



# Community Action Plan

## Ravenswood Local Nature Reserve

Updated September 2017

### Purpose

This document has been created in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, Greenfaulds High School and the community of Greenfaulds, Ravenswood and Seafar. The Action Plan identifies the history of the site, key issues and solutions that would be manageable by the students and local community to enhance natural heritage and achieve positive change. This document will also identify key contacts within North Lanarkshire Council to encourage and develop safe working practice and to gain appropriate permissions required while working on council owned land.

## Natural Connections project

Cumbernauld Living Landscape aims to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. Over 50% of Cumbernauld's town centre is made up of green spaces: parks, woodlands and gardens. However, these areas are often disconnected from one another and many are not as good for people – or wildlife – as they should be.

The Natural Connections project will encourage young people from marginalised groups to learn about, value and celebrate their local natural heritage. It will also give them the opportunity and skills to make real and lasting improvements to their environment. In addition, the project will promote and celebrate the town's greenspaces to the wider community through outdoor "Living Windows", an interactive web-map, a fold-out activity map and public events and displays.

Natural Connections will enable local residents and the marginalised groups to take action to improve three sites within Cumbernauld, St Maurice's, Ravenswood LNR and Cumbernauld Glen. These improvements will address improving biodiversity, safety, access, encourage health and wellbeing through participating in volunteers days and give local volunteers and the marginalised groups lifelong learning skills.

## History of Ravenswood L.N.R.

Ravenswood Local Nature Reserve is a 17 hectare site with a variety of habitats ranging from valuable wetlands, scrub, Pollockshole woodlands and an orchid meadow. Owned and managed by North Lanarkshire Council this site is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and was designated in March 2012 as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). Historically the area was used for farming and Ravenswood House is known for being an early medieval retreat of the Bishops and clergy of Glasgow. The House itself was demolished in the 1960's to make way for Our Lady's High school. Evidence from 1684 details the annual rent the farmer of Pollockshole Farm was obliged to pay the Earl of Wigton; 101 Scots pounds, 1 veal calf, 2 furlots of barley and 12 hens. Pollockshole farm remained a working farm up until 1964 with Cumbernauld Development Corporation purchasing the land for the new town. Today this reserve is home to an array of wildlife, including orchids, butterflies, newts, mammals and raptors. The site is used by local residents for dog walking and health and fitness owing to the well-built paths and is an escape from the hustle and bustle of new town living.

## Why the site is important

The Ravenswood LNR has a variety of important habitats, specifically the ponds and woodlands which are included in the Scottish Biodiversity List and the UK Biodiversity List of Priority Habitats. Increased development of available land to urban expansion has caused the decline in these rich habitats, which has had a knock on effect, reducing the biodiversity found within these habitats to alarming levels. The importance of the Ravenswood site is strengthened by the species which use it for their homes or during migration. UK Biodiversity Action Plan migrant bird species such as the Grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevias* and wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* use the rich landscape for feeding and shelter. Recent evidence of scat droppings would indicate pine marten *Martes martes* is passing through the site and the Small pearl bordered fritillary butterfly can be seen during June and July. Further enhancement and protection of the site will ensure these and other species have a safe haven for years to come.

From the point of view of local residents, Ravenswood LNR offers a place for recreational use and a chance to reconnect with nature. Access to a small car park onsite allows for patrons from further afield to visit, enjoy and explore. The simple circuitous path is an excellent walking route for beginners who can benefit both physically and mentally. The calming influence of the pond and the inspiring surrounding landscape help to relieve everyday stresses, while the woodlands provide cool shade in the height of summer. Property values in the area may be inclined to be higher due to access to a local greenspace and education of the site to local communities and inclusion to decision making on enhancements to the site will promote stewardship and protection of the site.

The site is also important for Eco-system services; these are services which our environment does for us. Services such as air and water purification, carbon storage, noise regulation, green travel pollination and accessible nature all of which we take for granted in an urban setting. The Eco-system services provided by the Ravenswood site are especially important due to the volume of traffic which uses the network of major road systems in the area; the Local Nature Reserve in this area acts as a buffer to the local houses thereby reducing pollution particularly from the M80 and A73 which surround the large housing schemes of Ravenswood Seafar and Greenfaulds.

## Objectives

- Enhance and protect the biodiversity of the site
- Involve the community, local groups and schools in the decision making and practical management of the site
- Raise the awareness of the site through Natural Connections school workshops and practical volunteer days

## Outcomes

- Build the confidence of students and increase skills
- Increase wildlife biodiversity
- Increase wildflower biodiversity and abundance
- Create a safer place for people to visit
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Raise awareness and appreciation of the site

## Contacts

Before any work commences please ensure permissions are gained from the management/ land owner of the site. St Maurice's pond is managed by the Land services department and the Conservation team including the Countryside Ranger Service North Team. For any questions or comments on site maintenance please contact:

Regeneration and Environmental Services

William Thompson

Assistant Area Manager

[ThomsonWi@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:ThomsonWi@northlan.gov.uk)

Senior Conservation Officer

Toby Nevitt

Greenspace Development

[NevittT@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:NevittT@northlan.gov.uk)

To record an interesting sighting of wildlife please contact Biodiversity Officer, taking note of the date, time and location of sighting:

Kirsty Mooney

Assistant Biodiversity Officer

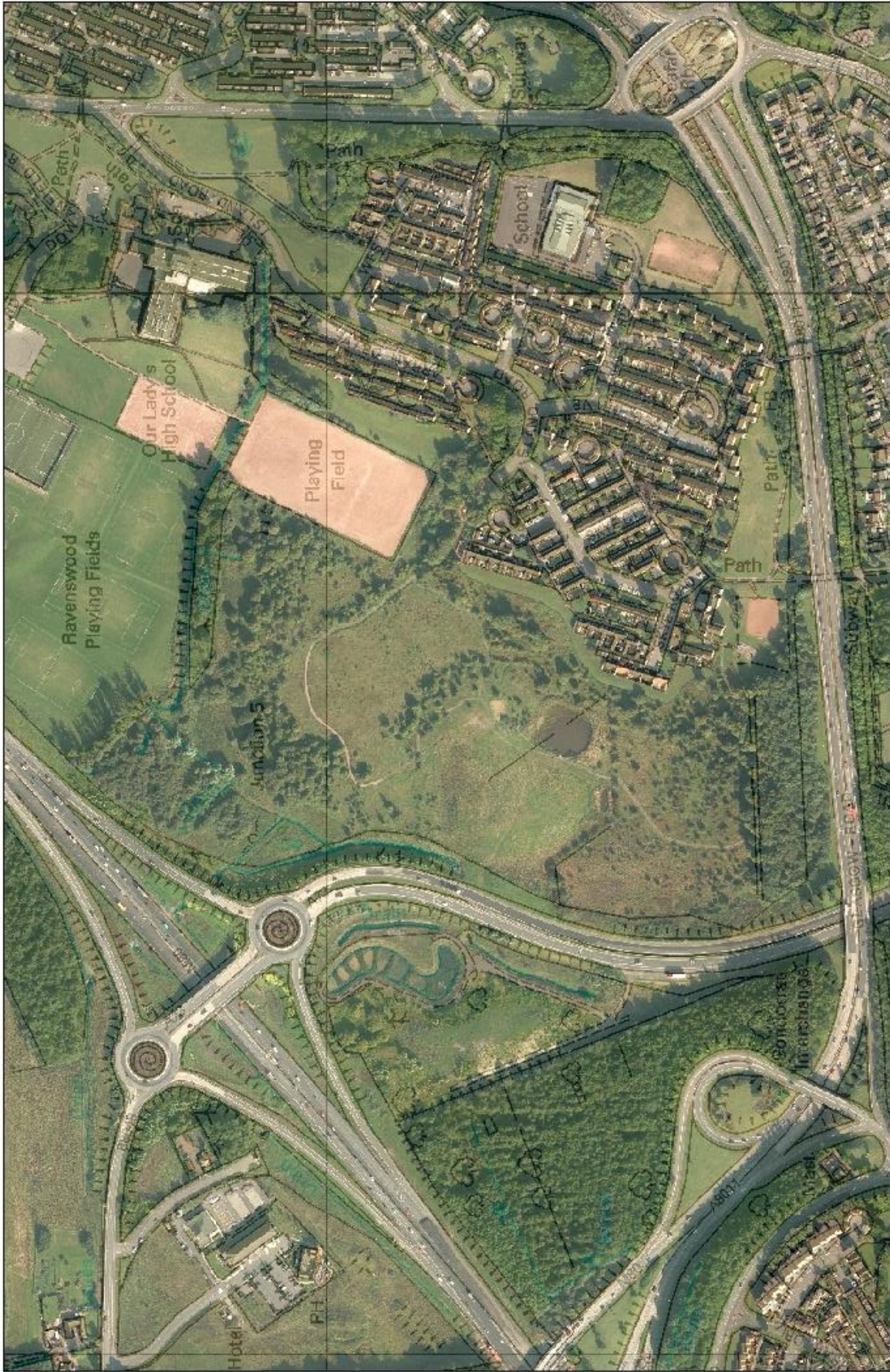
[MooneyKi@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:MooneyKi@northlan.gov.uk)

If you have any questions regarding the Cumbernauld Living Landscape or community engagement within Cumbernauld, contact:

Ian Mackenzie

Project Development Officer

[Imackenzie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:Imackenzie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)



# Community Action Plan

## Short term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of Sept 2017
Tree planting	Oct 2015- March 2016	Students/Community/volunteers	No. of trees planted	<b>NO trees are required for this site unless replacing dead stock</b>	
Tree guard removal	When necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	No. of tree guards removed	Removal of tree guards will allow further tree growth	<b>Greenfaulds High School</b> Tree guards removed from trees
Wildflower planting	Aug 2015 – March 2016	Students/Community/volunteers  Grow Wild seed promotion packs once per year	Coverage of per/m <sup>2</sup> of wildflower seed sown	<b>Plant species must be native and areas check for what type of species are suitable for the site.</b> Species such as bluebell and yellow rattle require planting in autumn as they need frost conditions to germinate.	<b>Natural Connections</b> Wildflower plugs planted – 2016
Litter picking	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Volume of litter removed - per bag	Organise days through Keep Scotland Beautiful to increase profile of group	<b>Natural Connections</b> 4 bags of waste removed
Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m <sup>2</sup> cleared Increase on orchids on meadow	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow	<b>Natural Connections</b> All INNS cut down at entrance ~0.013ha/13m <sup>2</sup> Scrub removed on orchid and butterfly meadow ~0.6908ha/6908m <sup>2</sup>
Survey of wildflowers	October 2015	Students/Community/volunteers <b>Approach other organisations i.e. Cumbernauld Living Landscape Plantlife etc.</b>	Set benchmark to No. of species and abundance currently present	Bioblitz complete on site by May 2018	
Pond clearing	March 2016	Students/Community/volunteers <b>Approach other organisations i.e. Cumbernauld Living Landscape Froglife etc.</b>	Area of pond cleared of vegetation	Volume of material removed	

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of Sept 2017
Fence mending	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	Length per/M of mended fence	<b>Only where necessary</b>	
Bat/bird house making – Bug habitats	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	No of habitats made and installed	<b>Check landowner is happy to have bat boxes due to licencing laws</b>	
ID Surveys	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	End of session evaluation	Delivered by sister organisations	
Exploring Natural History through creativity	March 2015	Students/Community/volunteers	End of session evaluation	Very simple and fun activity nature art/ photography	
Bush skills	March 2015	Cumbernauld Living Landscape Community Engagement Officer to be approached	Learning new skills End of session evaluation	Dependant on capacity	<b>Natural Connections</b> Wood carving delivered to students from Greenfaulds High School
Path clearing/maintenance	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Length of path cleared	Path clearing will make site more accessible to local residents, removal of leaf build up from autumn will prevent mud from accumulating on path and causing flooding issues	<b>Natural Connections</b> 15m cleared (*SCH) 2016 100m cleared –2016 16.2m cleared 2016 20m cleared –2017  <b>Greenfaulds High school</b> 20 metres of path cleared
Banter Bench maintenance	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Level of cleanliness for public use	Keeping site clean will prevent anti-social behaviour and build ownership of installation	<b>Natural Connections</b> Bench area cleared of leaves Weed control matting laid 360kg of Blue slate gravel added to underside of bench as hard standing

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of Sept 2017
Improvements to main entranceway of reserve	Feb 2017 – April 2017	Cumbernauld Living Landscape, Volunteers, schools, TCV contractor	A community consultation was held regarding the proposed works to the site. All work has been approved by public (residents within the area), NLC. A further consultation will be conducted at the end of the project to evaluate the communities response	<p>Scrub area to be cleared and levelled off – this will become an outdoor classroom for local primary schools.</p> <p>Low log wall to be incorporated as a surrounding edge, planting of hedgerow around log wall.</p> <p>Butterfly garden will be replanted with native species current native plants will be translocated to suitable sites; non-native species will be destroyed/ removed.</p> <p>New native planting regime will be carried out to minimise the need for intense future maintenance on this section.</p> <p>Addition of Scottish Heritage fruit trees will be added with emphasis on trees local to Lanarkshire (were possible)</p> <p>Large stone removed from built up log area – possible considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pond creation</li> <li>• Loggery</li> <li>• Bugs and beastie home</li> </ul>	<p><b>Natural Connections</b></p> <p>Outdoor classroom complete, semi-circular path around butterfly meadow complete</p> <p>720 mature plants (native stock) planted, raised bed area cleared, painted and stocked with native wildflowers.</p> <p>90% Garden escapes removed from entrance</p> <p>Small pond in raised bed area</p> <p>Bug hotel began – total length of bug habitat 97' 3"</p> <p>Large stone still in place cannot be removed, cleared and used as butterfly basking site</p> <p>6 Scottish Heritage fruit trees planted no tree guards to deter anti-social behaviour – 2 has since been eaten by deer future planting of trees recommended.</p> <p>50 hedging trees planted behind log/bug habitat</p>

\*SCH – School students Natural Connection workshops

## Medium term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress as of Sept 2017
Drainage improvements	Where and when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of flooding to path(s)	<b>Assess if this is required on each site. Would require a work team to assist i.e. TCV Project team</b>	
Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m <sup>2</sup> cleared Increase on orchids on meadow	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow (Wellies required on marsh)	See short term tasks



## Long term

Action	Target completion	Responsibility	Measure of success	Notes	Progress
Wildflower meadow management	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of nitrogen rich grasses and increase of wildflowers per/m <sup>2</sup> Can be surveyed before and after	Removal of cut hay essential to encourage wildflower growth	See short term tasks
Woodland management (weeding and pruning)	Ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Healthy growth of trees, clear line of vision through woodland, improved feeling of safety	Semi mature to mature branches laterally thinned at a maximum of 5" (head height), not exceeding 20% of tree mass, materials used to create brash deterrent for deer and to encourage regeneration or removed for the use of bug habitats	<b>Natural Connections to date (18/01/2017)</b> 805m of vegetation at paths cleared back 0.5m-1m from path edge Entrance – wooded area tidied up by pruning of lateral shoots to a height of 5', Willow branches trimmed to prevent striking passers by
Scrub removal	Ongoing where/when necessary	Students/Community/volunteers	Area per/m <sup>2</sup> cleared Increase on orchids on meadow	Carry out tasks while reducing damage to meadow	See short term tasks
Removal of INNS species	ongoing	Students/Community/volunteers	Compare coverage of INNS before and after Native species return	<b>Rhododendron and snowberry only at Ravenswood LNR. INNS must be cut and left to mulch at site of cutting due to current laws regarding INNS</b>	See short term tasks
Path maintenance	Where and when required	Students/Community/volunteers	Reduction of flooding to path(s)	Assess if this is required on each site. Would require a work team to assist i.e. TCV Project team	See short term tasks