COALFIELD
Communities Landscape Partnership

Taing dhan | Made possible with
A' Mhaoin-Dualchais Heritage Fund

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership

End of Scheme Evaluation



Coalfield Communities selected social media pictures ~ April 2023 to April 2024

Final version ~ December 2025

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Summary ~ Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership at a glance

The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund was delivered over a five year period between September 2020 and December 2025. The project delivery period was extended by four months from the intended finish in August 2025 to allow for the completion of some project activity that had been impacted by restrictions and delays resulting from the coronavirus pandemic from March 2020 onwards.

From information collected throughout the project period and presented in this evaluation the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership has delivered the following:

For nature recovery:

- **163 ha of landscape improvements** including **98ha of peatland** restored, **34ha of wildflower grassland** restored, **22ha of woodland** creation and **9ha of community garden** created
- **4,150 dams installed** improving **peatland management and reducing flood risk**
- **20,150 locally grown trees sourced and planted**
- **2.5km of hedgerow habitat created**



Tree planting at Hannahston Woods ~ an old open cast mine site

For connecting people with the natural and cultural heritage:

- **16,444 adults and children participating and engaged** through **221 scheme activities and events**
- **943 volunteers** contributing **3,325 volunteer days,** equivalent to an additional contribution of **£498,750**
- **857 participants** attending **287 training workshops** and demonstration events

- **517 awards and certificates** of achievement
- **241 community, local interest groups and partners** **engaged**
- **107 different pieces of interpretation and media** **produced** to promote awareness and understanding of the area
- **21 kilometres of access** **improved**
- **1 All Inclusive Cycle Track** providing **opportunities for all abilities**





Community excavation at Ochiltree

For resilience and employment:

- **3 staff members** who make up **the core team**
- **15 modern apprentices** gaining **land management skills and experience in land management** with **11 apprentices** progressing into employment or education





Apprentices Kieran, Eoghan, tutor Mark and apprentice Jack at Patna Community Woodland.

1. Introduction and context

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and led by East Ayrshire Council as the lead partner and accountable body, working together with 18 other organisations and groups with an interest in the Coalfields Communities area that includes;

- Archaeology Scotland
- Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group
- Central Scotland Green Action Trust
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Cumnock History Group
- Dalmellington Parish Development Trust
- East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative
- East Ayrshire Leisure
- East Ayrshire Woodlands
- EADHA Enterprises Ltd
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Galloway and South Ayrshire UNSECO Biosphere
- Glasgow University
- Lugar Parish Church
- Netherthird Community Action Training
- The Cumnock Tryst
- The Conservation Volunteers
- Strathclyde University

The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership is made up of representatives from the partner organisations who developed a shared vision for Coalfield Communities to:

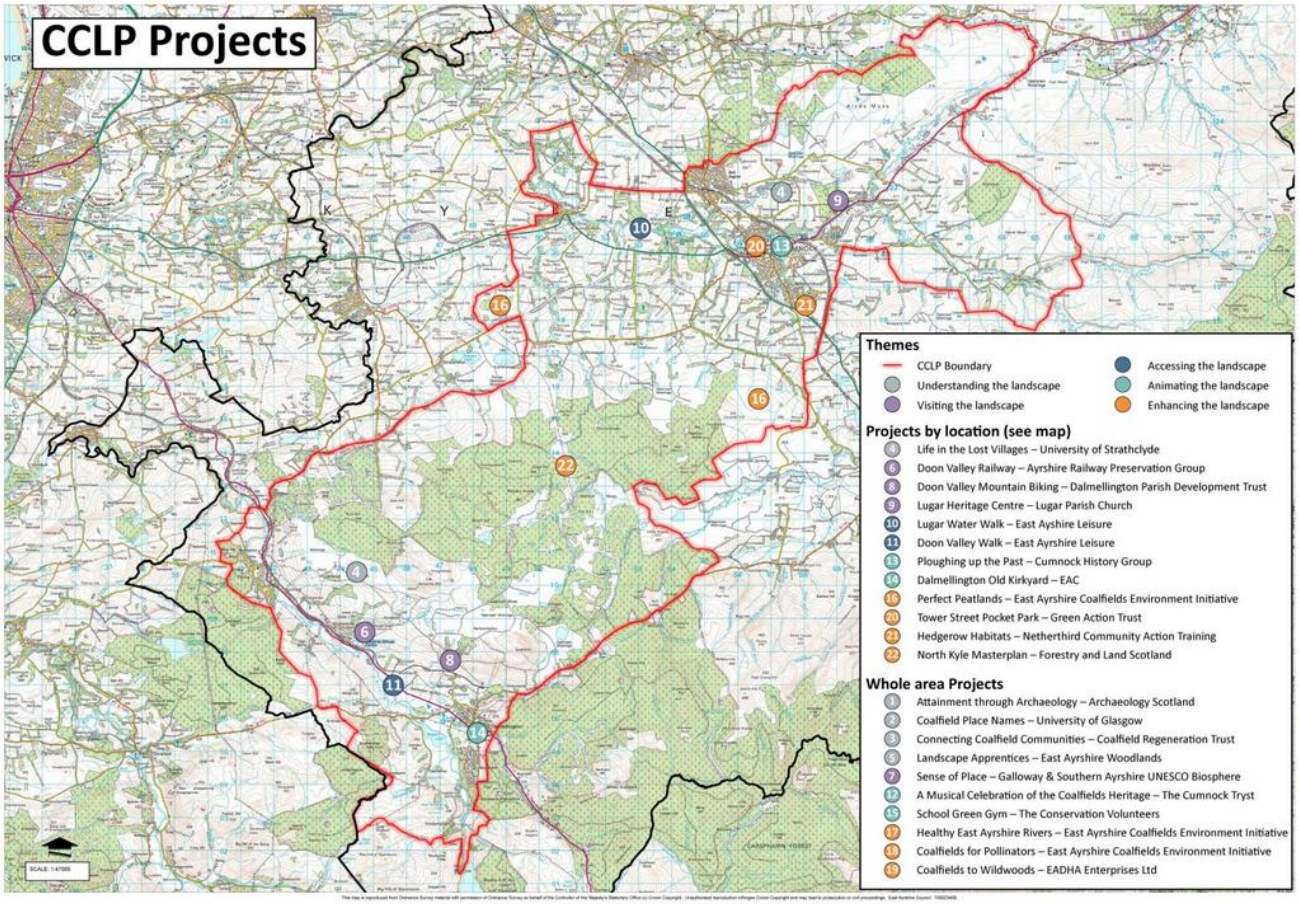
"Share the benefits of a renewed landscape, welcoming visitors from afar to celebrate their unique heritage, promote stewardship of the land and create new opportunities to enjoy the landscape, shaped by understanding of the past and needs of the future."

The ambition for the Partnership is to rebuild a connection between local communities and natural and cultural heritage features that have been impacted by the extensive mineral extraction in the area. The closure of many opencast coal sites in East Ayrshire, presented the opportunity to re-establish lost links between communities and the landscape through developing the following aims:

- Address the threats to the natural, built and cultural heritage through conservation, enhancement and promotion, capitalising on the area's assets for the benefit of people in the landscape
- Create opportunities for learning, recreation and wellbeing within the landscape for people with a range of abilities and backgrounds
- Reveal the past lives of the communities, drawing upon their close relationship with the land, thereby connecting people with their heritage and inspiring stewardship
- Equip people with the skills and knowledge to manage their landscape sustainably, building capacity and making it a successful place for residents and visitors alike

In terms of delivery and working towards achieving the overall vision, the Partnership has overseen a programme of 22 discrete projects that are taking place within a 231km^2 landscape area. Due to onset of COVID in early 2020 permission to start was in 2 stages. Partial permission to start was received on 22nd May 2020 and full permission to start on 4th September 2020 with an intended five year programme delivery from September 2020 through to August 2025.

Commencing project activity as intended was subject to considerable review following the major social and economic changes resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic that affected society from March 2020 onwards. To mitigate this disruption, a grant extension request was submitted in February 2025 meaning that project delivery was extended to the end of December 2025 with a current Grant Expiry Date of 16 January 2026.



The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership area and key project locations

It is a condition of National Lottery Heritage Fund grant awards that recipients carry out an end-of-scheme evaluation. The Heritage Fund have published specific guidance on evaluation for Landscape Partnerships which advises on how best to approach the evaluation of a complex, multi-project scheme, with an emphasis on the need to look across the whole range of activity, to identify how these have complemented one another, hopefully demonstrating that the scheme as a whole has delivered more than the sum of the individual projects.

While there is inevitably an element of judgement and criticism in any evaluation process, for those involved in a scheme it can provide a lot of positive feedback. The guidance states the aims of an evaluation as being able to "prove" (that resources have been well spent, ambitions achieved) and "improve" (capturing lessons learnt through experience of programme delivery).

With this recommended approach in mind, Coalfield Communities sought to make the most of the process by implementing a longitudinal approach to monitoring and evaluation, with an ethos of constructive reflection, aiming to draw out the learning from this project for the core team and partners to share with the Heritage Fund and other similar grant schemes. In order to achieve this, the following methodology was adopted.

- **Inception and development** ~ working with the project team and partners to refine the monitoring and evaluation framework building on work completed in the development phase, to help guide the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and specifically help with bringing together all the known outputs, outcomes and indicators into one place.

- **Annual snapshot reports** ~ producing three annual snapshot reports after year one, year three and year four giving an overview of progress against scheme outputs, along with financial spend to date. Reporting and presentation of findings to the Partnership Board.
- **Mid-term review** ~ key elements of this review conducted during the summer of 2023, included a project update meeting with the Programme Manager, a facilitated discussion at a meeting of the Coalfield Communities delivery partners, a review of the scheme documentation, plus reporting and presentation of findings to the Partnership Board.
- **Ongoing coaching and project completion templates** ~ online meetings with the project team members to give an overview of the evaluation approach and information needed to populate a final report. Producing individual project completion templates to help guide collection of evaluation data, information and learning.
- **End of scheme evaluation** ~ the information collected from the project completion reports by the project team and partners throughout the duration of the project has helped to feed into and shape this end-of-scheme evaluation.

Landscape Partnerships and project delivery

Landscape Partnerships are complex grant programmes. They are delivered through a partnership of bodies, normally including statutory agencies, local authorities, voluntary organisations and community groups. One of the goals of the programme is that schemes should actively engage local communities, while also meeting local social, environmental and economic needs.

Landscape Partnership Schemes need to address the conservation of the natural, built and cultural heritage. They are comprised of a number of discrete projects that include heritage conservation and restoration, access, education and training delivering across a set of programme outcomes. **Appendix 1** gives additional background information and an overview of the Heritage Fund's Landscape Partnership programme.

For the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership all of the projects included within the Scheme were chosen following an 18 month development phase during 2018 and 2019 that led to the production of a Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) and Stage 2 submission. All of the projects were chosen because of their connections with outcomes for heritage and the identified Coalfield Communities aims, objectives and priority themes that were linked to local need through the development process. 22 projects were identified and included for delivery as part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, based around five theme areas:

Theme 1: Understanding the Landscape • Attainment through Archaeology • Coalfield Place Names • Connecting Coalfield Communities • Life in the Lost Villages (oral history) • Landscape Apprentices	**Theme 2: Visiting the Landscape** • Doon Valley Railway • Discovering Sense of Place • Dalmellington Inclusive Cycling Project • Lugar Heritage Centre
Theme 3: Accessing the Landscape • River Lugar walk • Doon Valley walk	**Theme 4: Animating the Landscape** • Musical Celebration of the Coalfields • Ploughing up the Past • Dalmellington Old Kirk Yard • School Green Gym

Theme 5: Enhancing the Landscape

- Perfect Peatlands
- Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers
- Coalfields for Pollinators
- North Kyle Land Management Plan
- Coalfields to Wildwoods
- Tower Street pocket park
- Hedgerow Habitats



Project overview and theme branding from the Coalfield Communities website

As delivery has moved towards completion, the outputs and outcomes from the 22 projects have been captured by the Project Supervisor and partners and it is this information that has been included in the overall totals and evidence contained within this report to give a picture of what the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme has delivered "as a whole".

Appendix 2 gives a summary of what the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership set out to achieve along with further details on the individual projects and the different partners involved during the programme delivery phase.

2. Principal achievements: what was delivered on the ground

In order to develop the headline achievements for the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership "as a whole", the outputs from each individual project have been sorted, aggregated and presented according to headline output categories developed by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support early monitoring of their Landscape Partnership programme.

Following the transition to the National Lottery Heritage Fund it is no longer a requirement for Landscape Partnerships Schemes to report against these headings, yet from an evaluation perspective they are a very useful starting point and an opportunity to look at collective achievements and a mechanism to present data "in the round" rather than on a project by project basis. To get a picture of the overall achievements for Coalfield Communities, the anticipated outputs from the LCAP have been presented along with actual outputs achieved against the following key indicators:

- Advice, Access, Biodiversity & Landscape, Built Heritage, Employment, Participation & Learning, Training & Skills, and Volunteers

The collated outputs for the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership as a whole, are shown below with observations giving the main headlines of actual outputs achieved. To develop this picture, the output information has been derived from the individual project completion reports that links to the monitoring and evaluation spreadsheet. This comprehensive data sheet captured all of the project outputs and developed a series of key performance indicators and achievements to help with ongoing reporting and board presentations throughout the delivery of the programme.

Advice

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
10 technical reports, plans and strategies produced to support the development of the Coalfield Communities LPS, to inform and influence stakeholders	**12 technical reports**, plans and strategies produced to support the development of the Coalfield Communities LPS, to inform and influence stakeholders
5+ landscape wide surveys generating, **1,600+ new records uploaded** to national databases	3+ landscape wide surveys generating, **278+ new records** Output gap: **Coalfield Pollinators** ~ outputs for biological records needed to complete the picture

Advice outputs have been achieved with some outputs not reported

Advice outputs have been achieved. In the original project plans Coalfield for Pollinators identified 40 wildlife and pollinator surveys plus 500 wildlife records per year making 120 survey and 1,500 wildlife records in total. Project reporting information shows that 60 surveys have taken place with the number of records not reported. On a pro rata basis and making a judgment on the survey effort it can be estimated that 1,000 new biological records have been created.

Coalfields for Pollinators ~ before and after restoration activity

Left ~ Initial grass and forb growth on opencast mine site

Right ~ Well stablished small cluster of Butter cup, daisy, clover and cranesbill





Access

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
Access ~ total access improvements of 81km • Improvements to walking routes **totalling 49km** • 4 new walking routes **totalling 16km** • **35+ signs and waymarkers** to improve local access infrastructure The creation of **1 new mountain bike** trail **totalling 15.6km**	**Access improvements total 21km** • 2 routes improved **totalling 16km** • 1 new walking route **totalling 5km**, plus 3 new walking routes **under development** • **10 signs and waymarkers** to improve local access infrastructure **1 All-inclusive Cycle Track** created

Access outputs have been partially achieved with variations on intended activity

The variations have been due to three main factors as identified in the following project reporting:

Doon Valley Walk ~ 1.5 km of the intended 27 km achieved

The revised proposal for the Doon Valley Walk project delivered part of stage 1, the Ness Glen Upper Path improvements totalling 1.5 km. The sections from Dalmellington to Waterside Active Travel Route (4 km) and Stage 2 from Waterside to Patna (21.5 km) did not happen due to funding awarded to Ayrshire Road Alliance being withdrawn by Scottish Government, due to budget reorganisation.

Project completion report

River Lugar Walk ~ 14.5 km of the intended 22 km achieved

The reduction in length of path improvements was due to the estate roads originally identified in the original consultants' report not requiring any improvement work, this reduced the requirement for new signage to improve access infrastructure.

Project completion report

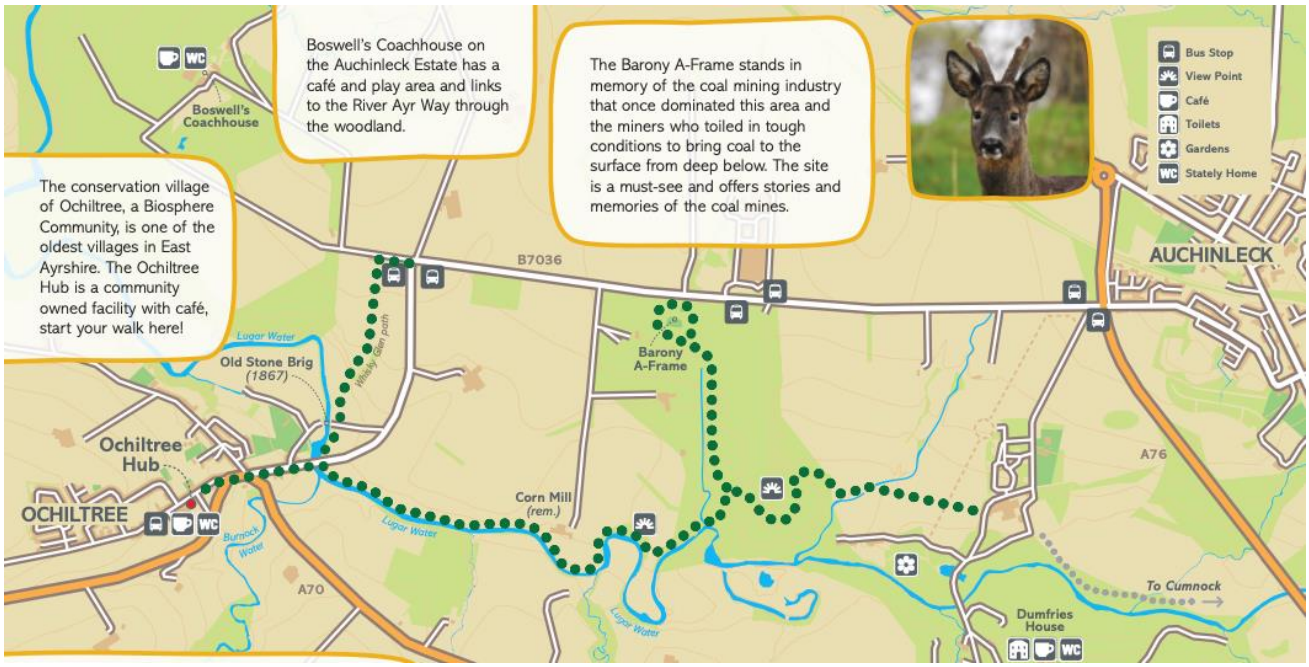
Doon Valley Mountain bike trail ~ significant change of project scope and outputs

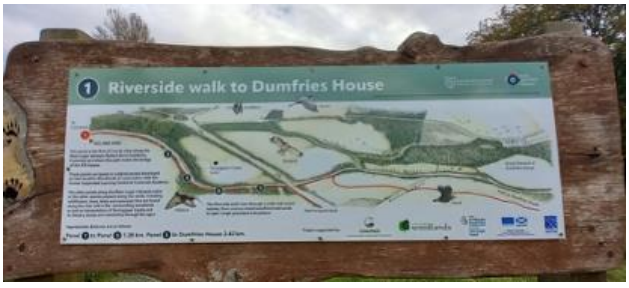
The creation of 1 new mountain bike trail totalling 15.6km proved to be unfeasible, with changes in location and project specification taking place over the duration of the Landscape Partnership Scheme. Just getting to project completion was seen as an achievement. The final project saw the creation of an All-inclusive Cycle Track covering 1 hectare that is open for community use, with accessible bike hire being available from Spring 2026.

Looking back, what is the one thing that you are most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme?

Completion of project ~ this project has been on-going since before COVID and over the years has changed location three times. The changes in location and project description have been challenging and the delays from COVID frustrating, therefore reaching the track launch stage and the overwhelming positive response from the community has given Dalmellington Parish Development Trust pride in this achievement.

Project completion report







Lugar water walk ~ leaflet extract and on site interpretation

Biodiversity and Landscape

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
164ha of landscape improvements to include: • 100ha of peatland restored • 25ha of wildflower grassland restored • 20ha of new woodland created • 15ha of broadleaved woodland • 4ha of community garden created	**163 ha of landscape improvements** including: • 98 ha of peatland restored • 34ha of wildflower grassland restored • 22ha of woodland creation • 9ha of community garden created
54,000 locally grown trees sourced and planted	**15,150 locally grown trees** sourced and planted
5,000 broadleaved trees planted along roadside	**5,000 broadleaved trees** planted along roadside
1,000 dams installed to improve peatland management and reduce flood risk	**4,000+ dams installed** to improve peatland management and reduce flood risk
1km of hedgerow habitat created	**2.5km of hedgerow** habitat created
	Output gap: Outputs from **North Kyle Land Management plan** needed to complete the picture

Biodiversity and Landscape outputs have been achieved

The scale of landscape improvements covering 163 hectares is in line with the intended ambitions set out in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

The number of dams installed to improve peatland management and reduce flood risk has increased fourfold and the length of hedgerow habitat created has more than doubled.

The reduction in the number of trees planted is due to *"too much reliance on a single organisation and site opportunity that was delayed through the entire project delivery period,"* as identified in the Coalfields to Wildwoods project completion report.



Water held at dam 12 months after installation



Peatland restoration workers on site

Built heritage

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
3 significant built heritage features restored and interpreted that included: • restoration and renovation of wagon shop • length of narrow gauge track laid • restoration of 1 mausoleum	**3 built heritage features** restored including: • **1 wagon shop** renovated and restored • **1 new heritage shed** • **1 new heritage centre** restored in Lugar Output gap: **Doon Valley Railway** ~ output information is needed to complete the picture

Built heritage outputs have been achieved with variations on intended activity

Dalmellington Old Kirkyard

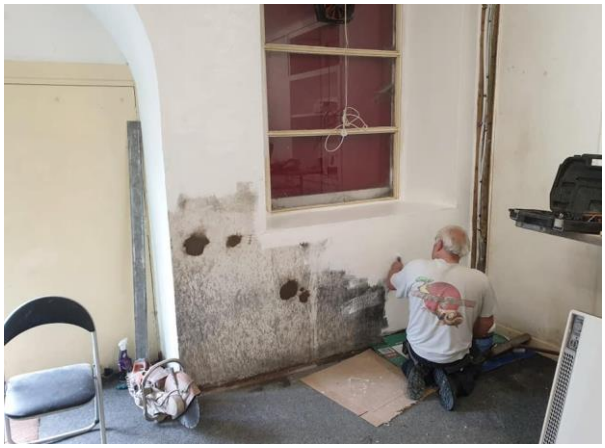
Issues with identifying a responsible party for maintenance of the McAdam Mausoleum, following restoration meant that the intended capital activity at Dalmellington Old Kirkyard was unable to take place. Although the owners were happy to contribute to costs they did not want to be responsible for maintenance and an arrangement with the Dalmellington Parish Development Trust fell through as they were unable to take on the legal responsibility. The project did remove some trees and stabilise some grave markers. 2 new interpretation signs were installed.

Doon Valley Railway

Restoration of the former Wagon Repair Shop will create a new museum that will be the new home of the Doon Valley Railway's heritage items and narrow gauge railway.

The new heritage shed will provide a home to the Doon Valley Railway's fleet of rolling stock and locomotives *"to preserve, protect, maintain and display to the general public."* Planning permission for the restoration of these built heritage features has been granted and following appointment of a contractor, work is due for completion by March 2026.





Doon Valley Railway improvements at Dunaskin Station ~ May 2021

Employment

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
3 staff making up the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership core team	**3 staff** recruited to the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership core team
12 apprentices recruited and progressing to other employment	**15 modern apprentices** recruited gaining skills and experience in land management activities
3 apprentices recruited and progressing to further education	**11 apprentices** progressing into employment and/or education
1 new **eco-tourism business** established	**3 student work placements** and **1 additional research associate**

Employment outputs have been achieved

3 staff were recruited to the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership core team, although with time limited funding in place only the Project Supervisor has remained since March 2025, to complete all remaining project activity.

15 Modern Apprenticeship (MA) places were recruited through East Ayrshire Woodlands over the duration of the scheme. These placements gave skills and experience in land management activity and were designed to capitalise on opportunities arising from the Scottish Government's drive to increase woodland and forestry cover in Scotland.

The eco-tourism business has not been established but it is hoped that a tree nursery will be established following completion of Coalfields to Wildwoods as demonstrated in the following project reflections.

> "Stuart Douglas my assistant on the project was the guy I had in mind for the development of such a business developing from the guided walks but we just didn't think there was a strong enough market for this. Rather than developing such an enterprise we have been looking at the possibility of him developing a small tree nursery off the back of the project which would be a fitting legacy and would take the all the learnings from the project. He is not quite at the stage yet of being up and running but has the agreement of Hansel Village to share some of their nursery space."

Additional employment outputs have been delivered with **3 student work placements** and **1 additional research associate** being involved in the **Life in Lost Villages (Oral History) project.**





Lost Villages exhibition ~ February to May 2024

Participation and Learning

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
7,100 adults engaged in activities and events	**15,204 adults engaged** in activities and events
1,600 children engaged in activities and events	**1,240 children engaged** in activities and events
87 community, local interest groups and partners engaged	**239 community, local interest groups and partners** engaged
380+ scheme activities, walks, talks and events	**224 scheme activities**, walks, talks and events
50+ different pieces of interpretation to promote awareness and understanding	**107 pieces of interpretation and digital media** to promote awareness and understanding

Participation and learning outputs have been exceeded.

Activities, walks, talks and events have been held with some success despite the interruptions experienced due to the COVID 19 pandemic that led to a slow start for engagement activity.

The doubling of the anticipated number of adults to be engaged from the Stage 2 phase can be largely attributed to the Life in the Lost villages project that held an additional exhibition to promote their findings and work, attracting 7,000 participants.

The extensive engagement work delivered through Connecting Coalfield Communities was able to demonstrate working with 90 different community groups providing capacity building support to those individual groups and linking together 68 groups across the coalfields area.





Easter activities based around the Pocket Park and the Lugar Path launch event

Volunteers

3,325 volunteer days contributed equivalent to a value added of £498,750

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2025
500+ volunteers anticipated to be involved	943 volunteers involved and trained
7,400 volunteer days delivered	**3,325 volunteer days delivered**

Volunteer numbers have been exceeded noting one large variation

Activity will have been impacted by COVID 19 through the interrupted start to programme delivery and building capacity, with the following observations made:.

Number of volunteers engaged has been exceeded with nearly double the number of volunteers recruited and contributing.

Total volunteer days of 3,325 contributed is under half of the planned number although a large number of volunteer days (4,800) was anticipated for Connecting Coalfield Communities with 1,045 recorded for this project.

NB. This figure of 7,400 days taken from the individual project plans is at variation with volunteer time in the Agreed Costs budget totals £85,600 which at £50 per day[1] equates to 1,712 volunteer days, a figure that has been exceeded.

Total volunteering effort is worth an additional contribution of £498,750, using the latest value of volunteering figures of £20 per hour from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The 3,325 days contributed is the equivalent of 15 full time working years (allowing for 220 work days per year) and works out as an additional resource of **three extra full time staff members contributing to the work of the Coalfield Communities partnership for every year of project delivery.**



Coalfield to Wildwoods, aspen plugs being potted on at Littlemill Primary School

[1] Unskilled volunteer day rate of £50 from the Heritage Fund at the time of application. Volunteer time now calculated at £20 per hour and is the figure used to generate the £498,750 overall headline contribution. ***3,325 Volunteer Days @ 7½ hours per day = 24,937.5 total hours.*** 24937.5 * £20 = £498,750.

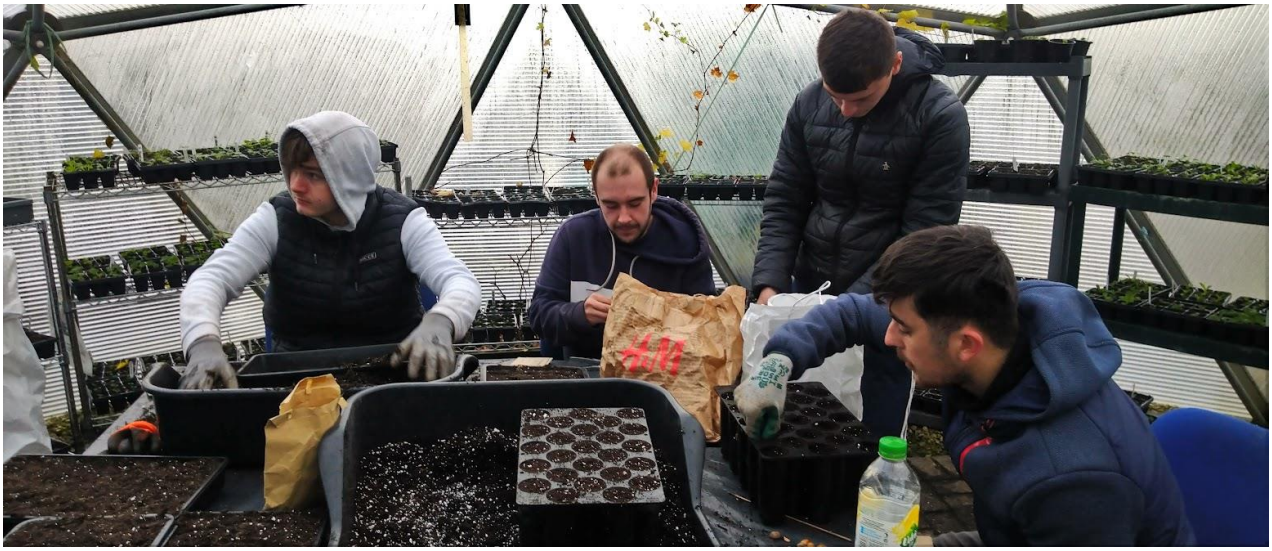
Training and Skills

What we said to the Heritage Fund in the LCAP	Actual outputs achieved to November 2024
370 training workshops or demonstration events facilitated and delivered	274 training and skills workshops facilitated and delivered
565 participants involved in training and skills workshops	**857 participants involved in training and skills workshops**
300 awards and certificates of achievement	517 awards and certificates of achievement

Training and Skills outputs have been exceeded

The additional 217 awards and certificates of achievement can be directly attributed to:

- 28 additional vocational skills certificates being obtained by the landscape apprentices
- 190 additional awards delivered by Attainment through Archaeology where *"each participant received a Heritage Hero Award of the appropriate level to formally recognise and celebrate their achievements"*





Growing trees in the community ~ processing hazelnuts for propagation at Know Nursery

Overall picture

From the information collected and presented for the final evaluation, **the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership can demonstrate that it has achieved many of the original ambitions** as anticipated within the LCAP and stage 2 submission. The elongated delivery period will have contributed this picture although this needs to be balanced against the inevitable variations and changes to individual projects as challenges arose at a local level during the delivery period, in particular of the programme of access improvements where changes and variations on intended activity have been documented and evidenced.

The biggest achievements to note and celebrate for nature recovery are:

- The landscape impact over 163 hectares to enhance natural heritage and improve biodiversity.
- 20,150 broadleaved trees planted
- 4,000+ dams installed to improve peatland management and reduce flood risk
- 2.5km of hedgerow habitat created

For local engagement and participation:

The delivery of an awareness and engagement programme at a community level has been the most effective part of Coalfield Communities as demonstrated by:

- 15,204 people participating in the 224 different events and learning activities throughout the scheme
- Engaging 1,240 children and students in events and activities
- Recruiting and engaging 943 volunteers contributing 3,325 days or the equivalent of an additional 15 full time working years
- The delivery of 274 skills workshops and training opportunities benefitting 857 people

The overall story and picture presented is the success of engagement activity at a local community level, connecting people with their natural and cultural heritage throughout the Coalfield Communities area. Changes and variations to the intended access and built heritage activity have been required, with the landscape improvements being delivered largely as intended.

The geography of the partnership area with a large upland landscape in the middle of two river valleys has possibly contributed to projects being delivered by project partners as intended yet missing out on opportunities, synergies and economies of scale that other Landscape Partnership Schemes have been able to demonstrate during the programme delivery phase.

3. Programme achievements and outcomes

What has been collectively achieved

Collecting qualitative evidence relates to the change and outcomes that have been delivered by a project or scheme. This is important in relation to 'people' goals such as engagement, learning and skills training, where numbers often miss the main story about how people's perceptions of their heritage, and their aspirations, have been changed.

Measuring outcomes are often more difficult to measure than quantitative outputs due to a number of complex factors such as:

- landscape change taking place over a longer period of time than delivery of the scheme and/or
- attributing individual change for people to just one particular moment or activity in time…

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme Outcomes

As part of developing the approach to monitoring and evaluation, four strategic "Scheme Outcomes" were identified and agreed with project partners. These four programme outcomes were linked to all the delivered projects, with evidence collected accordingly, recognising that some projects will deliver against more than one outcome and across a number of theme areas.

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme Outcomes
A. ~ Improving and recording natural and cultural heritage The key natural and significant cultural heritage features of the Coalfield Communities Landscape area will be improved and better understood with a system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained. *Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats and cultural heritage features will be mapped.*
B.~ Increasing awareness and understanding of the natural and cultural heritage More and different types of individuals and local groups will become positively engaged with the unique landscape of the Coalfield Communities area, to understand the threats to the heritage and will be empowered to take further future actions.
C. ~ Deepening engagement, gaining skills, training and employment People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring, conserving and understanding their heritage. Participants will use the experience and confidence gained to progress to employment or other learning opportunities.
D. ~ Improved access and healthy living opportunities Improving access infrastructure at strategic locations enabling people to become more aware of and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the Coalfield Communities area. There will be increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits.

The source material for the programme achievements and outcomes came from information collected by the project team, the individual project reports produced on conclusion of programme delivery and information for the digital time capsule that provided many of the rich examples of project achievements and outcomes. The following sections illustrate some of the project activity (but not all) providing evidence of qualitative information that delivered against scheme outcomes.

3a. Improving and recording natural and cultural heritage

A. ~ Improving and recording natural and cultural heritage of the area

The key natural and significant cultural heritage features of the Coalfield Communities Landscape area will be improved and better understood with a system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained. *Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats and cultural heritage features will be mapped.*

How has Coalfield Communities evidenced working towards or achieving this outcome?

Perfect Peatlands

"A really healthy bog is a powerful carbon sink. It restores biodiversity and improves river flow by holding water at river heads by flattening out the peaks and troughs. This in turn helps the healthy river project."

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"There has been a substantial improvement in the condition of a large area of peatland in the Ayrshire Coalfield. Much, perhaps all, of this area would not have been restored without this intervention. The project has also created excellent opportunities for skills development in the sector."



Looking out across Glaisnock Moss

"I'd love to see more areas of Glaisnock moss restored, helping connectivity between bogs throughout East Ayrshire. We are seeing dragonflies and short eared owls now. The restoration is helping animals that rely on the bog rather than other habitats."

Project Officer reflections

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"The peatlands of the Ayrshire coalfield are wetter and more biodiverse as a result of this project. bog species, such as sphagnum moss, cranberry, bilberry and bog specialist insects have increased and Molinia grasses have decreased. This is an overall improvement in biodiversity.

The project has improved the hydrology of the area, with a positive knock-on effect on the rivers Ayr and Nith – the Nith is a particularly flood prone river. It is very clear that during periods of high rainfall larger volumes of water are being held in the bog than was previously the case.

The bogs are now also emitting substantially less methane and CO2 than was the case pre restoration."

What difference has this project made to people?

"The people are so deeply committed to improving it and connecting the land back to those who actually live there. The people I worked with are local and we chose a local contractor. It was a deliberate choice to use locals for sustainability and connection. When I was on site there were lots of locals walking dogs. They were very much in favour of the restoration and preservation of the area."

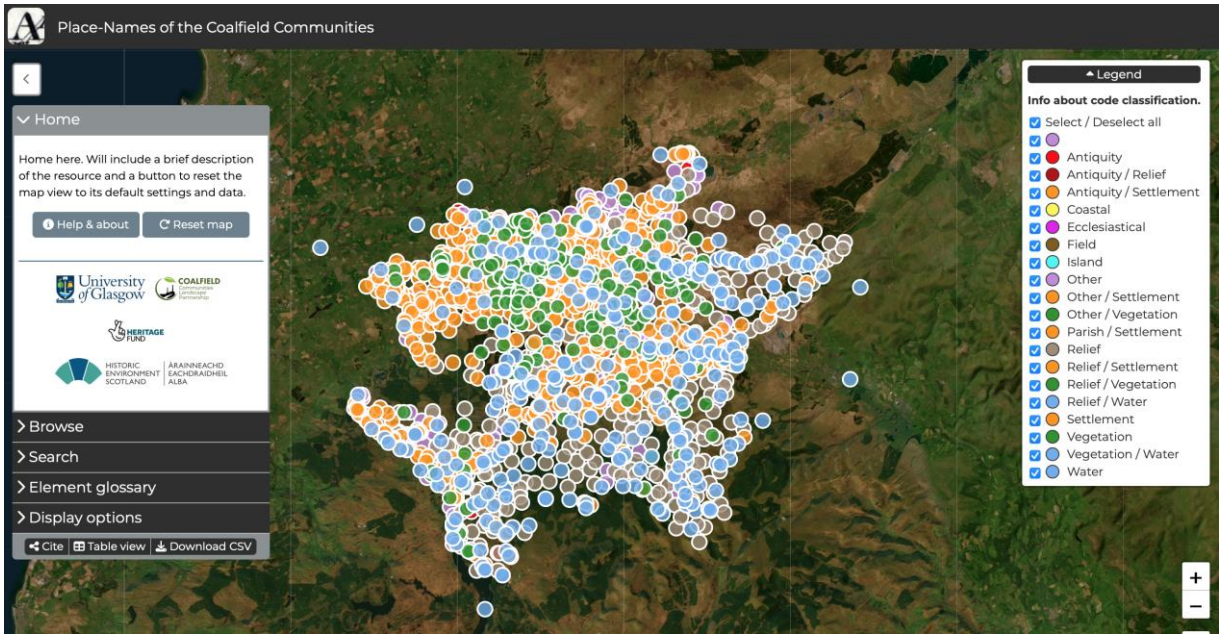
Project reflections for the time capsule

Coalfield Place Names

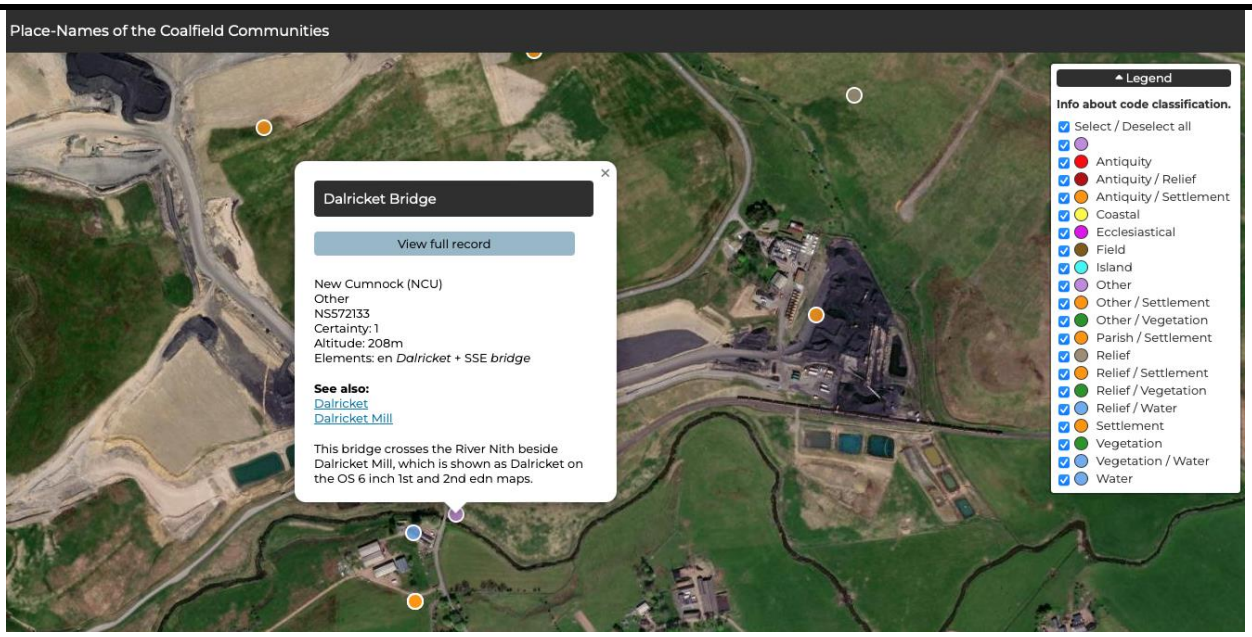
"The scale of the project was huge. We studied the five parishes and there were more places in the parish of New Cumnock than there were in the whole of Clackmannanshire…with a total of 2,800 local names identified."

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"When fully operational, the web resource we have created will be an important heritage tool for the future, allowing people to see the significance both of place-names, and of the places they represent, allowing people to capture a sense of the area's diverse and dynamic history. Much of the impact is still to come; the web resource will give people a great deal of accessible information about cultural and natural heritage in the area. It should support future developments, from walks to history projects."



Overview screen shot from the Place-names website



Single location selected from the Place-names website

"It is about language really; it is very clear that Gaelic was spoken here. It is not clear from when or until when that was the case, but certainly over several hundred years, highlighting that this was once a Gaelic area."

Project team reflections



Place names walk at the site of Highhouse Colliery



Place Names fieldwork at Mill Affleck, Auchinleck

Welcome to the Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities project website

Place-names are a marvellous resource, allowing people to get in touch with the 'intangible heritage' of the past: alerting us to the languages the past people in the area spoke, how they interacted with the environment round about them; allowing glimpses of their society, religion and daily life. In an area like the Coalfield Communities, place-names can play an even more important role, since the landscape was in places so heavily over-written with industrial activity during the 19th and 20th centuries.

https://ayr-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk

Place-names project website extract

Coalfields to Wildwoods

"This is good, my dad doesn't do anything like this with me at home. Can I come out again?"

Child, tree planting

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

Being able to work with so many young people. Highlights included:

- Running a tree planting event with Bellsbank Primary School in which most of the pupils were involved simultaneously possibly resulting in a record for East Ayrshire for the most number of children planting trees at one time.



- Planting trees on Littlemill Bing with the school pupils and having a seed ball throwing competition with the seed balls they made incorporating the seed they had collected.



- The local primary schools, especially Littlemill, Patna and Bellsbank have been so supportive and enthusiastic about being involved in the project and the pupils really seem to have engaged well and enjoyed the experience.



Littlemill Primary School ready to take their Aspen trees to the bing for planting



Logan Primary School ready to plant Aspen trees up the Glenmuir

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"Our planting sites will hopefully enhance the landscape as they establish and mature and create new areas where nature is allowed to return and thrive benefiting the biodiversity of the area. In advance of tree planting some areas have been fenced from livestock (Glenmuir and Pennyvenie sites) or grass cutting has ceased (Patna and Bellsbank sites) enabling a general rewilding over and above the actual planting."





Pennyvenie hedges and shelterbelt

What difference has this project made to people?

"There have been nearly 1000 volunteers who have helped including schools and the community wing of Kilmarnock football club. We planted one kilometre of hedge at Pennyvenie Farm to form a boundary between some woodland and an open cast site. A great example that is easy to see is a gap site in Patna where they demolished some old houses. About a hundred kids from the local school took part in the project that sits alongside the main road. It has transformed a place of urban decay into a large wild garden that has become really popular. Taking wilderness right into the heart of the community."

Project reflections for the time capsule

Life in the Lost Villages ~ an oral history

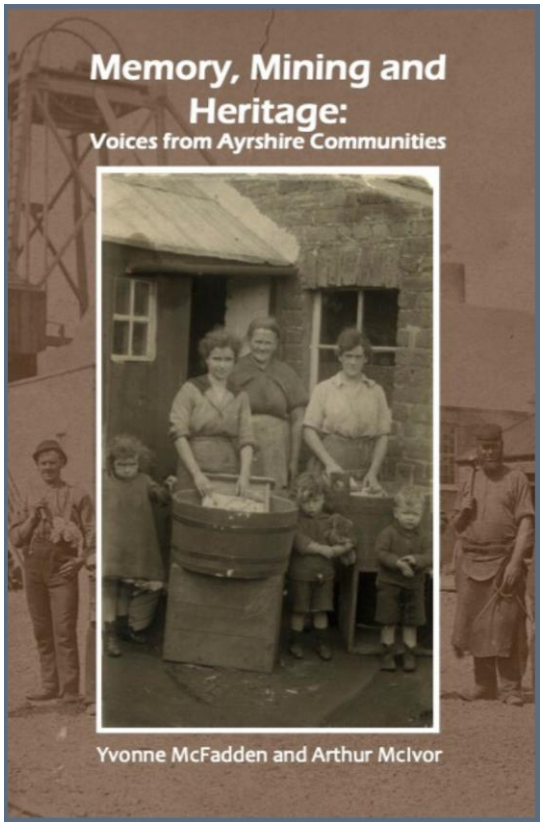
"We did not expect such as strong positive reaction from the local community. They were generous both in telling us their stories but also in supporting project events, giving us local advice and connecting us with people."

Project reflections

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

Preserving heritage ~ "It became clear that the East Ayrshire story from the mining communities was not prominent in the literature despite its industrial heritage. While the tangible heritage (the A-frames, the bings, and buildings) can be identified in the landscape, we have been able to ensure the *intangible* heritage is afforded the same treatment."

Untold Stories ~ "One of the most interesting elements was the eventual emergence of intergenerational stories of industrialisation and deindustrialisation. Whilst the deep pit mining is the dominant story of the area, younger people told us about open-cast mining and their sense of loss when that left the area - not only in terms of work but also the physical scars on the landscape. We heard about factories that offered work that also closed and left new generations without work in the local area."



Project book ~ "We are very proud of the 300 page project book, M*emory, Mining and Heritage: Voices from Ayrshire Communities (Carn, 2024)* which captures these stories and combines them with 137 images and photographs (some newly donated) in a readable, popular history."

[The book] tells the story of the row villages that have now largely vanished from the landscape. It captures homes life, leisure and recreation, the working lives of women and men, the process of moving to new housing, the harsh experience of closure, the story of open-cast mining and finally, how the communities preserve this history themselves through grassroot memorialisation.

"The history of this area of Scotland is less well documented than other mining communities of say Fife or Lanarkshire. This project ensures that for future generations these stories are accessible and part of working people's histories."

"Our story is written on a fading page that only we can read. Thanks to your book the page will not disappear"

Sam Purdie, writing in April 2024. He was one of the first interviewees, now in his late eighties and one of the strongest supporters of the project.



Book Launch event at the Boswell Centre, Auchinleck

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"This project has preserved the cultural and social heritage of the mining communities in East Ayrshire. An archive of 44 oral histories will be deposited at the Scottish Oral History Centre Archive at the University of Strathclyde and within local archives in East Ayrshire."



Lost Villages exhibition, in collaboration with East Ayrshire Leisure Trust, Baird Institute, Cumnock, February to May 2024



Field Trip to Commondyke led by volunteer Nanette McKee - standing in front of her ancestor's house reading a postcard sent during the 1st World War

Hedgerow Habitats

"There is huge pride in the appearance of the village, with the hedgerow planting at Holmburn road and the community garden. Biodiversity has increased due to the habitat improvements and we are keen to keep this going."



Project Development worker Jamie in the community garden at Netherthird.



Hedgerow planting on Holmburn Road

"Our hope for the future is to keep developing the four acres of the community garden as it is a very popular part of the community. We want to plant more fruit trees, improve the fencing and the raised beds. The aim is to do more with the school as the kids are very enthusiastic about planting and growing to learn about plants and vegetables."

Project reflections for the time capsule

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"Netherthird Community Action Trust are proud of the huge improvement to the natural heritage of Netherthird with the number of hedges planted across the village. Even though the project is based in Netherthird, the Community Garden has been used by families from across the whole of the Cumnock area."

Achieving national recognition

The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (thecaley.org.uk) is Scotland's national horticultural and gardening society, whose aim is to improve the science, art and practice of horticulture throughout the nation. "The Caley" have an award scheme for Growing and Learning in Nature, GLiN. This project won the award in the community category.

Project reflections for the time capsule

Lugar Heritage Centre

"If we hadn't succeeded with this project, the building would have been lost to the community and been left derelict or sold off for houses."

What difference has this project made to heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"People did not bother about heritage of the village but now the interest in Lugar has increased and people are keen to find out more about their local history and join the community. The newcomers have somewhere to come and meet whilst learning about their new community."

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"We have managed to improve the building, maintain the church, and create a meeting place for the community. We have brought back some pride and life back into the area. The project has added value to people's lives, people are connecting, the partnership working has benefited other local things like the bowling club. It is contributing to the area and its revival."



Flooring and pews removed in 2021



Murals and view towards café area at rear or Church



Refurbished presbytery, Official Opening March 23

"I think this is a wonderful community facility. Thank you to all involved.

Job well done and hopefully appreciated for many years to come. Enjoyed the history and other things done with the spout as well."

Comments from attendees at the official opening

3b. Increased awareness and understanding natural and cultural heritage

Outcome B. ~ Increasing awareness and understanding

More and different types of individuals and local groups will become positively engaged with the unique landscape of the Coalfield Communities area, to understand the threats to the heritage and will be empowered to take further future actions.

How has Coalfield Communities evidenced working towards or achieving this outcome?

Sense of Place

" I'm really delighted with school engagement through the CCLP projects. These links led to other community events that we would otherwise never have reached. The Friends of Hannahston Wood group are about to do their third nature day with us. This is a big event in the Biosphere calendar. We are very grateful for these connections"

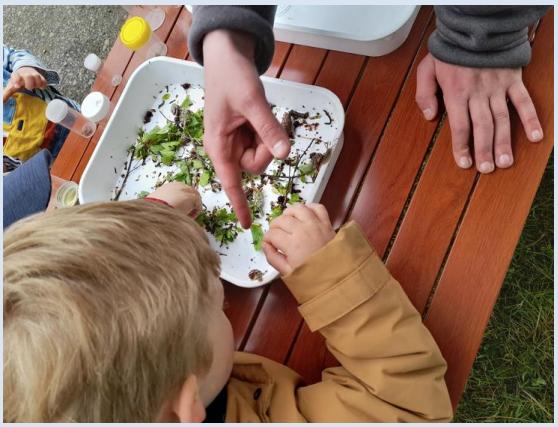
Jenna Cains ~ Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere.

"The Sense of Place project has highlighted the cultural and natural heritage of the area in a creative and accessible way, showing local people the value of the heritage and environment that they currently have, and the importance of protecting it into the future. The project also developed three local walks fliers which support community based tourism."

"Working with Friends of Hannahston Woods on two community nature days was an important way to engage local communities with the woodlands and with nature on their doorstep."



Some of the contributors at Hannahston Nature Day



Young person explores invertebrates at Hannahston Nature Day

What difference has this project made to people?

"Sessions with older generation groups that included visits to local heritage sites not only reinforces the value of such places to local people but supports them to reconnect and share their own personal heritage."

"The Climate Art project helped teachers and children to understand the science behind climate change, the impacts and adaptations needed in their local area, going forward. The art projects completed by the children provided a powerful message to adults, with the thoughts and feelings of young people communicated in a creative way."

Project officer reflections

Musical Celebration of the Coalfields

"Those involved have fed back that being part of the project will live with them forever. They have discovered new things about the history of the area, tested themselves creatively, developed their confidence as musicians and performers, and found a greater connection with their towns, villages and communities."

Project reflections

Looking back, what is the one thing that you are most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"The greatest achievement has been the overwhelmingly positive impact it has had on the individual participants. For the majority, this was a first step into the world of writing text and music themselves, and being involved in such a large-scale performance at an international festival.



Logan Primary School performing in the Barony Hall with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra



Things Tae Dae setting up for rehearsal

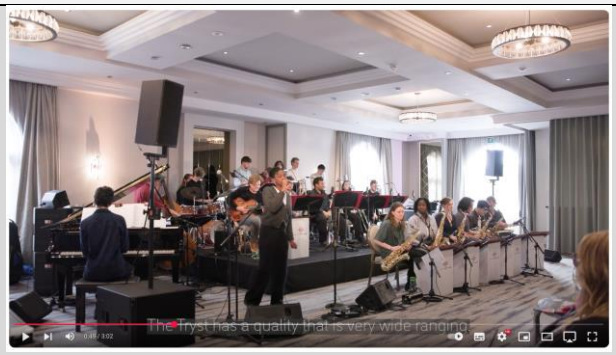
What difference has this project made to people?

"I think it's made me more confident in playing with different instruments and a completely new style of music."

"I have learned how to work in a group and how to cooperate with different people."

"It was really interesting seeing the coalmining landscapes in the photos and I was really happy with how my piece was played at the Festival."

Academy pupils feedback and impact





Screenshots from the film *The Cumnock Tryst 2024* (YouTube)

"I think the whole ethos, supporting the local community, involving the local community, mix of lots of people, and bringing top class musicians and musicianship to share music and composition is truly inspirational… The Cumnock Tryst seems to be reaching everyone from young school children, including those with special needs, all the way up to the elderly population."

Festival Chorus Member



"The fact that hundreds of local people, young and older, including those with additional support needs were enabled to make their own songs in word and melody, and then to have them all perform these alongside a world-renowned orchestra, with me conducting, was an achievement beyond my most optimistic expectations."

Sir James MacMillan

Evidence of wider impact delivered through the Musical Celebration of the Coalfields can be illustrated in the following additional project examples:



The project has allowed stories from across the community to be created, explored, told or re-told - in song, through broadcast and across social media. The creation of the film *The Moss and the Cosmos* has shown the Coalfield Communities area in a new and positive light and has now been seen internationally.

"Just a huge thank you to everyone who made this possible. It turned a very difficult time into a journey focused on things which matter."

Online participant from *The Moss and the Cosmos*

"An Early Day Motion tabled at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, a BBC Radio Scotland broadcast, and national press coverage, have all helped us raise awareness of the potential in this community like ours."

"One of the Tryst's objectives is to bring the world to Cumnock and introduce Cumnock to the world and we very much achieved that through the Landscape Partnership."

"The level of recognition has instilled an increased sense of belonging and pride in the community; that have created new social bonds and relationships that will continue to grow, increased confidence, improved sense of wellbeing, and are inspired to continue working creatively."

Project completion reflections

Taking part in the Cumnock Tryst Festival has allowed CAMPS - *Cumnock Arts Makes People Smile* - to showcase the talents of local people, fostering life skills like teamwork, confidence, and creative expression through community arts.

This has strengthened community bonds, celebrated local culture through an internationally renowned Festival, and empowered participants by connecting them with a wider audience, enriching the arts scene in Cumnock and beyond.



Gillian Walker discussing a world premier composition with a Robert Burns Academy pupil.

"While I knew about the disasters in the area, I didn't know many of the details. The research I did for my song changed my outlook as the mining deaths were given the prominence and respect they were due."

A member of Strings N Things

Life in the Lost Villages ~ an oral history

"I learned about the community spirit and rich, strong values. I loved this. I felt very emotional and proud to have grown up in a coalfield village."

Event participant feedback

What difference has this project made to people?

"People felt this was an important part of their heritage and were happy that we were carrying out the project."

"The local communities we worked within embraced the project. The project had an impact in raising people's self-esteem and contributing a sense of well-being; of folk's importance; that their lives had meaning – important in a deindustrialised area such as East Ayrshire where health indices are low, and the Standardised Mortality Ratio is high."

Project completion reflections



Screenshot from a talk by Dr Yvonne McFadden for the National Records of Scotland, March 2024

"Scots poet and former miner Rab Wilson was another project champion who wrote a poem dedicated to the project in his recent collection and often indicated his delight at our work"

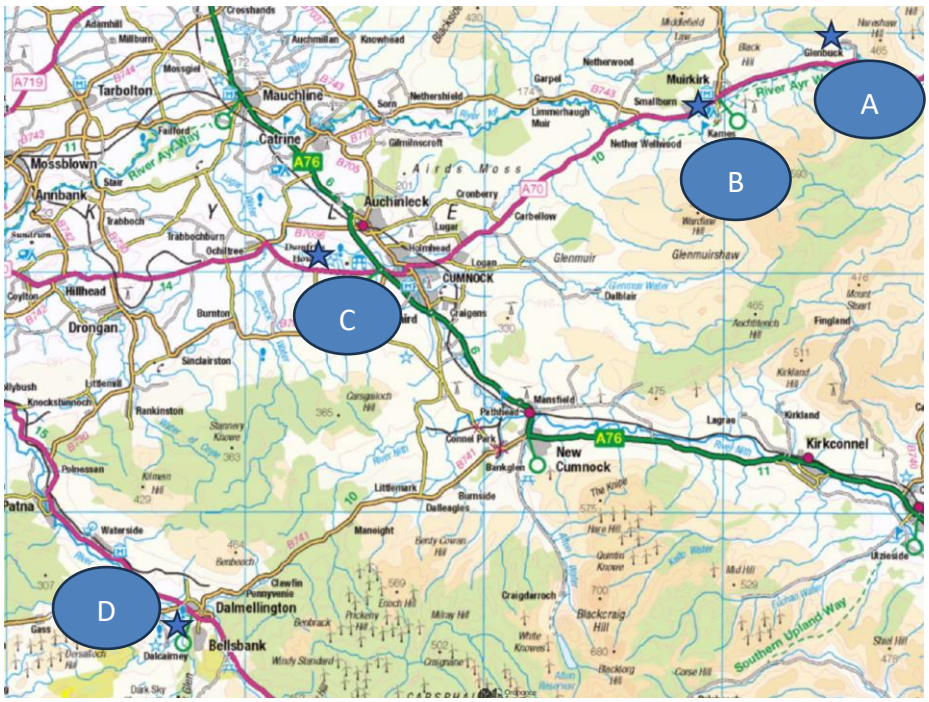
"Fabulous wark you guys are daein wi the Lost Villages!"



Rab Wilson at the Year of Stories, October 2022

Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers Case Study

Through the Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers, the East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI) engaged with different types of individuals and local groups to raise awareness of water quality within the Coalfield Communities area. Four river locations were identified for survey. These locations were sampled as part of awareness raising events led by CEI staff and in response to specific concerns raised by members of the public over water quality.



Site A: Stotenclough burn and Glenbuck Loch **(River Ayr)**

Site B: **River Ayr** at Smallburn

Site C: Lugar water at Dumfries House (**River Ayr)**

Site D: **River Doon** at Ness Glen

The idea was to engage the local community through awareness days followed by training to monitor water quality by studying invertebrate life in the rivers.

"This was a citizen science based river health monitoring project. We set about training members of the public to recognise invertebrate species as an indicator of river health. There are problems with iron rather than extracted minerals leaching into rivers. The soil is naturally very iron rich in Ayrshire. When it is disturbed the iron leaches out into water bodies. We have bodies of water that are seriously damaged from iron."

The project held training events with Muirkirk Anglers, the Dalmellington Recovery group, and volunteers at Stotenclough Burn / Glenbuck Loch. Further awareness events were held at Dumfries House and with 30 pupils at New Cumnock primary school.

Generally participants found the events interesting and engaging although it proved difficult to secure long term commitments to the testing and reporting process. Participants found the practical activity of exploring the rivers for creatures living there quite fun.

The hope for the future is that people who enjoy the river environment will have more awareness and opportunity to participate in their own way. Instructional signs have been designed with a dedicated e-mail address to encourage people to send images of life they find in the rivers.

Matt Cross ~ CEI People and Projects Manager

Coalfield for Pollinators

What difference has this project made to people?

"As a result of this project many local residents have had the chance to learn new skills form meadow management to wildlife identification. They have also enjoyed the fun fresh air exercise of sowing.

Groups engaged in the project include school children and people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction.

It has also helped address the scar on the landscape left by opencast coal mining, creating a more attractive and enjoyable place for people to live."

Participation and engagement from the United States of America

As with all of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership projects, collaboration and partnerships were vital. They also throw open opportunities for participation from unexpected sources. In this case a group of student elementary school teachers from the United States helped with planting and surveying pollinator species.



Prof Scott Jenkinson & Students from Eastern State University, Tennessee

At Hannahston Community Woodland, the students looked specifically for "Dingy Skipper" butterflies. These unassuming little brown butterflies are on the Scottish Biodiversity List and are a good indicator of healthy habitat.

Local input was of course incredibly important, with the bulk of the work being done by the people who live and work in the areas being planted.

Project reflections for the time capsule

Hedgerow Habitats

The community garden site was chosen as it sits right alongside the new primary school. What had been a scrub site used occasionally for grazing cattle has now been developed into a community and educational resource.

The community secured a thirty year lease from the local council in 2011 and has developed and improved constantly since then. **Every class in the school uses it for project work twice per week to learn about plants, habitat, the environment and food production.**

School pupils and trainees from other organisations gain knowledge and practical experience. In the better weather the school has open access to an outdoor classroom. Polytunnels provide year round facilities and protected space for planting and growing everything from fruit and vegetables to bedding plants. There are also raised beds, summerhouses and play areas connected by formal paths.

Anyone from the local community can come and enjoy the space.

Project reflections for the time capsule





Netherthird Community Gardens fun day ~ August 2023

Attainment through Archaeology

"The outcomes of the projects when young people are allowed creative freedom was a real surprise"

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"Local children and adults have been introduced to elements of their heritage they weren't previously aware of. Working outdoors directly with the sites connected participants with the landscape and the (historic) environment. They have learned about the importance of local monuments and learnt where they (themselves) fit in as part of a bigger story, strengthening their identities in doing so.

13 different sites were investigated as part of the project. The sites will benefit through updated historic records, new archaeological findings, vegetation clearance, improved access and shared knowledge and understanding.

Excavations in Ochiltree have produced more evidence of Ochiltree's prehistoric past, hopefully something that can be researched further in the future. The local heritage group have received training in archaeological skills, which they can use across other projects, as well as being able to contact our team for advice and support. Their local knowledge and lived experience of the area enriched findings for the project, contributing to its success.



Robert Burns Academy pupil recording gravestone inscriptions in Cumnock Old Cemetery, 2021



Dalmellington Primary pupils recording Dalmellington Motte, 2022

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

Although some content was set, every course had flexibility to be guided by the interests of the groups taking part. We were led by their interests, curiosity and talents and it was fantastic to see the past interpreted through their eyes and minds. In some instances, young people were shocked by the things there were good at, including creating scaled drawings (and using maths!) using the Plane Table in the cemetery. Other programmes culminated in some fantastic creative outputs – including comic strips and short stories produced by Logan Primary pupils, and video content produced by other groups.

One Robert Burns Academy Supported Learning Centre (SLC) student showed an interest in photography and filming in Ochiltree cemetery which led to a further workshop where professional filmmakers worked with the class to produce a video of the project using film footage taken by that individual. The video, and others are available through the Archaeology Scotland YouTube channel, including another video from an earlier project with 1st year pupils from the SLC. This video was used as part of the Council for British Archaeology and Birkbeck University's Letters to a Young Archaeology project and received lots of positive feedback.





Exploring Cumnock with Robert Burns Academy SLC

What difference has this project made to people?

"Taking part in the programmes supported young people in developing key meta skills, including curiosity – learning to question their surroundings and how they were shaped by people in the past. Communicating and collaboration through teamwork and sharing findings. Critical thinking and sensemaking through learning how to question historical sources and evidence on the ground. and creativity through sharing their findings in new creative ways. The multidisciplinary nature of archaeology also supported cross curricular learning, demonstrating practical applications of subjects such a maths, science, history and literacy."

"It has been great for everyone to get outside to see and learn about the practical applications of measurements and maths." Teacher, Dalmellington Primary.

"I like archaeology, it's interesting isn't it. Archaeology tells you about people who lived in the past." Pupil, Robert Burns Academy, SLC

"I really enjoyed learning all the skills and different types of jobs and activities an archaeologist actually does and telling my friends it is not just about digging up bones! I can't wait to further my knowledge of archaeology now I've finally got to experience it." Pupil, Robert Burns Academy



Timber Henge building, Logan Primary School, 2024



Family Open day at Ochiltree Excavation, 2024

Dalmellington Old Kirkyard







Interpretation boards depicting the grave markers and providing historical information

3c. Deepening engagement, gaining skills, training and employment

Outcome C. ~ Deepening engagement, gaining skills, training and employment

People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring, conserving and understanding their heritage. Participants will use the experience and confidence gained to progress to employment or other learning opportunities.

How has Coalfield Communities evidenced working towards or achieving this outcome?

Sense of Place

The following reflections are gathered from Jenna Cains, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere as part of information held within the Coalfield Communities time capsule.

What started out as a community action group from the local community council developed into the "Festival Committee." All of the previous groups had been in Dumfries and Galloway region and Jenna is convinced that the progressive leap into Ayrshire would probably not have happened without the Landscape Partnership connection.

Quite quickly the workshops began to evolve and branch out as inspiration from within led to personal learning journeys. Ideas that held special significance to the group or even individuals within it became the focus of exploration and discovery.

Landscapes, wildlife and even heritage buildings that held memories from the past were all subjects of study. This exploration in turn led to the idea of making short films as a richer way of documenting what a sense of place actually means for people.

This was completely new ground for the Biosphere project and led to Faith Hillier joining the team to begin making the film. Two groups were involved; one a youth group from Cumnock Juniors and the other a recovery group in Auchinleck.

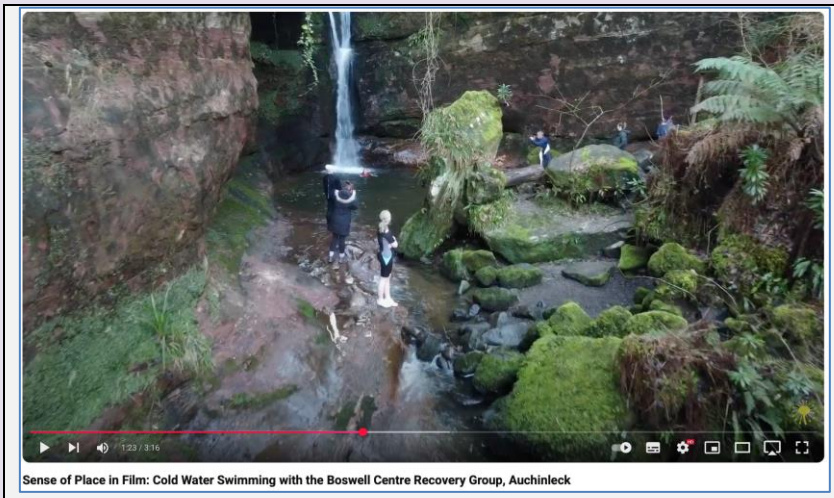
Each group began to learn new skills from storyboarding to camera handling, cinematography and even interviewing techniques.



Sense of Place storyboard from Auchinleck

Looking back, what is the one thing that you are most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

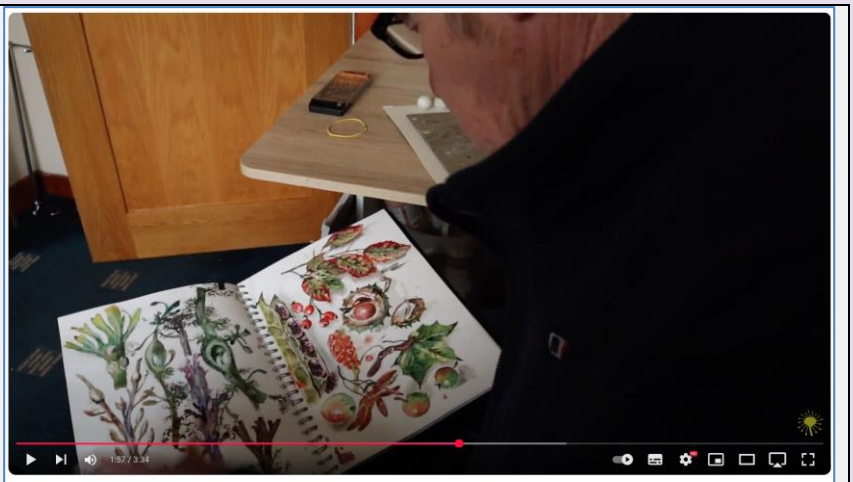
Sense of Place in Film project ~ "Our most valuable pieces of work, and what we are most proud of, was the *Sense of Place in Film* project. This involved bringing in film-makers Coulson & Tennant to train the Cumnock Junior Enterprise and Recovery groups in film-making skills. This created the opportunity for teamwork, skills development (speaking in front of the camera, editing, using equipment, storytelling) and self-reflection that resulted in a series of short films.



Sense of Place in Film: Cold Water Swimming with the Boswell Centre Recovery Group, Auchinleck

"I enjoyed seeing the young people develop in terms of their confidence in front of a camera, and their skill levels in terms of putting videos like this together and the amount of work that goes into that."

"It builds up confidence, knowledge and skills and I think that showed from when they started and were may be a bit dubious, to where they ended up with a great project".



Sense of Place in Film: Portrait of an Artist



Sense of Place in Film: Cumnock Juniors - Ellie Kay, Leading the Way

"I gained basic skills of using the camera, how to use editing apps and even add music into the films".

"I enjoyed new things and learning about the process of filmmaking".

Comments from participants in the Sense of Place in Film project

"This was never on the original project plan, and only came about because we reached a point with the original Sense of Place work where we had to think outside the box as to how to progress it in a new way; it was a new idea we had never tried before and turned out to be such a positive experience for all involved."

Project completion reflections

Ploughing up the Past

"We are all of the land, but as time has passed and people's connections and understanding of how our local landscape was formed by farming has greatly diminished. **Ploughing Up Our Past** ***has allowed older generations to record their memories for future generations and validate the importance of agriculture in our past, present, and future."***

Project completion reflections

Ploughing up the Past looked to record the history of farming within the Coalfields area. The impact of mining for coal, both deep underground and open cast was another area of interest.

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"The proudest moment is getting the *Ploughing Up Our Past* book published. We discovered that the same families moved around a small area, with no fresh blood coming in and much intermarriage. This resulted in families being very much tied to the area and having large extended families nearby."



Ploughing up the Past ~ books donated to East Ayrshire Libraries Jan 2023

We found unknown farms, names totally gone, or which lived on in folk memory or in field names such as Barebelly. We found lost farming words like 'treviss'. The project was just in time to record all of this!

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

"Farmers are aware of even more family links to other farmers and of the history of their farm. We have amassed a huge number of photographs which have stimulated memories."

What difference has this project made to people?

"People have learned about the history of farming and the geography of the area. They have had opportunities to learn new skills and gain experiential learning. The heritage is now easy for people to access. Folk's wellbeing has benefited from being able to meet with people from similar backgrounds and/or with similar interests, which, in turn, has alleviated isolation and loneliness."



Open Day at Cumnock Heritage Centre ~ July 2021



Butter-making workshop at the Exhibition in the Baird Institute ~ Summer 2022

"A most valuable project and I have been delighted to be part of it. Well done to all involved."

"The book is a fine piece of work which will be invaluable to anyone who has an interest in social history. I applaud those who were involved in the research."

Ploughing up the Past project participants

School Green Gym

Provided an alternative approach to exercise by encouraging young people and teachers to take part in a programme of outdoor activities linked to the environment and practical conservation activities.

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"High engagement from the pupils and their excitement to take part each week. Children were keen for more sessions and disappointed that sessions had ended. The Conservation Volunteers received positive feedback from the teachers noting that pupils were working together and problem solving as a team."

Natural heritage has been celebrated and conserved through physical improvements to the green spaces and school grounds. Participant's awareness of the outdoors and issues affecting wildlife and nature has also increased.



Patna Primary planted apple trees in the school garden which they are responsible for looking after



Primary 2 pupils from Dalmellington during a session of drawing flowers, leaves and making up nature stories

The sessions provided teachers with increased knowledge and confidence to deliver outdoor sessions themselves. It has also increased pupil learning and knowledge of plant and herb ID.









PHOTOS: LORRAINE LAWRIE, CLASS TEACHER, PATNA PRIMARY.

The **East Ayrshire School Green Gym Project** began delivering sessions in January 2023 in partnership with the Coalfields Community Landscape Partnership. Senior Project Officer **Laura Salvage** and Project Assistant **Abdulrahman Ali** have been working with pupils from Patna, Dalmellington, Auchinleck and Lochnorris Primary Schools, plus Robert Burns Academy in Cumnock.

The School Green Gym programme consists of outdoor sessions designed to provide an opportunity for pupils to be active, learn about nature and the environment, and take part in practical gardening, conservation, and environmental activities. The Green Gym model supports pupils in learning new skills and building self-esteem while also playing a part in developing green spaces within school grounds. The overall aim is to promote mental and physical health and encourage an interest and respect for the environment.

Primary 4 and 5 pupils at Patna Primary School said:

"I have learnt about different animals and habitats. I enjoyed doing a scavenger hunt where we had to free our teacher from a badger by collecting nature things."

"I learnt about what animals live in Scotland and what animals don't. I also loved making bird feeders out of apples and hanging them from trees in the garden."

"I have learnt about cool nature stuff, and we got to touch an antler from a deer."

Screenshot from the TCV Bulletin, Spring 2023

Hedgerow Habitats

"NCAT has seen a huge boost to the confidence levels and employment prospects of those on supported employment who joined the project; individuals have an improved work ethic and have picked up employment skills or gone onto further education."

Project completion reflections

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"Netherthird Community Action Training (NCAT) are most proud of the trainees and volunteers who have progressed and achieved success within the project. A lot of the volunteers and trainees have been through supported employment, and we have pride in their development."



Hedgerow Habitats summary achievements in East Ayrshires' 'Stay Connected' newsletter



Volunteers planting out shrubs and perennials in the community garden.

Connecting Coalfield Communities

Providing support to groups through identifying and completing funding applications this has resulted in over £477,428 being secured for local community groups and organisations.

Connecting Coalfield Communities final project report

Connecting Coalfield Communities was delivered through the Coalfield Regeneration Trust and was set up to "bring together local heritage groups so that they can share their knowledge with members of communities who are interested in developing their own knowledge about the heritage of their local area." A learning centred approach was used with the overall aim to raise confidence levels and increase self-esteem, ultimately changing lives.

The following impacts on deepening engagement and building skills is taken from **Engaging and Regenerating Left Behind Communities,** a report for the Coalfields Regeneration Trust produced by the Social Value Lab in February 2023.

Building Capacity Networks and Partnerships throughout the Coalfield Communities area

Connecting Coalfield Communities has supported local community groups in East Ayrshire to build their capacity to take on bigger projects and manage and grow their organisation.

Project staff have helped with establishing new community organisations and provided assistance to existing organisations with setting up legal structures, improving governance arrangements, project development, business planning and submitting funding applications.

Historically, and in part due to competition for funding, local community organisations have not always been inclined towards collaboration or working across communities. Through a series of networking events, Connecting Coalfield Communities began to tackle this issue by creating opportunities for organisations to work together and provide benefit to each other. It gave the chance for local organisations to network with key stakeholders, including local councillors, development trusts and existing local projects.

"Our group has achieved a lot in a relatively short period of time. Without the support and collaboration of CRT, I doubt we would have accomplished even half of what we have in the past 18+ months"







Promoting local events and engagement activities

Landscape Apprentices

Looking backwards, what is the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"The greatest achievement is the number of apprentices that have gone on to undertake a full-time job within the local area, utilising their vastly increased skillset, self-confidence and experience obtained from the Trees and Timber Modern Apprentice scheme. There are also many physical projects where the apprentices have assisted in upgrading community footpaths, boardwalks, Rights of Ways, Core Paths and Active Travel Routes, and improving the environment through tree planting and maintenance. Landscape Partnership funding has helped to support our funding position, allowing us to continue to operate throughout this period."

What difference has this project made to people?

"Our project has primarily been focused on delivering an increase in skills and employability prospects for young people. We feel strongly that this has been a success and will help to manage and nurture our natural heritage in the future."

"The skills I have been learning are really relevant to what I want to do in the future, improving access to the natural environment, they should provide me with access to job opportunities related to my intended career in land management and woodland creation."

Derren Muir ~ Modern Apprentice





Modern Apprentices at the Wee Glen, Dunlop

The significant impact on the apprentices and project legacy, can be best demonstrated in the individual ambitions collected for the Coalfield Communities time capsule.



Eoghan hopes to stick with forestry as a career.



Kieran's goal is to specialise as an Arborist.



George intends to continue to work with trees and timber as he enjoys being out in the landscape.



Declan intends to continue in the field as a career but is undecided on which area to specialise.

Project reflections for the time capsule

Perfect Peatland

What difference has this project made to people?

The project has offered opportunities for skill development which has made the individuals involved more employable and more skilled. This has been both for individuals involved in designing and managing the project and for those involved in site work.

Auchinleck Community Development Initiative Case Study

The Auchinleck Community Development Initiative is based within the Boswell Centre in the village. One of the groups that form part of the initiative is an alcohol and drug recovery group. The aim of the group is to show that it is not only possible to recover from addition but to support its members in finding new skills and a healthier approach to life.

The group was not one of the 22 core projects that formed part of the Coalfield Community Landscape Partnership but they have worked closely with the partners and have in turn supported other projects.

The group made a film with the Biosphere Sense of Place project celebrating the benefits of cold water swimming and International Women's Day, some of the feedback about the experience included:

"Cold water swimming is euphoric; I really love it!"

"One of the things we learned was how to interview people. We ask a question and when they answer it we edit the question out."

"We made up story boards to plan the film; we still have them."

"We learned that using a digital SLR camera makes a real difference in quality, being able to zoom in and out. Learning what cameras are about and what they are called. To be honest we were not great to begin with but it turned out to be the best thing we have ever done."





Sense of Place in Film ~ Cold Water Swimming with the Boswell Centre Recovery Group

The Auchinleck Community Development Initiative is one of the groups that Coalfield Communities were unable to participate in the initial stages of the Landscape Partnership. Their engagement and involvement has shown what strong networking and mutual support can achieve.



"Without the group I would never have had the confidence to get my Therapet business up and running."

Hazel Ferguson with Lucy

The group now has the skills and the experience of delivering projects to apply for their own funding to continue to have a positive impact in their local community.





Project reflections for the time capsule

3d. Improved access and healthy living opportunities

Outcome D.~ Improved access and healthy living

Improving access infrastructure at strategic locations enabling people to become more aware of and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the Coalfield Communities area. There will be increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits.

How has Coalfield Communities evidenced working towards or achieving this outcome?

Lugar River Walk

The project delivered improvements to the Lugar Walk, particularly between Dumfries House and Barony Bing, to allow a wider range of users to access the landscape and heritage. As a result of improving access, there is more opportunity for healthy walks in the countryside, easier access to Dumfries House Estate and a better link between Cumnock and Ochiltree.



River Lugar walk ~ promotion leaflet

What difference has this project made to people?

Enabling and enhancing access to green space and the outdoors has massive benefits to the physical and mental health of people using these routes. It allows exploration into areas people may not have previously been able to access easily. The accessible portions of some of these routes allow less able-bodied persons to access the outdoors.

Lugar River Walk ~ making it happen

Paddy McDonald is the Countryside Development Officer for East Ayrshire Leisure Trust. Paddy played a pivotal role in the improvement of the walk along the river from being a rough path to a formal walkway that is accessible to everyone.

"The key thing was liaising with landowners in terms of where they wanted the route to be and what they needed in terms of fencing (and other infrastructure) to allow public access. In some places the path was just a desire line, we wanted to make it accessible for all. There are a lot of young mums in the area using other routes with prams and buggies, we felt it was important to include them."

Paddy and his team worked alongside CCLP officers, arranging contractors to create paths that were safe and protected from erosion by the river itself. Liaison and mediating between landowners, contractors, East Ayrshire Council and the public was not always an easy task.

"A couple of landowners were not particularly happy to start with. We took them out to see other places along the route and spoke to people using the path. This helped them come around, that was very satisfying. So was getting very positive feedback from people using the path."

The next phase of the path is now under construction taking it all the way into the village of Lugar itself.

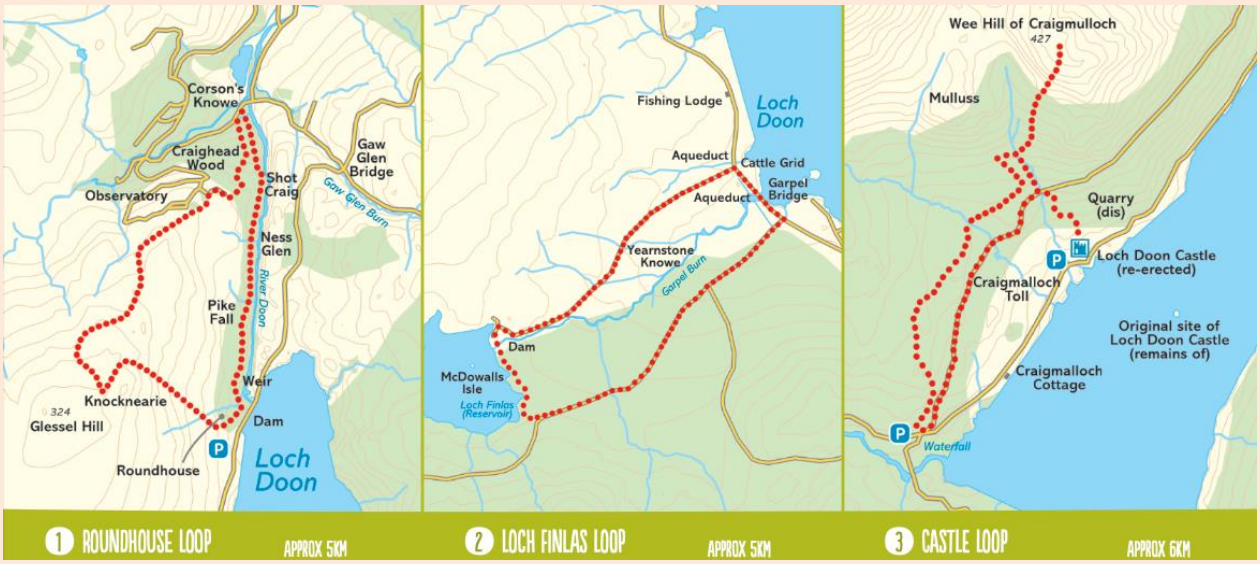
"The work that the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership have done and are still doing is really important to the local communities. I've been really happy to be involved. The extension to Lugar is absolutely fantastic. My team go into every school in East Ayrshire. We take groups out to do environmental education on site. The fact that we can now do that at more points along the Lugar Water really expands the environmental knowledge base."

Project reflections for the time capsule

Doon Valley Walk

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area?

The revised proposal for the Doon Valley Walk project delivered improvements to the Ness Glen Upper Path, part of the Roundhouse Loop and one of the Doon Valley promoted routes, created by the Doon Valley Walkers and promoted by the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.



Doon Valley walk ~ promoted routes extract

Sense of Place

What difference has this project made to people?

The project has been meaningful for communities and groups by strengthening connection to heritage, sharing of memories, and building skills and confidence in using natural heritage as a support for mental health and well-being. The sessions we delivered with Recovery groups were especially important… **these included significant hikes into wild space as part of using our natural heritage to support health and recovery.**



Members of a recovery group visit the mysterious Kirk Stone.

Tower Street Pocket Park

Looking back, what is the one thing that you are most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

"The greatest achievement is that a previous derelict, ugly site is now refurbished and being used by the community. The group have worked hard to improve the area and make it more aesthetically pleasing and transformed the site into a useful area for the community. The most surprising aspect has been the low levels of vandalism, with only minimal bits of litter.



Before the works….



Community ideas and thoughts



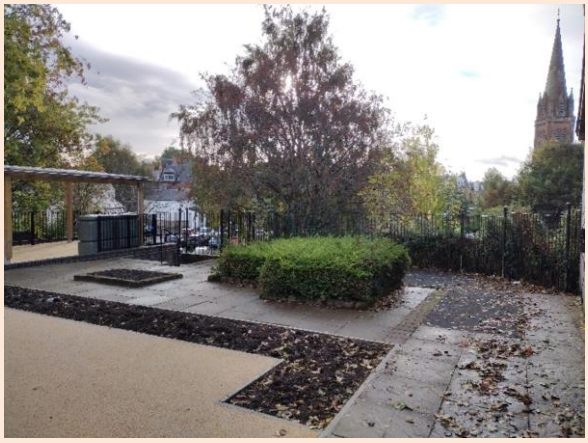
Pocket Park opening event

What difference has this project made to people?

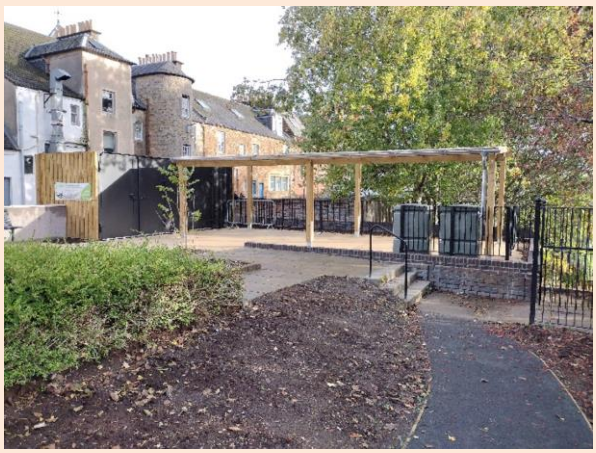
"The site was previously used for antisocial behaviour (drug use) and this appears to have ceased due to increased footfall. The project has provided another open space for the community to use and increased civic pride in Cumnock."



Before the works….



Completed site



Covered arbour and wood-clad storage unit



Halloween themed Pocket Park opening, 2022

What difference has this project made to the heritage of the Coalfield Communities?

"The project has raised awareness of the historical Tower Street site and surrounding area. The interpretation board helps to galvanise the community's interest in their local history. The Lugar walk which passes the site and this area acts a rest spot and meeting area for groups."

"So glad to see the eyesore has gone"

An older member of the community showing their appreciation for the change to the site

Other project examples and evidence of activities delivered through Coalfield Communities that will help with improved access and healthy living opportunities include:

Hedgerow Habitats ~ "Socially isolated individuals have volunteered at the garden which has reconnected them with their community and improved their wellbeing. The provision of an accessible, friendly, well maintained outdoor space on the doorstep of their new primary school has improved the overall well-being of the pupils."

"Netherthird Community Action Training have noticed a shift in the attitude of the local community with more focus being on a greener community. The partnership work with the local primary school work and experts in this field has contributed to this"

Landscape Apprentices ~ "The apprentices have increased access and enhanced accessibility to the natural environment through improvements to local paths and trails. Work has taken place in Ness Glen, Dalmellington; the Wee Glen, Dunlop and Broombraes, Cumnock. It has improved habitat management controlling invasive species, through learning about woodland creation and grassland management and responding to the damage caused by significant storms."

Attainment through Archaeology ~ In addition to developing new skills, mental and physical health were improved through increased physical activity and fresh air. The benefit of outdoor learning is well understood in its ability to reduce stress, improve focus and increase engagement. Participants were selected from across the school, many whom hadn't met before and formed friendships throughout the programme. In one programme 50% of participants mentioned, unprompted, that '*making new friends*' was their favourite part of the programme.

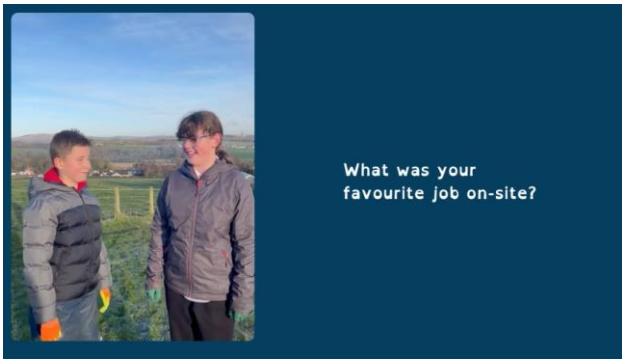
The community archaeology digs at Ochiltree had similar benefits for participants – in skills development, and health and wellbeing. It gave locals from all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to participate in archaeology, improving social cohesion, and for many it was their first experience of archaeology. The dig had the added benefit of acting as scarcely available work experience for a few young people looking to enter the sector.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience found muscles I haven't used for many years lovely to see the school kids enjoying the dig and hope it just ignites a wee spark for further learning in our youngsters, loved it and hope it's not the last. Thanks to everyone who took part and the archaeology team very informative."

"I thoroughly enjoyed it. I've always wanted to do this but never thought I'd ever get the chance. Brilliant people, brilliant experience, I'm so hoping we can do it all again."

Dig participants Ochiltree





Excavation film extract ~ Ochiltree Primary School, November 2024

4. How the resources were spent

Delivering a £4.6 million cash investment to improve condition and increase participation and awareness of the heritage of the Coalfield Communities area.

Financial summary

By September 2025, Coalfield Communities has evidenced a cash spend total of £3,858,787 or 68% of the anticipated total cash value of £5,657,075 from 21 financial claims. Information from the project team in November 2025 shows outstanding project activity to total nearly £814,453 by completion to the end of December 2025 meaning that an anticipated **cash expenditure of just over £4.6 million** will have been evidenced and claimed.

	LCAP ~ planned	Actual ~ Dec 2025	Balance
Cash	£5,657,075	£4,673,240[2]	(£983,835)
In kind and volunteer contribution	£757,211	£656,829	(£100,382)
Total	**£6,414,286**	**£5,333,069**	**(£1,084,217)**

In kind and volunteer contributions were estimated to be £757,211 within the Stage 2 Submission and by December 2025, £656,829 has been evidenced made up of £533,363 in kind time and £123,464 total volunteer contributions. Taking account of the outstanding £814K final cash claim **by Scheme Completion, Coalfield Communities will be able to demonstrate total investment of cash and non-cash expenditure of around £5.3 million** within the Landscape Partnership area.

The cash underspend of nearly £984,000 can be attributed to six main items, identified as follows:

Budget heading	Description	Underspend
Project expenditure ~ Doon Valley Walk	Part of this project was delivered through the Ayrshire Active Travel route with an internal decision being made not to claim the total expenditure as part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme.	£440,000
Paid training placements	The training placements cost less to deliver due to the age profile of the participants lowering the external payment received.	£203,000
Contingency	£52,000 used from the overall contingency budget of £182,000	£130,000
Project expenditure ~ Old Kirkyard	Variation agreed not to undertake the intended restoration due to issues with identifying a responsible party for future maintenance	£84,000
Project expenditure ~ Volunteer support	Budget of £47,800 remains for volunteer training and £36,000 for volunteer travel and subsistence	£83,800
Inflation	Inflation budget has yet to be drawn down.	£31,000
	Total	**£971,800**

[2] The actual cash expenditure total of £4,673,240 is £2,010 less than the figures contained within the project expenditure tracker due to the sum for Training for Volunteers not appearing on any of the individual claims.

Overall cash and in-kind expenditure profile

The following table summarises the figures presented in the quarterly financial claims to the Heritage Fund. Yearly totals have been included to help give a sense of how project claims have unfolded over the duration of Scheme delivery.

LCAP				Scheme Delivery			
Claim	**Date**	**Estimate cumulative**	**Yearly**	**Claim**	**Date**	**Actual cumulative**	**Yearly**
1.	Sep 20	£182,347	£911,737 **(16% total)**	1.	Sep 20	£21,638	£274,105 **5%**
2.	Dec 20	£364,695		2.	Dec 20	£33,590	
3.	Mar 21	£638,216		3.	Mar 21	£166,264	
4.	Jun 21	£911,737		4.	Jun 21	£274,105	
5.	Sep 21	£1,306,471	£1,973,670 **(51% total)**	5.	Sep 21	£331,289	£527,662 **14%**
6.	Dec 21	£1,701,205		6.	Dec 21	£494,187	
7.	Mar 22	£2,293,306		7.	Mar 22	£706,955	
8.	Jun 22	**£2,885,407**		8.	Jun 22	£801,767	
9.	Sep 22	£3,271,464	£1,544,228 **(78% total)**	9.	Sep 22	£977,942	£852,130 **29%**
10.	Dec 22	£3,657,521		10.	Dec 22	£1,218,184	
11.	Mar 23	£4,043,578		11.	Mar 23	£1,475,803	
12.	Jun 23	£4,429,635		12.	Jun 23	£1,653,897	
13.	Sep 23	£4,579,774	£600,554 **(89% total)**	13.	Sep 23	£2,120,997	£1,310,163 **53%**
14.	Dec 23	£4,729,912		14.	Dec 23	£2,509,109	
15.	Mar 24	£4,880,051		15.	Mar 24	£2,812,594	
16.	Jun 24	£5,030,189		16.	Jun 24	**£2,964,060**	
17.	Sep 24	£5,186,911	£626,886 **(100%)**	17.	Sep 24	£3,083,236	£632,699 **64%**
18.	Dec 24	£5,343,632		18.	Dec 24	£3,181,903	
19	Mar 25	£5,500,354		19.	Mar 25	£3,496,915	
20.	Jun 25	£5,657,075		20.	Jun 25	£3,596,759	
Revised programme timetable: Grant extension request submitted February 25. Project completion, December 2025, new grant expiry date 16 January 2026.				21.	Sep 25	£3,858,787	£1,076,481 **83%**
				22.	Dec 25	£4,673,240	

Observations relating to the **planned expenditure** from the Stage 2 submission are:

- The large amount of planned expenditure of £2.9 million (or 51% of the total cash budget) by the end of year two reflecting large intended expenditure on access at the time of preparing the LCAP and may have been due to aligning activity to other external funding timetables.
- £4.4 million or just under 80% of the overall scheme total was due to be claimed by the end of year three, giving a great deal of flexibility to catch up should delays and problems arise with smaller amounts of planned expenditure of £600K in year four and £627K in year five.

"We have to remember that the project started out on the back foot, missing out on the big bang start."

Partnership Board member ~ December 2025

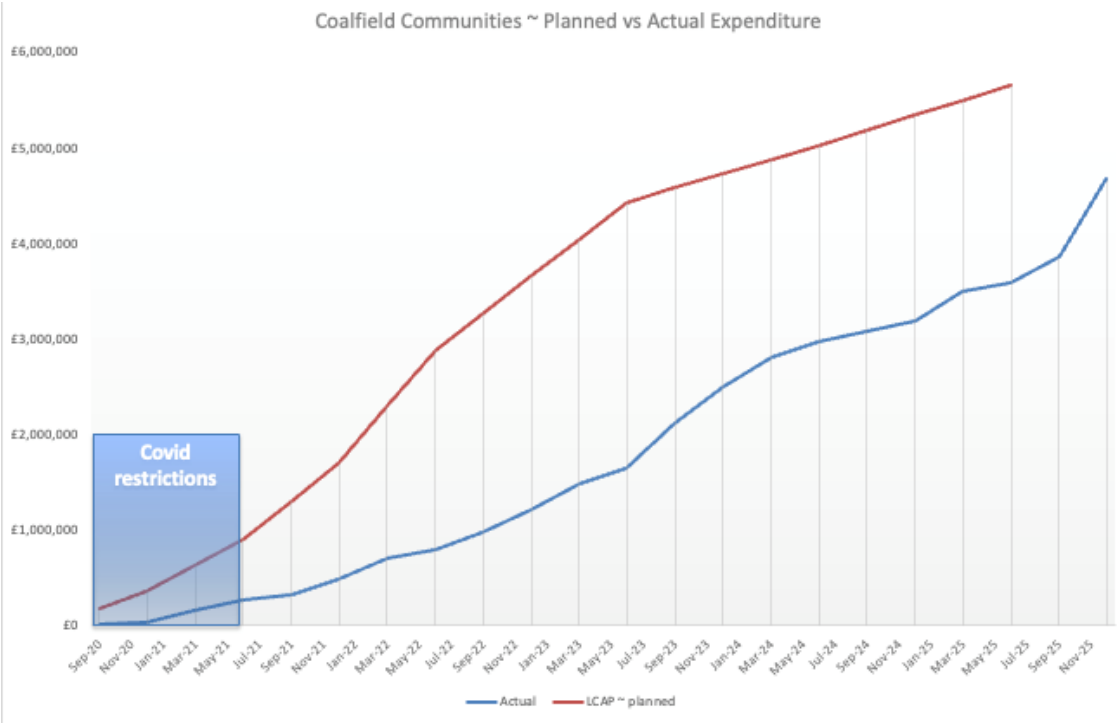
The main observations relating to the **actual expenditure** are:

- The low level of expenditure in year one (£274K) and two (£528K) reflecting the interruptions and complexity to fully commence activity due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The increase in activity in year three with expenditure totalling £1.3 million, although this tailed off in year four with £633K being claimed.
- The large amount of activity undertaken in the last 6 months with just under £1.1 million being claimed.

Information collected for the mid-term review, annual snapshot evaluation reports and the final evaluation can demonstrate that Coalfield Communities was financially well managed with clear overall reporting to the partnership board and quarterly claims to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, that has helped manage reputational risk on behalf of East Ayrshire Council as the lead partner and accountable body.

The underspend of nearly £984K will be a disappointment to the partnership and can be attributed to the four operational and two budget management items as identified on page 54. The reasons behind this are complex and not attributed to any one particular factor but a combination of starting project delivery in the middle of a worldwide pandemic and having a delivery philosophy of supporting and building capacity within local community groups should not be underestimated. As highlighted in the snapshot evaluation report produced in September 2024[3], the Landscape Partnership has been trying to **"fit an intended five year programme to deliver within four years."**

The overall picture of actual expenditure, against the planned scheme expenditure is shown in the graph below.



Coalfield Communities expenditure profile estimated to December 2025

[3] Coalfield Communities with 12 months to go ~ September 2024

5. Programme learning: some key ingredients for future activity

As part of the final evaluation of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, many of the projects supported through Coalfield Communities produced individual project completion reports. In addition to capturing the output and outcome information, the report format provided an opportunity for individual reflection, the chance to capture some lessons learnt and **think about how to improve** on the wide range of activities delivered.

Many of the lessons learnt from the completion reports reflect the different complex elements of successful project management and delivery and have been grouped into nine areas as follows:

Project management

- Being realistic with resources and timetable
- Managing risk and uncertainty, adopting a flexible approach
- Clear project planning, scope and relevant permissions
- Developing partnership working and building local relationships
- Managing for unforeseen and external shocks
- Establishing a good information base and project communications

Learning from doing

- Building effective systems and processes
- People and volunteer engagement
- Building and developing skills

The learning relates to many different elements of project management as well as learning identified through individual project delivery. The overall message gathered is one of managing uncertainty and risk whilst retaining the need to be flexible, due to the major societal, political and environmental impacts experienced by everyone during the delivery of the Scheme.

The nine areas identified are **based on the personal opinions and reflections of those people involved in delivery** and should serve as reference points and a **checklist of key ingredients** for all partners to integrate into thinking and planning the development of future project activity.

1. Project management ~ being realistic with resources and timetable

As evidenced through the following project feedback:

Coalfield Place Names ~ the scale of this project was far too ambitious, involving more data and names than the very small team could handle in the time we had. I would scale down the research, complete it sooner, and have more time for engagement. I would have constructed a bid for a different sort of team, one which **involved a locally-based engagement officer** throughout the project.

Tower Street pocket park ~ there is some disappointment that the original aim of installing raised beds at the site did not happen due to rising costs, but acknowledged that there are pros and cons to the current design of ground level bedding areas.

Something which was unexpected was the long-term commitment required by volunteers to see the project through and the longer than expected timeframe required for completing the necessary paperwork.

Doon Valley Walk ~ not to make major changes without ensuring that funding was guaranteed!

2. Project management ~ managing risk and uncertainty, adopting a flexible approach

Life in the Lost Villages ~ we would have community engagement events much earlier on. This was largely impossible due to the pandemic, which also had the effect that volunteers had mostly moved on by the time we came to interview people in person. The response and number of interviews gathered momentum as the project entered its final stages. To mitigate the slow start we applied for additional funds to run community engagement events as part of the *Year of Stories* in Autumn 2022. We engaged 162 people through these events alone.

Hedgerow Habitats ~ the barriers that have slowed progress have been out with Netherthird Community Action Training control. These include the global COVID pandemic, the delays to the primary school rebuild that affected partnership working and the local job market which has made recruiting trainees and volunteers more difficult.

3. Project management ~ having a clear project scope, specification and relevant permissions

Tower Street pocket park ~ The group would recommend establishing support from someone who understands the legal aspect of taking ownership of a site. The group was lucky that a volunteer with legal experience was able to explain procedures and complete the necessary paperwork.

Dalmellington All-Inclusive Cycle Track ~ We would reconsider the use of a Project Management Company and work directly using the construction company as the project manager.

Dalmellington Old Kirkyard ~ I would make sure that there was a proper agreement in place with regards to who was going to be responsible for maintenance of the mausoleum once it was refurbished. Although the owners were happy to contribute to costs they did not want to be responsible for maintenance and an arrangement with the Dalmellington Parish Development Trust fell through as the felt they could not take on the legal responsibility.

River Lugar Walk ~ Improving the specification's for some parts of the path as some sections have been damaged by flooding and water run off during 2 very bad storms.

Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ Avoid outputs where there is not an established need already, for example the setting up of a local conservation volunteer group or come up with outputs where there is not a clear path to their delivery.

4. Project management ~ developing partnership working and building local relationships

Attainment through Archaeology ~ It would be good to partner more with other projects the Coalfields Community Landscape Partnership to enhance outputs for both sides of the partnership and for participants.

Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ Don't place so much reliance on a single organisation or opportunity (e.g. The Skares site managed by Forestry Land Scotland, the planting of which was delayed through the entire project delivery period)

5. Managing external shocks ~ the global pandemic

Coalfield Place Names ~ we started the project in COVID lockdown, and it was many months before we could visit the area – so we turned the project from focussing on community engagement to a largely desk-based exercise for most of the first year (where most of the funding went).

Musical Celebration of the Coalfields ~ at the beginning of the project, we had been planning to collaborate with Scottish Opera to create a community opera. The original timescale of the project was however, hit by the COVID-19 pandemic with in-person workshops, especially in school and with our vulnerable participants, being impossible for an indeterminable length of time; uncertainty was becoming increasingly difficult for Scottish Opera's education department. We decided to invite the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to work with us on the creation of a community oratorio rather than an opera. This allowed participants to focus on generating their own texts and music with the country's leading composers and animateurs, culminating in performances at both the 2022 Festival and in 2023.

School Green Gym ~ the global COVID pandemic, school strikes and staff illness were barriers to project delivery; teaching time was lost, so schools emphasised literacy and core subjects. There was less focus on outdoor learning and some difficulty recruiting schools for the project. These challenges highlighted the team's own resilience, professionalism and commitment towards the project.

6. Project management ~ establishing a good information base and project communications

Lugar Heritage Centre ~ we were fortunate to have the project on paper - developed with an accredited architect that works with Church of Scotland - before we met the CCLP which meant they could take advantage of the CCLP opportunity.

School Green Gym ~ The Conservation Volunteers found that one programme of activity to fit all doesn't always work; being flexible was key to delivery. If they were to do the project again, they would work with schools and pupils to build a school-specific programme.

7. Learning from doing ~ building effective systems and processes

Coalfield Place Names ~ the project set out to collect, examine and publish on a web resource analysis of the place-names of 5 historical parishes in what is now East Ayrshire. We used the Ordnance Survey six inch 2nd edition as our basis for collecting names. This could be used with GB1900 project dataset (National Library of Scotland). However, this resulted in a large volume of names; data needed a great deal of curation for accuracy, consuming much valuable researcher time, and the historic period of the OS six inch 2nd edition was very volatile: new names and new places arose because this edition coincides with the high point of industrialisation in the area.

Attainment through Archaeology ~ Establish a more robust evaluation method which allows for comparison between the taster and 5 session courses, as well as a methodology that works well for all ages and abilities. Due to the nature of the groups we were working with attendance was variable. Because of this there are many missing data points in our evaluations. Capturing data on a daily basis might have been easier for some groups.

8. Learning from doing ~ people and volunteer engagement

Sense of Place ~ "Sense of Place" was limiting as a project title and design. There were natural avenues into in the areas of climate, sustainability and nature connection that we could have explored with a wider remit.

Ploughing up the Past ~ maybe we should have sent out a maildrop since a lot of older farmers don't do 'digital', but they may not have responded anyway.

Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ Identify or recruit local people before the project commenced to manage a community based nursery growing day to day, rather than expecting local groups to take this on board and focus on a smaller number of nursery sites.

Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ Identify key people in the council earlier on to work with to bring out groups of trainees, and other groups to volunteer.

9. Learning from doing ~ building and developing skills

Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers ~ the significant time commitment required to register outputs through the 'ARMI' database was a major disincentive for project participants. Project staff developed new materials and bespoke scoring system, becoming less reliant on the ARMI course. This was focussed specifically on Ayrshire and minimised study of species not found in Southwest Scotland. People who might have engaged with the newer version of the project, may have already been put off at an early stage by the demands of the earlier project configuration.

Landscape Apprentices ~ East Ayrshire Woodlands are in the process of upskilling our chargehands to provide more of the training in-house and partnering with our Greener Communities to increase their skillset. This will result in various savings in relation to costs of external trainers, assessors plus travel and accommodation for the apprentices whilst undertaking training at the SRUC campus in Dumfries, learning lessons from the experience gained throughout the CCLP period.

6. Legacy ~ what next for Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership?

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership legacy activity

In parallel with the delivery of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, the programme team and partners have considered the legacy of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership from an individual project and scheme perspective. Legacy planning has been appropriate to local need with discussions held between partners to consider Scheme Legacy and the completion of project reporting documents that helps identify specific project legacy .

Scheme legacy activity

In the final year of programme delivery, a legacy task and finish group was established to put together a legacy plan and set out how legacy activity is intended be delivered. The final plan outlines the overall scheme legacy, the legacy of individual projects and the 10 year management and maintenance arrangements put in place to ensure the improvements to heritage are maintained. The key headlines and outcomes from this work are summarised below:

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership ~ Legacy Plan

The following updates have been made to the Legacy Plan as written in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan after 5 years of delivery:

Management and Maintenance

CCLP project partners will maintain a 10 year management and maintenance plan with **funding allocated across the first 5 years.**

The fund, with a total value of £246,215 over 5 years, will commence following completion of delivery activity in December 2025 and aims to *"empower our partners to achieve, sustain and showcase the positive outcomes achieved through the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership."*

Partners will be able to request a drawdown from East Ayrshire Council of funding from the agreed management and maintenance budget. **Appendix 3** gives an indication of the budget allocated by project and the type of management and maintenance work to be undertaken. Requests can be made spread out over the five year period, but once the allocated funding has been claimed no more will be made available.

Partnership Legacy

Over the delivery phase of Coalfield Communities, the Project Supervisor has been part of a wider group of Landscape Partnerships in the North of England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Meeting online regularly to discuss issues faced by partnerships. Topics discussed included; procurement issues; management and maintenance; legacy; monitoring and evaluation of projects and what happens after the partnerships complete. Some, such as the Inner Forth Landscape Partnership continued on as Inner Forth Futures (with new partners) and secured more Heritage Fund money to deliver further projects. Others such as Galloway Glens wound up and no continuation body was set up. In others the lead partner took on responsibility to ensure that the management obligations from the Heritage Fund were carried out.

For Coalfield Communities, **East Ayrshire Council will continue to be the lead and accountable body for distribution of the management and maintenance fund** as identified above.

Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership ~ Legacy Plan

From a policy perspective, East Ayrshire Council has embedded CCLP in the Local Development Plan 2 but due to budget constraints, and strategic reorganisation it has proved difficult for the Council to commit to leading on continuation of the partnership as constituted for the delivery for the Landscape Partnership scheme.

Whilst there is no direct continuation of partnership activity, the policy changes and existence of the management and maintenance fund will enable the continuation of investment for heritage within the Coalfield Communities area and will be combined with the following funding and strategic partnership support identified as part of the legacy planning process:

Future Long Term Funding

"There has been a very positive development in the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership area led by the formation of the 9 Community Council Group (9CCG). This was set up to help administer and distribute the community benefit money coming into the area from the various wind farm developers. The 9CCG joined the CCLP Board to ensure that in the future we could look at ways in which the legacy could develop, for individual projects as well as the CCLP as a whole.

One developer (Greenburn and possible Knockippen development) has committed a part of their community benefit money (about 11%) to the CCLP and this will be coming via the 9CCG. However, this money will not be available till at least 2026, after the CCLP completes. Further discussions are under way."

Continued Partnership Support

Board members who have an interest in the work undertaken through the Landscape Partnership will continue to support and look for investment opportunities to build on the initial programme of work as follows:

***"Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere ~** As the Biosphere will continue long after the completion of the CCLP It is anticipated that they will build on their Sense of Place project and expand activity to deliver other projects in the in the CCLP area.*

***East Ayrshire Leisure Trust ~** East Ayrshire Leisure is revising its Core Path Plan which will take in to account work done through the CCLP in the Doon and Lugar Valleys. This is with a view to producing a Recreation Plan which will embed the CCLP work, ensuring a legacy. The paths are part of the Strategic Paths Network, this will ensure that work done on the path network will be managed and promoted after the Landscape Partnership completes.*

***Health and Social Care Partnership ~** There has been limited involvement to date but hopefully in the final year we can build in projects such as the inclusive cycling and the walks into the wider health agenda.*

***Forestry and Land Scotland ~** The further development and delivery of the North Kyle Master Plan (once the windfarms are completed) will build on the CCLP projects and the networks and partnerships that have been established.*

***9 Community Council Group ~** The 9CCG will be establishing a Strategic Area Fund to fund high level strategic projects for the benefit of the Cumnock and Doon Valley. A Consultation exercise was conducted during 2024/2025 (to which CCLP Staff contributed) a long list of 9 ideas. It is encouraging to see that CCLP projects such as the Doon Valley Railway and cycling appear as part of these suggestions. The 9CCG Board will (in December 2025) agree the report outcomes and these will be presented to the public at the 9CCG conference on 20th January 2026."*

Individual Project Legacies

Intended project legacies as identified within individual project plans from the LCAP, have been updated within the final project reports ensuring an ongoing legacy of activity from the Landscape Partnership Scheme. From these and to be noted is the individual partner commitment to develop the legacy from Coalfield Communities around five key themes:

- Maintaining habitat, heritage, and access improvements
- Developing and deepening partnership working
- Community Engagement
- Further heritage research
- Building capacity and securing additional resources

Some of the individual project legacies, as identified from the project completion reports are summarised in the following tables:

Maintaining habitat, heritage, and access improvements
Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ Legacy works to be undertaken will include maintenance and enhancement of existing planting areas with supplementary tree planting as well as the introduction of wildflower and shrubs to enhance their structural and biodiversity value. Other potential planting sites have been identified late on in the project which could be developed in a later legacy phase.
Lugar Heritage Centre ~ The warm hub now has Wi-Fi and they hope to encourage members of the community to use the site for internet use for job applications and alleviate internet poverty by making the facilities available to all. This area could also be used as an office space for future staff and volunteers. Lugar Parish Church will continue to develop the heritage centre and increase the exhibition. They are keen to reduce running costs and improve their energy efficiency with solar panels and an electric vehicle charging point.
Dalmellington Old Kirkyard ~ The information boards will be maintained. The work undertaken on getting the mausoleum up to the point of procurement (using the site drawings and specification) can be used as a reference point for future restoration work once suitable maintenance arrangements are put in place.
Doon Valley Walk ~ Work is still planned for the active travel route (indeed a part was started in Dalmellington) when funding becomes available.
River Lugar Walk ~ Continue to look at improvements to the path and heritage information.

Developing and deepening partnership working
Landscape Apprentices ~ The current proposal is that East Ayrshire Woodland's and the Modern Apprenticeship programme be transferred to the East Ayrshire Leisure Trust, who will rebrand as Ayrshire 360 in April 2026. They intend to expand the Modern Apprenticeship programme, providing skills & experience within not only the Landscape Partnership area but throughout East Ayrshires leisure facilities including the extensive Core path network.
The project has left a legacy of a high quality and accessible modern apprenticeship route into land-based sector employment established in East Ayrshire. There is potential for East Ayrshire Woodlands to continue the Modern Apprenticeship course beyond the Landscape Partnership project area in the future, which will leave a legacy of high quality land management and improved

natural heritage, through woodland creation, wildflower meadow establishment, rehabilitation of neglected and damaged land, and the creation/upgrading of public paths, and rights of way.

Sense of Place ~ The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire (GSA) Biosphere geographical boundary includes all of the communities that were supported by CCLP. Since participating in CCLP, the GSA Biosphere has gained two new Biosphere Communities - plus a long list of new partners, colleagues, contacts, schools and community groups, that the project has developed.

Ochiltree and Dalrymple will go forward as part of a new network of Biosphere Communities that will explore shared learning and will feed into the Biosphere Board. Our connection with Friends of Hannahston Woods will continue by exploring the possibility of a third nature day (funding dependent), and we will continue to be part of community engagements and delivery.

"Being part of CCLP has vastly raised our profile in East Ayrshire and within that part of the Biosphere and enabled us to go about our work in a completely different way."

"Seeing the power of collaborative productions between different East Ayrshire community organisations, brought together via The Cumnock Tryst, has given us a blueprint for how we can continue to expand our work."

Musical Celebration of the Coalfields project completion report

Community engagement

Attainment through Archaeology ~ Archaeology Scotland hope to continue working with groups in the Coalfields area, building on partnerships developed throughout the project and establishing new ones. They would like to collaborate with other groups to deliver more varied programmes and signpost participants to other opportunities and courses following the completion of their work.

Reports written and videos created throughout the project will be made available online. All videos are available through Archaeology Scotland's YouTube channel. Archaeological results will be published in the journal Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.

Coalfields to Wildwoods ~ There may still be an opportunity to pursue the establishment of local conservation groups. This is comes off the back of a suitable site being available close to communities which could be adopted and managed by a group going forward. The Patna and Bellsbank gap sites are possibilities for continuing activity. The schools are the only local organisation in these communities that have been identified to work with and could be engaged to bring together a group from the wider community.

Musical Celebration of the Coalfields ~ The Cumnock Tryst will maintain its connections to the community groups, to ensure the benefits are nurtured and can be developed further through cultural engagement.

All groups have been invited to join year-round events including a concert with Karine Polwart who worked with many project participants. For all under-18 participants access to these events is free; those living locally all receive large discounts on ticket prices. Support will continue to be offered to groups' workshops and performances, and advice to artists as they develop their own work.

"Work within the primary and secondary school sectors is particularly well received by teaching staff and we will ensure that we define creative projects with the local area at their heart as our work evolves."

Hedgerow Habitats ~ Funding has been identified through the Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT) that aims to tackle community poverty by providing support to families on low incomes in the form

of an after school club, to support the food bank, and set up a new youth group which provide free child care so that families can work longer and earn more money.

Tower Street Pocket Park ~ Green Action Trust will continue to promote the site as a community space and encourage community involvement through participation with Cumnock Action Plan.

Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers ~ Coalfield Environment Initiative staff are experimenting with using small signs with simple instructions and dedicated email address to get members of the pubic to send images of freshwater invertebrates. Signs will identify, suitable safe sites and landowners have been approached for permission.

School Green Gym ~ Schools have material to continue outdoor learning, schools documented future aspirations for their outdoors space, schools requested further ID help with outdoor spaces. The Conservation Volunteers provided advice on how to improve their outdoor space.

Would consider delivering sessions for parents/guardians and possibly include an event or session showcasing what the children have learned and achieved.

Further heritage research

Ploughing up the Past ~ Cumnock History Group are still getting new information and will continue to add information to the website and family tree as it arises. The exhibition material is now in the care of Cumnock Heritage Centre who will link it to their exhibits. The intended next project is to start looking at the recreation of old photographs.

Lost Villages ~ The project team have suggested, subject to funding, future liaison with the Scottish Oral History Centre to deepen oral history gathering in Ayrshire, as well as the appointment of a part-time oral history curator in Ayrshire. A People's Parish project has been set up in Cumnock and they have been carrying out some interviews within the context of project activity to build on the existing work.

Coalfield Place Names ~ The project plans to complete the web resource; integrate with the Galloway Glens resource, and engaging with the Carrick names project. In the long term, the data will form the basis of at least two volumes of the Survey of Scottish Place-Names for the county of Ayrshire.

Building capacity and securing additional resources

Coalfields for Pollinators ~ The Coalfields Environment Initiative is currently making an application to Nature Scot's Nature Restoration fund to continue delivering new pollinator habitat across the Ayrshire coalfield.

Perfect Peatlands ~ The Coalfields Environment Initiative will look for opportunities to undertake peatland restoration and also look at what other interventions are possible on and around the areas where peatland restoration has been conducted in order to compliment the previous work.

Dalmellington All-Inclusive Cycling Project ~ Opportunities to develop the ramps and pump track within the track grounds will be explored as well as a play park to run alongside the increased access.

Further details of all the individual project legacies have been summarised as part of the legacy planning process and are listed by project title and delivery theme within **Appendix 4.**

7. Evaluation observations and recommendations

LOOKING OUTWARDS

7.1 ~ A scheme that met and exceeded intended outputs

The information collected and presented within this evaluation can demonstrate success as a Landscape Partnership Scheme with natural and cultural heritage improvements spread across the programme area.

As noted in Section 2, the intended outputs have been achieved for all the areas of activity with the exception of access, that have been reviewed with any variations agreed and incorporated into the programme of delivery. Highlights of the outputs achieved include:

For landscape restoration and nature recovery

- The landscape impact over 163 hectares to enhance natural heritage and improve biodiversity
- 20,150 broadleaved trees planted
- 4,000+ dams installed to improve peatland management and reduce flood risk
- 2.5km of hedgerow habitat created

For local engagement and participation

- 15,204 people participating in the 224 different events and learning activities throughout the scheme
- Engaging 1,240 children and students in events and activities
- Recruiting and engaging 943 volunteers contributing 3,325 days or the equivalent of an additional 15 full time working years
- The delivery of 274 skills workshops and training opportunities benefitting 857 people

In building up the picture of what Coalfield Communities has delivered as a Scheme it can be demonstrated that outputs have been exceeded against three of the key evaluation indicator areas, achieved against four of the indicators and partially achieved against one indicator as derived from the LCAP and summarised below.



7.2 ~ Demonstrating delivery of significant outcomes, particularly for people and legacy

Combined with the delivery of outputs, information collected through the external evaluation process can evidence delivery of significant achievements against the four scheme outcomes, whilst demonstrating a range of improvements against the National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes: for heritage; for people and for local communities.

The impact on people has been the stand out achievement of this Landscape Partnership scheme as demonstrated through the evidence collected for:

- **Section 3b ~ Increased awareness and understanding natural and cultural heritage**

and

- **Section 3c ~ Deepening engagement, gaining skills, training and employment**

Additional examples of the positive impact on people and communities were collected from comments and presentations at the final celebration event held in Cumnock in October 2025.

"Coalfield Communities has helped connect local people to their natural and cultural heritage and done that in abundance."

"From the Biosphere perspective we have created long standing relationships with the local communities involved in the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership."

Ed Forrest, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and Partnership Chair

"Coalfield Communities has helped to address every aspect of heritage and the political and social support that you have achieved is very inspiring."

Stuart Housden, National Lottery Heritage Fund Committee Member for Scotland

"Through the Landscape Partnership Scheme, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust have been able to establish a presence back in East Ayrshire and we have been able to employ two officers to continue the work that has been started."

Pauline Grandison, Coalfields Regeneration Trust







Coalfield Communities final celebration, October 2025

There has been much project information to sift and sort with, both big and small examples of the impact, benefit and change delivered on people. To illustrate this, the following table identifies three of the programme achievements, identified following a review of the project documentation collected as part of this final evaluation.

Outcome highlights

- **Coalfield Place Names ~** The interactive web-based Place Names map carries an extraordinary amount of detailed information, and is a fascinating resource documenting significant cultural heritage that will be useful to many local people.
- **Sense of Place Films ~** These are simple, well-made films, created by local young people, reflecting on the meaning of their home communities, and their own personal involvement and contributions.
- **Musical Celebration of the Coalfields ~** Impressive use of highly regarded conductors, composers and musicians, to involve local people in a programme of creating and performing original musical pieces inspired by local cultural heritage. This project is showcased by some inspiring high quality short films. This project also has an impressive legacy of ongoing involvement with communities.

Project evaluation notes

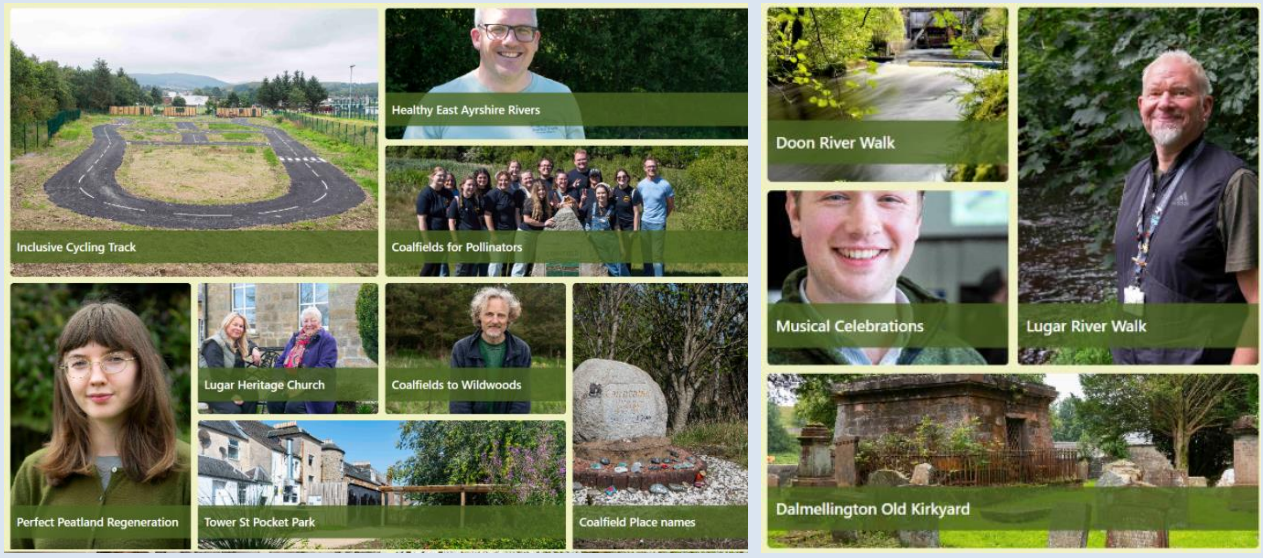
Two further observations and strengths identified through the external evaluation include:

Development of the Coalfields Communities Digital Time Capsule ~ As part of the overall programme legacy, a digital time capsule of the work delivered through the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership Scheme is being created. At the time of completing the external evaluation the time capsule was not publicly available, yet a review of the draft contents shows a rich collection of photographs, quotes and experiences as referenced through parts of this evaluation report.

Digital time capsule extract

Creating a digital time capsule for the Coalfields Communities Landscape Partnership is a meaningful way to preserve the legacy of our work and reflect the aspirations of current partners and communities.

By using a blog format with rich photos and a few key pieces of video content, we will create an engaging and easily navigable time capsule that captures the heart of the Coalfields Communities Landscape Partnership. This digital time capsule can document the CCLP projects partners and community's journey, reflect on their contributions, and share aspirations for future generations, all in a way that is accessible and timeless.



Digital time capsule screen shots

Intending to deliver a significant project and partnership legacy ~ As shown in Section 6, Coalfield Communities can demonstrate a significant intended legacy with the presence of a clear management and maintenance plan helping to maximise the investment made in the programme area by the Heritage Fund and other funding partners. The work of individual projects in continuing heritage and access improvements, providing further opportunities for heritage research and community engagement throughout the programme area, will build on the achievements delivered to date through the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Whilst the Landscape Partnership as constituted for the delivery phase is not continuing, the principle of partnership working in the area has been established in local policies and will be built upon by members of the Partnership Board who will continue to look for investment opportunities to build on the initial programme of work.

REFLECTING INWARDS

7.3 ~ A missed opportunity in bringing everything together?

For all the achievements that can be demonstrated throughout the final evaluation, a number of complex threads have run through the whole delivery phase that lead to the question of whether more could have been made of the opportunities presented through the presence of having a Landscape Partnership Scheme within the Coalfield Communities area. Some of these examples to emerge and highlighted through this evaluation are:

1. **Budget underspend**

   By starting in September 2020 in the middle of a global pandemic, Coalfield Communities did begin on "the backfoot", missing the opportunity to have a large formal launch. The impact of the slow start has been a consistent underspend against budget projections leaving a balance of grant aid that will remain unclaimed. For all the caution of wanting to give the identified projects the full amount of time to deliver their intended activity, much activity remained to be delivered over the final 12 months and having a pipeline of other opportunities to improve natural and cultural heritage may have helped maximise the available investment and improve the benefits delivered through the scheme.

2. **Impact of project geography**

   The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership was focussed on a very specific area of East Ayrshire that was refined during the development phase, to include two lowland valley areas separated by one larger upland area. Much of the activity has been with the communities and people living in the valley areas but the geography has constrained the scope of who the projects have worked with and how the final boundary has cut across local authority Councillor areas.

   The Landscape Conservation Action Plan highlights the importance of species at risk such as; red squirrel; black grouse and water vole. An opportunity may have been missed by not developing a species related project that could have engaged people from across the whole area, drawing activity and people together and begin to demonstrate a programme that is more than "the sum of its parts."

3. **Project team composition**

   Whilst the Landscape Partnership team was located within the host organisation, with officers employed to work with delivery partners on projects and respond to local need, the capacity of the Programme Manager and two project officers to bring everything together was limited.

Given the focus on capacity building and people engagement through partnership working, a weakness is having no dedicated communications support. Compared to other partnerships of a similar scale, the Coalfield Communities core team was very small with a team of just three officers employed and since March 2025, only the Project Supervisor has remained to oversee all aspects of completion of programme delivery. Throughout this time communication has been primarily maintained through the CCLP Facebook page.

4. Strategic communication

As the programme developed, more could have been made of the Coalfield Communities website as a communications tool to help bring together the many different personal stories and experiences that have been evidenced through this final evaluation report. There is a lot of excellent material that has been produced by Coalfield Communities with the risk that this is not brought together as a "cohesive whole" telling the story of some significant achievements. The digital time capsule is a unique idea that will be a resource that brings the many different elements together but as with other activity, tied to the budget underspend, remains to be launched at the time of writing. **How to maximise interest to ensure that people know about the existence of the time capsule will be an important challenge** that needs to be addressed and actioned as the programme moves beyond the delivery phase.

Doon Valley Railway Case Study ~ Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group (ARPG)

One project included from the development phase yet is only just starting some of the intended heritage restoration activity is the Doon Valley Railway**.** This project intended to:

"Focus on capacity building with the ARPG to help forge community links, increase volunteer numbers and identifying funding sources with a view to increase the visitor offering and visitor numbers. It will also look at how to improve the cafe, the renovation of the old wagon shed to accommodate visitors and a narrow gauge railway and the building of a new shed to house the collection of historically important restored rolling stock."

Whilst the project has yet to deliver any of the intended project outputs and is not referenced in the programme outcomes as part of this evaluation, the experience of being part of the Coalfield Communities has helped support the development of the charity, improved governance and left the organisation in a stronger position. Working with the CCLP team means that the ARPG has:

- Recognised the limitations of their original governance and have undertaken a significant internal restructure with an expanded board including a new funding director
- Overcome problems with the lease and ownership of buildings
- Secured Scheduled Ancient Monument consent through working Heritage Environment Scotland
- Developed better partnerships and links with Archaeology Scotland, Dalmellington Parish Development Trust and Doon Valley Active Travel
- Registered for the procurement of external services with Public Contracts Scotland

"Through involvement with the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership, the group have built the confidence to take things on and get stuff done."

Project team reflections

7.4 ~ Many lessons learned

The project completion reports contain a rich source of lessons learned, with signposts and evidence to help develop future project activity. Information collected from these reports highlighted the many different complex elements that relate to successful project management and delivery and included:

Project management

- Being realistic with resources and timetable
- Managing risk and uncertainty, adopting a flexible approach
- Clear project planning, scope and relevant permissions
- Developing partnership working and building local relationships
- Establishing a good information base and project communications
- Managing unforeseen and external shocks

Learning from doing

- Building effective systems and processes
- People and volunteer engagement
- Building and developing skills

The lessons learnt from this evaluation report should be combined and used to evidence future funding applications and partnership working beyond completion of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership scheme.

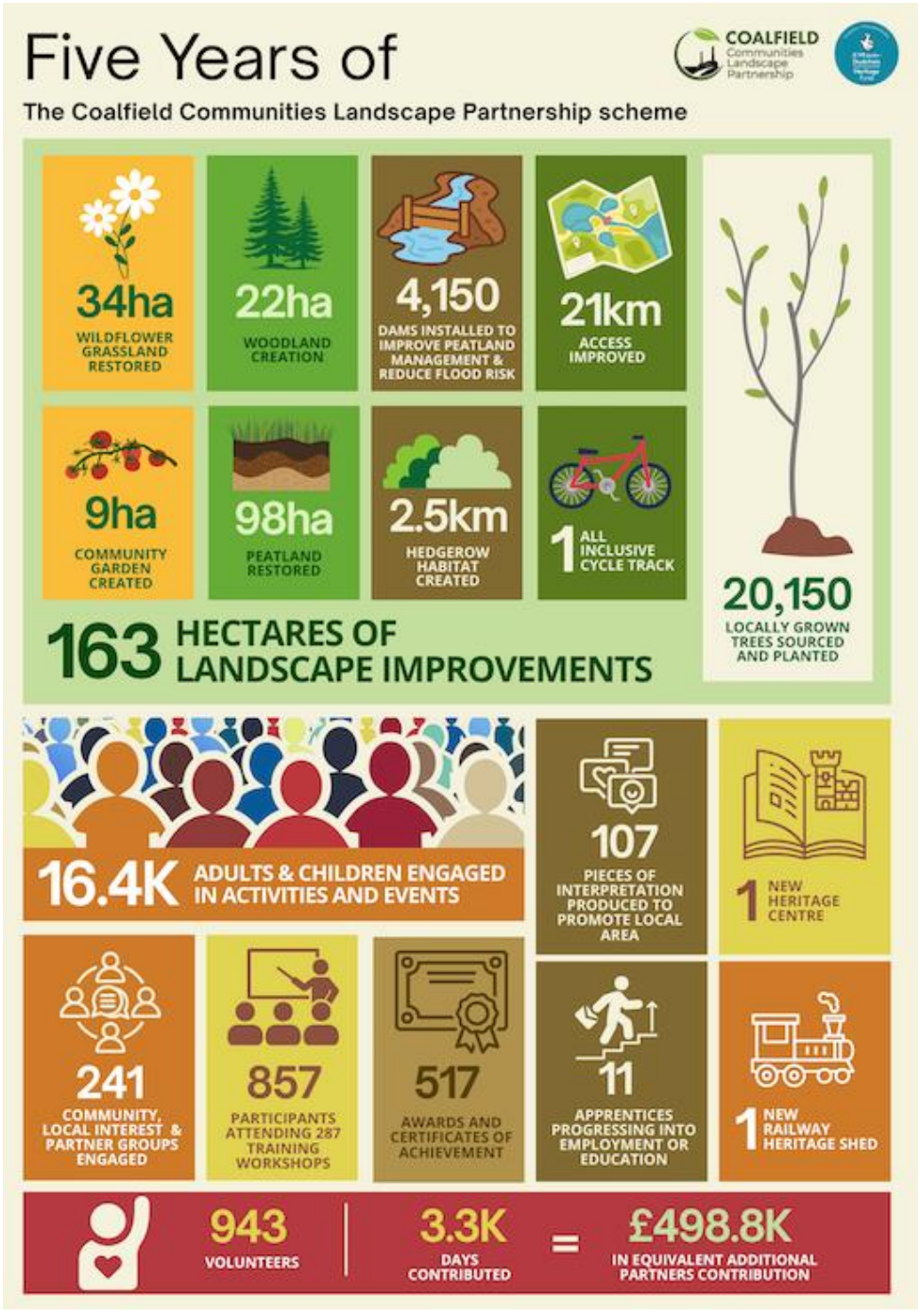
7.5 ~ Evaluation recommendations

This report attempts to bring together and present the many achievements and impact of all the Coalfield Communities project activities in one place. The Landscape Partnership has delivered a wide range of heritage activity that has met the National Lottery Heritage Fund approved purposes and delivered what was intended at the outset with variations . It can be demonstrated that significant heritage outcomes have been achieved and that behind the headlines there have been many different internal and external factors that have impacted on the delivery of a complex programme of work.

The Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership has been a scheme with some excellent examples of community and people engagement activity that should be disseminated and communicated wider. The key recommendations emerging from this evaluation would be:

- That time is taken by staff within East Ayrshire Council and project partners to **reflect and appreciate what has been achieved** looking at the scheme as a whole, the importance of the lessons learnt, the final evaluation observations and how these can be applied to the development of further projects through continued partnership working.
- That as the partnership moves beyond completion of the scheme and as resources allow, the Coalfield Communities **website should be amended and edited** so that **reference and access to the digital time capsule** is made and that **the story and achievements,** of the Landscape Partnership Scheme are consolidated and elements of good practice, with necessary signposting to other digital media and other resources, are found in one place.

- **Using the infographic** with final project outputs collected through this evaluation will be a "quick win" that should be circulated to project partners, included on the Coalfield Communities website and shared as part of a final project newsletter.



Coalfield Communities infographic showing final scheme outputs, December 2025

- **Including the project evaluation report in the digital time capsule** will be an additional resource that will help tell the story of the Landscape Partnership scheme.

Combining these four recommendations along with the dissemination of the final infographic would bring together the headline achievements in digital and/or print format and would act as a further prospectus to help secure funding and future partner support for continued heritage activity within the wider Coalfield Communities landscape area.



Literacy, expressive arts, religious and moral education ~ Attainment through Archaeology presentation, October 2025

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my thanks in particular to Colin MacDonald, CCLP Officers Carlann McPhilemy, Cynthia Bahi and Kate Dickens and all the other members of the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership, who I have worked with over the last five years and have provided the information and insight that enabled this evaluation to be completed. Collection of much of the information contained within the report has been conducted remotely between October and December 2025, so any errors and misinterpretations are in good faith and remain my responsibility.

Simon Lees, ***Countryside Training Partnership,*** *December 2025*

Appendix 1. ~ What is a Landscape Partnership?

Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership programme

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), renamed in January 2019 as the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom. Landscape Partnerships grew out of 14 Area Schemes that were introduced in 1999.

In 2004 HLF's second Strategic Plan (SP2) saw the replacement of Area Schemes by Landscape Partnerships. From 2008 to 2012, Landscape Partnerships were part of HLF's third Strategic Plan (SP3) while HLF's last Strategic Framework (SP4), covering the period 2013-2018, was launched in October 2012. Landscape Partnerships were the only HLF programme to focus primarily on rural areas, and offer grants of between £250,000 and £2 million. Schemes aim to conserve the heritage within areas of distinctive landscape character.

Landscape Partnerships are complex grant programmes. They are delivered through a partnership of bodies, normally including statutory agencies, local authorities, voluntary and community organisations. One of the goals of the programme is that schemes should actively engage local communities, while also meeting local social, environmental and economic needs.

Landscape Partnership Schemes need to address the conservation of the natural, built and cultural heritage. They are comprised of a number of discrete projects that include heritage conservation and restoration, access, education and training delivering evenly across all of the following of the nine programme outcomes:

Heritage will be:	People will have:	For communities:
• Better managed • In better condition • Identified and recorded	• Developed skills • Volunteered time • Learnt about heritage	• The local area will be better to work, live or visit • Negative environmental impacts will be reduced • More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

The Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) was developed by the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership from February 2018 to November 2019 as part of its Stage 2 submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The LCAP is based on research and consultation carried out by the partnership and contains projects that relate directly to the conservation of the area's natural, cultural and built heritage. The partner organisations worked at both partnership and thematic working group levels throughout this period to develop a common vision and to provide strategic direction and advice.

The lead partner, East Ayrshire Council, has a commitment to the regeneration and rejuvenation of local coalfield communities. Through local engagement as part of the Local Development Planning process, it became clear to the Council that local communities wanted a more positive future, where they could reconnect with their landscape and heritage. It was from this starting point that the Council began to explore the idea of a Landscape Partnership and began to engage other partners. A group of interested parties, led by a team from East Ayrshire Council's Planning and Regeneration section, made initial contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2017 and explored the opportunity for a Stage 1 Application to the Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Following a positive response from HLF, community engagement events were held across the area seeking wider but more focussed input from individuals and community groups about what was special about the area, the challenges it faced, and to consider opportunities to acknowledge and support local heritage assets. These events demonstrated a very wide range of partners with a stake in the local landscape, varying from statutory organisations to small community groups and individuals. This initial consultation led to a Stage 1 submission for consideration in June 2017, with Stage 1 approval received in November 2017, that funded the formal Development Phase.

The date of the initial application and development phase award in October 2017, meant that Coalfield Communities was subject to the Heritage Fund's application and implementation process during SP4.

Landscape

Landscape Partnerships contribute significantly to the UK's commitment to implementation of the European Landscape Convention. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) sees 'landscape' as multifaceted, multipurpose and multifunctional, the product of the action and interaction of humans and nature over time. Landscape is the place where people live and work and which people visit. Landscape provides vital benefits such as food, water and other 'ecosystem services'. Landscape is valued by people for many different reasons and is 'used' in many different ways.

The ELC's definition of 'Landscape' as *'an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and /or human factors'* is a rich concept that encompasses but goes beyond the traditional (geomorphological, ecological, archaeological, or aesthetic) approaches. The ELC makes it clear that people are at the heart of all landscapes (the commonplace and 'degraded' as well as the well-known) each of which has its distinctive character and meaning to those who inhabit or visit it. The ELC approach defines landscape as:

- The result of the complex interaction of natural (e.g. geology, soils, biodiversity), cultural (settlement, land use), the perceptual and aesthetic (experience, associations, tranquillity, colour);
- Linking past, present and future as the dynamic manifestation of physical processes and human intervention (has always changed and will continue to do so)
- Important to people, multiple and sometimes contested values, including tangible and intangible dimensions;
- Existing at any scale from large tracts of land such as mountain ranges, to small locally important spaces such as parks and streetscapes.

There is a considerable overlap between the provisions of the ELC and the objectives of HLF's Landscape Partnership programme, which is the only national grant programme whose objectives largely coincide with the ELC philosophy.



The *Coalfield Communities* landscape



Map showing the location of Landscape Partnerships that were awarded funds by Heritage Lottery Fund from 2004 to 2018

Appendix 2. ~ What did Coalfield Communities set out to achieve?

Background and strategic context

Lying in an eastern corner of South West Scotland, the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership area extends across 231 km2, from the River Doon catchment in the south to the Lugar Water catchment in the north and includes the upland foothills in between. The Lugar joins with the River Ayr at Barskimming and the Doon flows westward into the Clyde Estuary at Doonfoot. The major settlements are Dalmellington which sits to the east of the River Doon and Cumnock, through which the Lugar Water flows.

The wider East Ayrshire population has remained relatively static over the last twenty years. Data from the last ten years shows that the southern part of East Ayrshire where the Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership (CCLP) sits has experienced a higher level of population decline than the northern end over the same period. The overall population of the area in 2011 was 22,416.

The population density varies considerably across the area, with upland areas relatively sparsely populated and most of the population based in the settlements in the Lugar and Doon Valleys. Overall, the CCLP area contains lower numbers children (the 0-15 age group has declined by 15.8% since 1997) lower numbers working age people (the 23-44 age group has declined by 19.3% since 1997) and higher numbers of people in the 55-85 age bracket (increased by over 20%) indicating lower levels of economic activity and a higher dependency rate than for Scotland as a whole.

East Ayrshire is the sixth most deprived data zone in Scotland, with employment, health and income related deprivation factors of greatest concern. The rural setting creates challenges in relation to access to services/amenities transport links and employment opportunities. 21% of children in the southern locality live in poverty.

Agriculture is historically important in the CCLP area - for employment, economic activity and the regional landscape. Land capability in the upland areas is constrained. Nearly a third of the CCLP area is under some form of forest cover, including large areas of the central upland and Doon Valley. Most land is owner occupied farmland; the rest is owned by Forestry and Land Scotland and a variety of opencast coal companies.



The Coalfield Communities Landscape ~ from p. 32 of the LCAP

The Coalfield Communities area includes a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that highlight the importance of natural heritage. Aird's Moss, is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is one of the few remaining areas of blanket bog in south west Scotland. The basin area within the Doon Valley contains Bogton Loch and Dalmellington Moss SSSIs. The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere was designated in 2012. The Biosphere is based on understanding and promoting a positive and sustainable relationship between people and the environment. The CCLP area lies within the transition zone for the biosphere.

The landscape of the Coalfield Communities consists of a mosaic of habitats, natural in origin, but all modified to a greater or lesser extent by human activities. Some habitats are locally significant, because they are rare and support scarce species, or because they are locally extensive.

Moorlands are an important habitat, though very little remains within the CCLP area. Most of it - along with blanket bog habitat - has been submerged under extensive conifer plantations. There are still some very well-preserved bogs ('mosses') in the area including raised bogs at Dalmellington and Low Moss along with blanket bog at Martyrs Moss. They support specialised plant and animal species rarely found in other habitats. Almost all bogs have been exploited for fuel and other uses over hundreds of years, however they constitute an enormous carbon sink and often preserve a valuable archaeological record.

There are few large areas of native wood. Most fragments are along river corridors and in inaccessible cleughs (gullies); the best examples are within estates where there has been continuity of land use for many generations. This includes Craigengillan on the Doon and Boswell/ Auchinleck on the Lugar. Upland mixed Ashwood's, upland Birchwood's, upland Oakwood and wet woodland or carr all occur in the CCLP. *Chalara* dieback disease of ash poses a major threat to the area's native woodland remnants. Commercial forestry was planted between WW1 and WW2 with the aim of providing local sources for pit props; later plantations are extensive in the coalfield areas. Crossbills and Black Grouse have are associated with these managed conifer forests. Sitka spruce is the dominant commercial species.

The principal rivers are the Lugar and the Doon - both are much affected by human activity, including diffuse pollution from agriculture. Some of tributaries, like the Glenmuir Water, are much cleaner and support varied fauna.

Important species that occur in the CCLP area are, Red Squirrel, Hen Harrier, Osprey (breeding at Loch Doon), Golden Eagle, Black Grouse, Curlew, Pine Marten, Water Vole, and Dingy Skipper.

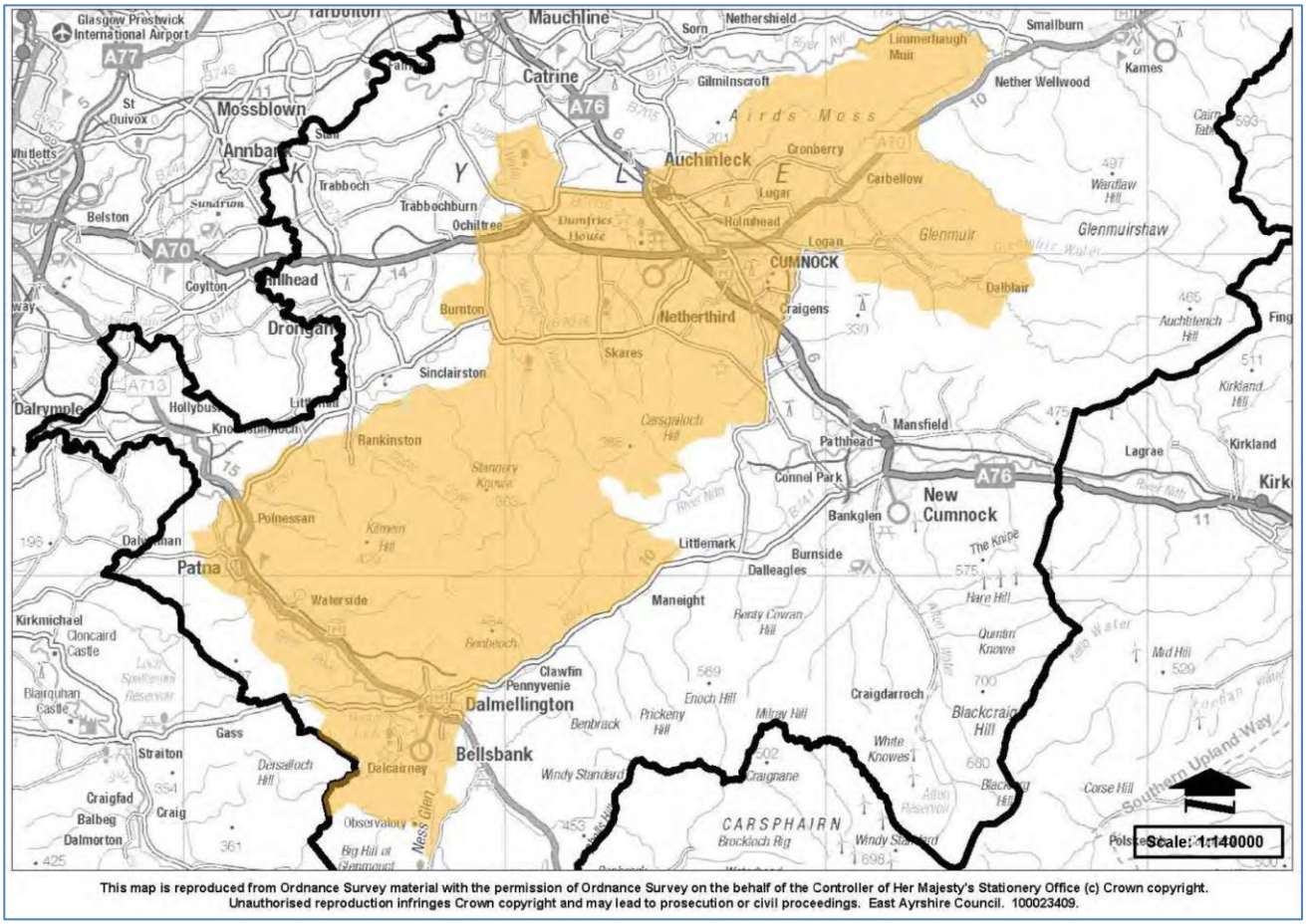
The historic environment of the Coalfield Communities area is rich for many periods but especially its industrial heritage, offering considerable potential to engage local people and attract research, building local narratives about the past and present in the coalfield communities. The area includes 10 Scheduled Monuments, 2 Designed Landscapes, and 9 category A Listed Buildings.

Many local groups expressed frustration mineral extraction destroyed connections between communities and historical features. The closure of many opencast coal sites in East Ayrshire, presented an opportunity to re-establish lost links between communities and the countryside. CCLP aimed to support this process.

Development Stage Boundary Review

The initial Stage 1 proposal covered the whole coalfields area in East Ayrshire, some 900km^2 (see black line in the map below showing part of the initial boundary). However, this was too large an area for the Landscape Partnership programme. It was felt that money would be spread far too thinly and the desired landscape scale change would not be achieved. A critical process undertaken by the CCLP team was to review the boundary and ensure the final area made sense across a range of factors including (i) Landscape form and character; (ii) Existing communities and the ability to maximise engagement in the partnership; (iii) Existing and unexplored heritage; and (iv) Where there is the greatest potential for the Landscape Partnership to deliver the greatest benefit.

Extract from Landscape Conservation Action Plan



Coalfield Communities boundary map ~ the yellow shaded area represents the final project boundary

"The collapse of the open cast coaling industry in East Ayrshire in 2013 left an ugly, unsafe and inaccessible landscape in the heart of the area containing those communities upon whose livelihood depended upon it. The legacy of unrestored land in East Ayrshire presents a unique opportunity to think strategically about place making and green infrastructure in the south of East Ayrshire, and to restore and rebuild a new Sense of Place for coalfield communities."

Coalfield Communities Landscape Conservation Action Plan

The scheme vision and objectives

The Coalfield Communities vision is:

> ***'Coalfield Communities share the benefits of a renewed landscape, welcoming visitors from afar to celebrate their unique heritage, promote stewardship of the land and create new opportunities to enjoy the landscape, shaped by understanding of the past and needs of the future.'***

Through consultation and collaboration, the partnership identified seven objectives which, when delivered, would secure a lasting and positive change:

1. Celebrate the area's rich industrial heritage and its wider role in the industrial revolution
2. Learn lessons from past exploitation of the land to promote land use that preserves natural heritage and supports communities
3. Improve and rejuvenate the landscape by restoring peatlands and establishing new habitats for flora and fauna
4. Connect communities with their shared heritage and with each other through a programme of events and learning opportunities
5. Revive a Sense of Place through recording and promoting sporting, artistic, linguistic and musical traditions
6. Improve and enhance access to the natural environment for a range of users by creating new and upgrading existing paths
7. Develop and build capacity to promote the Coalfield Communities as a destination for outdoor recreation and tourism in the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere.

These objectives align with the four strategic outcomes of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Landscape Partnership Programme namely:

- Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character.
- Increasing community participation in local heritage.
- Increasing access to and learning about the landscape and its heritage.
- Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills.

Programme themes and project delivery

To work toward the objectives, the Partnership developed project activity around five themes:

Understanding the Landscape ~ In order to celebrate our unique heritage, we need to understand our historical landscape. Projects will look at discovering/rediscovering our historical past.

Visiting the Landscape ~ Providing opportunities to visit and spend time in the landscape is important. Projects will look at celebrating our unique history, promote stewardship of the land and create new opportunities to enjoy the landscape.

Accessing the Landscape ~ Due to historic mineral extraction in the centre of our area, communities have been cut off from the landscape. Being able to gain access is an important element of the CCLP. Projects will create new opportunities to open up and enjoy the landscape.

Animating the Landscape ~ Bringing our cultural and historical heritage to life will provide opportunities for residents and visitors to find out more about the area. Projects will promote stewardship of the land and create new opportunities to enjoy the landscape.

Enhancing the Landscape ~ Our landscape has been scarred by open cast mining, most of which is under remediation. Although we cannot address these issues directly, we have the opportunity to improve and enhance other areas of the landscape. Projects will lead to a renewed landscape through conserving and enhancing the natural environment as well as restoring peatlands and establishing new habitats for flora and fauna.

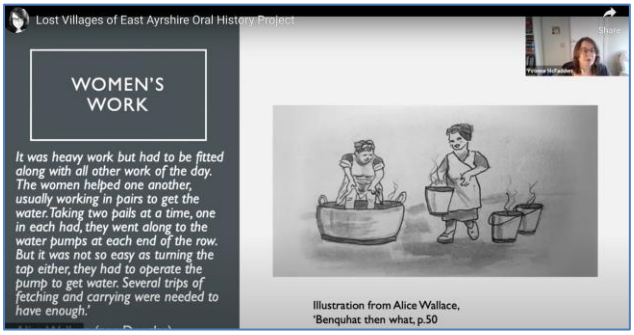
The themes as identified within the development phase were divided into 22 projects, delivered within the Coalfield Communities landscape area, and listed in the following tables.

Understanding the Landscape

5 projects contributed to this theme made up of:

Project	Lead partner
Attainment through Archaeology	Archaeology Scotland
Coalfield Place Names	Glasgow University
Connecting Coalfield Communities	Coalfields Regeneration Trust
Life in the Lost Villages (oral history)	Scottish Centre for Oral History (Strathclyde University)
Landscape Apprentices	East Ayrshire Woodlands





Screenshots from the YouTube film *Lost Villages of East Ayrshire Oral History Project*

Visiting the Landscape

4 projects contributed to this theme made up of:

Project	Lead Partner
Doon Valley Railway	Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group
Discovering Sense of Place	Galloway and South Ayrshire UNSECO Biosphere
Dalmellington Inclusive Cycling Project	Dalmellington Parish Development Trust
Lugar Heritage Centre	Lugar Parish Church



Dalmellington Inclusive Cycling Project ~ feasibility study with example track layout

Accessing the Landscape

3 projects contributed to this theme made up of:

Project	Lead partner
River Lugar walk	East Ayrshire Leisure
Doon Valley walk	East Ayrshire Leisure
North Kyle Masterplan	Forestry and Land Scotland



Doon Valley walk

Animating the Landscape

4 projects contributed to this theme made up of:

Project	Lead partner
Musical Celebration of the Coalfields	The Cumnock Tryst
Ploughing up the Past	Cumnock History Group
Dalmellington Old Kirk Yard	Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership
School Green Gym	The Conservation Volunteers

Enhancing the Landscape

6 projects contributed to this theme made up of:

Project	Lead partner
Perfect Peatlands	East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative
Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers	East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative
Coalfields for Pollinators	East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative
Coalfields to Wildwoods	EADHA Enterprises Ltd
Tower Street pocket park	Central Scotland Green Action Trust
Hedgerow Habitats	Netherthird Community Action Training
North Kyle Masterplan	Forestry and Land Scotland



A walk exploring the *Coalfields for Pollinators* project

Project changes and additions

As with any complex multi-year programme, changes and opportunities emerged during the implementation phase of the Landscape Partnership Scheme that led to changes in individual project scope and additional activities being delivered.

All of the 22 projects as identified in the development phase were delivered, the substantive changes were in the capacity of some of the lead partners, with members of the Coalfield Communities core team taking different levels of responsibility for delivering some of the projects.

Appendix 3. ~ Management and maintenance budget allocation

Summary of management and maintenance fund budget allocation taken from the Coalfield Communities draft Legacy Plan.

Project and delivery partner	**What work is involved**	**Budget £**
CCLP Legacy	Delivery of the Lagacy Plan	Non Cash 8,125
Lugar Heritage Centre, Lugar Parish Church	Maintenance of the building and heritage collection	10,000
Lugar walk, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust	Repair of footpath, vegetation removal	Cash 72,000 Non cash 20,000
Doon Valley Walk, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust	Repair of footpath, vegetation removal	Cash 20,000 Non cash 10,000
Dalmellington Inclusive Cycle track, Dalmellington Parish Development Trust	Maintenance of bikes and cycle track	10,000
Doon Valley Railway Heritage Shed, Ayrshire Railway Preservation Group	Maintenance of new shed	10,000
Dalmellington Old Kirk yard, East Ayrshire Council	Maintenance of information signs.	500
Tower Street Pocket Park, Cumnock Action Plan group	Maintenance of site	7,500
Hedgerow Habitats, Netherthird Community Action Training	Trimming of hedges	1,500
Lost Villages Oral History, University of Strathclyde, Scottish Oral History Centre	Updating website with information.	2,000
Place Names, University of Glasgow	Adding new information to the database.	2,000
Sense of Place, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere	Continue community engagement with groups, reprint of three fliers created	5,000
Coalfields to Wildwoods, EADAH	Monitoring growth and replanting.	20,000
Healthy Rivers, East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	Update in training of volunteers	1,500
Perfect Peatlands, East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	Monitoring of site	3,000
Coalfields for Pollinators, East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	Monitoring of site, plant surveys	3,000
Landscape Apprentices, East Ayrshire Council/EAW	Maintenance of projects undertaken by the EAW's Modern Apprentices	10,000
Attainment through Archaeology, Archaeology Scotland	Working with community groups and schools	12,000

Project and delivery partner	**What work is involved**	**Budget £**
School Green Gym, The Conservation Volunteers	Networking and delivery of new programmes	2,000
Musical Celebration of the Coalfields, The Cumnock Tryst	Networking and delivery of new programmes	5,000
Ploughing up our Past, Cumnock History Group	Maintaining the website any further printing of Ploughing up our Past.	1,000
North Kyle Landscape Management Plan, Forestry and Land Scotland	Implementation of planting regime ~ to be covered by Forestry Land Scotland	None
Connecting Communities, Coalfield Regeneration Trust	Networking and delivery of new programmes	10,000
Management and maintenance total		**£246,215**

Appendix 4. ~ Individual project legacies

Summary of the individual project legacies taken from the Coalfield Communities draft Legacy Plan.

Project	Lead Partner	Legacy
Understanding the Environment		
Attainment through Archaeology	Archaeology Scotland	On going delivery of projects and programmes in East Ayrshire
Coalfield Place Names	University of Glasgow	Place names website and data base at www.ayr-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk
Connecting Communities	Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT)	Continued delivery and expansion of its programme of activities in East Ayrshire. The CCLP funded a staff member to deliver their project and now they have employed 2 staff members to work in East Ayrshire.
Life in the Lost Villages (oral history)	University of Strathclyde, Scottish Oral History Centre	Lost villages website www.thelostvillages.co.uk Ongoing seminars and papers as well as sale of book "Memory, mining and heritage, voices from Ayrshire Communities." -The exhibition will be permanently housed at the Boswell Centre in Auchinleck.
Landscape Apprentices	East Ayrshire Woodlands	Continued delivery of Trees & Timber apprenticeships in East Ayrshire
Visiting the Landscape		
Doon Valley Railway	Ayrshire Railway Preservation group (ARPG)	Continued operation and income generation from new heritage shed
Sense of Place	Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere	Continued delivery and expansion of its programme of activities in East Ayrshire
Doon Valley Inclusive Cycling	Dalmellington Parish Development Trust	Delivery and management of inclusive cycling facility
Lugar Heritage Centre	Lugar Parish Church	Management and further development of the Lugar Heritage Centre
Accessing the Landscape		
Lugar Water Walk	East Ayrshire Leisure Trust	Manage and maintain the walk, Path Wardens scheme
Doon Valley Walk	East Ayrshire Leisure Trust	Manage and maintain the walk, Path Wardens scheme
Animating the Landscape		
A Musical Celebration of the Coalfields	The Cumnock Tryst	Website www.thecumnocktryst.com/musical-celebration-of-the-coalfields "Moss and the Cosmos" film
Ploughing up our Past	Cumnock History Group	Website www.cumnockhistorygroup.org/ploughing-up-our-past/ Book "Ploughing up our Past" and "Cumnock Cookbook"
Dalmellington Old Kirk Yard	East Ayrshire Council	Continued upkeep of the kirkyard

Project	Lead Partner	Legacy
School Green Gym	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)	Continued delivery and expansion of its programme of activities in East Ayrshire
Enhancing the Landscape		
Perfect Peatlands	The East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	Continue to deliver further peatland enhancement projects
Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers	The East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	Continue to train and manage volunteers to maintain healthy rivers in East Ayrshire
Coalfields for Pollinators	The East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI)	To maintain planted areas and continue to deliver further planting for pollinators projects
Coalfields to Wildwoods	EADAH	To maintain planted areas and continue to collect and grow native species of trees and bushes
Tower Street Pocket Park	Cumnock Action Plan	Maintain, use and promote Pocket Park
Hedgerow Habitats	Netherthird Community Action Training	Look after new hedgerows and create new areas
North Kyle Land Management Plan	Forestry and Land Scotland	Implement the NKLMP as well as the North Kyle Master Plan