

Castle Loch Lochmaben Community Trust

Newsletter

Summer 2024



Scottish Charity

No. SCO044045

Editorial,

This is our first newsletter for a few years and we hope that you find it informative and interesting.

We have included articles from our new Habitat Officer, Rhonda Graham, volunteering and events, as well as general information about the conservation aspects of Castle Loch and its surrounding woodlands and grasslands. Surveying of plants, animals, birds and insects etc. is on-going.

Castle Loch is born from a Community Project and we would love to have input from those using the area, so please do contact us with your observations and ideas.

We would be really pleased to hear from members who would like to contribute to the next newsletter, which is planned for the autumn.

Please use the email address below.

CLLCT 'Brew and a Bite' Events

At Lochfield Cottage

11am to 3pm:-

July 21st

August 18th

Events raise funds for CLLCT so there be may articles for sale.

If you would like to help out please contact us—details below.

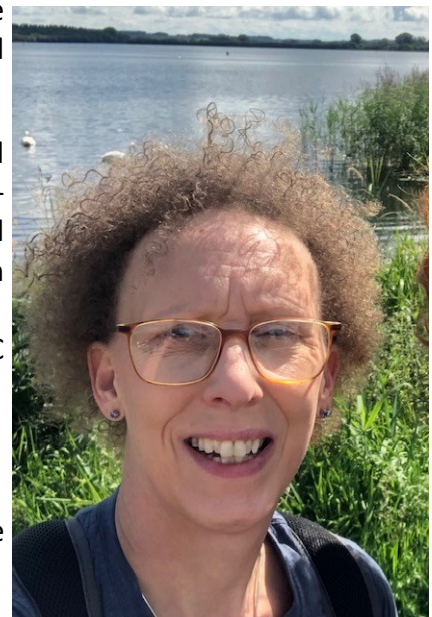
New Habitat Officer

CLLCT recruited a new Habitat Officer in October 2023 and I have been settling into the role and getting to know the local flora and fauna at Castle Loch.

I started my career at Dundee Art College and after a short spell living in the city of Edinburgh decided to review my career in illustration and applied for a different degree in Animal Science and then in Animal Behaviour. After working within the Animal Health industry I completed a Masters Degree in Poultry, specifically Dabbling ducks, before turning to teaching Animal Care at SRUC (Barony College) for the following ten years.

With a passion for wildlife and nature I have turned my head to conservation and am keen to carry on learning more about all the different wildlife groups at Castle Loch and share my knowledge with the next generation.

Rhonda Graham



Website— www.castleloch.org.uk

Facebook CLLCT

Email: castlelochcommunity@outlook.com

Supporting CLLCT

Although we do apply for grant aid from funding organisations for major projects such as the new boardwalk, we appreciate donations from members and users of Castle Loch.

- There is a Donations Post outside Lochfield Cottage, or donations can be posted through the door of the cottage.
- The QR Code on noticeboards and the website is a simple way of donating to Castle Loch using your mobile phone.
- If you have ideas for fund-raising and can give some help, please let us know.
- or why not come along to one of our 'Brew and Bite' events—see the first page.



Volunteering

Rhonda holds regular Volunteer days—every first Saturday and every third Thursday in the month, starting at 9.30am until lunchtime.

Volunteers maintain the footpaths and signs for walkers and provide bird and bat boxes etc. for wildlife. Litter-picking, mainly along the roadsides, is an ongoing task.

Volunteering is a very sociable past-time and a great chance to learn new skills. Recently retired people or those waiting to be employed are very welcome. Refreshments are provided, including home made cakes!

All volunteers will be required to complete a simple induction form.

If you would like to be part of the team please get in touch with Rhonda.

Email: castlelochcommunity@outlook.com

About Castle Loch

Do you know that Castle Loch is owned by the local communities of Lochmaben, the Royal Four Towns and Templand? There is no membership fee but being a member will show that you support the project. We do ask people to use the area responsibly.

Castle Loch is much more than just a place to walk or run, or walk your dog - it is a Nature Reserve a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Ramsar Site and Special Protected Area. The site was designated as a SSSI for its importance for large numbers of over-wintering Goosanders, and Pink-footed geese. SSSIs require consent from Nature Scot for certain operations and maintenance and management procedures may be restricted.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Sites proposed for selection are advised by the UK statutory nature conservation agencies.

So - **SLOW DOWN** and appreciate the changing nature in every season, look around to see what is about - trees, wild plants, fungi, birds and animals.

Listen to the birdsong and smell the woodland flowers as well...

If you are unsure do ask the Habitats officer or volunteers what there is to see.

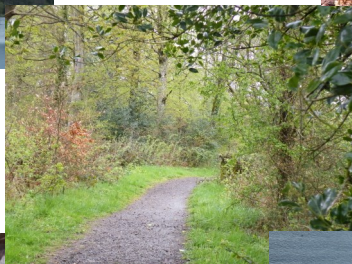
It may be possible for us to run specific or general interest walks to show people the different species, so let us know if you would be interested in this sort of event.

View over the loch to the island



Wood Anemones beside the Annandale Way (woodland by the B7020)

Footpath through woodland



Amethyst Deceiver fungus in woodland



Mute swan (male or 'cob')

Because of Castle Loch's importance to nature and because birds and other creatures breed in the woodlands and long grasses we ask that owners

keep their dogs on the lead.

Letting us know -

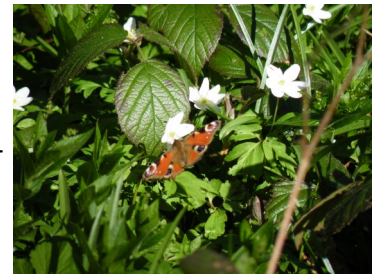
If you see anything of note in the way of birds, flowers, fungi etc. you may wish to let us know - so we have provided white boards in the porch at Lochfield for birds, flowers and fungi.

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 We would really like to know your, and your family’s experience of visiting Castle Loch— enjoyment, comments put your suggestions through the letterbox at Castle Loch or via the contacts on the front page

More notes on Wildlife at Castle Loch

Late spring and early summer are great times of the year to appreciate the plants that come into flower at this time and the changing bird population. Wintering geese and many of the species of duck like teal, goldeneye and wigeon have left the water and returned to their summer haunts, to be replaced in the woodlands by summer migrants such as blackcap, sedge- and other warblers and swallows ; you cannot fail to have heard the chiff-chaff singing.

The bluebells - pretty but sadly not all of them our native species - have finished blooming but red campion, wood anemones, wood sorrel and other woodland plants have taken their place. Trees, too, have flowers— look closely at the canopy of sycamores, willow and birch trees. Flowers and trees are a valuable source of nectar and pollen for many insects, including bees. Although there are some fungi around the loch at this time of year most appears in the autumn.



Peacock butterfly with wood anemone and bramble

Fishing

The loch has always been popular with both local fishermen and those from further afield. It is not run by the Trust but by Castle Loch Fishery from whom permits can be obtained. Local residents traditionally fish for free.

Visit their webpage <https://castlelochfishery.co.uk> for permits and contact details.

As with all visitors, we ask fishermen to respect the loch and its environs and in particular remember not to leave litter or fishing hooks and tackle behind.

Emergency Contacts

Police (non-urgent) 101

Emergency

Police, Fire Ambulance 999

SSPCA 03000 999999



Hugh Fraser Foundation

Minnycap Community Fund

And — many thanks to all anonymous donors