

# Castle Loch Lochmaben Community Trust

## Newsletter

April 2026



SCO 044045

### Editorial

**Our AGM** was held on Tuesday 24th March and approximately 30 people attended—a very good number.

Two new Board Members were elected: Malcolm Wade will be the interim Treasurer from the end of our financial year in May. Now retired, Malcolm has many years experience as a professional accountant.

Clare Whitney is our other new Board member and both are welcomed.

See Dougie's article on the Treasurer position on Page 2.

Thank you to Bill Coombes who gave a lovely talk which was very well received, about trees at Castle Loch.

### Contents

**Page 2** Habitat Officer's Report

Position of Treasurer

Funders

**Page 3** Amphibians at Castle Loch

Lyme Disease

**Page 4** Flooding in Kirkhirst Wood

Please note that your membership, although free, does show your support for the Castle Loch Lochmaben Community Trust.

We are currently trying to update our list. If you live in Lochmaben, Templand, the Royal Four Towns or the surrounding district, you are eligible for membership.

Just contact any Trustee, or Rhonda at Lochfield Cottage, if you or someone you know wishes to become a member.

**Control and click on this link to join CLLCT and access the website**

[CLLCT - Contact Us](#)

### Dates for your Diary

#### Brew and a Bite at Lochfield Cottage

10am to 3pm on Sundays

**May 17th**

**June 28th**

**July 26th**

**August 30th**

Please come along to show your support.

If you would like to help at these events, or do some baking, please contact Rhonda (use the email address below).

**Lockerbie and District Rotary Club** will hold their annual 'Walk the Walk' event around Castle Loch on Sunday 17th May, 10am. Walkers raise money for their chosen charity or organisation.

### Contacts for Castle Loch Community Trust -

Website—[www.castleloch.co.uk](http://www.castleloch.co.uk)

Facebook CLLCT

Email— [castlelochcommunity@outlook.com](mailto:castlelochcommunity@outlook.com)

## Habitat Officer's Report

Volunteers at Castle Loch have had a busy start to spring, by planting over 600 tree saplings around the Loch. As well as our usual volunteers being involved we have also been engaging with Lochmaben Primary to help get the trees in the ground.

With a mixture of Hazel, Crab Apple, Cherry, Aspen and Yew, Castle Loch was funded by the Tree Council and DG Woodlands to allow this planting project to take place. With trees having to be in the ground by the 6<sup>th</sup> March, volunteers have been dedicated to completing the project by the deadline. We have established a wildlife corridor linking two woodlands together as well as a food hedge to support wildlife during the winter months. Natural regeneration has been tubed to protect from deer as well as introducing a mixture of trees to other areas around the Loch, in keeping with what is already present.



## Position of Treasurer

You will have seen previous communications advertising the fact that the Trust is looking for a new Treasurer. We have a member who has come forward to offer his services meantime but, as he says in his own words, he is not as young as he used to be, and is happy for the position to be interim; he would really like a younger man or woman to step up and he would happily assist throughout the transition.

**It would also be a great opportunity for a recently retired person to develop a new interest.**

**No previous experience would be required as there will be plenty of support available.**

I have been associated with the Trust for a number of years as a Volunteer, a Trustee and now Chair and I can't emphasise enough what a pleasurable and worthwhile experience it is to be involved as part of the team in looking after this Community Project on behalf of the Community, and the social interaction and working among very friendly and like minded people is a very fulfilling experience and one that I would have missed if I had not offered up my services in the past, a move which I have never regretted.

So please, if you may be interested at all, get in touch with me in the first instance at [broomrigg@aol.com](mailto:broomrigg@aol.com)

Thank you - Dougie Fountain

George Hunter Trust

CLLCT has been funded by:-

Stronger Starts

Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Comhairle Dhùn Phris is Gail-Ghàidhealaibh

GRANGE

RUSSELL ROOF TILES

NRS  
National Restoration Services

D&G Woodlands

COMMUNITY FUND

NAIRN CONSTRUCTION LTD

the tree council

And - many thanks to all anonymous donors

## Amphibians at Castle Loch



Last year and this year's early spring has supported the perfect conditions for our resident amphibians. Large observations of spawn were observed last year with a successful population developing into froglets and toadlets. With species of common frog and common toad being the predominant species around the Loch, we also see populations of smooth newts and palmate newts, though less often.

The common frog, the most often seen, can vary greatly in colour often making identification confusing for some. Colours can vary from brown to orange/red and green allowing the frog to blend into its background when not moving. The smooth skinned common frog can be seen with a dark 'mask' behind the eye, with the male being paler under the throat. Female frogs can lay up to 4000 eggs per spawn with a hatch rate sometimes as few as 1 in 50 making it to adulthood.



Toadlets generally start off a dark brown and can be seen to walk or crawl rather than the typical hop of a frog. With typically rougher skin than frogs, toads can also show great colour variation, from dark brown to red and green. One of the key differences when observing amphibians at this time of year is the spawn they leave behind. Toads leave behind strands of long lines of spawn, usually wrapped around some plant matter, whereas frogs leave large gelatinous piles wherever they have bred from, in sometimes small bodies of water.

*Rhonda Graham*

## Ticks and Lyme Disease

When you walk around Castle Loch you will be walking on well-maintained footpaths and the risk of picking up ticks is very slight. However, if you go to other areas you may walk through long grass or bracken and could well pick one or two up, and it is as well to know about the risk they pose, although slight.

The main thing is to check yourself (and family) for ticks when you get home. A tick may sometimes be no bigger than a pin head at first. When you spot one it should be carefully removed using a tick remover or similar. The tick will dig into the skin—sometimes itchy— and may be difficult to remove, but do make sure that it is **all** removed!

Keep an eye on the bite site and if you notice a reddish ring around it contact your doctor as it is an indication that the tick has passed on Lyme disease. A course of antibiotics administered as soon as possible will prevent any illness.

Lyme disease is difficult to diagnose but can cause debilitating long-lasting flu-like symptoms. A blood test can provide a reliable diagnosis.



Picture from the NHS website

You can find more information on the NHS website [Lyme disease - NHS](#) (control and click on this link)

*Freda Seddon*

## Flooding in Kirkhirst Wood

Following on from my last article on flooding which focused on the fluctuating water levels in the Loch during periods of heavy rain, this article will focus on the flooding in Kirkhirst Wood.

Kirkhirst Wood is situated on the opposite side of the farm track from the Loch and has a varying network of ditches and small channels which drain the wood and the surrounding areas and these feed in to a larger, wider, deeper channel which is very evident when crossing the bridge at the southerly end of Kirkhirst Wood. This channel was filling up with water during periods of heavy rain and, without any sign of an outflow, was flooding the path and the adjacent areas of woodland, and it only gradually seeped away when the weather improved. The flooding was not deep, maybe six inches to a foot in places, but this impacted on people walking in shoes or even walking boots. We assumed that there was maybe a drainage pipe under the farm track which was choked feeding in to a buried drain under the grassland heading down to the Loch.

The flooding this year was the worst that we had experienced so far, so we made the decision to tackle the problem in January.



We sourced 2x6 metre pipes (18 inches wide) from Drainwise at Kirkpatrick Fleming, 20 tons of Type 1 sub base from Grange Quarry, hired a Digger from Hire and Supplies and engaged the services of a local experienced digger operator and set to the task.

It transpired that there was no previous drainage pipe or field drain, but there had had been a ditch through the grassland to the Loch which was completely overgrown and unrecognisable.

Over the space of a day and a half, we cleaned out the ditch, opened up the farm track to let the water away and installed the 2 pipes end to end and then built the farm track back up again using the sub base.

Since then, we have monitored the flow of water regularly, and it has barely stopped running since, albeit sometimes just a trickle, but also sometimes a much stronger flow during wet weather and the water in the channel has maintained a consistent level throughout so, hopefully, next winter, that area will be passable and walkable, irrespective of what nature throws at us.

*Dougie Fountain*



*Many thanks to Dougie for all his work on this project, not only being present to supervise the work when in progress but for the time spent on the planning and organisation for everyone's benefit, and for this report and photographs.*

*Editor*