

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust 2023 - 2030 Strategy

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST



Creating connections in nature, with nature **and** to each other.



Our Work & Who we are

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Our climate is changing, wildlife is under threat and in decline. Rural communities in the National Park are ageing and declining in number. As well as the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises, local communities face challenges including poor service provision, public transport, lack of affordable housing and lack of opportunity; all of which contribute to rural poverty and are having a substantial impact.

This strategy sets out a step change for delivery by the Countryside Trust providing strategic direction for our charity to deliver activities that create **sustainable connections with nature**; **empower and encourage others to adopt connections with nature**; and **collaborate to develop sustainable nature connections**.

Our Vision

Our landscapes and communities are connected and thriving.

Our Purpose

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust's purpose is to create connections in nature, with nature and each other.

Our Mission

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust is an environmental, and health and wellbeing charity, which aims to support and enhance the wellbeing and resilience in landscapes, communities and people. Working predominantly within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, we deliver projects, encourage participation, and collaborate with others to address the biodiversity and climate emergencies, and to create more sustainable, healthy and active communities, places and partnerships.

Our Specialisms

- Landscape scale NATURE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS.
- HEALTH and WELLBEING walks.
- Active TRAVEL.
- Targeted COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & SUPPORT.



We deliver. We empower. We collaborate.



What we do

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Deliver impact:

The work we carry out delivers active change within communities substantially benefits quality of lives and positively restores landscapes and habitats.



Create connections:

Our partnership approach enables us to facilitate; to collaborate; to join together resulting in bigger and better-connected projects and wider benefits to communities.



Independent, credible, trusted and fair:

We facilitate, we work in partnership, we have no political or policy agenda, we respect and understand different points of view. We can be an intermediary; we can access and respond to different opportunities; we can be reactive and flexible when others are constrained.



Bottom-up approach:

The work we deliver is driven by a real and identified need. We work with people to provide benefits to communities, and we respond to the biodiversity crisis by work with land managers to deliver the foundations for ecological restoration.



Nature:

Our priority is nature and addressing the biodiversity crisis. We focus on large scale habitat improvements.



Nature and people:

Of equal importance is restoring positive connections between the people of the Park (residents, communities of interest), the outdoors and each other. We particularly focus on the physical, social & mental wellbeing benefits of being in nature.



Empowered:

We are empowered to deliver change, and we empower others who share our common values to make a difference.



Evidence based:

Our work is based on research, scientific studies and best practice.



Creating a sustainable legacy:

We are fulfilling a need and a purpose. Our work delivers lasting impact for individuals, communities and the natural environment.



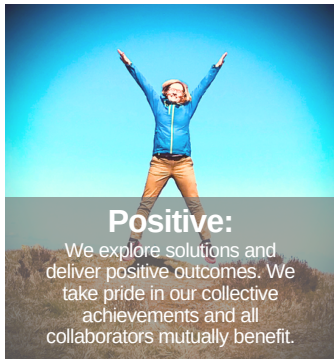
Exemplar:

We are a catalyst to get things started and grow ideas. We use our wide network to support and facilitate new activities.



Positive:

We explore solutions and deliver positive outcomes. We take pride in our collective achievements and all collaborators mutually benefit.



Active action:

We take action, we encourage people to actively participate and to be active in and connected to nature.



Value for money:

We maximise our resources and income to deliver the greatest impact and effect



We are **exemplars**. We are **independent, credible, trusted and fair**. We are **Trust in the Park**.



Our Strategic Ambition 2023 - 2030



We have three work programmes with defined outcomes that our work will deliver.

Connected Lives

Outcomes our work will deliver:

- Our nature focussed activities will encourage and empower individuals to be more physically active, to appreciate the nature on their doorstep and to help foster greater physical, mental and social wellbeing via enjoying nature.
- Our work will create deeper and beneficial connections between individuals within communities and between communities.
- Our collaborations will develop volunteering, learning and skills development opportunities and accreditation.
- Our activities will expand across a broader reach of LLTNP enabling us to work with a greater number of people.

Nature Connections

Outcomes our work will deliver:

- Our collaborations on landscape scale conservation projects will deliver a net positive impact on the local environment, its ecology and biodiversity, and the biodiversity and climate emergency.
- Our work with land managers, NGO's and communities will increase the strategic connectivity of habitats, green active travel routes and communities.
- Nature friendly landscapes will be created due to our activities.
- Due to our work, communities and visitors will be more appreciative and connected to a nature friendly environment.

A Connected Organisation

Outcomes our work will deliver:

- Our profile will increase, and we will be recognised as a well-known and respected charity within communities and stakeholders.
- We will be recognised for the sustained and successful delivery of our flagship projects.
- We will increase our capacity to enable us to be the 'go-to' organisation when new ideas and projects are in development.
- We will be more financially resilient by reducing our reliance on core funding and diversifying our income streams.
- We will create a productive operational environment with empowered and appreciated staff enabling us to deliver, respond to opportunities & have capacity for innovation.

We create connections in nature, with nature and to each other.



Delivering our Strategic Ambition

Our ambition will be delivered through our flagship projects and is where we can make a real impact; **Walk in the Park, In Step with Nature, Wild Strathfillan, Active in the Park** and **The Great Trossachs Forest NNR**.

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Nature Connections

Our climate is changing, wildlife is under threat and in decline. For our work to deliver a sustainable legacy, the Countryside Trust needs to lead, inspire and facilitate ambitious and large-scale nature restoration work. We need to improve habitat connectivity, diversity and resilience to restore natural processes and ecosystem function in order to build resilience, diversity and a critical mass.

Community connections with nature are equally important – to understand what is special, what is changing and what we can all do to acknowledge, care, appreciate, act and protect everything that has a home in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

We will:

- **Deliver landscape restoration as part of Wild Strathfillan project.**
- **Develop & deliver The Great Trossachs Forest NNR funded projects.**
- **Collaborate in Loch Lomond Basin Project.**
- **Deliver nature connection project: In Step with Nature.**
- **Develop Nature Ambassadors Walk Leader volunteering activity.**
- **Deliver localised nature restoration activities.**



Image: The Great Trossachs Forest from Ben Ledi, 2023



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Connected Lives

Rural communities in the National Park are ageing and declining in number. As well as the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises, local communities face challenges including poor service provision, public transport, lack of affordable housing and lack of opportunity; all of which contribute to rural poverty and are having a substantial impact.

Research shows that creating connections with others and being outside in nature has positive impacts on individual social physical and mental wellbeing.

Support to connect communities, share knowledge, build resilience and empower positive behaviour change is where the Countryside Trust can deliver impact to increase local capacity and energy to make a difference.

We will:

- Deliver community activities encouraging physical, social and mental wellbeing.
- Develop green referrals: a Natural Health Service in the National Park.
- Collaborate with Local Support Groups.
- Develop our support for hard-to-reach individuals in communities.
- Celebrate our people - ambassadors for our work.
- Develop our volunteer programme.
- Create Community connections.



Image: Killin 'Walk in the Park' group presented with their Paths for All 'Health Walk Group of the Year' Award at Scottish Parliament, September 2023



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A Connected Organisation

This strategy sets out a step change by the Countryside Trust.

We know that our name and activities are sometimes confused with other organisations and our role, reach and impact is not always fully understood. With refreshed vision and purpose, together with a culture that better reflects our values, we will create a better foundation upon which this ambitious strategy can be delivered. Our team will be empowered, trained and supported to deliver our vision whilst thriving in their careers.

We will:

- Deliver supporting activities.
- Promote our work and achievements.
- Deliver our values through our Board, our Team and Governance activities.
- Develop and expand our financial supporters to build financial resilience.
- Understand the options for sustainable long-term delivery with landowners and communities.



Image: Board Strategy Away Day,
Drymen, February 2023



