

tidelines

Issue 53 Winter 2020

newsletter of the Solway Firth Partnership



**Dynamic
Dunescape**
Page 4-5



**Kirkcudbright
Bay Walks**
Page 12-13



**Myths, Legends and
Folklore of the Rhins**
Page 16-17


2020
**COASTS
& WATERS**



SFP Team, left to right: Morag, Nic, Georgie, Paul, Clair

A Note from Solway Firth Partnership

We are still limited in the work we can do at Solway Firth Partnership due to current government advice but we have been able to put together the winter issue of Tidelines. We are not producing any printed copies but will make the pdf version available as widely as possible. So get out and enjoy the Solway Coast but don't forget to follow the government advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

You can find the latest guidelines for England at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

and the latest guidelines for Scotland at
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

Contents



The Dynamic Dunescape Project	4 – 5
The Solway Coast AONB, Focus on Mawbray Banks	6 – 7
Maryport Regeneration	8 – 9
An Update from the SMILE Project	10 – 11
New Kirkcudbright Bay Walks Guide	12 – 13
Robin Rigg Community Funded Projects	14 – 15
Myths, Legends and Folklore of the Rhins	16 – 17
Introducing the Fishermen’s Mission and Local Officer, Grant Wilson	18 – 19
A Study on Equitable Governance & Management of the Solway Firth	20 – 21
The Fresh and the Salt – a Book Review	22
SFP Accounts	23

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Dynamic Dunescapes



Partnership working on the dunes



Dynamic Dunescapes is an exciting and ambitious new project, restoring some of the most important sand dunes in England and Wales for the benefit of people, communities and wildlife. Many of us know and love sand dunes as beautiful coastal landscapes, but they are also important biodiversity hotspots. These dunes are a sanctuary for unique and rare species which are perfectly adapted to live in shifting sand, like the northern dune tiger beetle, natterjack toad, sand lizard and fen orchid.

But sand dunes are listed as one of the most at-risk landscapes across Europe for biodiversity loss and these dune-adapted creatures are now at risk. Over time, many sand dunes have become covered by grass and scrub which have stabilised the sand, and invasive species have overtaken the habitats of native ones. Conservationists now know that a healthy dune environment needs areas of freely-moving sand, sheltered dune slacks and areas with low vegetation to support its diverse wildlife.

So, the project is using pioneering conservation techniques to rejuvenate dunes and make their shifting sands the perfect home for our native threatened wildlife again. From Cornwall to Cumbria, the Dynamic Dunescapes will restore nine key dune areas in England and Wales, covering up to 7,000 hectares of beautiful coastal landscape.



Having fun on the sand dunes



Dunes beside river estuary

But that's not all. A myriad of fascinating events are being planned in the dunes for the local communities, schools and visitors, subject to any coronavirus restrictions. Sand dunes are far more than just a hurdle to pass on the way to the beach from the car park, and the project's schedule will invite people into the dunes to learn more about the ecosystem and its resident wildlife, and inspire visitors of all ages to love their local dunes.

For keen coastal volunteers and budding environmental conservationists, fascinating opportunities to get involved in the restoration projects, help species monitoring programmes and support scientific research are planned subject to restrictions. For more information about the project or any of the Dynamic Dunescapes project sites, and to keep up to date with events and volunteering opportunities, visit www.dynamicdunescapes.co.uk

The Cumbria Dynamic Dunescapes project is working at eleven sites. These include working in partnership with local landowners and the Solway Coast AONB at Grune Point and Silloth Dunes to remove invasive species and implement cattle grazing to reverse some of the detrimental over-stabilisation of the dunes. Work will be taking place over the next four years and we apologise for any inconvenience to members of the public who may use any of the Cumbria sites.

FUNDING & THE PARTNERSHIP

The Dynamic Dunescapes project has secured £10m funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the EU LIFE Programme and from project partners.

Project partners are Natural England, Plantlife, National Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.



FOCUS ON Mawbray Banks & The Solway Coast Dunes



Mawbray Banks

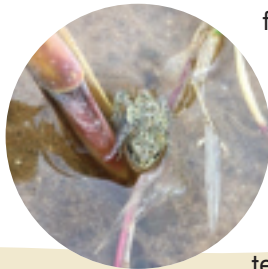
Lots Going On!

If you visit the Solway coast dunes over the next few months you will notice lots going on as we continue our programme of nature recovery work to enhance habitats and improve access for visitors.

Coastal sand dunes are the most threatened habitat in terms of biodiversity loss in Europe. They are suffering from widespread over-stabilisation, invasive species, nutrient enrichment, habitat loss and fragmentation. As a result, dunes have become overgrown with vegetation causing dune wildlife populations to suffer.

Mawbray Banks is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is home to Isle of Man cabbage, dune heath (a habitat becoming rare in Cumbria) and is also a haven for natterjack toads.

We are working with Dynamic Dunescapes, a national project working to halt the decline to sensitive dune habitats (see pages 4 – 5), as we work to protect and improve the condition of this important site.



CYCLEWAY

Construction work on the new route linking the existing cycleway between Maryport and Allonby onward to Silloth is now well underway and the contractors are making good progress. There is some disruption at a number of sites and car parks as construction continues but this should be short term and we are expecting the cycleway to be open early in the new year.

MORE NATTERJACK TOAD POOLS AT MAWBRAV BANKS

Ponds provide important habitats for amphibians and some of our rare plants. Natterjacks require ponds with little vegetation, gently sloping open access, short grass swards and areas that are sheltered to keep the water temperature warm.

Contractors will be on site over the next few months constructing two further natterjack toad pools at Mawbray Banks. We know that the natterjacks thrive where there is a concentration of pools of varying aspect, size and depth and the new pools will provide this



Isle of Man Cabbage
Left: Natterjack toadlet

variety with a total of five pools in the central area of the Mawbray Banks site. The works undertaken last year were very successful and we now have a healthy breeding population of toads on the site and the current works will build on this success. We will also be scraping the turf off the sides of some of the dunes around the pools creating areas of bare sand where the toads can burrow.

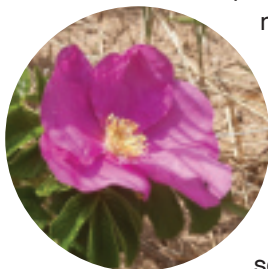


SCRUB CONTROL

As dunes have become increasingly stabilised, more scrub has grown, risking encroachment onto dune heath. The Solway Coast AONB Conservation Volunteers work hard to cut back encroaching scrub and dense areas will be removed through mechanised flailing and grubbing out. Some areas of gorse will be maintained on the reserve to provide habitat and shelter for birds, ensuring nesting is not disrupted.

ROSA RUGOSA CONTROL

The rose, *Rosa rugosa* is an invasive species which dominates sand dunes and has become a significant problem on the Mawbray Banks dunes and at other sites along the coast. Where possible the entire plant is dug up and the stems and rhizomes burned on site. Other areas will be cut by hand or brush cutter. Regrowth and uncut areas are carefully spot sprayed with herbicide. These actions are followed up later in the same year and in subsequent years to ensure effectiveness.



CONSERVATION GRAZING

Grazing is considered an effective and natural way to maintain certain habitats. Historically, sand dunes have been used for grazing and even farming rabbit warrens which have played a major role in helping to keep dunes healthy.

Change in how the land is used and a shift in grazing regimes has had a large impact in the loss of healthy dune systems. Grazing is effective in helping



Belted Galloway cattle
Below: Invasive rose, *Rosa rugosa*

to keep unwanted scrub at bay. It disturbs the ground to allow specialised plants to flourish, maintains short grass swards for natterjack toads, creates open patches of sand for natterjacks to hibernate and provides habitat for ground nesting birds too. At Mawbray, a native breed cattle herd will be introduced to the site. The cattle from a local herd will be selected for their familiarity with people and well-behaved dogs.

Fencing will be installed around Mawbray Banks, allowing access onto the beach via stiles and gates throughout the site at main entry points. Our aim is that you will be able to roam over the dunes much as you do currently.

ACCESS AND RECREATION

Public use and enjoyment of our coastline is important. They are great places to go to walk, relax and learn about the fascinating wildlife. All works we do as part of the project will ensure your access to enjoy these special spaces continues whilst helping to protect and conserve our wildlife.

An Online Programme of Activities

THE SHOW MUST GO...ONLINE!

Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit has teamed up with a few good partners to bring the Solway to you. Planned pre-Covid events have gone through a transformation of digital metamorphosis. See if we can pique your interest with the programme below.

A SERIES OF COASTAL CONVERSATIONS

The Solway Coast AONB and Solway Firth Partnership are presenting a series of webinars that focus on cross border topics such as salt, military history and farmsteads. The first talk of the series, on 29 October, 'Salt on the Solway', focused on the Solway's salt making heritage.

The speakers, Andrew Fielding and John Pickin, summarised our current understanding of historic salt making on both sides of the Solway. If you missed the 'Salt on the Solway' webinar, visit the Solway Coast AONB or SFP Youtube channel to see the recorded event. Our next Coastal Conversation will be on Farmsteads, on 3 December, details to follow.

GET FIT WITH LAURA

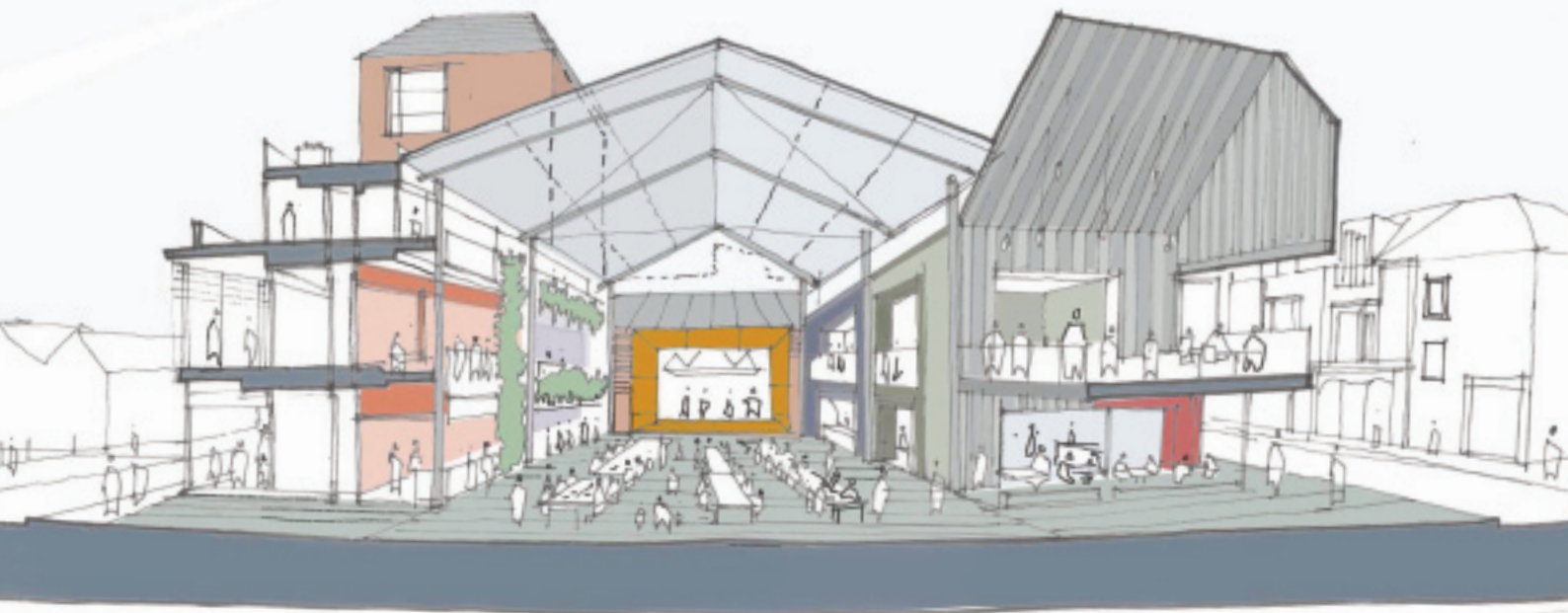
Join Laura's Academy for a fun filled 30 minutes of exercise. This is a perfect chance for those of you who don't like the idea or have the time to attend a class in person. It is a perfect platform to improve your fitness from the comfort of your own home.

CREATIVE LITERACY TUTORIALS

Liz Million has designed a series of early years creative literacy tutorials themed around the AONB wildlife. Liz will have your little one coming up with characters and writing their own story boards in no time. The first tutorial will air in November.

Delve into the world of digital and enjoy the Solway Coast AONB from the comfort of your own home.

Visit the *Solway Coast AONB website* to find out more about the online activities.



Empire Yard internal sketch

Maryport Regeneration

Situated on the southern entrance of the Solway and with a fascinating heritage dating back to Roman times, for over a century Maryport has suffered general decline and limited economic growth. Recognising its enormous potential, Allerdale Borough Council are now working with a variety of different stakeholders to support an extensive regeneration programme for the town.

Following on from a detailed study carried out by consultants in 2018, the council adopted the 'Maryport Delivery Plan' which set out a number of key recommendations for improvements. Last year a dedicated team was set up in order to develop these plans and obtain funding to deliver projects in relation to both the town centre and waterfront zones. Due to the availability of regeneration funding which specifically targets town centre decline in England, the town centre area therefore became the immediate area of focus for the team.

FUTURE HIGH STREET PROPOSALS

Following on from a successful submission of an expression of interest last December, Allerdale was awarded a sum of £150,000 by the Government Future High Street Team in order to support the development of a business case. Consultants were appointed to develop plans, which include architectural drawings, associated projected costings and business plans relating to the redevelopment of key buildings within the town centre.

The business case was drawn up through a comprehensive process of engagement with Cumbria County Council, Maryport Town Council, local businesses, residents and other key stakeholders. A decision on funding of the business case is due in the autumn and if successful could result in a four-year programme of works up to a value of over £16.7m, which will transform Maryport Town Centre.

The duration of the programme must be no longer than four years, and the proposal covers the six elements:

- Improved pedestrian access and public realm areas, linking different zones within the town.
- The provision of a semi covered market square facility, focusing on food and beverage and local produce.
- The refurbishment of a former empty Cinema to provide an arts / entertainment and community hub facility.
- Refurbishment of the Wave Leisure Centre to provide an indoor pool and cycling hub.
- Conversion of the vacant Christchurch building to provide a new location for the Maritime Museum.
- Provision of a grants system to be administered by the council to support the conversion of empty retail units into residential properties.

The focus for each scheme supports making Maryport a destination of choice. The aim being to move away from traditional retail, to increase footfall, invest in community facilities and enhance the unique selling points of the town in order to attract tourism and thus develop economic growth.



The Carlton



Digital masterplan



Empire Yard

THE MARYPORT HERITAGE ACTION ZONE

Allerdale are also now able to announce the success of Maryport's Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) bid, which will see an investment of £1.2m into the town centre. The HAZ programme will receive about half of its funding from Historic England and the rest will come from the Council itself with input from Sellafield and local building owners.

The programme is designed to promote the regeneration of Maryport using its unique and special architectural and townscape heritage. As well as upgrading many of Senhouse Street's impressive historic buildings, there are exciting plans to create events and activities over the next four years to celebrate and better appreciate the town's history and culture and encourage greater footfall.

The HAZ will upgrade four key buildings in the high street, making them more usable, attractive and welcoming. They are: Maryport Town Hall, the Maritime Museum building, Heron Foods and 68 Crosby Street. The latter involving and enabling the conversion of the upper floors of Midland Bank Chambers to be converted into much-needed visitor accommodation.

The HAZ will also involve the removal of some shopfronts and allow them to be replaced with high quality new ones

more in keeping with the beautiful architecture of the street. There will also be new and improved signage, seating and public art in Senhouse Street.

A key and exciting element of the project is the 'Cultural Programme' which will involve festivals, competitions and town trails, the start of a street art trail with a piece inspired by what is best and most loved about Maryport, and a calendar of events celebrating the town's heritage. A team of local people involved in arts and culture, called 'Creative Maryport' has been established to create a 4 year programme of events in and around the high street, increasing footfall and showcasing all that it has to offer.

An important element of the programme is to ensure on-going engagement with the local community, particularly seeking to engage with currently under-represented groups. Engagement activities will focus on ensuring awareness and, where applicable involvement, in the HAZ capital projects. People will also be encouraged to get involved in the cultural programme and, more generally, around Maryport's heritage. This will increase awareness and pride in Maryport's history and show how it can contribute to its future prosperity.

You can find out more at <https://www.allerdale.gov.uk/en/maryport/>

Christ Church



Maryport Harbour



Empire Yard external sketch

An Update from the SMILE Project

Another edition of Tidelines magazine, another reason to SMILE with a SMILE Project update for you all.

SEASS report and SMILE Project funded through;



SEAES Report Funded through;





COVID-19 has, unfortunately, resulted in the delay, cancellation, or holding virtual alternatives for so many events which we were hoping to attend this summer. We hope everyone reading Tidelines is safe and well and has managed to attend webinar alternatives over the past few months. There have been some great online events such as the Dumfries and Galloway Environment Fair, Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership presentations, and many more! We've been attending these events and been keeping active on social media throughout lockdown, sharing beautiful images of the Solway to help keep you all connected to the coast even when we couldn't visit it.

Alongside the SMILE Project there are two associated projects called SEASS and SEAES. These are acronyms for the Socio-economic Analysis of the Scottish Solway (SEASS) and the Socio-economic Analysis of the English Solway (SEAES).

These two projects, undertaken by the consultancy firm EKOS, have been ongoing alongside the SMILE Project. The projects are separate, each being funded individually through the European Maritime Fisheries Fund in Scotland and England. However, they are complementary providing regional socio-economic intelligence for the entire Solway Firth when read together.

Although unique and stand-alone, these projects also feed into the SMILE Project, creating the core information and data to populate the 'Productive' chapter of the new, interactive, Solway Review. We are pleased that these projects were successfully completed in early 2020 with each analysis covering the sectors which benefit from, or fully rely on, the

Solway to provide value for their industry on both the Scottish and the English sides.

Sea fisheries, seafood processing, shipping and transport, tourism, and other sectors are included in the SEASS and SEAES reports, which are structurally based on Scotland's Marine Atlas's 'Productive' chapter. The reports look into the economic contribution, main activities and distribution, pressures (socio-economic and environmental) from the activity and a regional look forward for each sector.

EKOS has also created helpful one-page summaries and chapter summaries for both the SEASS and SEAES reports as the full analyses are over 100 pages long!

With the completion of these reports populating the Solway Review's 'Productive' section is well underway and includes hyperlinks to further useful information and engaging maps. If you would like to read the full reports, one page, or chapter summaries they are all available on our website -

<https://www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk/planning/seass-and-seaes/>

We hope to be able to attend events with stakeholders around the Solway soon! Keep an eye on Solway Firth Partnership's website for online events coming soon, or take a look at our online interactive resources.

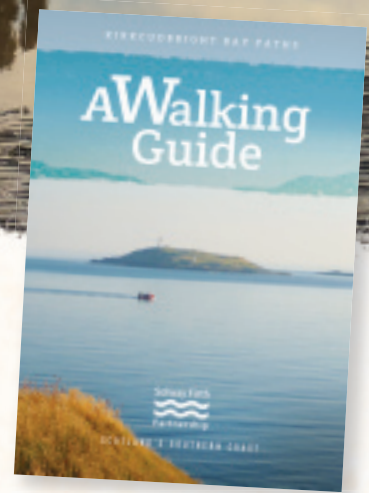
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New Kirkcudbright Bay Walks Guide

The tidal estuary of Kirkcudbright Bay is a perfect place to explore a varied shoreline of rocky headlands, sandy bays, pebble beaches and cliffs with caves that are steeped in history.

A new guide describes three walks that introduce the magical countryside of Kirkcudbright Bay where you can stand in the shade of a woodland and hear the call of the curlew or feel a sea breeze while exploring an old graveyard.

Where a river meets the sea is a dynamic place with the rhythm of tides and seasons making every visit a delight. Whether you want a gentle amble around St Mary's Isle, a stroll to enjoy clifftop views from Torrs Point or a more demanding ramble through the undulating woodland on the Senwick shore, this guide helps you discover the many tales connected to places in the bay.

The Solway Firth Partnership Kirkcudbright Bay Views Project aims to enhance connections between people and place by improving paths and gathering local heritage knowledge to develop informed access to Kirkcudbright Bay. This project is one of several supported by the Galloway Glens Partnership Landscape Scheme that will improve the access provision across the area and encourage more people to experience the cultural and natural heritage of the area.



Speckled wood

ST MARY'S ISLE

Starting at the centre of Kirkcudbright this walk provides a circular walk round St Mary's Isle. The name is misleading because it is not an island but a narrow peninsular jutting out into Kirkcudbright Bay, named after the 12th century Augustinian Priory dedicated to St Mary although no remains of the priory can be seen today.

SENWICK SHORE

From the car park at the popular Doon beach on the west side of the estuary a beaten earth path meanders through the wooded coast with views down into Kirkcudbright Bay. Named after the nearby Doon Hill where there are earthworks of an ancient fort hidden in the woodland it is shown as Nun Mill Bay on many maps. The footpath can be a little tricky to locate because the path begins between two gardens in Mill Hall. An information board is planned at the car park to make access to the path easier to find.

TORRS POINT

This is a linear walk along pavements on the east side of Kirkcudbright Bay with a loop out to the cliffs at Torrs Point before returning through farmland and a minor road. There is also limited parking at a layby on the minor road south of Mutehill if a shorter walk is preferred.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The project also gathered heritage information from local sources and involved volunteers who took part in a survey of heritage features in Kirkcudbright Bay. Held over a long weekend in October 2019 training was led by experts from the SCAPE Trust (Scottish Coastal Archaeology and the Problem of Coastal Erosion) and the Nautical Archaeology Society. The weekend included a guided walk and talk along the shore between Senwick Churchyard and the Doon beach to look at the history of the area; recording the remains of the Fauna, a vessel on the banks of the River Dee near Gibbhill Point; and a visit to the wreck of the Monreith with participation in a rapid archaeological survey.

This work was especially important as Kirkcudbright Bay has several fragile remains, which required surveying so that 'Preservation by Record' was undertaken before features are lost. The report, which is available on the Solway Firth Partnership website, led to an ITV Border News article and featured as part of the Can You Dig It online events programme which is available on the Galloway Glen YouTube channel.

Further volunteer survey work is planned as part of the Can You Dig It Project to survey the carvings of Torrs Cave and unique yairs and doachs, fish traps, in the River Dee.



This work is being undertaken as part of the Solway Firth Partnership Kirkcudbright Bay Views Project supported by The Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership Scheme. The Galloway Glens is a suite of projects being undertaken up and down the Ken/Dee Valley, between 2018 and 2023, connecting people to

their heritage, driving economic activity and supporting sustainable communities. The Galloway Glens is primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and is supported by a range of partners including Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere.





Robin Rigg Community Fund

Update on Funded Projects

Despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19 some of the Robin Rigg Community Funded Projects have been able to get going in 2020. Catch up with the progress of three of the projects.



Salmon smolt being measured

Saving our Salmon Project

The 'Save our Salmon' Project is a two-year partnership project between West Cumbria Rivers Trust, The Environment Agency, The University of Glasgow, Natural England, Derwent Owners Association and several local angling clubs. The project involves trapping, tagging and tracking Atlantic salmon smolts to understand more about their movements on their journey through the River Derwent and out to the Irish Sea.

Smolts are the stage in the salmon life cycle where they leave their juvenile habitats and migrate out to sea for the first time. There is very little known about this stage of the life cycle. It is hoped that by undertaking this project, that the resultant data will better inform management decisions and action to try to address the decline of salmon populations within the River Derwent, which is sadly following a global downward trend in Atlantic salmon populations.

The project is now at its halfway stage, and whilst the current global pandemic has prevented us from collecting all the data we set out to get in 2020, the University of Glasgow were successful in tagging and tracking the full 2020 cohort of 100 salmon smolts.

The photograph above shows one of the smolts caught and tagged. The dedicated PhD researcher is now reviewing the tracking data from 2020, and we are reviewing our methodology and formulating the best approach for 2021 to gain maximum value from this project.



The Robin Rigg Community Fund is provided by RWE Renewables



Salmon trap on River Derwent

We wish all the projects well during this difficult time and hope they can continue to deliver all the valuable community work.

Fruit baskets for visually impaired people in West Cumbria



Sight Loss Lifeline Project

West Cumbria Society for the Blind was established in 1990 by a group of volunteers who identified a need for support services to address the barriers and challenges faced by visually impaired people. Their services have proved to be a "lifeline" for people suffering from sight loss many of whom have other disabilities due to age.

The project planned to provide staff for a Resource and Information Drop-in

Centre in Whitehaven town centre and run an outreach programme to alleviate social isolation and depression caused by sight loss. Following the lockdown in March the project immediately reorganised their work to ensure the most vulnerable visually impaired still received emotional and practical support.

The Resource Centre is now back open to the public and measures are in place to ensure all Government guidelines are followed and the centre is Covid secure.

Staff have been busier than ever with people requiring support as the measures put in place following lockdown are challenging for the visually impaired to follow. They are also in regular contact by telephone with over 300 isolated and lonely people providing much needed advice, guidance and emotional support. The organisation has also sent baskets of fruit to over 90 lonely, isolated people living on their own. Members have expressed their surprise and delight...e.g. 'I was absolutely delighted and can't thank you enough for the lovely thought...'

Staff reported back to the Robin Rigg Community Fund, 'It is thanks to your generosity that we are still able to support over 1,000 visually impaired people each year who access our services'.



Lifeline in the Resource Centre



Borgue Playpark Equipment

The trustees of Borgue Public Hall raised funds which were matched by a grant from the Robin Rigg Community Fund to replace the playpark in front of the hall to provide a safe and fun place for the young people of Borgue to play.

As you can see from the photos the playpark has been successfully installed and the children certainly seem to be enjoying it!

Kids enjoying the Borgue playpark



Rhins of Galloway Coast Path Search for Stories



As the Rhins of Galloway Coast path begins to take shape we are searching for local stories that inform our understanding of the past and enjoyment of the present. The history of the Rhins is mingled with myth, legend and folklore that relate to specific places in an area once steeped in superstition.

Some stories have been recorded in ancient books and have been the subject for scholars while others are just a footnote in an archaeological report. Stories that have been handed down through the generations may be common knowledge while others may only remain in the oral tradition of a local family.

You can help

Do you know of any stories, ancient or modern, true or fantastic, connected to places on the Rhin coast? We would love to hear from you in order to make a collection of tales from the Rhins.

Witches

There are many interesting walks along the rugged coast, but a visit to the southern tip of the Mull of Galloway is always exhilarating as you watch the swirling seas from the foghorn lookout perched on the cliffs.

Here you will be standing above Carrickcarlin Point - carrick means rock and carlin is a Scots term for a witch or old woman, a name probably inspired by the tale of witches who conjured up nine tides in one place.

Several versions of the story have been recorded in old books but they all agree that nine witches cast a spell to trap passengers on a boat as it passed the Mull of Galloway but were then prevented from lifting the spell and so the rough seas remained for all time.

Saints

Near the Mull of Galloway is a cave, chapel and healing well associated with the legend of St Medan or Medana. The story is first told in the Aberdeen Breviary, one of the earliest books to be printed in Scotland, and tells of a beautiful Irish maiden who had vowed to lead a religious life.

To avoid being seduced by a noble knight she flees to the Rhins of Galloway but he follows her and on seeing him approach she takes refuge on a boulder in the sea. Praying for help the boulder floats across Luce Bay to the Machars.

Again, the knight tracks her down and this time she asked him why he is following her and he replied that it is her eyes that are so bewitching. She then tears out her eyes and gives them to the knight who, full of remorse, returns home. A spring then miraculously bubbles up beneath her feet so she could wash her face.

Giants

According to local tradition a giant called Murchie was buried on a remote rocky outcrop at the northern point of the Rhins to the east of Corsewall Lighthouse.

In the mid 1800s the discovery of a grave with bones seems to have confirmed the story but not long before a man digging for treasure at the same spot took fright and, in his rush, to leave fell and broke his arm. This adds to the story that the place is said to be haunted, presumably by the ghost of the giant.

Fairies

On a route following the coast south of Dally Bay you soon reach a grassy knoll marked on maps as Castle Ban. Now thought to be the site of a medieval motte, it was said to be haunted by fairies.

A local tale tells us that three attempts have been made to dig for hidden treasure and all resulted in mishap. The first man accidentally cut off his own foot with the first strike of his spade, the second was scared away by strange and alarming sounds coming from the sea and the third was terrified by the appearance of a lady in white warning of dire consequences and threats of vengeance if the place was ever disturbed again!



The Mull tidal race



Giant's grave



St Medan's Well



Scallop boat at Kirkcudbright Harbour

Introducing the Fishermen's Mission

& Local Officer Grant Wilson

During these unprecedented times I thought it worthwhile to reintroduce The Fishermen's Mission and to let you know we are still working and will soon have an active Facebook page covering the south west.

The Fishermen's Mission is still working hard helping seamen throughout the UK. I presently work from home in Dumfries and although I am not visiting, I am happy to chat to anyone by phone or video link.

Kirkcudbright Harbour



Lobster creel





Leaving Kirkcudbright Harbour

The Fishermen's Mission reaches out to both active and retired fishermen by providing practical, spiritual and financial support – as well as a vital emergency response service.

We are the only national charity that works solely to help fishermen and their families, and for over 130 years of service, the Fishermen's Mission has stayed true to our Christian calling with a strong tradition and proud heritage.

From having a heart to heart over a coffee to responding when there is a tragedy or emergency, we're the vital port of call for fishermen and their families when they need us most – 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

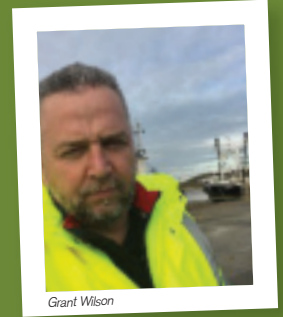
Here are some examples of the ways in which we supported the UK's fishing communities last year:

- We helped 152 children of fishermen
- We visited 4,861 fishing boats
- We had meetings with 2,452 fishermen
- We carried out 8,054 welfare visits
- 221 fishermen were helped after an emergency at sea
- We helped fishermen access grants totalling £1.1 million
- We were available 24/7

Unloading at Kirkcudbright Harbour



Who am I and what am I doing?



Grant Wilson

Since I started in August last year I have tried to get round all the harbours and organisations to meet everyone but due to other commitments and now the pandemic this just has not happened.

I know the Solway coast very well having spent my school years at Dalbeattie High School and Kirkcudbright Academy.

I have recently retired having served as an Operational Police Officer and worked in Lockerbie, Moffat, Kirkcudbright, Castle Douglas, Annan and Stranraer.

During the course of my police duties, I became involved with The Fishermen's Mission during a police enquiry.

At that time I could not have imagined I would be joining The Mission and assisting fishermen on a daily basis.

If you are aware of anyone who would benefit from The Mission, they may need financial assistance due to unforeseen circumstances brought on by Covid-19, require emotional support or simply want a cup of tea and a blether then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Hopefully I will be out and about again soon, visiting harbours and chatting to one and all.

My working hours cover 2 days a week (usually Thursday and Friday) but these days can change depending on the requirements of my role.

I am normally available on 07774 115412 (but if I don't answer please leave a message and I will return your call) or send me an email at SolwayfirthMPO@Fishermensmission.org.uk or in an emergency please call our HQ on 0800 634 1020.

Superintendent Grant Wilson

Fishermen's Mission Port Officer for the Solway



Equitable Governance & Management of the Solway Firth – How You Can Help!

The Inner Solway Firth (which includes the Upper Solway Flats & Marshes) is a Marine Protected Area with a number of designations. Through its designated status as both a Special Area of Conservation (EU Habitats Directive) and a Special Protection Area (EU Birds Directive), it is part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas. It is also listed under the Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance and part of the OSPAR Commission's North East Atlantic Network of MPAs (Region III – Celtic Seas). On a national level, the Inner Solway Firth is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, partly in Scotland and partly in England. There is also the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, located solely on the English side, and Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve on the Scottish side.

The complexities of the Inner Solway's designations are added to by the fact that natural features often straddle borders. In the case of the Inner Solway, this results in the many cross-border designations found here. The variety of designations illustrates the high value of natural features of conservation importance found within this area. For example, the Special Protection Area is designated for 20 bird species including oystercatcher, pintail and redshank, and the Special Area of Conservation is designated for 10 important coastal features, marine features, and fish species.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) may be designated for many reasons, from nature conservation to fisheries management, and are considered successful if they can meet

their biological objectives while maintaining sustainable use. This means taking into consideration not just environmental sustainability (i.e. ecological resilience) but also socioeconomic sustainability – maintaining the cultural and economic services that the area provides. Stakeholder involvement in MPA management is necessary to ensure a functional balance between nature conservation and human activity, because research shows that when stakeholders are not aware of an MPA's objectives and are not consulted during the design and implementation of an MPA, biodiversity suffers. The respect and inclusion of stakeholders in protected area decision-making is known as equitable governance and it is one of the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity. Aichi Target 11 of the CBD calls for 'effectively and equitably managed' protected areas. However, equity tends to be overlooked in protected area management assessments.

A study conducted by Constance Schéré, a PhD candidate at King's College London studying marine conservation in the Irish Sea, is exploring the role equity (i.e. fairness and inclusion) plays in MPA effectiveness. The Inner Solway Firth is one of three case-study sites included in her research. In order to fully understand the state of equitable conservation in the Irish Sea, this study is looking to recruit participants in the Inner Solway Firth area.

KING'S College LONDON

Ms. Schéré is asking members of the Solway community and others to consider taking part in a short, fully anonymous online survey. This survey is open to anyone who has an interest in the conservation and protection of the Solway Firth. So even if you're a tourist or don't live directly on the coast you can still help this research by completing the survey.

Participants will be asked to respond to questions about how fairly and inclusively stakeholders feel they are being treated as users of the Solway Firth. This survey is made up of 20 questions, takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and can be done on a computer or smartphone. At the end of the survey, participants will be asked if they'd like to participate further by being interviewed (this can be done over the phone or via Skype to ensure social distancing measures). An interview will give participants the chance to elaborate on any issues or good practices they feel are most important regarding how the Inner Solway Firth MPA is being managed and protected. Since the online survey is fully anonymous, identities will not be revealed in the study results even if they choose to be interviewed.

All participants who complete the survey can choose to be entered into a prize draw to win 1 of 3 Amazon gift cards, worth up to £100.

The link to the survey can be found here:

<http://www.tiny.cc/solwayfirth> or participants can scan the QR code using their smartphone to access the survey directly.

Thank you in advance for your help in the equity study!



Do you enjoy the Solway Firth?
Whether you're a local resident or just here for the day, we want to hear from YOU!

Complete a **10-minute anonymous survey** and enter to **WIN 1 of 3 Amazon gift cards (up to £100)!**

Scan the QR code to complete the survey on your phone or visit www.tiny.cc/solwayfirth for your chance to WIN!

This survey is part of a King's College London research study on fairness and inclusion of stakeholders that's only in marine protected areas.
Questions? Contact: patrick.stevens@kcl.ac.uk

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Sandyhills, Inner Solway





High tide on the saltmarsh, below: Cockle shells at Kippford

The Fresh and the Salt

The Story of the Solway by Ann Lingard



Explore the wondrous features of the Solway Firth from home in the newest publication from renowned author Ann Lingard.

As an intrepid explorer of the Solway estuary who moved to the area 20 years ago, Ann discusses lesser known elements of the Solway along with sights we all know and love with wonderful descriptions which make you feel as if you are trekking alongside her.

Managing to blend personal experiences from studying zoology, historic stories, and recent adventures onto the Solway coast, this book allows the reader to feel the fresh air of the Solway from home and explore from the comfort of your armchair.

Ann has an unquenchable curiosity introducing characters from around the Solway throughout the exploration adding to the knowledge passed along throughout the pages. You may even spot a few mentions of your very own Solway Firth Partnership, along with some of our projects and publications.

You can sense Ann's unwavering dedication and interest in all things Solway throughout the chapters, refusing to stop with the knowledge she already holds, and seeking out those

with additional stories and information to add. Whether she is travelling around Rockcliffe Marsh, flying over the Solway, or enjoying a cup of tea and scone

with one of her many characters throughout this book, she never fails to make the reader feel as if they are right alongside her (knee deep in mud at times) exploring all the same locations.

There is truly something for everyone in this new publication, with historic information spanning from the near and very distant past, to local stories and knowledge you could only find on the Solway shores.

Just to whet your appetite some interesting snippets from the book include: sea anemones can live for 20 years and perhaps even 40 years.

Merse bergs, areas of isolated merse (or salt marsh) – can collapse in the same way as icebergs.

The Fresh and the Salt, The Story of the Solway is available now.

www.birlinn.co.uk ISBN 978 1 78027 693 9



Plaster diorama showing Haig Pit, 2010

Celtica Hav, entering Silloth

New Red Sandstone at Fleswick Bay



Accounts to March 2020

Solway Firth Partnership aims to undertake activities in line with our mission statement: *To support a vibrant and sustainable local economy while respecting, protecting and celebrating the distinctive character, heritage and natural features of our marine and coastal area.*

Our accounts for the financial year end 31 March 2020 show an income of £181,702 of Restricted and Unrestricted funds (£160,665 in the previous financial year) giving us a surplus of £4,750 in our Unrestricted funds. An Unrestricted Reserve of £78,481 is carried forward into the next financial year.

Projects completed this year included the Fishing Faces Project (including a booklet raising awareness of commercial Solway fisheries) and the SEASS / SEAES Project (Socio-Economic Analysis of the Scottish Solway and Socio-Economic Analysis of the English Solway) all funded through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (through both Marine Scotland and the Marine Management Organisation). The SMILE (Solway Marine Information Learning and Environment) Project continued into its third year and the Solway Coastwise Project finished with a final publication – ‘Words and Places’. All reports/booklets are available on the SFP website.

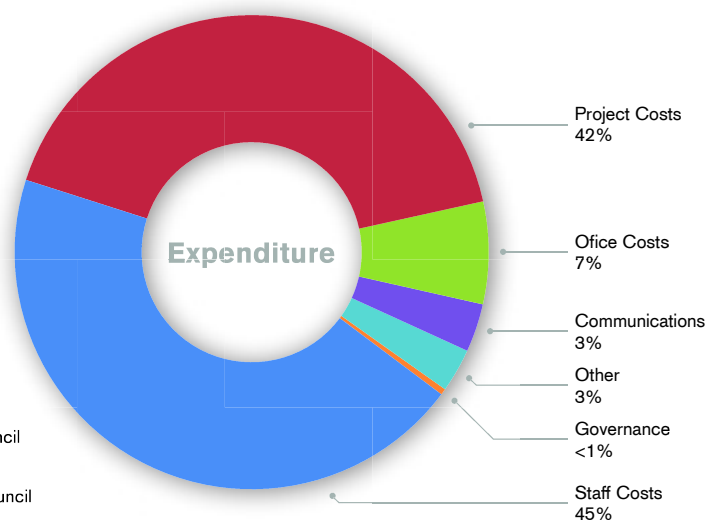
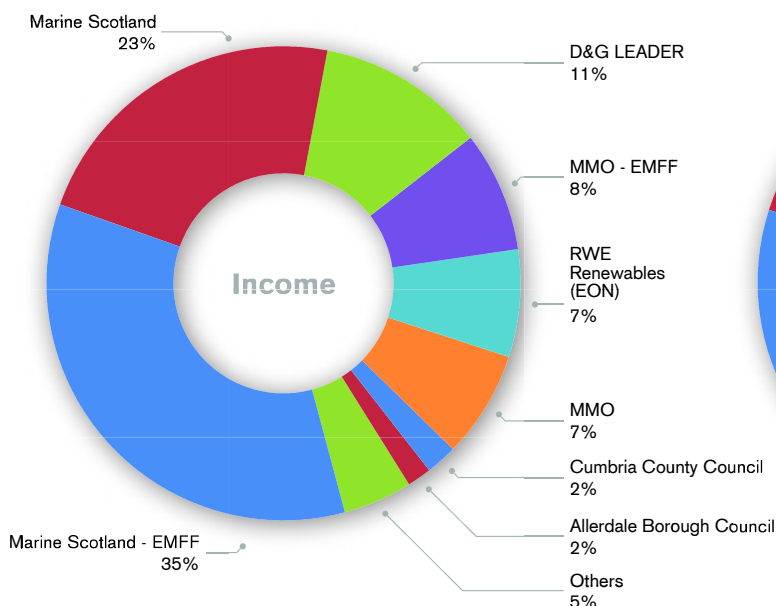
Our thanks go to the staff team who have worked hard to make the projects a success during the year.

We are very grateful to all the organisations that have provided funding in the last financial year: Marine Scotland, RWE Renewables (formerly EON), Natural England, Cumbria County Council, Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme, Marine Management Organisation, European Maritime Fisheries Fund.

We would also like to thank all the people who have given in-kind support in many ways, thereby enabling our core activities to continue as well as allowing a wide range of projects to go ahead. We appreciate that Solway Firth Partnership relies on the goodwill and expertise of many people and organisations in order to be able to carry out the work we do.

Our full accounts for the last financial year are available on our website: www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk

Clair McFarlan: Solway Firth Partnership





For further information, to submit an article or to join the SFP mailing list please contact:
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To subscribe to the Solway Firth Partnership Newsletter please visit: www.solwayfirthpartnership.co.uk

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