**Bo’ness & Blackness Action Plan 2013 – 2018**

**2014 update in this colour**

**2015 update in this colour**

**Theme 1: Community Facilities & Activities**

**Priority 1. New Community Hub**

* Newtown P. Association has just recently received ownership of the Newtown Park and facilities. Harry has moved away from Bo’ness but still an active member however our contact now is Robert Snedden, who is also a member of Bo’ness Community Council so we are in constant contact with him. [So watch this space.]
* August 2015

Newtown Park Association in 2014 achieved the transfer of Newtown Park back into community hands, which is where it began as a gift to the town in the early 1900’s. The charitable association has a Board of community minded people who care passionately about Bo’ness. They are now taking forward community consultation to ensure that the site is developed to respond to a range of community needs and Newtown Park becomes a place for all 7 days a week.

 PMR Leisure Community Sports Consultants have been commissioned by the Association to help consult with our community. Over the last couple of months they have engaged with youngsters at the Academy and have a group in the Life Skills Programme who will help with the consultation and survey of all the Primary Schools in the Autumn Term. They have spoken to community organisations across the town, trying to gain views from the very young through to those who are retired and looking for activities to take part in, in the town. The response so far that is coming forward, suggests that Bo’ness is in much need of a ‘fit for purpose’, modern, community hub and quality synthetic pitch. The Association have already put a bid to the Council for upgraded pitch facilities, which if successful would enable the schools and community to use the site 7 days a week for sport. HOWEVER, the most important part is to get the new community hub right. So far the Consultants have heard the town needs a multi purpose space to cater for adult and youth activities, a kitchen/café which can provide opportunities for cooking classes as well as training for young people. Along with these comments others would like to see somewhere to access computers and the internet. Music plays a large part in this community and offering facilities to support this has come forward also. There are 2 community meetings planned on the following dates – 27th August 7pm at Fisons and 8th September 7pm at Bridgeness Social Club. If people can’t attend, but wish to share their views they can contact the consultants on info@pmrleisure.co.uk or 01620895900

 **Priority 2. Support access to existing premises**

* The Council has now decided to offer a Community rate for hiring the Town hall at £10.50 per hour, much better than £800.
* One Bo’ness group are paying the PLI for a small group to continue to use the library. [Anonymous ]

Still ongoing.

* Carriden Church is releasing their Hall to other groups now.
* Only at the discussion stage of some Bo’net groups wishing to purchase premises in the Town Centre.

 Discussions have now ceased due to the Newtown Park Project

 **Priority 3 Support for existing groups and activities.**

* We are in the throes of assisting Churches together, Store House etc. The aim is to bringing together Professionals and Volunteers to assist the needy in Bo’ness. ‘The **Bo’ness Care and Share**Group’At present we have had 3 meetings, have sourced premises and with the help of C.V.S. looking for funding. Basically we require a ‘Drop-in centre’ cuppa, chat, information and we will have the backing of the professionals a signpost to the needs of the individual, be it - the Food bank, clothing, debt problems. They may not have the confidence to go into an office for help; these are the people we want to help. Madelene and I are helping to get this project off the ground. 4 Open sessions have taken place and at present the findings are collated.

The clients felt that the venue was too far away from the Town Centre, the group approached the Salvation Army situated at Corbiehall and in partnership ‘HOPE STREET’ has been formed in association with the Healing Rooms, Storehouse and Social Work. They opened their doors at the beginning of August. Bo’net has now stepped away from this Project as our help is not required. We only were involved to assist the setting up of the project.

**Priority  4 Continued & expand support for young people.**

Frank managed to source more funding for Fusion to continue and Madelene and I signed it off through Bo’net and it was successful.

Due to budget cuts, Falkirk Council is now going to close the Recreation Centre at 5pm on a Saturday meaning that Fusion will require new premises.

**Priority 5 Upgrade Recreation Centre**

Falkirk Council nearly closed it in the latest budget. However on a positive note we have a Recreation Centre Staff member now on our mailing list as they want to be involved with the Community.

No further update

**Theme 2: Environment & Outdoor Recreation.**

**Priority 1 Develop Kinneil Estate and Woods.**

* Falkirk Community Trust has employed Chris Cutts to develop a Master Plan for Kinneil Estate. He has worked closely with The Friends and now the Master Plan is complete and at the draft stage. We are delighted that Kinneil House has received a Feasibility Study too and the Community will be involved through each stage.

The Kinneil Estate Advisory Group is being formed and awaiting the date of the first meeting. This group is made up from Councillors, Council employees, Historic Scotland, Bo’ness Community Council, The Friends of Kinneil, White Lady Mountain Bike Group and other members of the Community.

* Still looking into the Café but it is highlighted in the Master Plan and the Mountain Bike group are still ongoing, they too are highlighted in the Management Plan so good news.

A Pop up Café has been implemented in Kinneil Museum on the Open Days of Kinneil House. This is us gathering evidence of the requirement of a café in the Estate.

* . The Woodland Management plan for Kinneil is supposed to begin in Autumn [Mmmmm we have been here before but looks more promising this time.]

The plan began in December 2014, cutting down the trees in one area. This is a 20 year programme, every 5 years they tackle one area. Many people are appalled at the state of the area, but a true saying “you cannot make an omelette without cracking eggs” Deer fencing is up around the area which will stay up for two years giving the planted trees time to grow. Paths are to be completed by the winter 2015.

**Priority 2 Develop a network of paths and cycle tracks.**

* Bo’net has been working with Falkirk Council, Bo’ness and Blackness Community Councils, Carriden Church Community Group and The Friends of Kinneil regarding John Muir Way and the path from Blackness to Bo’ness. The path will hopefully be completed by the end of August so there will be a celebration with Blackness. We are also in the throes of organising a group [Professionals and Volunteers] to look at the JMW section between Carriden and the harbour. This is needing upgrading and serious money implemented] An initial group discussion has taken place and everyone is to come back to the group with ideas and possible funding sources.

**This has been fantastic. Bo’ness Foreshore Projects – Update, August 2015**

**PATH IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE FORESHORE:**

Following an audit of the section of the John Muir Way that comes through the Falkirk Council area, a number of recommendations were made for improving the quality of the path for locals and visitors.  In terms of improvements required in Bo’ness, the priorities were; Blackness to Shore Wood – path upgrade complete; officially opened by the communities of Carriden and Blackness in April 2015

Bridgeness Foreshore – path upgrade from sewage works to Bridgeness Scrap Yard completed early summer 2015 Falkirk Council has been successful in securing funding from Sustrans for further improvements to the John Muir Way in Bo’ness.  The original plan was to use this funding to upgrade to tarmac the path from Shore Wood to Carriden and the sewage works during 2015/16.

Having recently inspected various sections of the foreshore, the Outdoor Access team is now considering upgrading the section of path from Carriden to the sewage works during 2015/16 and leaving the path from Shore Wood to Carriden in its current state.  This may leave a sum of Sustrans money available for use elsewhere along the John Muir Way.  There is an opportunity to use any outstanding funding that may be available to upgrade other sections of path along the foreshore nearer to Bo’ness Town Centre.

**BUGLIFE PROJECTS:**

**Former Shipbreaking Yard - vacant & derelict land sites** This site is important for invertebrates. Funding has been secured to work with volunteers who will help manage the site for biodiversity interest. The project is being run by Buglife (the invertebrate conservation charity) in partnership with Falkirk Council. Volunteers may live near the site, but equally could include folk working in the nearby businesses within the Industrial Estate (including Caledonian Produce). Volunteer activity will include scrub removal, invasive species control, woodland management, litter removal and yellow rattle seed sowing.

**Grangepans Meadow Creation**

This project is also being run by Buglife in partnership with Falkirk Council. Volunteer activities will include sowing wildflower seeds, putting in wildflower plug plants, and helping with management of the new meadow. The project is part funded through Falkirk Environment Trust and Inner Forth Landscape Initiative. **Buglife will be hoping for lots of community involvement for both these projects.**

**ART AND INTERPRETATION PROJECTS:**

**Natural Connections project** Room 8 Studios worked with Scottish Natural Heritage and Falkirk Council between October 2014 and May 2015 speaking to members of the local community to find out their thoughts and feelings about the Bridgeness Foreshore area. Much of the activity has been filmed, and Tracey and Holger from Room 8 have gathered an enormous amount of information about what people think of the area. This will culminate in some physical improvements along the foreshore – e.g. art / words painted on concrete sea wall; arty benches along the foreshore.

Project achievements from the research and development phase of the project include:

* **Inception meeting**: with key members of Bo’ness Community Council, Bo’net and other active community groups in the area.
* **Walk for thought**: Use of visual and audio interviews with key Bo’ness people as they walked along the foreshore. This provided the artists with an insight into the area’s history, archaeology, community aspirations and personal memories and stories about the foreshore.
* **Open Studio**: An open studio was held in a vacant shop in Bo’ness Town Centre in December 2014. This gave people an opportunity to share stories about their personal connections with the foreshore and their favourite places along it.
* **Film-making workshop** with Bo’ness Academy: Room 8 Studio worked with 12 young people (aged 16 – 18) through the Hippodrome Festival of Silent Film, Falkirk Community Trust and Falkirk Council Community Learning and Development. Following a workshop with Room 8, the young people wrote, performed and filmed a short piece at Carriden Woods and worked with a sound artist to create a beat-boxing soundtrack for their film.
* **Foraging Nature Workshop** with Falkirk Council Ranger Service: This event focused on working with older and less mobile residents and encouraging them to talk about nature and their experience of the foreshore. The group took part in a guided walk along the foreshore at Carriden beach followed by enjoying foraged food soup in the Upper Forth Boat Club cabin.
* **Waymarkers Event**: Sharing work inspired by the community conversations, Studio 8 created a mobile cinema event at Carriden beach. A transit van was used to show 4 short films created with some of the footage taken from the project. The Seabox made a guest appearance and was used during the event. Participants were asked to write the first word that came to mind to describe the foreshore and place this in the Seabox.

The Next phase:

Ideas from the initial phase of Room 8 Studios work will be developed and used to deliver on-site enhancements which may include:

* Art project along the concrete sea wall between Bridgeness and Upper Forth Boat Club – “Flooded Words” – we will be looking for more community engagement to help deliver this one
* New seating for the Bridgeness Foreshore area – “Foraged Seats”
* Fund-raising will be required to make this next step happen.

**LITTER PICKS:**

In October 2014, Falkirk Council’s Litter Strategy team ran their ‘Picktober’ campaign encouraging community litter picks along the full length of the John Muir Way in the Falkirk Council area. The foreshore area was included in this. Forth Estuary Forum have been asked to work with the Council’s Litter Strategy team to deliver additional litter-pick events targeting the Bridgeness Foreshore area.

**BO’NESS BUOY**

Potential Heritage Lottery Fund bid (Our Heritage grant, which is up to £100,000)

Buoy lifted from Bo’ness dock in March 2015.

**Condition Survey** for the buoy – a brief for this is currently out to tender with a tender return date of 11th September 2015. This will establish:

* Current condition of the buoy
* Recommendations for short-term works required to stabilise and restore the buoy (along with cost estimate for carrying out these works)
* Long-term maintenance requirements (with cost estimates)
* Recommendations and cost estimate for the type of display structure required for the buoy

**Restoration and Display** of the buoy – community research into the buoy and dock area will help inform interpretation materials installed around the displayed buoy. The project may also include locating, lifting and restoring the 2nd buoy if this is feasible.

**Film:** recording the restoration process, community research into the history of the buoy, harbour and dock area, and local memories and stories about the buoy, harbour and dock.

Next Step:

* Continue research into history of the buoy, dock and harbour
* Submit HLF bid
* Submit FET bid
* Once funding secured put project brief and film-making brief out to tender.
* Lots of potential for community involvement for this project.

**KINNEIL FORESHORE**

* 1 x meadow area at Snab Lane; 1 x meadow area at Corbie Inn – these will be cut late September, with grass bailed and lifted.
* In the 2nd phase of creating small clearances in the woodland on the peninsula – Autumn 2015. I think Ian said that this is year 2 of a 4 year project and that, as happened last year, there will be additional planting taking place this winter 2015/16 and wildflower seed sowing.
* Kinneil drystane dyke: tenders received and TCV appointed. TCV due to start late September on a 6-month trainee project to build the dyke.
* Improvement of signage for Kinneil is covered in the Master Plan

This is being covered within the JMW project.

No further forward with signage. Foreshore signage is at the planning stage.

**Priority 3 Improve play, sports and Skateboard facilities**

* The Newtown Club is moving on with their project.

Fantastic results see above

* Skateboard – they are still looking through legal papers. Madelene is in contact with them.

This group seems to have dissolved

* Tennis Club unfortunately has disbanded.
* Since the document was produced another group came onboard with Bo’net. This group is the Bo’ness United Community Football group. They coach 180 local boys and now girls. We assisted them with their application and were awarded just under £10,000 this month. To improve facilities.

This group is going from strength to strength, keeping us informed of their projects. They now use our contacts and feel that they can apply for funding themselves now. They too are now working and linking to the Newtown project

**Priority 4 Town and Village enhancement in Bo’ness & Blackness**

* As stated previously that we are in continual working in partnership to improve the connection between the town and village.

This partnership is ongoing, see Foreshore report.

* Blackness is improving the village with new signage, plant pots, beach litter pick and joint celebrations between both communities.
* We have not created a project yet but the area around the Town Clock has been redone due to the roots of the trees coming up through the mono blocking and 5 trees are being planted [properly this time]

At present we are only at the thinking stage, as you can appreciate we are working with so many groups at the moment.

**Priority 5 Maintain the Green Belt**

* Lost this one as new houses are being proposed.

Still in the planning stage.

**Theme 3 Heritage & Culture**

**Priority 1 Kinneil House and Museum**

* Falkirk Community Trust were given £50,000 from Falkirk Council for a feasibility study on Kinneil House, [which fell at the first hurdle]However The Friends of Kinneil did not take no for an answer, we did a parliament motion and I wrote to all Central  Scotland MSP’s  F.C.T . Historic Scotland had a rethink and the Study was completed at Easter and the proposals are built into the Kinneil Master Plan Draft which is out to the community bodies of Bo’ness for views.

As stated previously, we are awaiting to have our first Advisory meeting.

* The Friends are working with Historic Scotland regarding James Watt as 2015 and 2019 are significant years. They are keen to work on the Cottage.

This has been an exciting year regarding the setting up of a James Watt Festival include places and groups around Britain. The Friends of Kinneil are taking a major part in this celebration. Funding bid to HLF for £100,000. 00. This bid will be carried out by the British group.

They propose a Legacy and Festival event at Kinneil Cottage and the Community will be involved.

There has been a plaque placed on the cottage;

JAMES WATT 1736 – 1819

Inventor of the Condensing Steam Engine, undertook his formative work in this building.

* Café and physical activities are within the Master Plan but I am a little concerned on the delivery of educational opportunities.

Café see above. Physical activities are still in our minds but not pursuing it at the moment.

 **Priority 2 Interpretation and promotion of the Industrial Heritage**

* A film is at present being produced regarding the Potteries of Bo’ness. A website is in the pipeline regarding the past industry of the Town. Mining, shipbuilding and Ship braking will be covered within the Inner Forth Project and the Bridgeness Project.

<http://www.boness.org.uk/timeline> This is a fantastic website with the new Pottery film on it now.

**Priority 3 Continued support for the areas living culture, groups and events.**

* We are delighted that Bo’ness and Carriden Band have a new representative and are keen to work with us for future funding. I continue to deliver to the bands potential funding bids.

I have met several times with a small group. Their priority is the Band hall. They had applied for £1,000.00 several times; I looked over the application and redid it. They received their funding the following month and replaced the Boiler.

* Accordion band are looking for new premises as Falkirk Council have put the cost of School letts up. The band is seeking our assistance to by a premise in the Town Centre.

They had to rethink this idea as the neighbours did not want it to be a hall for rehearsing.

* In the past year we have not assisted the Barony Theatre only promoting their performances through social media. The Silent Film Festival held within the town and the Hippodrome we have sponsored an event for a family workshop.

This group are now looking for major funding to expand their premises. They do not require our input for funding only in-kind assistance.

* We are the main voluntary group taking the lead with Town Centre management to deliver The Victorian Street Fair which is held in May but begins preparation in October. We have gone from a few stalls to 72 this year.

2015 This year the VSF was postponed until August due to the high winds.

It was a success and we were able to receive funding £1.400.00 to assist in keeping the Charity stalls cost down to £15.00 each and we delivered lots of free activities for the children and their families.

* Through Dave at CVS I discovered funding for Churches [which is very rare] and I contacted all Churches in Bo’ness to inform them of the funding. No feedback has been received yet.

Still no feedback but Bo’ness Churches Together group [which Madelene and I are involved] held the first ‘Churches Family Fun Day’ we held it at Newtown Park and we were assisted by the Police and Fire Brigade. All free activities also the rides on and inside the Fire engine and Police Car. A great day had by all.

**Theme 4 Access to Transport & Services.**

**Priority 1 Retain, expand and integrate train and bus services**

* We are still monitoring the Bus and Train services. However the OAPs of Bo’ness and Blackness now cannot have free transport from Linlithgow Station due to Linlithgow being a different region [although we have the same post code]

Falkirk Council has withdrawn the X19 bus service from Bo’ness to Edinburgh.

You just about cannot receive public transport out/into Bo’ness. We have tried our best to appeal against this with Bo’ness Community Council, they did relent for a while but this was a budget cut.

**Priority 2 Develop and sustain existing support services for the vulnerable in the Community.**

* We have good links with the First Responders and St Andrew’s Groups.

* As I stated groups are beginning to develop Bo’ness Care and Share Group.

Now called HOPE STREET situated in the Salvation Army premises at Corbiehall

* We are still looking into the unemployed travelling to Grangemouth for their benefits. Many walk to Grangemouth [8 mile round trip to sign on] as they have not got the funds to pay the £5.60 return bus fare. Bus or eat.

They are looking into bus tokens for the unemployed.

 **Theme 5: Economy & Tourism**

**Priority 1 Branding and Promoting**

* We have our new Bo’ness leaflet. These are in the process of delivery to outreach tourism establishments, local venues, shops, churches and homes.

This has been a great project, due to the low supply, we are thinking of a reprint with some changes. [The John Muir Way] this was firstly to be called Trail at the time of the printing.

**Priority 2 Continued Town and Harbour regeneration.**

* We have a stronger link with SRPS, working together to improve railway visitors spending time in the town.

We have had a pilot project having 2 class pupils from one of the Primary schools

ride on the train for free. We hope to expand this for next year.

* Big slabs of stones have been removed and placed as seating areas.

The Friends of Kinneil funded 4 new picnic benches to be placed on the Foreshore.

* Guided walks are being proposed with Step Forth along the Foreshore on a Monday evening.

This walk is well established now.

* No proposals have been carried out regarding improving the Harbour area.

No change

* Not commissioned a feasibility study yet for the West Pier.
* No change
* Letter was written regarding turning the bus shelters around away from the North wind. Not taken this any further at present.
* No change

**Priority 3 Support existing businesses and initiatives.**

* This is continual work supporting through social media. One family baker in the town was changing the premises and requested assistance with professionals and we managed to link them up with the appropriate people to assist them. We intend to visit each business to collate their information and place it on our website – ie opening times – produce – contact details etc.

This is on the plans for the Autumn.

**Priority 4 Development of more facilities and amenities in Blackness**

* This is being developed. Village café – the Pub has been bought by a local resident so the owner and the Community are in negotiations how the premises could meet the needs of the village and visitors.

This is still ongoing.