

# Statutory Biodiversity Duty **REPORT ON DELIVERY**

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1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014



# Foreword

Angus is one of the most biologically rich areas of Scotland (and the UK). Tourism relies on our unspoilt landscape and the iconic wildlife - from the golden eagle in the uplands, and red squirrels in our woodlands, to the farmland barn owls and seabirds and small blue butterflies on the coast – Angus is certainly rich in its biodiversity and attracts visitors from far and wide. Beneficial insects pollinate our crops and the land provides raw materials for our renowned food and drink industries, as well as materials for buildings and roads. As we are learning from a project in the Angus glens, simple tree planting can contribute towards flood defence works elsewhere in the catchment.

Many organisations including Angus Council, community planning partners and nature conservation bodies are committed to working together to conserve our special natural heritage. Such partnerships are vital, but with the enactment of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 emphasis has been very much on local biodiversity issues. Under the Act every council employee has a legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Working together across all our services, we are developing the best ways to do this - and, at the same time, contributing to other policies and initiatives, such as community planning.

Angus Council was a key partner in setting up the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership in 1998. Since the publication of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002 we have been helping to implement its 400 actions. Of the 75 projects listed within the Partnership as at the end of 2014, 63 are situated in Angus. Many of these are community-led, but many are also being initiated by Angus Council officers. Tayside Biodiversity Partnership is now reviewing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and a 2nd Edition will be published next year updating our actions and guiding us for the period 2015 to 2025.

Looking back, however, from 2005 until earlier this year, landfill tax monies via the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund ensured 31 Angus-based projects were funded. Another 21 biodiversity projects were funded via the Angus Environment Trust. In total just under half a million pounds (£499,799) has levered in local project spending of £804,975. Without this important funding, many of the actions within the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan would remain unfulfilled and national targets failed. However it is not all about actions and targets – by involving the local communities and council officers in many of these projects, this has helped to raise awareness of a range of biodiversity issues across the county and enabled many people to call a project their own. This in itself creates a ripple effect of more work being achieved and many more of our important Angus species and habitats being safeguarded.



Richard Stiff  
Chief Executive, Angus Council

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 Our Duty to Report

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their functions. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 further requires all public bodies to report every three years on how they comply with this Duty. This first report is required by 1 January 2015 to cover activity for the period **1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014**. This report demonstrates how Angus Council has complied with the Biodiversity Duty for this period.

## 1.2 The International and Scottish Context

The work undertaken by Angus Council to further biodiversity conservation contributes to international targets to halt the global loss of biodiversity. The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity provides the original overarching target to halt global biodiversity loss; in 2010, new global targets for 2020 - the 'Aichi' targets were agreed. These are:

### **Strategic Goal A**

Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;

### **Strategic Goal B**

Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;

### **Strategic Goal C**

To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity;

### **Strategic Goal D**

Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services;

### **Strategic Goal E**

Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Following the agreement of the Aichi targets, the European Union published 'Our Life Insurance, Our Natural Capital: an EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020'. To update and supplement the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy ('Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands') which was published in 2004, the Scottish Government launched its '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity' in June 2013.

### **1.3 The Role of Local Authorities and Local Biodiversity Partnerships**

Local Authorities are well placed to deliver biodiversity conservation as they can have a significant impact on biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. There are opportunities for widescale community engagement, sustainable resource management and positive education, plus a range of projects and initiatives that can be undertaken, all of which can contribute directly to the safeguarding of local biodiversity.

In Scotland, many Local Authorities support and act as key leaders for the Local Biodiversity Partnership in their area. These partnerships were created in response to the original Convention on Biological Diversity. The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, part funded by Angus Council, was one of the first in Scotland, being set up 16 years ago. A dedicated Biodiversity Co-ordinator has been in place for the past 14 years. The role and importance of Local Biodiversity Partnerships is recognised and supported in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Since its first publication in 2002, the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan has had two main aims, namely:

- To co-ordinate existing actions, as well as initiating and co-ordinating new ones; and
- To conserve and enhance the region's biodiversity, taking into account both local and national priorities.

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership (TBP) is currently overseeing some 75 projects via its Working Groups; with the Partnership taking forward some of the projects itself. It also assessed and reported on the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund (community landfill tax monies) from 2005 until mid-2014 which provided leverage of £1,824,000 on grants provided of £758,728.

## 2 The Strategic Delivery of the Biodiversity Duty in Angus Council 2012-14

This section outlines how Angus Council has strategically delivered biodiversity conservation for the three year period 2012-2014.

### 2.1 Governance, Leadership and Management

Angus Council is a joint leader/funder with Perth and Kinross Council of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership which employs a Biodiversity Co-ordinator to facilitate the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and assist the council in delivering against our biodiversity duty.

Many teams within Angus Council lead on carbon, climate change and sustainability work within the Council co-ordinating various policies, action plans and projects which have clear links to biodiversity conservation. Angus Council is a signatory to the Climate Change Declaration, and the Scotland Geodiversity Charter. Both contribute towards biodiversity conservation measures.

Angus Council Plan 2014-2017 refers to local outcomes as ‘the results we want our work, and that of our partners, to deliver’, and includes the following:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Local Outcome 11</b> | Our Natural Environment is protected and enjoyed.                                    |
| <b>Local Outcome 10</b> | communities are developed in a sustainable manner                                    |
| <b>Local Outcome 12</b> | Our carbon footprint is reduced  |
| <b>Local Outcome 2</b>  | Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit                                  |
| <b>Local Outcome 8</b>  | We have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced |

The Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement (2013-16) highlights that the 12 local outcomes ‘reflect our local circumstances and priorities but also support and contribute towards the government’s sixteen national outcomes.’

The local outcomes related to biodiversity, above, contribute to the following national priorities:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>National Outcome 6</b>  | We live longer, healthier lives  |
| <b>National Outcome 10</b> | We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need. |
| <b>National Outcome 12</b> | We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.   |
| <b>National Outcome 14</b> | We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production                        |

## 2.2 Mainstreaming

The conservation of biodiversity is embedded in the delivery of Council services.

Main Drivers include;

- Angus Local Development Plan - a key service in the delivery of biodiversity conservation through land management policies, protection and designation of local sites. This ensures that land use planning and the management of Council-owned land delivers protection and enhancements for biodiversity.
- The Development Standards team who assess individual planning applications potential impacts on biodiversity.
- Countryside Services who manage the natural environment within Angus country parks, local nature reserves and a range of non-designated sites;
- Environmental Strategy Project Officers who develop media and awareness raising opportunities, training seminars, environmental projects development and collaborative working opportunities.

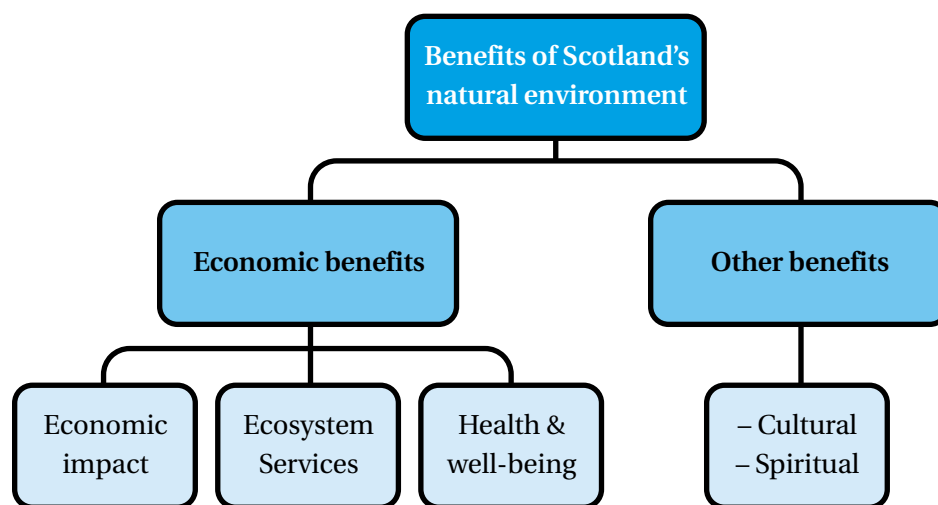


Figure 1. The importance of the environment cannot be counted in economic terms alone (SNH).

## 2.3 Monitoring

The status of biodiversity and activity on biodiversity conservation is monitored through:

- Inclusion of Local Authority projects via the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Reporting System (UKBARS), input by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership;
- the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership's Annual Report on overall delivery of actions and targets;
- State of the Environment Report for Angus 2011;
- Annual Report by the Parks and Burial Grounds;
- A programme of species monitoring and survey work carried out by Council staff, volunteers and partners to provide the baseline data for indicators;
- Angus Council Climate Change Strategy Annual Reports;
- Scotland's Climate Change Declaration Annual Reports;
- Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-16;
- River South Esk Catchment Partnership's Management Plan;
- Angus Community Planning Partnership - Rural and Environment Partnership Full Year Reports.

## 2.4 Partnership Working

The Council is a joint lead partner for the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership. The Partnership comprises approximately 100 organisations and bodies, including government agencies, non-governmental bodies, local naturalists and volunteer conservation groups. It is chaired by an independent Chairman. The Partnership is responsible for the production, delivery and promotion of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan, together with reporting on actions and targets.

To facilitate wider partnership working, the Partnership set up its own Forum. Angus Council was pleased to host the first meeting of the Forum in Forfar in March 2012. One of the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund recipients, Murton Nature Reserve, showcased its projects to Forum members with a guided tour of the reserve. Angus Council hosted the third Forum meeting in May 2014, this time in Arbroath; afterwards members explored the coastal cliff path and learnt more about the ongoing work being undertaken there.

Council officers also work in collaboration with a range of partnerships including:

River South Esk Catchment Partnership, Tay Estuary Forum, Cairngorm National Park Authority, Angus Rural & Environment Partnership, Angus Local Access Forum, TACTRAN, Sustainable Scotland Network, North East Green Network, Angus Council Educational Development Service (Creative Learning Partnership).



### 3 The Delivery of the Biodiversity Duty in Angus Council by Directorate/Service 2012-14

This section outlines how Angus Council has delivered biodiversity conservation at a service level for the three year period 2012-2014.

Recently Angus Council has undergone a management restructure. The new structure, adopted over the last two years incorporates four distinct areas of work. These are:

<b>Communities Directorate</b>	services to communities
<b>Chief Executive's Unit</b>	economic development, communications, governance, resilience and corporate support
<b>People Directorate</b>	services to individuals and families
<b>Resources Directorate</b>	services that support the business of the council

Each department has a number of Service areas. Responsibilities of and activities within Service areas are detailed below, although in many cases Services will work in collaboration.

#### 3.1 Communities Directorate

##### Environment & Development Plan

The work of the Environment & Development Plan team includes a wide range of specialisms which contribute towards nature conservation, protection, increasing awareness raising and mainstreaming through policy and project focussed work. These include:

##### Environmental Strategy Policy

Staff provides an advisory service on a variety of biodiversity related issues such as protected species, nature conservation site designations and Habitat Regulations Appraisal.

##### Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan

The Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan delivery includes a wide range of positive action for biodiversity across the region. Staff within the department assists with the delivery and monitoring of actions by their contribution to specific Partnership Working Groups.

Over the past few years, the Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator has held regular informal biodiversity surgeries in Angus: the purpose of these is to advise Local Authority employees across all departments on their biodiversity duty, help start up biodiversity projects, or add a biodiversity slant to existing projects. The latter has proven particularly important where the Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme is concerned. Following a Greenspace/ Green Graveyard presentation to the Landscape Team in 2012, a Council Greenspace Grasslands Working Group was set up to focus on and take forward biodiversity projects.

At biodiversity surgery meetings, there is also an opportunity to ensure specific LBAP input into the numerous biodiversity projects being considered by the Angus Environment Trust. Liaising with the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Restoration proposals led to the Kirriemuir Swift Conservation Project being set up and funded via the Angus Environment Trust. This is the first such project in Scotland (and possibly the UK) to work closely in association with a CARS property restoration project.

At the end of 2012, Angus Council took part in the TBP Conference “Putting the Buzz into Local Biodiversity – Tayside’s Community Action for Wildlife”. More than 90 people from all over eastern Scotland were welcomed to Battleby to take part in this event. One of the key presentations given was ‘From Glen to Coast – Angus’ Central Asset: the River South Esk Catchment: an example of a working ecosystem, its projects and the communities involved”.

### **In-house training seminars**

Training and advice is provided by the TBP “Building Better Biodiversity” series of training sessions on a range of biodiversity topics. For example, in 2012 there was an opportunity for a private visit to Scotia Seeds, near Brechin, to learn more about Wildflower Meadows, Verges and Ponds Management, and in 2013 the Tayside Biodiversity Co-ordinator gave a presentation to the council’s community planning teams.

### **More recent workshops have included:**

a whole day in February regarding Swifts & Bats in the Kirriemuir Conservation Area, a practical Small Blue Butterfly training session in June (Arbroath), two half day workshops (Arbroath and Forfar) on Making Room for Wildlife in Care Home and Day Care Centre Grounds, and presentations on the Native Woodland Scotland Survey, Design & Management of SUDS for Biodiversity, and Mitigation Measures to Safeguard Amphibians. Future events in the programme will include engaging the Community – Mapping Projects, Badger Mitigation in Development, Wildlife Crime, Bats in Trees, Bridges and Development, and Wild Cats in Angus.

### **Tay Estuary Forum**

Angus Council is a funding member of the Tay Estuary Forum. The Forum brings together organisations and individuals with a common interest in the welfare and sustainable use of the Tay Estuary and adjacent coastline. It is hoped that through improved co-ordination and communication between these diverse interests and users, future conflicts within the coastal zone can be minimized. The over-arching nature conservation aim of the forum is to promote understanding and monitoring of species in order to make informed decisions relating to their management. Issues which impact upon biodiversity such as flooding, diffuse pollution, coastal erosion and invasive species are monitored by the group.

### **River South Esk Catchment Partnership**

The project co-ordinator for the River South Esk Catchment Partnership is housed within Angus Council which is one of the main founding funders of the partnership. The River South Esk catchment covers a large area of Angus in North East Scotland and is drained by the River South Esk and its tributaries. This includes its lochs, groundwaters, wetlands and the unique enclosed estuary of Montrose Basin.

At first glance the area would appear to be in perfect condition, especially compared with more heavily built-up areas. We can see this from the wide range of wildlife the area supports – from Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussels to otters and water voles, to name a few, however, monitoring reports and consultation with those who use the area or regulate the activities that happen in it, suggest otherwise. Flooding is a concern in some parts of the area such as at Brechin; fish stocks and Freshwater pearl mussels are reducing in number; non-native invasive weeds are spreading in the middle and lower areas; and the ecological status of some tributaries is poor or moderate rather than the good status it should be.

Over the last three years a range of projects have been carried out that contribute towards the health and wellbeing of the catchments habitats and species, in line with the catchment management plan objectives. These include:

- The extensive treatment of non native invasive species such as giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam and American mink.
- significant river restoration projects to encourage habitat diversification and river naturalisation
- native tree planting projects,
- European funded projects such as 'Pearls in Peril'

The partnership has welcomed five ministerial visits to the catchment and has been praised on its collaborative work. The partnership promotes nature conservation and project work through its dedicated website, newsletter and twitter account.

### **Angus Council Climate Change Strategy**

The Council's Climate Change Strategy contains a section on Cultural and Natural Heritage which outlines work undertaken by the council (and other stakeholders) to achieve the objective of: Raise awareness of climate change issues which will influence our stewardship of biodiversity natural resources and the promotion of the unique natural environment of Angus.

The CC Strategy reports annually on the progress made on actions within the strategy as part as our obligation under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Angus Council signed up to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration in 2007 and has produced an annual report every year since then. The report contains a section which asks how the council is performing its biodiversity duties under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

### **The Great British Non-native Species Secretariat**

The Non-native Species Information Portal hosted by the Non-native Species Secretariat provides a central repository for distribution data and information about non-native species in Britain and provides basic information about all non-native species in Britain and more detailed factsheets for 300 species. The River South Esk has its own dedicated local Stakeholder page on the site where good practice is shared and awareness of catchment issues is raised.

### **Outdoor Access**

Management activities are carried out within the planning service and contribute to the enjoyment and conservation of biodiversity within Angus. Examples include:

Development of path networks, and improvements to core paths, increasing opportunities for people to access and appreciate Angus' biodiversity.

During path construction works, native seed mixes have been used when reinstating verges.

Path maintenance regimes are typically low intervention, with minimum impact on biodiversity. Herbicide use is restricted to hard path surfaces, and vegetation is cut no more than twice per year.

### **Angus Local Plan Review**

The Angus Local Plan Review (ALPR) adopted February 2009, recognises the importance and value of the natural heritage value of Angus. The protection and enhancement of the areas rich and varied environmental assets is central to the councils approach to sustainable development and the use of resources.

The adopted ALPR includes a range of policies which support the protection, and where possible, enhancement of biodiversity, primarily through the Councils development management function. In addition to protecting the conservation interests of international and national natural heritage designations, the Angus LPR recognises the importance of sites of regional or local interest, including Local Nature Reserves and sites of recognised local nature conservation interest.

The ALPR also includes policy support for the enhancement and protection of the natural heritage value of the wider Angus environment to promote biodiversity. To ensure the retention and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity interests, development proposals affecting protected or priority habitats and/or species must demonstrate that the potential impacts have been assessed and taken into account.

### **Building Conservation**

Building conservation activities include:

- Taking account of wildlife roosts, nests etc. and other concerns such as breeding season and hibernation when considering proposals for alterations or demolition to old buildings, including listed buildings ensuring appropriate surveys and mitigation measures are carried out where necessary.
- Encourage building owners to consider opportunities for biodiversity enhancement such as retention of garden areas and trees.
- Ensure that Conservation Area Appraisals or development briefs are appropriately considered as part of the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Take account of biodiversity as part of design considerations when developing site briefs or reviewing proposals.

### **Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)**

Kirriemuir CARS held an all-day seminar in Kirriemuir in February 2014 in conjunction with Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Tayside Swifts to raise awareness of Swifts and Bats in buildings and how to safeguard them. There were two key speakers, Edward Mayer from Swift Conservation and Anne Youngman from Bat Conservation Trust. In the morning session, Edward discussed some simple and inexpensive ways to help mitigate the serious decline in the swift population, after which everyone got involved in a practical exercise with a potential building development. Following that, there was a guided walk around the town centre to try and identify and safeguard potential swift nest sites in a variety of building types. In the afternoon, Anne followed up with a similar talk on the protection of the bat species, both to protect their existing habitats and to be aware of the possibility of creating new ones.

The CARS seminar/workshop sought to raise awareness of these protected species and in conjunction with the Tayside Swifts group under their Kirriemuir Town Centre Swift Conservation Project, encourage the installation of nesting boxes within building projects/development schemes in the Conservation area, when the opportunity arises. The first completed Priority Project under the CARS scheme at the Glengate Hall made provision for the reinstatement of an existing swift nesting site within the wallhead and the installation of new nesting boxes at the rear of the building.

Working in conjunction with the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Restoration project, opportunities are being followed up to advise and install nestboxes when the property frontages are restored. There is a community element to the project and work is planned with Hillcrest Housing Association, in addition to training sessions, walks and talks taking place during the summer.

### **Development Standards**

The development management service implements the biodiversity protection and enhancement policies contained within TAYplan and the Angus Local Plan Review through the assessment of applications for planning permission. The development management function is also responsible to ensure that development is assessed against legislation designed to protect designated sites and species (e.g. Habitat Regulations). Below are some examples of how the work the team carries out contributes to the enhancement and protection of biodiversity:

- Development proposals which could affect protected sites require to be supported by information to show that adverse impacts can be mitigated against e.g. ensuring that drainage proposals for new houses close to the South Esk SAC do not increase the phosphorous loading on the watercourse or sediment release into it. By and large, planning permission is only issued where adverse impacts can be mitigated;
- Protected Species Surveys are required in support of development proposals being assessed e.g. a bat survey which identifies impacts of developments on bats and any mitigation or habitat enhancement measures required to comply with the statutory duty or to enhance habitats. This may include actions such as the use of bat slates in buildings or areas of roofs which are maintained or provided as bat roosts. For birds, controls may be attached to a planning permission restricting the time of year development can take place to avoid disturbing birds during the nesting season;
- Planning conditions or planning obligations have been utilised to treat invasive species such as Giant Hogweed on and adjacent to residential development sites (e.g. Baldovan House, Strathmartine);
- Development proposals which would destroy areas of woodland have been resisted which has consequently protected the habitats contained within those woodlands;
- New housing developments have included open spaces and landscaped areas which promote biodiversity; and
- Woodland management schemes which enhance biodiversity by removing non-native plants have been included in development proposals.

### **The Commonwealth Games 2014**

The Commonwealth Games proposal for the shooting ranges established at Barry Buddon incorporated measures to protect biodiversity within Barry Links through various measures such as the use of an ecological clerk of works; a monitoring and reporting protocol with SNH to safeguard the qualifying interests of the SAC and avoid any adverse effect on its integrity and an Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan.

The restoration of the site would lead to an enhancement of the biodiversity through mitigation to ensure that recovery of vegetation occurs and there is no permanent loss. A three year monitoring plan has been agreed and signed off by SNH and the Scottish Government which will ensure vegetation within the site will re-establish.

## **Building Standards**

The building standards team have a range of publications that highlight the need to consider biodiversity when carrying out works on property. Produced by the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership the materials are available at main customer points within Angus Council main offices and are available for mailing out to customers where appropriate. A Septic tank guidance note produced by the Dee Catchment Partnership is also available at main reception points and, whilst stocks last, with applications for building warrant for new houses in the countryside.

## **Parks and Burial Grounds**

The neighbourhood areas are a key delivery mechanism for biodiversity conservation through the management of community parks and local Greenspace projects. The neighbourhoods are also of great importance for the close communication networks they have with local communities. The following projects have been carried out in Angus:

### **Angus Orchard Project**

- This 3 year project saw 357 fruit trees planted to form 63 orchards in schools, nurseries and country parks in Angus, with 75 different groups involved from schools to social work departments. A wide variety of cooking and eating apples, plum, pear, walnut and cherry were planted, and where possible old heritage varieties from Angus were used.
- As a follow up project to the planting works, a leaflet on orchard tree care and maintenance has been produced and distributed to all groups involved. This gives tips on how to prune orchard trees and harvest the fruit safely.

### **Landscaping as part of new built Primary Schools**

- For the design of two new primary schools in Angus, Seaview Primary School and Isla Primary School, a variety of biodiversity features have been included in the landscape design to benefit the pupils by enabling outdoor learning and at the same time enhance biodiversity.
- At both schools a variety of predominantly native trees and shrubs have been planted along the boundary to enhance local biodiversity and to complement the species in the adjacent countryside.
- An Outdoor Classroom was created for both schools, adjacent to orchards planted with Scottish apple, plum and cherry trees.
- Within the playgrounds of the schools, Sensory Gardens have been created with raised planters containing plants to experience the different senses, e.g. fragrant flowers and aromatic herbs, tactile leaves, rustling seedheads etc. The pupils will be encouraged to care for these plants and learn how to grow their own edible plants like strawberries, chives and lettuce.
- Between Isla Primary School and the adjacent road two kinds of species-rich wildflower meadows have been created, which will attract a variety of insects and butterflies to the dry roadside verge and the wet meadow areas.
- Pupils and teachers have been encouraged to incorporate wildlife features into their playgrounds by building bat or bird boxes; making log pile habitats and insect hotels.

### **Elliot Links SSSI**

- The site at Elliot is protected for its stable sand dune system and abandoned river meanders, which together support open dune and wetland plant communities and several rare plants. SNH carried out a site survey, which showed that the dune feature was declining due to increasing growth scrub and visitors to the area.
- A project was designed to inform and redirect visitors to the Links, with the introduction of formal access points like boardwalks, viewing platforms and fencing along sections of the path to guide walkers and cyclists. Interpretation signs were erected to educate the public on potential hazards to the site like dog fouling, littering and shortcutting through the site.
- A second works phase was started in early 2014, which will see the removal of invasive species in a three year management programme. The main objective is to remove invasive plants like roses and gorse that have taken hold in the fragile dune ecosystem and threaten the development of indigenous species.

### **Soft Landscaping Projects**

All soft landscaping schemes for housing areas, parks and open spaces, road improvements etc. are developed along the following principles:

- Identify species and habitats of interest on existing site and ensure their protection during site works
- Incorporate existing habitats such as scrub and woodland, grassland, ponds, burns, etc. into the new green space where appropriate.
- Retain mature and veteran trees for their high biodiversity value
- Check timing/ effect of works on species and habitats to ensure lowest possible impact
- Include fruit and nut producing tree species in new hedges, woodlands or standard tree plantings
- Use native, local provenance species of shrubs, trees and other plants whenever possible
- Where possible, utilise walls and fences for growing a wide variety of climbing plants which will provide shelter and a food source for invertebrates, birds and bats.

### **Millennium woodland**

- The 54 new woodland areas, covering 92 hectares spread out over the county, were created in 2000 and are since being managed with a view of enhancing biodiversity, while also providing an important resource for recreation and education.
- Recent woodland management works have seen the development of glades and pathways through some woodland to increase sunlight reaching the ground and therefore encouraging a wider variety of undergrowth and wildlife. For the same reason areas of hazel and willow planting are coppiced annually. The yield of the coppicing is in turn used by local groups to produce outdoor living sculpture work, hurdles, play tunnels and domes.
- Through thinning and brashing works the longevity of the woodland is encouraged, while also opening up the understorey to more light. Where possible prunings and other dead wood are left in place to decompose.
- Along the perimeter of each woodland buffer strips of rough grassland have been created, with a shrub understorey edge to the tree planting.

### **Wildflower meadows**

- Species-rich wildflower meadows have been created as part of several planting schemes in parks and school areas, with planting either undertaken as plug planting or seeded into open ground. The Linnet Link project was an innovative idea to manage the land alongside the newly-realigned A92 Arbroath to Dundee road. There were plantings of large wildflower meadows and the swales/ponds were enhanced with water-edge species such as yellow flag and purple loosestrife. Only local provenance species from Angus or East Scotland were used, sourced from companies associated with Flora Locale. Native trees and shrubs were also planted to encourage birds, such as linnets and yellowhammers, to move between existing areas of habitat.

### **Habitat connectivity**

- Parks & Burial Grounds are consulted on the Open Space requirements of major planning applications for new developments. Through the consultation process they encourage developers to conserve linear features and wildlife corridors, and to use required Public Open Space to achieve further linkages.
- Developers are encouraged to preserve environmental features in parks and open spaces, and to design new features like ponds with biodiversity benefits.

### **Parks and Grounds Maintenance**

- During 2013 and 2014 the areas of heavily-managed grassland have been reduced by converting areas to rough grassland and by reducing or stopping mowing regimes.
- Chemical-free rough grassland buffer zones are kept at woodland edges and alongside hedgerows and footpaths, thus reducing costs and creating important 'biodiversity banks' for invertebrates. In Rosemount Estate a species-rich grassland area is being managed through a single cut late in the season with cuttings removed to encourage meadow species. Woodland prunings are chipped and spread on site in order to produce mulch for establishing and maintaining low maintenance.

### **Working with local community groups**

- The Parks & Burial Grounds section is working with a wide range of community groups, who are keen on enhancing their local community while at the same time contributing to biodiversity.
- Communities interested in setting up and maintaining community gardens and planters are encouraged by giving advice and helping with funding applications, providing materials and occasionally labour through Parks' staff.

### **Countryside Services**

Countryside Services offer a wide range of services from their primary bases and from other secondary countryside sites around Angus. These services include information and advice, security and safety, maintenance and conservation, activities and events. This core provision supports the whole Community including Groups and Individuals, Visitors and Residents, 361 days a year. The Diary of Events plays a leading part in both the Educational and Recreational Outputs of the Ranger Service. Ranger-led activities in 2012/13 comprised of 253 activities with 8169 participants and 8629 in 2013/14. These core activities form the foundations of Ranger work and are supplemented annually by new projects and initiatives.



### **Community participation**

Rangers are involved throughout the year teaching and instructing young people and adults about the wider environment. This role takes on many forms: Rangers work with School and Community groups, helping with projects and initiatives; they lead Guided Walks and Workshops; they sit on committees and give advice to a wide range of organisations. They use their skills, expertise and knowledge to involve people in both land and water based activities.

The Service is registered with Organisations, including Schools, Colleges and the Angus Volunteer Agency. Each year young people spend time at the Key sites learning about the role of Countryside Rangers. Other individuals seek practical Ranger work experience to help strengthen their case for future employment. Historically, volunteers have progressed in some cases to seasonal posts with the Ranger Service

Countryside Services are very conscious of how their objectives tie into the National Single Outcome Agreement. An example of this is the service's aim "to Increase awareness and understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage". This supports National Indicator (41) "Improve people's perceptions, attitudes and awareness of Scotland's reputation".

### **Biological recording**

Surveys and Biological Recording are an important element of the service's outputs. In 2012/13 36 surveys were carried out for a wide range of species. In 2013/14 this had increased to 41. Examples include:

- Collating of Lowland Deer sightings, to establish numbers, in Angus for Lowland Deer Network Scotland, a body set up in response to The Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, which places a requirement on all landowners with deer on their property to manage those deer sustainably.
- Twinflower and Intermediate Wintergreen surveys conducted through the CNPA Rare Plants Project with Andy Scobie (CNPA Project Officer) looking at historical site locations along the Dounalt and on the slopes of the Scorrie.
- Highland Tiger Project conducted through the CNPA with David Hetherington (Project Manager). Two baited remote cameras set up at Glen Doll and lower Glen Clova to record presence/absence of Wildcat. This project is now complete, although the remote cameras are still in use and the data recorded.
- Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Junior Ranger Programme rolled out.
- CNPA Raptor Tracking Project: Breeding data given to CNPA and Tayside Raptor Study Group.
- Glaxo Smith Kline Orange day: A team of staff (approx 12) work annually on the Basin carrying out various maintenance and conservation activities including renovating a birdhide and pond creation.

### **Conservation / Habitat and Estate Management**

Rangers are based in the 5 key sites in Angus; from these bases they care for several of the Core Paths Networks and picnic sites around Angus. The Rangers look after the sites and their visitors as well as caring for and enhancing the Natural Heritage. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code is a driver of activity and rangers advise visitors and mitigate when required on a wide range of countryside issues including access, camping, fishing and shooting, farming practices and dogs. Daily Patrols are out carried out to monitor wildlife. The Ranger team based in the new Base at Glen Doll are tasked to look after various sites in proximity to the base and other locations in the Angus area of the Cairngorms National Park. In addition to the key sites, patrols are carried out along 15 external sites including nature trails, the Coastal path and the Angus Path Network. These patrols also monitor biodiversity in their proximity.

### **Significant Achievements**

Significant achievements that countryside services are very proud of over the last three years include:

- Visitors: There were 654,850 visitors through the gates at all core sites in 2011/12. Although this was 10% down on the same period last year, it is still a significant figure in view of the extremely poor weather throughout the summer.
- Grant Aid: £26177 was received from Angus Environmental Trust and Forestry Commission Scotland to help fund a variety of projects including a Flower Meadow at Monifieth, Heathland Restoration at Crombie, Orchard and Meadow project at Monikie and the Garden improvements at Forfar Loch.
- NHS Craigmill Centre: Selected volunteers under the supervision of staff from the Craigmill Centre in Dundee carry out Conservation work at Crombie. This project was run on a trial basis initially, but is now establishment as a weekly routine under the guidance of the Rangers.
- The Wee Wellie Wander Resource pack – collaboration between Angus Artists in Schools, Angus Council EDS Arts and Cultural Education Team and the Ranger Service, is on-going and will be completed later in 2013.
- Partners in Learning Award 2013: The Ranger Service was recognised again at an award ceremony at the Carnoustie Golf Hotel in recognition of collaborative partnership and valuable contribution to the development of skills for learning, life and work within Angus.
- Angus Glens Walking Festival 2013: With 27 Guided Walks available, 527 (534 in 2012 and 583 in 2014) Participants took to the hills and Glens. There were 52% of new walkers which is encouraging for the future of this event
- The Angus Ranger Service is joint leader of the Tayside Swift Interest Group which is undertaking a wide range of volunteer-based surveys and sharing the resulting database with the Planning Departments (GIS), Swift Conservation, Concern for Swifts Scotland, British Trust for Ornithology and the RSBP. A Graduate Intern is entering all data received onto the PKC GIS and we will ensure AC receives this information in due course. Issue 3 of the Tayside Swift Newsletter is in the process of being compiled.

## **Community Planning**

Community planning contributes to the nature conservation duty at a high overarching level. Angus Council services are driven by local and national objectives highlighted in section 2.1 Governance, Leadership and Management. Partnerships and working groups are in place and contribute towards the role out of fulfilling our biodiversity duty. These include:

### **Angus Rural and Environment Partnership**

The Angus Community Planning Partnership's Rural and Environment Partnership includes the priority 'Environment – natural and built' and the group facilitates collaborative work between environmental stakeholders throughout Angus. The Angus Single Outcome Agreement is reported on a six monthly basis and includes a number of relevant measures and actions. The environmental element of reporting receives input from this stakeholder group and regularly a wide range of positive work is reported. Representatives from both Angus Council and the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership sit on this group and in the past 3 years have given presentations on the work underway in the area.

### **Pride in Place Member/Officer Group**

Since 2013 the Pride in Place Member/Officer Group has facilitated community involvement in projects which focus on improving the environment of Angus through community participation, indirectly benefiting local biodiversity. Main elements include:

#### **Clean-Up Angus Campaign**

- The Clean-Up Angus Campaign aims to address littering in Angus by identifying littering hotspots through public consultation and facilitating community clean ups. At present the group has had great success in carrying out beach cleans, contributing to the removal of marine litter which is hazardous to biodiversity. An action plan with the purpose of streamlining and focussing all of the work being carried out by community groups in Angus has been developed and monitoring is carried out by the overseeing member officer group.
- This high profile campaign is aimed at all areas of the community and there has been a strong focus on involving local schools. An article has appeared in "View" an internal publication distributed to school staff throughout and the action plan has been drafted in conjunction with secondary schools.
- Government funding has been sought to facilitate litter projects throughout Angus. Approximately £200K of funds has been made available nationally through the Litter Innovation Fund and Litter Infrastructure and Enforcement Fund. In 2014 the group agreed that an initial focus area would be West Links, Arbroath and a "pick up 3" campaign would encourage the whole community to actively reduce the incidences of litter across the project area.

#### **Dog Fouling**

- Dog fouling is a problem not only from public health perspective; dog excrement can create nutrient enrichment if left unchecked upsetting the delicate balance of ecosystems. Elliot Links SSSI, designated for coastal plant species suffered from nutrient enrichment due to this very reason and restricted access measures have been applied on site by creating boardwalk trails. From 1 April 2014 52 fixed penalty notices were issued for dog fouling in Angus. The member officer group works closely with environmental health teams and proactive community groups such as The Green Dog Walkers initiative raising awareness within the community, hopefully reducing the occurrence of this widespread problem.

### **Beautiful Angus**

- Beautiful Angus focuses on encouraging community participation in schemes such as the annual Council Garden competition and community planting projects including site adoption and ongoing community management. Alongside traditional planting there is a strong focus on mainstreaming planting for wildlife, raising awareness of schemes that provide seeds and saplings and bird boxes etc for community groups and citizen science.
- The group facilitates local environmental schemes and has recently helped establish a number of community orchards, allotments, wildflower meadows and outdoor educational areas now managed by their local communities. Assistance is available to groups in making funding bids and to develop relationships with partner organisations through the Council's staff network and channels of communication.

### **Roads**

Roads staff activities fall into various specialisms including roads maintenance and flood management. Biodiversity projects from the last three years include:

#### **Roads Maintenance/Verge management**

The Tayside Biodiversity Partnership prepared a report for the Angus Council Roads Department ahead of its three year verge management contracts. This enabled liaison with local community and environmental organisations and specific advice from botanists with regard the species-rich verges in the Glens. The rural grass cutting tender is due back from pricing in the near future, being tendered by Tayside Procurement Consortium on behalf of Angus and Perth and Kinross. It was sent out for Angus with two cuts on A, B and C class roads per year and a 1 metre swathe generally with extra sight lines and inside of bends, plus only one cut on U class roads mid summer and no wide cut back intended. We have a local agreement on the A92 at the Montrose Basin Wildlife Centre for the centre itself to look after an area of grass for conservation purposes.

#### **Amphibians in Drains / Gully Pot Project**

- Roads have confirmed an interest in working with the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership to incorporate wildlife drains during routine work. Success of the project will be publicised across the UK. Froglife, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC) and the UK Herpetological Society are keen to be involved. The TayARG (Tayside Amphibian & Reptile Group) was set up in 2013: its volunteers are taking forward a number of Toads on Roads projects and the TBP is providing training and practical conservation work for the volunteers.
- Following the long-term survey work being undertaken by the TBP in Perth & Kinross, the Angus Council Roads Department gave permission for the first British Amphibian Ladder trial to be undertaken at two sites: one just north of Dundee and the other in Carnoustie (this follows the first such global trial in the Netherlands). This is being undertaken by the Friends of Angus Herpetofauna and students from UHI and Dundee University, reporting directly to Angus Council.
- Angus Environmental Trust funded wildlife kerbs and other measures at a key toad and frog crossing point at Monikie Country Park as part of a wider biodiversity project.
- In Perth & Kinross, Amphibian Priority Zones are being ground-truthed so that data can be entered into the Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) GIS; this, together with ground-truthing the SUDS Audit data, will highlight where best to focus the installation of wildlife kerbs and the trial amphibian ladders by PKC Roads Department which is incorporating such installation at the maintenance planning stage. It is hoped a similar Amphibian Priority Zone mapping project will be possible for Angus Council roads during 2015.

## **Roads Flood team**

The Glen Clova Contour Planting Project and research, a large scale forestry project aimed at reducing peak flows in the River South Esk catchment, is supported financially, with £80,000 being made available to date, by the Forestry Commission, Angus Council, Esk District Salmon Fishery Board and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, with in-kind support from RSPB. Further studies have been initiated in Glen Clova in 2014 as a result of the project including a hydrological assessment of contour planting, a waders, wetlands and forest planning study, an ecological site classification of the glen and an investigation into the future of hill sheep farming. Planting at the first site identified in the scheme was completed in the spring and the second is under way as of autumn 2014. Lessons learned from 2014's plantings will be useful to shape the projects direction in 2015.

## **Transport**

Angus Councils Transport team indirectly contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of biodiversity by implementing sustainable strategies and making the outdoor more accessible for Angus residents. Below are a range of projects highlighting how this is carried out.

- One of the strategic objectives outlined in Angus Council's Public Transport Policy Statement is: 'To develop the role of public transport within the community, providing mobility for those without access to cars, as an attractive alternative to those with access to cars and contributing to addressing issues of sustainability'. Collaboration is ongoing and the team are currently working with community planning, NHS Tayside, Voluntary Action Angus, Tactran and other partners to introduce Active Travel Branding – 'Angus on the Go'.
- The transport team promote public transport through the implementation of the Angus Public Transport Information Strategy. This includes at stop information, real time information available at key stops and via mobile phone, website, journey planners etc. Good, readily available public transport information is a key to people being able to access sustainable transport.
- The team also promote the carriage of bicycles on buses where this facility is available e.g. Service X7 operating from Aberdeen to Dundee advertises this facility which is promoted by Stagecoach in conjunction with Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Dundee Councils.
- Collaboration continues with Scotrail to provide additional stopping services in Angus. For example: following meetings between Angus Council, Tactran, MSP's and Elected Members; the number of services stopping at Monifieth increased from two to six Monday-Saturday from December 2013. More than 1,300 people used the services from 9 December 2013 and 1 March 2014 - compared with less than 550 at Monifieth station over the same period the previous year, an increase of up to 120% a month. The decision to treble the number of trains at Monifieth on weekdays and Saturdays reflects the strong demand for rail services in the area.

## **Consumer Protection**

### **Waste Services Team**

Waste services contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Angus in the following ways:

- Collection of household and commercial wastes from the kerbside (and ensuring that customers meet their duty of care), ensures that waste is disposed of properly, thus protecting habitats
- Anti-litter, fly tipping and dog fouling enforcement and campaign efforts help to reduce levels of environmental crimes, thus again protecting habitats
- Cleaning of public open spaces maintains clean habitats
- Disposal of abandoned vehicles ensures removal of another potential pollutant from the environment

## **Property**

The property team have carried out the following works which contribute to their biodiversity effort:

- Bat and Swift survey carried out in 2012 at Kirriemuir Library before extension and alteration works commenced.
- Bat survey carried out in 2012 at Wirren Gardens site, Montrose, prior to construction works commencing to provide new affordable homes.
- Bat survey carried out in 2012 at the Mechanics Institute, Brechin, prior to carrying out external stonework repairs.
- Removal of telegraph pole and public toilet in 2013 at Myre car park, Forfar, to facilitate construction of wildlife garden by local Botanist group.
- Bird nesting boxes are in place for breeding migrants at the Orchard bank campus.

## **3.2 Chief Executive's Unit**

### **Economic Development**

The Angus Economic Strategy includes four key priorities, one of which is 'Supporting Pride in Place'. This priority links closely to the environment and pride people have for the Angus area. It also links closely to the Community Planning vision of 'Angus is a place where a first class quality of life can be enjoyed by all', which relies on a good clean environment to ensure our residents are happy and healthy. Economic Development plays a key role in order to protect, preserve and develop our natural and built environment.

The External Funding Team contribution to the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity in Angus is by coordination of the following activities and schemes:

### **Angus Environmental Trust (AET)**

AET is a company limited by guarantee which was established in September 1997 under The Landfill Tax Regulations (1996). The main aim of the Trust is to distribute landfill tax funds to assist both local community groups, organisations and other environmental bodies to take forward projects within Angus. All projects supported must be for public benefit and support the following:

- Projects to reclaim and restore land for economic, social or environmental purposes;
- Projects that prevent or reduce any potential for pollution or to treat pollution on land polluted by a previous use;
- Projects to restore or improve the natural environment and the maintenance or recovery of a species in its natural habitat;

### **Angus Community Grant Scheme**

The Angus Council Community Grant Scheme aims to support small community and voluntary groups across Angus with a grant towards the cost of a project in the fields of arts, heritage, sport or the environment. An example of a project which was supported locally was Monifieth Eco Force which was funded to promote the study of ecology and biodiversity within Monifieth and the surrounding district and to raise awareness of the importance of ecology and biodiversity to the wider community. A community orchard has been planned and following the success of this, a further area within the town is now being researched with a view to using the site as a community biodiversity space.

### **Support and Advice**

The team frequently provides information, support, signposting and advice to local community groups wishing to undertake an environmental project. Through this work links have been made with various environmental funders including Grow Wild, Cairngorms National Park, Climate Challenge Fund and CSV Action Earth.

### **Angus Event Organisers' Network**

This is the lead for a network of community groups developing and running events in Angus. The Network promotes environmentally friendly practices.

### **Outdoor Tourism**

The Angus Glens Walking Festival is one of the most successful festivals of its kind and engenders responsible enjoyment of the environment.

Other activities include contributing to the development of positive landscaping and SUDS areas within our business parks and associated wildlife corridors where needed. This often forms part of the planning process in the initial stages of any business park development.

## **3.3 People Directorate**

### **Adult Care**

Adult Care is working on the following biodiversity related projects:

- Lilybank Gardening Group is working in partnership with Forfar in Flower, a community project developing horticulture in our local area. The group grow and harden off plants in the greenhouse on site, which are then transferred and planted out in the local community. The group also maintain one of the local flower beds in Boyd Park, Forfar. Dundee and Angus College, supported by Lilybank staff are maintaining the external grounds around the building.
- The Criminal Justice Service are constructing an amphibian fence at Monikie Country park to prevent frogs, newts etc. getting killed on the road; the Forfar improvement team is clearing disused areas of the town and re-planting with flowers and shrubs to encourage wildlife; trees have been planted in the community garden which will encourage insect life.
- Adult care is also involved in the promotion of biodiversity through the "Sustainability" aspect of the Angus Council Healthy Outdoor Learning Awards.
- Hospitalfield Organic Produce Enterprise (HOPE) is an environmentally friendly charitable project which provides training and work experience for people with a learning disability living in Angus. HOPE aims to improve opportunities for social, educational and recreational activities for people with a learning disability living in the local area and to provide the local community with a reliable source of organically grown vegetables and plants.

### **Children & Young People**

Development is ongoing in a new residential unit for children and there will be development of a garden as part of a landscaping plan for the initiative.

## **Schools and Learning**

Schools and learning are leading on promoting biodiversity awareness in Angus in the following areas:

- Eco-Schools are an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school action on sustainable development education issues. It is an environmental management tool, a learning resource and a recognised award scheme. It empowers young people to take action towards an economically, socially and environmentally just world. There are currently 84 schools in Angus which are registered with the Eco-Schools programme. Of these 31 schools hold Green Flag awards. 53 schools hold Silver awards and 58 schools hold Bronze awards. The Green Flag is the international standard of excellence in the Eco-Schools programme - is dependent on extensive activity under 'The Seven Elements', and three of the 'Ten Topics', one of which must be Litter. Unlike the Bronze and Silver Awards, the Green Flag Award is not based on school self-assessment. It is externally assessed by Keep Scotland Beautiful's Eco-Schools team.
- The HOLA award system has been created to help practitioners recognise pupil achievement across Health & Wellbeing, in particular, outdoor learning. These awards are not discrete awards and should support a holistic approach to outdoor learning. Learning through Health & Wellbeing promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions. Because of this, it is the responsibility of every teacher to contribute to learning and development in this area. An example of HOLA is Newbigging Primary School planned and tidied their eco garden area. They were very excited to find frogs living in the school grounds! Volunteers from the local community came in to help the children learn how to plant spring bulbs in layers so that there will be colour from March onwards. They worked co-operatively to design and paint miniature bird boxes too.
- Forfar Academy pupils managed to achieve their John Muir Discovery Award by working closely with the Forfar Loch Rangers over a few months. The pupils discovered and explored the Loch area, helped the Rangers with conservation projects, and found out about John Muir's life. The pupils then shared their experiences through a wall display in the corridor of the ISB unit within the school.
- A sensory garden has been completed at Carlogie Primary School which will provide a fantastic outdoor place for learning, fun and enjoyment.

### **Going the Whole Hog**

Following funding by the Angus Environment Trust, the Angus Ranger Service is ensuring that all 57 Angus schools receive a hedgehog hibernation box, spring bulbs, wildflower seeds and tools, and advice on wildflower gardening.

### **Health Improvement Team**

The Health Improvement Team work in partnership within Angus supporting adult access to the outdoors in arrange of initiatives such as:

### **Steps Tay Health Angus**

Affiliated to the national Paths for All organisation, Steps Tay Health Angus provides walking opportunities to encourage inactive/less able people to become more active and enjoy the local environment. A total of fourteen trained volunteer walk leaders currently support nine weekly 'health walks' at various locations across Angus, involving around 80 participants each week.



### **Branching Out**

Forestry Commission Scotland, with Angus Council Rangers, has offered 'Branching Out' (Greenspace and conservation activities on referral for mental health service users). Rangers have also worked with Tayside Occupational Health to support people with a wide range of health conditions to overcome barriers to employment or other useful occupation.

## **3.4 Resources Directorate**

### **Corporate Improvement & Finance**

Corporate Improvement & Finance support biodiversity in areas including:

#### **Sustainable Procurement Policy**

Angus Council at its meeting on 22 March 2012 approved a sustainable procurement policy which applies to all council procurement. Work continues to embed that approach into all council procurement activity. The corporate procurement manager engages with stakeholders with regard to corporate social responsibility in order to develop a procurement approach to climate change/environmental issues.

#### **Timber Pledge**

- In June 2012 the council committed to working towards achieving WWF's Silver Timber Pledge Award. This committed the council to working with suppliers and contractors to find out the source of their timber and making a clear commitment to refuse to buy any timber where the source is unknown. If the direct supplier is certified by a CPET-approved scheme (Forest Stewardship Council or PEFC - Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes), it shows they can provide timber from a source that is managed in a legal and sustainable way.
- In July 2014 the Silver Timber Pledge Award was achieved for the new Montrose Sports Centre.

### **Corporate GIS**

The Corporate GIS team develop environmental data sets and facilitate council employees in maintaining and using data (spatial or not). The team enable the dissemination of information through interactive maps, and add value to data by combining it with other datasets. Data visualisation through maps is a good way to summarise large volumes of biodiversity data, display themes within biodiversity data and show changes and patterns over time.

## 4 Communication and Engagement

Awareness-raising, communication and engagement are a key element of biodiversity work within the Council. Promotion of biodiversity includes:

The TBP administers four Facebook pages featuring many events, updates and stories from Angus – Tayside Biodiversity, Tayside Swifts, Tayside Amphibians & Reptiles, and Tayside Recorders' Forum. Its website, [www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk](http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk) features a series of advisory notes for developers and planners, as well as sections for different species and habitat. The 1st Edition Local Biodiversity Action Plan with its appendices is featured and this will be updated in 2015 with the 2nd Edition and its new Actions Schedule.

The TBP regularly prepares press releases and arranges photocalls to its events in Angus.

In the past, the TBP has published a series of species newsletters (focussing on Barn owls, Red squirrels and Swifts). A new issue of the Tayside Swifts Newsletter will be published in 2015. The Partnership's "From Summit to Sand" newsletter features Angus projects and initiatives. The 2015 edition will largely feature the projects achieved via the SITA Tayside Biodiversity Action Fund and Angus Environmental Trust grants. Many of the Angus projects and South Esk catchment projects are also featured in the UK Biodiversity Newsletter published by DEFRA, and the Scottish Biodiversity Forum Biodiversity Bulletin.

The Angus Council website is regularly updated to include local, regional and national biodiversity news and two twitter accounts highlighting sustainability and the South Esk catchment have been launched in 2014 increasing the audience vastly, Angus Council has more than 4000 followers. This format and also the Angus Council intranet have been used frequently in 2014 to encourage citizen science projects as such as the surveying of cetaceans and invertebrates in coastal areas.

### **Tayside Biodiversity Festival / Scottish Nature Week**

The Partnership contributed events from Angus and Perth & Kinross to the Scottish Nature Week (to raise awareness of biodiversity issues), as well as submitting numerous press releases on the wide range of activities, workshops and training days held throughout the year. The Angus Ranger Service takes forward most of the Angus-based events for this Week.

### **Tayside Recorders' Forum**

- The Angus Ranger Service hosted the Recorders' Day at The Meffan in April 2014. The conference was a sell out with some 90 people applying for the 60 free tickets. The event brings together professionals and amateurs interested in species survey work. It acts as the focus to launching a number of TBP projects, most of which involve local people. A Recorders' Bulletin was circulated in the event's delegates pack and is now featured on the website. A new Tayside Wildlife Recorders Forum Facebook page has been set up at the request of the Forum.

## **Proposed North East Green Network**

Over the past two years, the TBP and North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnerships have brought together a suite of organisations, including Angus Council, to discuss the potential of setting up a North and East Green Network. A Scoping Report was prepared and meetings took place with the TBP's Chair acting as Interim Chairman. A small committee was set up to explore what the NEGN might become and a Concept Note produced and circulated in March 2014. It has been agreed the NEGN will not be formally structured like the Central Scotland Green Network, but act instead as an informal group encouraging collaborative working that can pick up and use the principles of networks. In time, it is planned the NEGN will encourage more effective 'joined up' project planning, policy implementation and project delivery across North and East Scotland.

## **Biodiversity Case Studies and Highlights**

This report demonstrates the breadth of activities delivered by the council which help to increase the area's biodiversity. Particular highlights from 2012/14 which follow, illustrate the strength of partnership working within Angus and the level of dedication to species conservation that occurs regularly.

### **Small Blue and Coastal Butterflies Project**

The project now includes the North East Scotland Local Area Biodiversity Action Plan area as well as Tayside. The Interest Group was set up in 2011 and recently met at the end of September to report on the year's survey results and to plan the wider project in 2015. An MSc dissertation is guiding future work and there are hopes to develop longer term projects centred on coastal colonies and potential disused railway sites. Scotia Seeds will donate local provenance kidney vetch seeds to enable specific sites to be broadcast seeded. A local nursery will also grow on some of the seed for planting out as mature plants in early 2016. It is hoped this will help restore connectivity of populations along the coast.



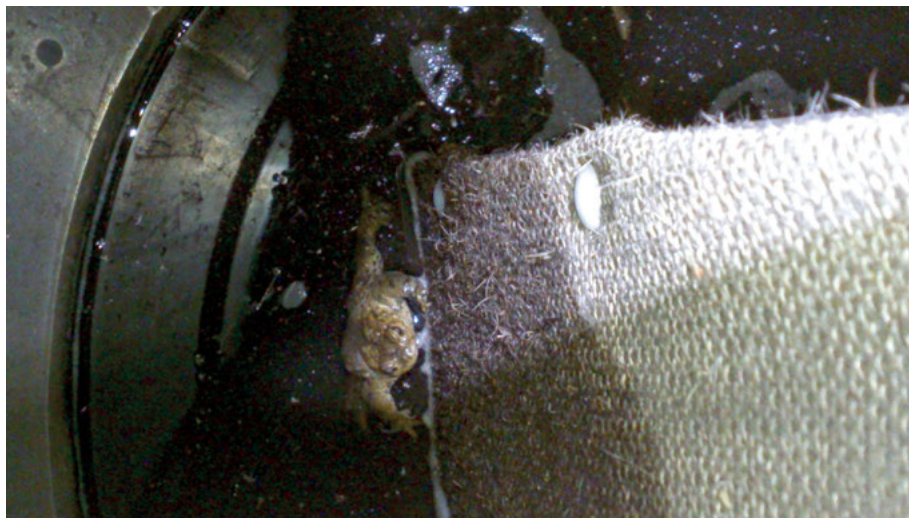
Small blue © Barry Prater

### **Amphibians in Drains Survey**

The Roads Department gave permission for the first British Amphibian Ladder trial to be undertaken at two sites: one just north of Dundee (67 gullypots from which 252 live amphibians were released and a further 55 found dead in just one season's surveying) and the other in Carnoustie. This follows the first such trial in the Netherlands. The work is being undertaken by the Friends of Angus Herpetofauna and students from UHI and Dundee University. The volunteers gave an update of their findings at the Tayside Recorders' Forum event in Forfar in 2014 and were invited to give a similar update later in the year at the Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Scottish Symposium in Edinburgh.



Amphibian ladder © Claire McInroy



Frog using ladder © Claire McInroy

### **Nature on Track**

ScotRail has been very supportive of the TBP's "Nature on Track" project which was launched in 2010. The Council contributed advice towards a series of posters featuring both the heritage and natural heritage of the Montrose Basin and which Scottish Wildlife Trust prepared. Specific railway station biodiversity enhancement projects have been considered and these have involved local authority community staff. The original leaflet will be redesigned as a poster and web-based resource, widening it from the Perth to Montrose area to Perthshire and Argyllshire.

## 5 Future Biodiversity Action Planned

The key work areas for the next three years (2015, 2016 and 2017) will be:

- Environmental Strategy Officer will assist with the review and launch of the 2nd Edition of the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Printing the 2nd Edition of the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan (2015-2025)
- Taking forward and fulfilling agreed actions within the Tayside LBAP 2nd Edition
- Assist with the mainstreaming of the biodiversity process across the Council departments
- Encouraging more community and school groups to undertake small-scale environmental projects and to play an active part in undertaking citizen science surveys
- With the TBP, help embed the biodiversity process into local businesses to demonstrate the economic, as well as the intrinsic, value of ecosystem services and biodiversity.
- Play an active part in setting up and inputting into the North & East Scotland Green Network

The economy and economics aside, the challenges of getting people to be Healthier (to be more active) and Greener (to get more involved with our precious environment), are enormous. The Ranger Service continues to play its part in servicing these needs, but raising awareness of how everyone can take part in safeguarding their local wildlife and to living a healthier lifestyle is down to every single employee and member of the Council. The TBP's strapline is "Every Action Counts" and this would be a good motto for Angus to use in championing its biodiversity and ecosystem services to all the residents and visitors to the county.

Project work will always be a main driver of biodiversity conservation. Below are examples of two projects that have been planned and will be rolled out during the next reporting phase.

### **Green Kirk & Graveyard Initiative**

It is hoped there will be a pilot Angus Bats in Churches project during 2015 which will bring together the Tayside Bat Group, Angus Ranger Service, ministers, local communities and schools to actively improve churchyards with bats in mind, and to survey for existing bat roosts and put up bat boxes where relevant.

### **Angus School Bats Project**

Using existing targets for working with schools, the Angus Ranger Service will raise awareness of bats in schools, liaise with Housing/Property to note existing roost sites and encourage the improvement of school grounds for bats. This will be a pilot project; hopefully the Perth & Kinross Ranger Service will widen out the project in 2016.

## 6 Conclusion

Angus Council are proud to raise awareness of local biodiversity where ever possible and strive to collaborate with the local community, neighbouring local authorities and stakeholders to ensure that biodiversity can be enjoyed by all for generations to come.

Collating the range of work that is undertaken within Angus Council's varied services shows the vast range of activity teams facilitate as part of their regular work programme. Tremendous progress has been made in the past few years to mainstream the biodiversity process and this report demonstrates this. It will be a useful document to review internally on an annual basis as more and more departments understand the need to report back. This will pave the way for a more comprehensive and inclusive reporting structure in time for the next Scottish Biodiversity Duty reporting round in 2018.

Importantly, ongoing monitoring will allow Angus Council projects to be entered into the UK Biodiversity Action Recording System. This will enable the local authority to monitor progress on its own projects and those taking place elsewhere in Angus. The system will enable summaries of the data to be generated, as well as demonstrating what biodiversity actions it is contributing towards Scottish Biodiversity Strategy targets.



Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



**BIODIVERSITY**  
THE VARIETY OF LIFE

