

**Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
Developing the Biosphere – Next steps 2013 – 2016**

Year 1 Report



southern uplands partnership
living land, living community

The Southern Uplands Partnership

May 7th 2015

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere progress report

Introduction

The Southern Uplands Partnership were appointed to manage the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere 'Next Steps Project 2013 - 16' through a partnership agreement including Scottish Natural Heritage, Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Forest Enterprise Scotland, and The Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP) on behalf of the wider Biosphere Partnership.

Management on behalf of SUP has been led by Ed Forrest and commenced with the appointment of three staff who all started on April 22nd 2014. Each was employed to work four days a week on the Biosphere, with the Natural Heritage officer working a fifth day at D&G Environmental Resources Centre. The project officers starting were Stephanie Miles, Natural Heritage Officer, Chimwemwe Chagunda, Business Officer and Nic Coombey, Community and Learning Officer. Stephanie Miles left her position in March 2015.

Communication

The Biosphere is all about making connections and good communication is an essential element to a successful Biosphere.



GALLOWAY AND
SOUTHERN AYRSHIRE
BIOSPHERE

One of the first priorities for the new team was the development of a new Communication Plan working with consultants, Countryside, and the newly formed Communications and Technical Group who helped in the design of the logo and to identify short term actions. The priority

was the development of a graphic brand style to include text and symbol. Guidelines for use of the new brand style were produced and adopted across all biosphere communications.

Local consultants were commissioned to redevelop and rebrand the Biosphere website as well as make it easier to navigate.

Promotion of the Biosphere using the new branding taken place through:

- website
- two e-newsletters
- press releases, news items and articles have featured in printed media
- posters for Biosphere supported events
- exhibition pop-up display
- Facebook page and Twitter



Charter



A revised Biosphere Charter was produced to identify six key principles that would show support for the aims and aspirations of the biosphere. An application process was developed using forms available on the website and this quickly began to attract attention with 11 applications being approved from a variety of individuals, community groups and businesses.

As part of the development each signatory to the charter will receive a Charter Certificate, Proud Supporter badge and information leaflet. They will also be invited to attend a 'learning journey' within the biosphere and will get a Proud Supporter badge to display as a window sticker.

Sense of Place and Dark Sky Park

The Sense of Place toolkit has been rebranded and redesigned to provide a resource to be used as part of the Charter approach when engaging with community groups and organisations. A Sense of Place audit has been developed to engage with businesses who sign up to the Charter.

The Sense of Place approach will be used to roll out a program of workshop over the next few months aimed at developing a better understanding of the Biosphere and promoting an opportunity to become a local biosphere ambassador. Gatehouse Development Initiative has already linked their Rural Heritage Promoters project with the Sense of Place approach.



The Biosphere project has contributed to the Year of Food and Drink 2015 initiative by supporting Ballantrae festival of Food & Drink and promoting other food festivals in the region. The Biosphere project has also attended 5 food and drink tourism conferences.

The Biosphere project is supporting the training of Biosphere / Dark Sky communicators through the recruitment of self employed rangers to a training program run in conjunction with FCS and the Galloway Observatory. The training will take place over summer 2015 with a view to the rangers being up and running in time for the winter 2015 Dark Sky season. The joint Dark Sky / Biosphere promotion means the rangers will be able to offer the region as a 24 /7 attraction.

Local communities have been engaged in the Biosphere through a variety of presentations, walks and events including;

- 11 Community Councils
- 6 talks to interest groups
- 2 walks
- 3 community events

Ecosystem Services and Land Management

Land management issues have been researched and scenarios for public engagement have been compiled. Following discussion about the Biosphere and how it might make use of the Ecosystem Services approach public engagement on this subject has been delayed until years 2 and 3.

Biodiversity and Habitat Networks

The Natural Heritage of the Biosphere report has been completed and published via the website. The priority Species and Habitats Action Plans are at an advanced stage having been drafted but still requiring completion.

The Biosphere project has assisted with the Peatland Action and DGERC 'Bugs in the Bog' project. It is also supporting the development of the Boswell's Bioblitz event with Easy Ayrshire Coalfields Environmental Initiative.



Learning from experience

The Biosphere project has led or supported activities with 9 Primary Schools and 4 Secondary Schools. A joint event is being developed with 3 Secondary Schools, one from each region, to encourage outdoor and creative learning.

The Biosphere project has also taken part in presentations to newly qualified teachers in Dumfries and Galloway and has taken part in discussions to improve information exchange with teacher and practitioners.



The Biosphere project has also engaged with further education establishments including 2 lectures and a site visit with Glasgow University.

Employment

The Biosphere project attended and contributed to employability and skills discussions and events including the Biosphere Conference at Dumfries House involving Sanquhar Academy and Doon Academy.

Arts and Festivals

The project team has been promoting use of the Biosphere to leading arts practitioners in the area and has encouraged the continued use of the Biosphere area as a location for environmental arts events including Environmental Art Festival Scotland 2015 and Sanctuary 2015 audio and light event.



Financial Summary Year 1

A financial summary for year 1 of the biosphere project is shown below. Of key significance is the low capital spends against internal biosphere projects. This is attributed to the project team laying the foundations for a number of initiatives and awaiting agreement on the new communications and branding. It is anticipated that the under spend in year 1 will be made up for in years 2 and 3 respectively.

The SUP "in kind" contribution is £4,441 over the project requirements. This is a reflection of SUP having to contribute substantially more project management time than was budgeted for at the start of the project. This is due to a combination of factors including offering some staff additional support and guidance, unexpected staff recruitment, and additional duties in lieu of a full time biosphere coordinator. Following a meeting with the Funders Group it was agreed that there were sufficient funds available for SUP to transfer £5,000 from capital spend to project management to cover the shortfall in this and subsequent years, without any of the capital spend projects being affected.

BIOSPHERE DEVELOPMENT 2013-16		Total Budget	TOTAL SPENT		BIOSPHERE DEVELOPMENT 2013-16	Total Budget	RECEIVED
YEAR 1 SUMMARY 2014-15		Year 1	TO DATE		YEAR 1 SUMMARY 2014-15	Year 1	TO DATE
			31.03.15				31.03.15
Staff Costs					Cash Contributions		
Salary Costs		£63,700.00	£65,002.63		Scottish Natural Heritage	£70,000.00	£70,000.00
Pension		£5,096.00	£2,744.06				
Employers NI		£6,370.00	£5,180.60		Dumfries and Galloway Council	£30,000.00	£20,000.00
Travel		£13,200.00	£6,226.83		Dumfries and Galloway Council (Furniture)		£1,173.60
Office / On-Costs / Computers		£7,500.00	£5,430.10		East Ayrshire Council	£4,000.00	£4,000.00
Total Staff Costs		£95,866.00	£84,584.22				
					South Ayrshire Council	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Project Costs							
Dark Sky Park Business	BD	£5,000.00	£0.00		Forest Enterprise	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Biosphere Marketing and Signage	BD	£5,000.00	£5,513.62				
My Sense of Place	BD	£3,000.00	£0.00		External Grant Aid	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
International Environmental Art Festival	CL		£0.00				
Healthy Living in the Biosphere	CL	£2,500.00	£0.00		Southern Uplands Partnership (DGERC)	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Learning from Experience	CL	£1,500.00	£0.00				

BIOSPHERE DEVELOPMENT 2013-16		Total Budget	TOTAL SPENT		BIOSPHERE DEVELOPMENT 2013-16	Total Budget	RECEIVED
Employment in the Biosphere	CL	£2,500.00	£0.00		Bank Interest		£192.62
Enhance Biodiversity and Habitat Networks	NH	£4,000.00	£0.00				
Ecosystem Services	NH	£2,500.00	£123.00				
Secure Future Funding			£0.00				
Land Management		£1,000.00	£0.00				
Total Project Costs		£27,000.00	£5,636.62				
SUP Project Management		£16,121.00	£16,121.00				
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£138,987.00	£106,341.84		TOTAL CASH INCOME	£136,500.00	£127,866.22
					BALANCE		£21,524.38
					In-Kind Contributions		
<i>MOA Budget</i> £136,587					East Ayrshire Council	£6,000.00	£6,000.00
<i>Shortfall in Budget</i> £2,487					Southern Uplands Partnership	£7,500.00	£11,941.76
(SA - last updated and reconciled 03/05/15)					Total In Kind Income	£13,500.00	£17,941.76