



TALKIN TARN Country Park FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Management Plan Feedback

The main consultation phase is now over for the site management plan. Further consultation will soon be underway with local school children to collect their viewpoints. I would like to thank everyone who has already taken the time to feed back to us. Suggestions/comments that have been made include the following;

- Improve access to the water for people with disabilities through providing lifting equipment and accessible boats.
- Ban cycling for children over the age of 10years old
- Instigate a regular tree planting programme to keep woods fully stocked.
- Extend AONB to include Talkin Tarn.
- Control invasive species such as rabbits and grey squirrels.
- Negotiate with local landowners to reduce nitrates going into the Tarn.
- Develop the campsite with Yurts or wooden wigwams.
- Lay on transport to make special events more accessible to all.
- New playground not as interesting as old one.
- New rowing club shed is out of proportion, shouldn't be trading off trees for built structures.

We will be replying to all suggestions over the coming weeks and explaining how we will incorporate people's ideas or if not, why that is not possible.

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CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL



www.carlisle.gov.uk

Talkin Tarn Wins First Green Flag Award

Green Flag Awards recognise and reward the best parks in the country and Talkin Tarn stood out after impressing the judges with its excellent use of green space, well-maintained facilities and high standard of safety and security.

This year has seen the highest number of awards handed out – a record 1,200 Green Flags and Green Pennants across the UK

compared to 1,013 in 2009. The applications for the Green Flag Awards are judged against eight criteria: a welcoming place; healthy safe and secure; clean and well maintained; sustainability; conservation and heritage; community involvement; marketing; and management.

The Green Flag Award vision is that by 2020, 50 per cent of green

spaces in England and Wales will be of Green Flag standard – a staggering 15,000 sites.

For more information visit: www.greenflagaward.org.uk



Summer Wildlife Reports - by David Pearson

Up until the last week or so we have had only 50% of the normal rainfall this spring, despite all the water at the beginning of the year. This is evident by the level of the water here at the Tarn. It has been, not the lowest it has ever been, but nearly. The water level is controlled by a simple sluice on the other side of the lake, and this runs into Hell Beck and the Eden. But water has not been flowing out of the Tarn for several months now, well below the level of the sluice. The Mute Swan chicks are doing fine, we have had at least six broods of Mallard and one brood of Moorhen chicks noticed so far. Other species are doing fine with the Woodpeckers feeding young. Plenty of Blue Tit and Great Tit fledglings are around and we even saw a Jay with two young in the woods near the campsite.

Floristically, the site is in full bloom. With Orchids such as Common Spotted and Greater Butterfly, flowering in the meadow and all round the site our rich and diverse flora offers a range of identification challenges. New and interesting species turn up each year, just when you think that the list is complete. At the top of the car park, the southern end, on the

bank, we have found patches of Three-nerved Sandwort (*Moehringia trinrevia*) growing in the exposed sandy areas. This diminutive plant has three conspicuous veins, or nerves, beneath each leaf blade, which help distinguish it from other sandworts, stitchworts and chickweeds. It can withstand moderate shading and likes well-drained soils. Ideal adaptations for the sandy car park banks.

The other new plant, halfway down the car park to the side nearest the entrance which we have found is Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*). This small flowered plant trails over the ground and it is thought the old meaning of straw was to strew over the ground, which is just what Wild Strawberry does with its creepers. A similar plant, the Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*) is very similar, but does not produce fruit. I hope it does not turn out to be this particular one!

We are continuing to see Red Squirrels on site as well as the occasional Grey.

Keep your eyes peeled for the small copper butterfly which you should soon see around the Tarn edge.

Small and deep orange with lots of black spots

If you spot any other interesting plants and animals on your visit to the Tarn, let us know what you find, and if you spot something you are unsure of come along to the site office and we will be more than happy to help you identify anything, as well as show you the best place to see any particular wildlife.

Well that's all for the moment, so until next time good luck on seeing some new wildlife.



Greater Butterfly Orchid

Goodbye James Hallam

I've really enjoyed my year working for the City Council on my placement and have been involved in a huge range of work. I have also made some great friends during the course of the year, and hope to keep in touch with you all. Despite my weekday volunteering coming to an end in June, I plan to continue my work part-time weekend warden work at the Tarn

until I return to college at the end of September.

My thanks to Fiona Shipp and Dave Pearson (plus all the other Tarn staff) as well as Jon May and Cath Gregory from the City Council, for making my experience so enjoyable.

Finally, good luck to Jack Fraser, my successor in the student placement position. Jack who is studying for his degree at Bangor University, will start work on

26th July, working 4 days a week at the Tarn and 1 day a week with the countryside team in Carlisle.



James & David Hard At Work

Site Updates

Moodle Site

We are currently working on developing a moodle website for local schools to be able to better access information and interact about Talkin Tarn. We plan for this to be ready to use in September. Its initial focus will be involving children in the consultation on the sites management plan.

Staff Training

Two members of staff have undertaken refresher first aid training and food hygiene and staff have also had training in customer care from Cumbria Tourism.

School Visits

The outside staff have had a busy summer term - 16 days of school visits. The staff lead environmental education days at the Tarn linked to the national curriculum. Many schools have also visited for self led activities at the Tarn.

Richard Rose Academy—Morton came and did their annual 50 mile walk around the Tarn with the majority of students managing to complete this gruelling 24 hours challenge.

Staff have also been preparing to start leading visits for the new

environment and land based diploma.

Water Use

The water has been busy, this term, at the Tarn with the following groups all now using the site throughout the year, Becks Training, Robin Wood Activity Centre, Carlisle Sea Cadets and Richard Rose Academy. This is in addition to our rowing and sailing clubs and the triathletes and model boat clubs who can be mainly seen on the Tarn on evenings and weekends.

Erosion & Narrow Leaved Helleborine Protection

Over the coming weeks, visitors to the Tarn may notice some new fencing going up in the woods (the section of wood on the hill to your right as you walk down towards the Tarn)

Talkin Tarn is one of the few areas in the UK to have the Narrow-leaved Helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) - an orchid with long, narrow leaves and white flowers - growing in the wild.

The plant is found only in a few regions of the UK and only about 80 colonies remain but almost half of these have only two or three plants and are not likely to survive much longer without conservation action. The present sites are mostly in the west of Scotland and in Hampshire. The orchid has declined significantly in the last 30 years and is now classified

as 'Vulnerable' - considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

At Talkin Tarn, protection measures have been drawn up with help from local and national experts including Plantlife, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Natural England to ensure that the rare orchid is conserved for future visitors to see. An area of woodland will be fenced off, protecting the orchid and helping to prevent soil erosion. New steps will be built to help visitors to continue to enjoy the woodland paths in safety.

In addition to protecting the orchid, the fence will help prevent trampling, erosion and soil compaction all of which have a detrimental effect on the range of other plants and fungi that occur in the area – particularly the

fungus which the orchid relies on.

Areas of path within the proposed enclosure suffer from heavy erosion and are alongside steep banks, making them dangerous to anyone using them. Placement of a fence will allow these paths to re-establish vegetation and recover naturally over time.

Look out at the Tarn for maps of where the fencing will be going.



Narrow Leaved Helleborine

Boathouse Tearoom Update - by Heather Thomlinson

Summer Evening Opening

Summer is upon us and we have started our evening opening for the takeaway and gift shop on Tuesdays and Thursdays till 8pm, weather permitting. So come down after tea and treat your self to a stroll and maybe a glass of wine or an ice cream and enjoy the view and the sunset.

A New Worktop

Our new stock cupboard is now complete and has enabled us to have a bit of a clear out and get ourselves better organised in our takeaway area.

A new worktop has been installed behind the counter which will make the serving process much easier with the coffee machine much closer to hand. A new drinks fridge will also be able to better display our local beers and keep them chilled.

Special Offer

We have joined the special Year Of Culture campaign with The Times newspaper. Times+ members can bring their Times+ card and enjoy a complimentary soft drink for the Times+ member and one guest Monday -Thursday only.

Hanging Baskets

Our Summer baskets are now up with the cheery floral display welcoming customers up to the tearoom. Thank you to Carlisle City Council's Green Spaces for supplying these.



Events

Lakes Alive

Wednesday 28th July 2pm—7pm

A nature trail with a difference as your woodland visit comes alive with strolling performances, shows and installations for the whole family to enjoy. This is a free Lakes-Alive event hosted at Talkin Tarn Country Park, See www.lakesalive.org for further information.

Love Parks Week

Saturday 24th July—Sunday 1st August A huge range of free activities across Carlisle for all the family
<http://www.loveparksweek.org.uk/>

Model Boat Club

Sail—In Day
Sunday 1st August

Weather Related

Blue Green Algae

The algae levels have been really low this year which is good for the water sports and dogs desperate to cool down. We are continuing to monitor the levels in detail twice a week. We can only assume the very cold winter has had some affect on the Tarn and knocked the species back somewhat which is fantastic and adds evidence to the level of blooms being effected by global warming. Monitoring at the Tarn is being shared with Durham University and will go into research on blue green algae nationally.

Weekend Volunteers

Come and give us a hand to look after the Park, get some exercise, fresh air and make new friends at the same time.

Our Weekend Volunteer Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, from 10am to 3.30pm. Wear old clothes and bring a packed lunch.

Call the site office for more details.

**Talkin Tarn Country Park
Tarn Road
Brampton
Cumbria
CA8 1HN**

Phone Site Office:
016977 3129

Photography by: Fiona Shipp