

## Minutes for Carron Valley Partnership Meeting

24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 1-4pm

FCS Offices, Hamilton

### Attending

<u>Mike Batley</u>	CSFT
Gillian Barrie	CSFT
Robert Hunter	Stirling Council
Dennis O’Kane	North Lanarkshire Council
Jeremy Thompson	FCS
Jamie [REDACTED]	CVDG
<u>Niall Thompson</u>	CVDG
David Russel I	CVDG

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### 1. Apologies

Rena Tarwinska	FCS
John Brinkin	North Lanarkshire Council
Geoff Brown	Scottish Water
Richard Barton	CVDG

### 2. Previous Meeting

#### CVDG

Red trail funding – CVDG expressed serious concern at the fundamental difference in the 2 sets of minutes and the method in which the FCS minutes were produced / circulated. . .  
Angela [REDACTED] produced CVDG version of the April meeting minutes on 22/4 and distributed to the partnership on 1 May. These minutes were read by most partners and were not contested. JT produced minutes on 16 May and distributed 24 May, approx 4 weeks after the meeting and 1 hour before start of May meeting. AW minutes stated that JT had said that Tomtain should be a red route. Whereas JT minutes said that there was no support for funding a red trail. CVDG wished to discuss this, but JT noted the difference and tabled for later discussion.

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#### North Lanarkshire Council

The letter for the Chief Executive was sent out by the Head of Regeneration, in order to get the letters out quickly.

#### Stirling Council

Still waiting news from the judges on Scotland’s Finest Woodland Award. JT had spoken informally to a judge and they said that they were very impressed by the volunteer hours being put in by CVDG.

### 3.Partner Update

### CVDG

Heritage Lottery Fund –

Not happy to back £50k multi user route due to concern about the health and safety implications of a multi user trail, with no segregation on the route, for example. CVDG have agreed to withdraw the application for the moment, and HLF have appointed an officer to help CVDG to improve the application. Hoping to resubmit the application by the end of June, and if successful funding available from end September. CVDG worried that a larger track will ruin the scenery, FCS will look into the minimum standards for a multi use route. JT suggested looking at the Countryside Trust Specification and cite d braiding as a potential solution. Angela [REDACTED] has meeting Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May with HLF to discuss possible ways forward.

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### CSFT

Project manager completed drafts for specific sub consultant and main consultant. CSFT are keen to agree a date for issuing brief.

Partners have to liaise with Mark Smillie to arrange payment of contribution. Payments to be made to CSFT as they are going to hold the pot for next lot of work. North Lanarkshire Council is dealing with £1280 invoice for design plan, this amount has to be deducted from their contribution.

CSFT will invoice partners for contributions.

### Stirling Council

Robert has spoken to Falkirk Councillor for the Denny area, he is also involved in education and leisure. He has suggested that now may be the time to make approaches to East Dumbartonshire and Falkirk Councils to see if they would like to be involved in the partnership. CSFT have good relations with Falkirk council and would be happy to make the approach. Stirling Council? to make enquiries with East Dumbartonshire. Robert sees this as a potential future funding opportunity.

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### North Lanarkshire Council

Core pathwork consultation brief – 2 routes on core pathwork plan that link into Denny, with several routes into Carron Valley

Plasma screens 12/13 screens in different offices/drop-in centres through the council area, on which a DVD advertising Carron Valley could be shown.

### FCS

Maintenance of existing trails –

Arrangements have been made with WB Grieves to repair the trails that were damaged by harvesters. Jeremy Thompson is suggesting a site meeting to discuss repairs. There is no

start date as yet, however Grievances are preparing a method statement for the work that need carried out.

CVDG noted they wished to formally complain about the poor handling of this issue as they had a site meeting with Frank Jackson in December last year where he agreed to rectify the damage and said that this would be done quickly (indicated January), now 6 months later the repairs have still not been carried out.

Review of signage –

Jeremy Thompson said that Karl Bartlett had visited CV and the current prohibition signs are not appropriate, he wants to think of a new way to advise the public about the dangers of using the bike track for walking. A design will be made up before the old ones are removed, as it would be unsafe for there to be no signs, Karl (FCS) to advise on the wording of the signs.

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CVDG pointed out that Glentress have prohibition signs and that FCS should start with their flagship centre using a consistent approach from the top down, instead of singling out CV for attention. JT advised that he cannot speak on behalf of other centres and “two wrongs don’t make a right”. DR suggested that JT should highlight that Glentress has an issue to Karl Bartlett, in order that FCS is seen to be following a consistent approach. Jeremy Thompson explained that due to land reform act walkers could not be excluded from the trails. CVDG expressed concern at this and questioned whether the health and safety of users took precedence over the land reform act. Jeremy Thompson proposed the wording ‘purpose built mountain bike trail’, it was thought that this could be misleading.

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Robert Hunter to look into position with regards to land reform act, about prohibiting access to the trails.

### Clan Ronald

Jeremy gave up date.

Toilets -

Progressing well with the toilet. In order to help FCS is going to pay for outlet pipe and reed bed (Jeremy to confirm that FCS covering all cost of reed bed). Contractor is currently in place for this work and just waiting quote, hoping work to start in the next 2 weeks. FCS have also agreed to employ someone to fit out toilets, and are currently looking at a mechanism to increase? lease for 2 years to cover the cost of completing the work. Jeremy to also check on the establishment time for the reed bed was suggested that this could be as much as 6 months. Cvdg highlighted those recent complaints of bikers urinating in the car park by local residents stem from the fact that appropriate facilities are not available on site.

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Vehicle counter –

Had not been repaired yet CVDG expressed disappointment that this issue as it has been ongoing since mid 2005. FCS roads engineer is not happy for the counter to go on the bridge. Radio and electronics branch to go out next week and explore other options, CVDG suggested it would be a good time to tarmac the bell mouth and install counter under this. FCS option was a small strip of tarmac to hold the counter. JT has a Target date of the end of June to get the counter up and running.

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Elsbeth English –

Jeremy had site meeting with her to discuss ways of improving the area. Her main concern seemed to be interpretation. She was also keen to promote responsible access, no promises were made about any changes suggested. She seemed satisfied with the conversation and a follow up letter confirming what had been discussed has been sent out. CV DG noted they largely agreed with the points raised in the letter, although expressed surprise that anyone had been spotted defecating in the car park.

Key points that JT should follow up from conversation was more awareness of responsible access, improvement of the information board and sign posting of the emergency phone. Both CVDG and FCS to arrange more information about remembering to use the forest cycle code on their websites.

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Geoff Freedman is working on design for the water crossing on the orange route.

Visitor Pressure –

Jeremy stated the importance on getting the toilets up and running and dealing with complaints appropriately. Possible temporary solution is to rent porta-loos, however there is the risk of theft (which is not covered by insurance) and vandalism.

Permissions for access –

CVDG now require to gain permissions from FCS in order to take vehicle into the forest, these can be obtained through Jeremy, car registrations are required. It may be possible to issue a yearlong permission for this purpose. This is required for insurance purposes in case of an accident, due to ongoing timber operations in the forest. During the initial stage of construction access was wrapped up in the agreement, now the full permission is required.

#### 4. Bikefest

Gillian CSFT

- CSFT lack of press coverage was disappointing, this was possible due to election and other large news stories that week.
- £2k mountain bike would have been a good pull if we had known about it in advance.
- Might want start thinking about future releases so that they are prepared well in advance

The press release was handled by CSFT, it was then sent to the partners for comment, Scottish Lowlands's office suggested some edits. The press release was then sent to the FCS press office before returning it to CSFT who finalised the release.

CVDG were very aggrieved at the handling of the press issue from an FCS perspective. CVDG believes that the lack of press coverage is due to removing anything that would have made the piece newsworthy, specifically the removal of the £1.5m funding tagline. CVDG expressed distaste at the “dumbing down” of the mountain bike message and DR was particularly unhappy at the fact that his quote was changed with no consultation.

Discussed the need to work together on the press release. Possibly CSFT and FC press officers and David (CVDG) working together on future press releases. Could arrange for press officers to attend next meeting – NT asked for Claire Martin to be present at the next meeting.

Stirling council to feedback into press numbers for the event - intranet and internet. Were also impressed by the turnout on the day of the event. It was agreed that numbers were estimated at around 500 visitors.

Jeremy thought that the event had been very well organised. It allowed him to get a better feel for the place and gave the chance to get to know local people better. He had been concerned about the Bikefest idea, as it concentrated on one user, but it worked really well and it didn't just attract mountain bikers there was a mix of different people.

There is also the potential there for Clan Ronald to put on future events, possibly incorporating the heritage aspect, with specific themes rather than a general event. Also the idea of making the Bikefest an annual event.

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## 5. Result of PID (Project Initiation Document) Submission

Jeremy explained that the PID is a business-planning tool used by FCS to allow the project to be incorporated in business plan for the whole of Scotland. The project then has to be sponsored by FDM, who then puts it forward to the appropriate Project champion, who must be a member of the board, and in this case it is Alan Stevenson as the project area is recreation and communities.

The purpose of the PID is to outline the scope of the project in order to gain support, if the champion supports it then they take the PID to the board. And they decide either it's a good idea go ahead and develop or good idea but no funding available comeback in a year. The champion can give guidance on how to get the PID through the board, however if the champion does not support the idea then it will not go to the board.

Alan Stevenson supports the project in theory, but not in its current state. No PID's went to the board on 15<sup>th</sup> May due to unknown business pressures, but Alan has looked at the PID. The feedback from this is that he is unlikely to approve such a large project, the Tomtain route is a major problem due to it being a red route, as they do not want to consider red grade route due to number already in Scotland.

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The only difference between the PID and the project plan was that Tomtain was a red/blue route. The PID was looking at the initial stage £650K, but Alan thinks that this is too large. He is recommending phasing the £650k into 2/3 stages, therefore it is unlikely that we will have £500k spend by March 2008. Alan feels that he will not get support at the board for such a large project. Alan is also suggesting a monitoring and review process between each phase, to look at realistic ongoing management cost i.e. staffing and repairs. Also issue of displacing visitors from existing facilities with new facilities at Carron Valley.

CVDG has put in funding bids after gaining approval from the partnership based on the project plan which was agreed by the partnership, what Alan is suggesting is going to cause problems if they are awarded funding and don't have the matching funds.

Jeremy to ask Alan to formalise his concerns for the partnership, so that they can go back to Alan with their comments.

CVDG are furious that 6 months ago Alan Stevenson and Michael Wall approved the project subject to breaking the plan up into smaller portions (which was done by CVDG) and a portion of the red route being removed (which was done by CVDG), and now the

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agreement has been renegotiated upon. CVDG are now in a position that the project plan contained a big red route, then a smaller red route and now no red route at all. They have spent considerable time working on the project and are now being asked to essentially third a third. Niall (CVDG) emailed Alan Stevenson on Monday inviting him to attend this meeting, the email had been read but he had yet to receive a response. Jamie – FC gave CVDG approval to go ahead and apply for funding, which will cause CVDG and the CVP an embarrassing problem if they do get the funding.

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The next board meeting is 11<sup>th</sup> June

Mike asked if the partnership can get more information on the reasons behind rejecting the project.

CVDG suggested going to ministers to get progress, CSFT suggested that they should explore other opportunities before going down that route.

Jeremy suggested that CVDG had already gone down the route of talking to MSP's. Mike suggested that we should work together as a partnership and that decision like contacting MSP should be made together.

Jamie said that as a community group they have contact with various different ministers who support the project and CVDG keep them informed of progress.

Mike (CSFT) it would be better to collectively try to influence rather than object to his behaviour. Ask for clear statement of why he wants this and offer a response either collectively or individually.

Jeremy Thompson to ask Alan Stevenson to come and speak to the partnership at one of the meetings.

Jeremy says that red trail over Tomtain would not be in the first stage. Niall CVDG named 7 different red trails throughout Scotland that have opened in past few months and believes that this is discrimination.

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CVDG and the CVP need sight of the PID and require a definite position from Alan so that they know what they are responding to. JW requested the PID be sent out to the partnership for review before 5pm on Tue 29/5. JT agreed to do this

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Jeremy will circulate PID along with comments from Alan Stevenson to all partners, by Tuesday.

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Political – Jamie said CVDG have contacts with MSP and that CVDG members may have decided to contact ministers on their own. Mike reminds CVDG that this kind of action affects the other partners as well. CVDG say that some individual members may have contacted ministers but this would have been done on an individual basis, not on behalf of CVDG.

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Robert Hunter suggests that it may be good idea to look at the National Mountain Bike Strategy to see where we sit with this, could we use this to influence Alan Stevenson's decision.

## 6. Partnership Process

PID document

- doesn't reflect [the agreed partnership](#) project plan
- no one in the partnership has seen PID
- did not have agreement of the partnership before submission

When the concordat was written 6 months ago, FC knew about the PID but it was not written into the concordat and none of the partners were aware of PID.

Question of whether the partnership agreement holds any merit if FC can change the rules to suit them.

Meeting minutes should be issued to all partners within a week of the partnership meeting, not on the day of the next meeting. To allow them to be reviewed and agreed, also an agenda should be made available in advance of the meeting to allow preparation.

Other problems is the conflicting meeting minutes from the last meeting, one set of minutes issued 2 weeks after the meeting the other set issued at this meeting. [CVDG again expressed concern at the fundamental difference in the meeting minutes and highlighted the serious implications that this difference has. CVDG set of minutes, produced on 22/4 and circulated 01/05, 23 days before the next meeting to all partners with no objections raised, states that JT said the Tomtain route was a red trail. AW's minutes highlight this was a specific question to JT and a specific answer was given – a red trail. The FC minutes, produced on 16/5 and distributed on 24/5 state that FCS would not support a large amount of funding going into a red trail – this is a fundamental difference. JT advised these minutes were compiled using Rena Tarwinska's notes and JT's notes. CVDG concluded AW's notes had not been contested and therefore were an accurate representation of the meeting and what was said.](#)

Suggestion that the venue and chair for the meeting should be worked on a rotational basis, so that everyone gets the chance to chair the meeting and are reasonable for taking and distributing the minutes. Also ensuring that when meetings are set up that the dates and times as stuck to and not changed at the last minute.

Possibly draft a clause for the concordat to include the PID. And that technically CSFT are not a partner as they are not listed on the front of the concordat, however they have signed it.

## 7. Appointment of Trail Design Consultants



CVDG

- disputing the brief as it does not include a red trail now, but did previously
- is it possible to survey Tomtain as a red route
- scope the route to look at the most suitable option for that area (blue, red or black)
- JW requested JT sign off the brief for the trail design consultant to allow CSFT to issue the documents and the work to go ahead. JW requested this be completed by Tue 29/5. JT agreed

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Paul Masson has already carried out scoping for the multi-use.

Idea of braiding was suggested by Jeremy for the multi – use to take the horses off the main route, this may be difficult due to the small space that the route is being planned to go through. CVDG expressed concern at how braiding works on a 2 way trail. CVDG also expressed concern that so much effort was being expended to support a very minor section of the recreation community (horseriders) JT confirmed that he envisaged horserider numbers at 1-4 per week. JT advised they had to look at this option because they cannot legally stop horseriders using the trail.

The most appropriate time for discussing this would be once the consultant is in place and they will be able to advise.

CVDG stated the best idea is to build a separate trail altogether specifically for horse use.

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Date for next meeting 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007 @ 2pm

Julie Hamilton  
29<sup>th</sup> May 2007