



Aquila
Wildlife & Nature CIC
INFORM • INCLUDE • INSPIRE



Proposal:



positive management of land in St Fillans

**For the benefit of
biodiversity, people & future
resilience**



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Executive Summary

This proposal sets out a plan to manage a piece of land within St Fillans and owned by the Drummond Foundation in a way that restores and enhances biodiversity while opening the space for safe and inclusive community use. The land has considerable potential to support wildlife and provide opportunities for learning, recreation, and wellbeing.

Key actions proposed include:

- Restoring the choked pond and installing a pond-dipping platform.
- Undertaking a tree survey, making dangerous trees safe, and devise a planting plan for planting new native trees.
- Creating a patch of osier to be coppiced for weaving activities.
- Creating a wildlife-friendly dead hedgerow around the site to allow for the removal of the perimeter fence.
- Clearing vegetation in the centre of the site for community events.
- Controlling invasive bracken to allow diverse ground flora.
- Creating a low-impact, accessible path to encourage community access and installing new gates.



The proposal balances ecological restoration with community enjoyment, ensuring long-term value for the Foundation and the wider community.



Background and context

The land parcel within St Fillans (behind the war memorial) is a valuable yet currently underutilised resource. It contains features of ecological significance — notably a pond, mature trees, and woodland edge habitats. However, these features are currently degraded: the pond is choked with vegetation, bracken dominates large areas, and some trees pose risks due to disease or instability.

The site is also enclosed by fencing that limits access and creates a barrier between people and nature. There is a strong opportunity to revitalise the land both as a haven for wildlife and as a space for the community to enjoy responsibly. With careful planning and positive management, this land could become a flagship example of how local landowners can support biodiversity and community wellbeing in harmony.



Aims



The proposal aims to:

- Enhance biodiversity by restoring habitats and introducing management practices that encourage a greater diversity of species.
- Promote community access and enjoyment by making the land safe and welcoming, providing opportunities for recreation, education, and wellbeing.
- Ensure sustainability by adopting long-term, low-impact management approaches that work with natural processes and require minimal intervention in future.





Proposed Actions



1. Pond Restoration

The pond will be cleared of the dense clumps of yellow-flag iris which is dominating the pond, along with the alders growing within and causing the pond to become increasingly choked up each year, causing seasonal drying-up. A deeper section will be created in the middle of the pond along with edge shelving to create different zones within the pond to promote a healthy aquatic habitat capable of supporting amphibians, invertebrates, and bird life. A pond-dipping platform will be installed, designed for safe use by children, families, and school groups. Dogs will be actively discouraged from jumping in the pond.

2. Tree Survey and Management

A professional arboricultural survey will be carried out to assess tree health and risks. Unsafe or diseased trees will be made safe, with standing deadwood retained wherever possible for habitat value.



3. Tree Planting

Some existing birch may be thinned and new trees will be planted, focusing on native and climate-resilient species. This will diversify the woodland structure and ensure continuity of canopy cover into the future. A small area of osier plantation will be created which will be coppiced annually for use in weaving activities and possibly for fuel for outdoor community events.



4. Dead Hedgerow & Fencing

A dead hedgerow will be created using felled timber and brash, providing habitat for invertebrates, small mammals, and birds while acting as a natural boundary. This be created in stages allowing for sections of the wire fencing to be removed, whilst utilising the existing fence posts. The eventual removal of the existing perimeter fence will improve access and connectivity with the wider landscape whilst remaining an effective barrier to deer.



5. Vegetation Clearance

Vegetation within the open area of the site, which mainly consists of soft rush, will be maintained as a short sward through regular strimming. This will provide a flat open area suitable for hosting outdoor community events.

6. Bracken Control

Invasive bracken will be managed using bashing and cutting techniques to reduce dominance and encourage a richer ground flora, including native grasses and wildflowers.



7. Improved Accessibility

A low-impact, accessible path will be created to guide visitors through the site, reducing trampling pressure and providing a safe, clear route for exploration. Access will be made available at both ends of the site, leading off the current footpaths, through gates with self-locking gate latches.



Community Engagement

The project will actively involve the community through volunteering opportunities in habitat management, tree planting, and wildlife monitoring. Educational use of the site will be encouraged, with schools, families, and community groups invited to use the pond platform and woodland path for outdoor learning. Interpretation boards or simple signage will provide information about biodiversity and the importance of land stewardship, helping visitors appreciate the natural and cultural value of the site.



Benefits and Outcomes

Ecological

- Restoration of pond habitat supporting amphibians, aquatic invertebrates, and aquatic plants.
- Healthier, safer trees contributing to structural diversity and woodland resilience.
- Reduced bracken dominance, allowing a wider range of wild plants to flourish.

Social

- Improved access for the local community, including children and older residents.
- Opportunities for volunteering, learning, and recreation in a safe environment.
- Stronger connections between people and nature, fostering care for the land.

Economic and Wellbeing

- Enhanced reputation of the estate as a responsible landowner and biodiversity champion.
- Potential for positive media coverage and community goodwill.
- Contribution to mental and physical wellbeing through nature-based activities.
- Meets objectives within the St Fillans Place Plan.



Delivery and Timeline



Year 1

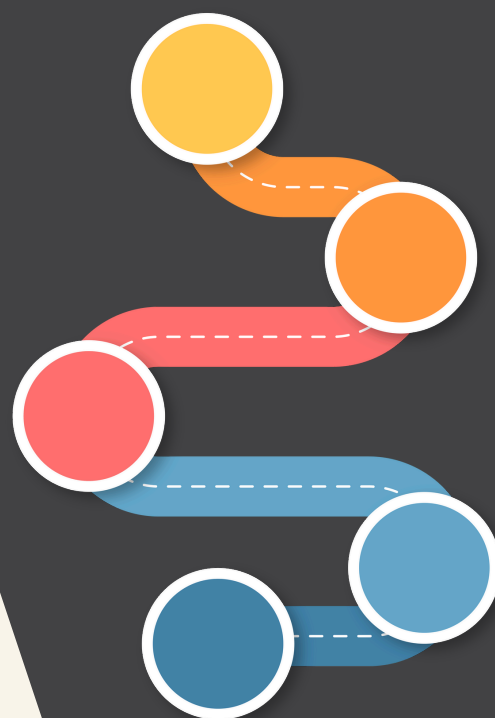
- Tree and pond surveys.
- Initial pond restoration.
- Urgent tree safety works.
- Understory tree planting.
- Start dead hedgerow.
- Start bracken control.
- Vegetation clearance.

Years 2-3

- Trial community events.
- Continue dead hedgerow.
- Construction of pond-dipping platform and path.
- Install gates.
- Continued bracken control.
- Continue vegetation clearance.

Years 4+

- Ongoing monitoring and adaptive management.
- Community engagement programmes fully established.





Funding And Resources

The project may be resourced through a combination of:

External Funding

Some initial external funding has been secured from the SSE Hydro Fund (£6,155.58).

Volunteers

Volunteers from the local community will be involved in the project and the use of the gardening group's tools has been agreed.

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Staff time will be given to project management

N We take donations at our community event to put towards our community benefit projects

We have existing links with Stirling University students who are looking for opportunities to get involved in practical habitat management and restoration.

We have existing resources which will be used to complete some of the works

We will seek sponsorship from local businesses or ask for donations of resources or staff time

We will source young volunteers through our existing links with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

We have the relevant experience, knowledge & access to the appropriate experts to deliver the project efficiently





Monitoring and Evaluation

Success will be measured by:

Biodiversity indicators

- Species richness
- Pond condition
- Woodland health.

Community indicators

- Visitor numbers
- Volunteer hours
- Educational use.

Foundation Outcomes

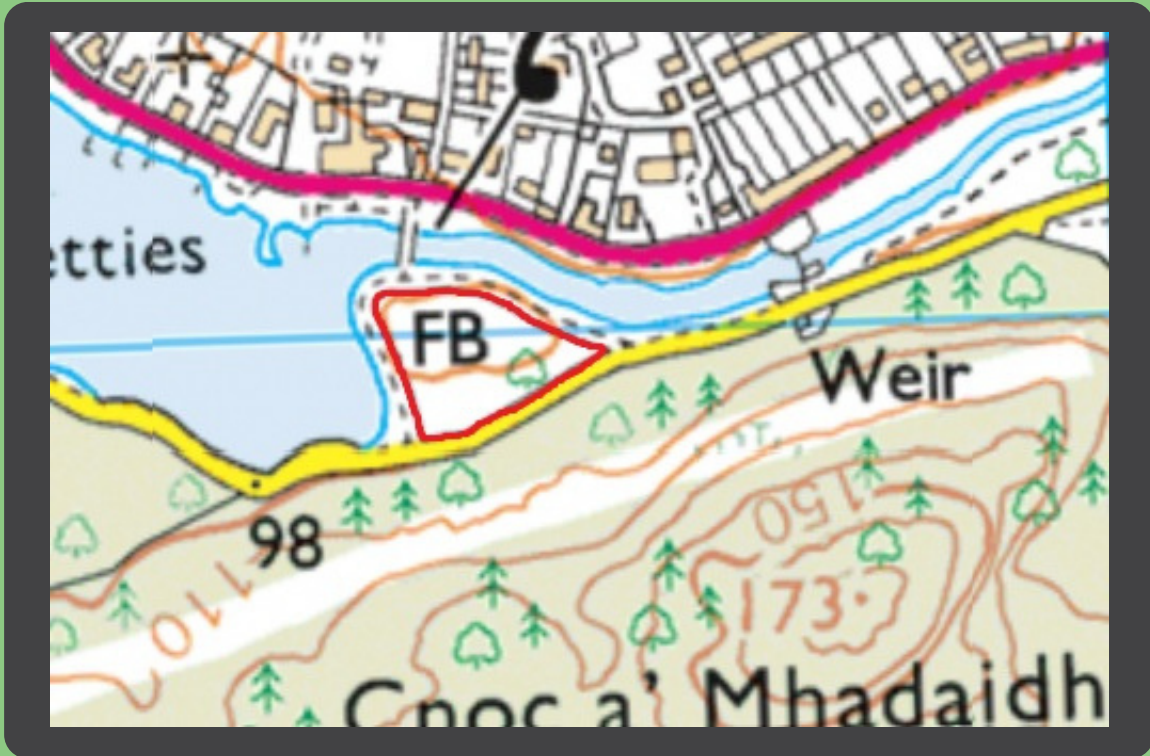
- Positive feedback from the community
 - Recognition of good land stewardship.
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Appendix – Figures



**The land is located to the rear of the war memorial
at NGR NN 69602 23995 (site centred)**



Appendix – Figures



Area of bracken for control



Trees for survey and management

Appendix – Figures



**Open area of soft rush
to be strimmed**



Dead hedgerow example

Appendix – Figures



Pond for restoration

