

## **Friends of Milngavie Reservoir Vision Statement: 2021- 2024**

**Our vision:** *‘To ensure that the Reservoir is returned to its original beauty and then to have a sustainable long-term plan to keep it beautiful for the benefit of future generations’.*

### **Our strategic priorities:**

As a volunteer group, Friends of Milngavie Reservoir aims to work in collaboration with Scottish Water, calling upon knowledge and expertise from all sources to inform and engage with local community groups to safeguard the site. To build on our work, we have identified five strategic priorities: **Heritage, Visitor Access, Community and Partnership, Biodiversity and Green Conservation and Health and Wellbeing.**

### **Heritage:**

The designed landscape of the reservoirs celebrated and showcased the Victorian ingenuity that established Loch Katrine as a clean drinking water source for the people of Glasgow, and continues to do so 160 years later. We want to pay tribute to that.

The unique qualities of the Reservoirs are recognised by its many designations: A-listed building (2008), National Inventory of Historic Garden and Designed Landscapes (2018) and Conservation Area (2006). We want to work with Scottish Water, Historic Environment Scotland and East Dunbartonshire Council to make ensure that this valuable national historic asset is expertly cared for and safeguarded for future generations and our priorities are:

- Continue to advocate appropriate restoration and maintenance of the reservoirs and their associated beautifully designed and engineered structures.
- Work closely with Scottish Water to ensure the deterioration of masonry and metalwork must be reversed.
- We will keep a watching brief on Barrachan to ensure appropriate scale and design of residential development.
- Promote the remarkable heritage story of the site from inception to completion and ensure information is permanently available for visitors to access, through exhibition and via signs and digital links.

### **Visitor Access:**

There has been consensus through various questionnaires and surveys that the special quality of this site lies in its tranquil beauty. Recreation is low-key and enjoyment is derived from the combination of fine man-made features in a natural landscape. The site commands panoramic views with an ever-changing play of light and water. It also offers more intimate wooded landscapes off the main paths. It is seen as a ‘safe’ quiet space, free of traffic and suitable for all abilities. With this in mind, the FoMR priorities are:

- Improve the path network to make it fit for purpose. This may include more durable surfaces on well-used paths.
- Encourage considerate use of the paths by cyclists and pedestrians. Discourage bicycle use on narrow wooded paths, to prevent damage to tree roots, flora and fauna.
- Promote active travel to access the reservoirs.
- Improve public Transport services to/ from the reservoirs with links to Milngavie transport hub (Milngavie station) and Mugdock Country Park.
- Continue to allow car access for disabled visitors but control access by unauthorised vehicles. The current system of signs is not working and we will address this.

- We will look again at potential additional car parking options at nearby sites.
- We will continue to promote the use of a Ranger Service as was required by the Legal Agreement (to enforce Scottish Water local regulations, monitoring car parking and antisocial behaviour but also being an informative presence on site and engaging with community groups).
- We will work in collaboration with Scottish Water on a signage and interpretation project which aims to overhaul the existing information.
- We would like to see Commissioner's Cottage providing a base for the Ranger service, for meetings and also for the display of Milngavie Reservoir historical matter.
- Improve and upgrade the existing public toilets.

### **Community and Partnership:**

We will work closely with local community networks and represent their interests in respect of the reservoirs. We want to enhance the visitor experience and a sense of community custodianship by restoring and continuing to maintain the site to the high standard this national asset deserves. We're going to:

- Work in formal partnership with Scottish Water, for example, on an ambitious rolling three-year plan (2021-2024) to deliver a series of improvements, with a priority on implementing community priorities as evidenced in its public opinion survey (2020).
- Develop a business case, in partnership with Scottish Water, for a community ranger for on-site security and management, in line with EDC planning conditions.
- Draw on this deep visitor insight to build those experiences that will give us strong local and national appeal, and our valuable contribution to natural heritage.
- Provide new education and learning opportunities for all, through linkages with schools and other groups, and new digital educational resources and our positioning papers.
- Build mutually rewarding relationships with new and existing partners. Increase our work with partners to meet common goals to support our shared key priorities.
- Mark the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary since Mugdock Reservoir became fully operational (1860), with a royal seal of approval, linking back to when Queen Victoria opened the works (Oct 1859).
- We will work with partners and initially scope a potential application for UNESCO World Heritage Site status.
- Create more volunteering opportunities.
- Scope and prepare a potential application for charitable status, to support our vision.

### **Biodiversity and Green Conservation:**

We aim to improve the biodiversity of the site by means of native planting, adjusted maintenance regimes and use of wild flora mixes and we will identify where areas are suitable for these changes. This policy is in line with the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan. We recognise that there may be operational constraints to 'wilding' or planting in some areas.

We do not want to compromise the integrity of the built structures and we aim to keep masonry and ironwork free of damaging vegetation. We also aim to respect the original design by use of non-native trees and shrubs to replace those dying or dead where they are integral to the original designed landscape. We're going to:

- Collaborate with Scottish Water on a soft landscape management and maintenance plan.
- Seek opportunities for new native tree planting and explore grant funding for this.

- Promote wildflower meadows and areas to encourage more pollinators. We have started this process with our plans for the old chlorination plant.

**Health and Wellbeing:**

The reservoirs were designed from the outset to provide a scenic, picturesque amenity with public access by footpaths. They were seen as an opportunity for visitors get away from Glasgow and enjoy the open air.

This Victorian understanding still pertains today with recognition that social, physical and mental well-being is enhanced by access to open green space and nature. The reservoirs will continue to deliver this aspiration and support citizens' wellbeing, through an improved path network and attractively managed landscape with opportunities to sit and enjoy views. FoMR priorities are:

- Improve access to the area's natural environment by developing a Path Restoration Plan, in partnership with Scottish Water.
- Successful implementation of biodiversity measures that will increase visitors' connectivity with nature.
- Support and promote the benefits of national outdoor health and wellbeing initiatives.

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