

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 02 MAY 2006**

#### **CATRINE ENVIRONMENTAL HERITAGE PROJECT – UPDATE & DESIGNATION OF CATRINE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

##### **Report by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the progress with the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project (CEHP).
- 1.2 To advise the Committee of the formal designation and advertisement of the Catrine Local Nature Reserve (effective date 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006).

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The CEHP has been developed by the Policy and Projects Section over the last three years with the support of community groups including the Catrine Community Council, Catrine Community Association, Catrine Voes Trust, Catrine Environmental Group, Catrine Angling Club, the local member for Catrine, Catrine Primary School, Daldorch House School, and environmental agencies including Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Ayrshire Rivers Trust and River Ayr Salmon Fishery Board.
- 2.2 The Development Services Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005 agreed to enter into a partnership with the reformed Catrine Voes Trust (now the Catrine Community Trust (CCT)) for the purpose of progressing with the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project. The Committee authorised the Solicitor to the Council to draft & complete the constitution of the Catrine Environmental Heritage Partnership (CEHP) subject to the approval of the CCT; and to prepare and sign an agency agreement relative to the CEHP. The Committee also authorised the Executive Head of Finance to establish accounting procedures and records for the CEHP and requested that the Council nominate three elected members to represent the Council on the CEHP Executive Committee.
- 2.3 The Development Services Committee has also previously agreed to designate a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) around the Weir & Voes and adjacent woodlands. The formal LNR designation has yet to be implemented. The Development Service Committee on 26 May 1998 agreed to designate the Catrine Voes and Woodlands as a Local Nature Reserve; agreed to enter into a Management Agreement with the Catrine Voes Trust; authorised the Director of Development Services, in consultation with the Director of Support Services, to prioritise the details of the Management Agreement, and agreed to nominate an Officer and an Elected member to represent the Council on the Management Committee.

- 2.4 The Development Service Committee on 26 January 1999 agreed to alter the boundary of the LNR to include an additional site opposite Catrine Parish Church and agreed to adopt the new boundary as the extent of the Catrine Voes and Woodland LNR for the purposes of its formal declaration.

### 3. CEHP PROGRESS

- 3.1 Following a well attended public meeting on 8th February 2005, Catrine Voes Trust was reformed at an AGM in August 2005. A new Board of 12 Directors was elected. Special resolutions were passed by large majorities including one to change the name of the trust to "Catrine Community Trust".
- 3.2 The constitution of the CEHP and the agency agreement has now been agreed and signed by the CCT and the Solicitor to the Council on behalf of the Council. The CCT have also agreed a CEHP Mission statement that has been expanded to;

***"The Catrine Environmental Heritage Project aims to conserve the Catrine Voes and Weir system and in doing so contribute to the environmental well-being and social and economic development of Catrine, providing for the long-term viability and vitality of the immediate and surrounding area. The unique heritage of Catrine is in need of conservation and repair, it is under-utilised and there is the potential to offer more to both the local community and visitors to the town. The project will establish and implement a range of proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the historic and environmental importance of Catrine, maximising the potential for related educational and recreational uses and enhancing local economic development opportunities. The major hard outputs for the project include the Conservation of the Catrine Weir and Voes System (Scheduled Ancient Monument) in a structurally sound and sustainable manner that includes the improvement of the fish ladder and enables the conservation/restoration and re-use of the turbines and water system to develop a hydro electricity scheme and the potential development of a trout hatchery to provide an income to ensure the continued management & maintenance of both the built and natural heritage***

- 3.3 Meetings have been convened with Historic Scotland to agree the way forward to enable the conservation of the "Catrine Water Power System". EAC Projects Officers have been working with engineers from Halcrow Group and CCT Directors on the production of a fully costed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. As part of this process Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained for site investigations into the geology of the weir and voes. Historic Scotland is currently in the process of procuring a specialist report on how the weir can be conserved with minimum disturbance. A detailed topographical survey of the weir and voes area has also been completed.
- 3.4 CCT has formed a sub-group to work with East Ayrshire Outdoor Access Unit (EAOAU) to provide interpretation boards along the River Ayr Way which is due to be formally opened shortly. EAOAU has also upgraded several paths which connect to the River Ayr Way within Catrine.

- 3.5 A study into the potential for hydro electricity generation was carried out by Hydro Electric Developments in 2005. This report concluded that the system is capable of restoration if sufficient capital can be raised and the turbine infrastructure purchased from Glen Catrine Bonded Warehouse. The restored system is capable of providing a sustainable source of revenue income to be used for maintenance of the Catrine Water System infrastructure.
- 3.6 Project Officers are working with a CCT Sub Committee, Catrine Angling Club, Ayrshire Rivers Trust and the River Ayr Salmon Fisheries Board on fund raising for a salmon and trout hatchery project with the major emphasis on education.

#### **4. CATRINE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE**

- 4.1 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is running Local Nature Reserve Celebrations in July 2006 throughout Scotland. Formal designation of the Catrine LNR during this period provides an opportunity to benefit from a nationwide publicity campaign and also to obtain funding from SNH to assist in the holding of events to celebrate its designation.
- 4.2 Accordingly plans are well underway for the formal designation of the Catrine Local Nature Reserve (LNR) on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2006. A week of events to celebrate, have been planned by East Ayrshire Rangers Service and the CCT including;
- A Bugs & Beasties Hunt
  - A potato raft race
  - A Willow Weaving Demonstration
  - Dyeing of textiles using natural materials sourced from local woods
- 4.3 The East Ayrshire Ranger Service have also been contracted to deliver an updated "Conservation Management Plan" for the proposed Local Nature Reserve. Research for this has to be carried out during the appropriate seasons however the work should be completed during 2006. The CCT will be working with the Rangers Service where appropriate to assist them in carrying out survey work for the Conservation Management Plan.
- 4.4 In addition to the improvements that will be proposed through the Conservation Management Plan over the last few months the area around Catrine Weir and Voes has been enhanced by the activities of local people, assisted by EAC Criminal Justice Unit. The Unit have carried out a general tidy-up and repairs to waterside fencing, pending a full upgrade to the fencing infrastructure which Historic Scotland will have to approve by way of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC).
- 4.5 Contained within the 28 May 1998 report was the commitment to set up a Management Committee between the Council and the then Catrine Voes Trust. The proposed Management Committee would have consisted of the Council, the owners of the LNR, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Catrine Community Council, Catrine Community Association, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Catrine and Sorn History Group and Historic Scotland.

4.6 Committee on 9 March 2005 gave its approval to enter into a partnership with the successors to the Catrine Voes Trust. Catrine Community Trust and the Council have now formally entered into the partnership arrangement and an agency agreement as outlined above. However, it is recommended that the proposed Management Committee for the LNR be subsumed into the organisational structure of the CEHP.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are financial implications for the Council associated with advertising the formal declaration of the LNR in the Cumnock Chronicle and the Edinburgh Gazette.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The duty to formally designate the LNR is set out in Section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

## **7. COMMUNITY PLAN & POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 East Ayrshire Community Plan's "Improving the Environment Action Plan" aims to protect and improve the natural and built environment and identifies the designation of Catrine Local Nature Reserve as a specific target.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 All work required in relation to the above proposals can be incorporated into the work programme of the existing staff within the Planning, Development and Building Standards Division.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (1) Note the progress with the Catrine Environmental Heritage Project;**
- (2) Agree the proposed formal designation date of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2006 for the Catrine Local Nature Reserve and the Celebration Events scheduled for July 2006;**
- (3) Agree that the management of the LNR is subsumed into the Catrine Environmental Heritage Partnership between the Council & the CCT ; and**
- (4) Otherwise note the contents of this report.**

**James Lavery**  
**Executive Director of Development and Property Services**  
21 April 2006  
CMcK/IMB - FV

## LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to the Development Services Committee "Designation of the Catrine Voes and Woodlands Nature Reserve" - 26 May 1998.
2. Report to the Development Services Committee "Designation of the Catrine Voes and Woodlands Nature Reserve" - 26 January 1999.
3. Report to Development Services Committee " Catrine Environmental Heritage Project – Organisational Arrangements" – 09 March 2005
4. Report to Development Services Committee "Community environmental Improvement Action Plans and Projects 2004/5 and 2005/6" -14 December 2004.
5. Report to Development Services Committee "Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans and Projects 2003/4 and 2004/5 - 10 March 2004.
6. Report to Development Services Committee "Community Environmental Improvement Action Plans and Projects 2003/2004 - 26 August 2003.
7. Catrine Environmental Heritage Project - project planning paper - October 2003.
8. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
9. Local Nature Reserves in Scotland - A Guide to their Selection and Declaration: Scottish Natural Heritage: June 2000.

For further information on the content of the report contact Colin McKee, Principal Planning Officer Policy & Projects, on 01563 576769.

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