

Cycling Friendly Dunoon & Cowal

Meeting Notes

Thursday 13th June 2019

Present: Nicola Hackett (Live Argyll); Dougie Fletcher; Sara Cairns (Breeze Network); Duncan MacLeod; John Ferrie (Cowal Mountain Bike Club / Dunoon Men's Shed); Lucy (Dunoon Community Council); Claire Hallybone (Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme); Ann Campbell (Dunoon Area Alliance/SURF)

Apologies: Caroline Coyne, Tom Warren.

Topic	Discussion	Action
Introductions	<p>Ann welcomed everyone along to this informal meeting arranged by Dunoon Area Alliance.</p> <p>Dunoon Area Alliance aims to build a network of people and organisations interested in working together on community-led regeneration priorities for Dunoon and the surrounding area. Ann is employed by SURF, Scotland's Regeneration Network, to work as a part-time facilitator to help develop Alliance action. Through their network and development work, SURF provide excellent links to national policy makers and funders.</p> <p>Among the long list of ideas, the <i>Think Dunoon</i> community consultation process identified interest in developing a 'Cycling Town' and this was selected as one of the priority projects to be explored further.</p> <p>The purpose of this meeting is to start a shared conversation on the range of cycling-related assets here in Dunoon and Cowal; helping to make connections between initiatives; and considering any gaps and whether joint action could be developed to fill these.</p>	
Existing Assets	<p>Activities</p> <p>Cowal Mountain Bike Club – aims to promote and encourage responsible mountain bike riding within Cowal. Hosts a variety of rides each month from 'beginner' rides to 'advanced' rides. Have developed a variety of trails within the Dunoon area and continue to improve these and develop new trails. Offer open nights to 'try a mountain bike'.</p> <p>Breeze Network Dunoon – provides fun, free bike rides for women of all abilities with a qualified guide. Part of a UK-wide initiative. Up to eight people per ride with no age limit.</p> <p>Dunoon Elderly Befrienders Project Cycling without Age Project – The Befrienders are about to take delivery of their own trishaw, which will allow their older people to be taken on regular bike rides along the prom and beyond.</p> <p>Go Active at Hunter's Quay Holiday Village – need to find out whether bike hire is available at Hunter's Quay, or just at their Lochgoilhead holiday village.</p>	

Benmore Outdoor Centre –

Dunoon Presents Cycling Events – a variety of high-profile events supporting the development of adventure tourism and smaller scale events for families. Outdoor Festival (Summit to Sea) new for 2019.

Routes

Mini Pump Track at the West Bay swing park – owned by Dunoon Presents and maintained with help from Dunoon Men’s Shed and CMB.

East Bay Promenade – designated cycle path with small signs denoting shared use with pedestrians.

Lock Eck / Puddle Lane – safe and easy off-road cycling options.

Forest Tracks – not actively promoted by Forestry & Land Scotland as cycle routes (due to liability issues), but extensive routes from easy to hard or mental!

Three Ferries Road Cycling Routes – these multi-ferry route options attract significant numbers of road cyclists to the area.

SUSTRANS National Cycle Network Route 75 - goes through Dunoon town centre and out to Portavadie.

Walking & Cycling in Dunoon Map – produced by Argyll & Bute Council Sustainable Travel team and now needing updated.

Skills Development

There are a number of accredited schemes on offer and local people with qualifications.

Bike Ability – there are qualified Bike Ability instructors in the area. Live Argyll deliver Bike Ability programmes and support a number of cycling clubs through the Community Sports Hub programme, including in Dunoon.

Cycling proficiency in schools –provided by A&B Education Department through individual schools. There is room for expanding this provision.

Essential Cycling Skills – Duncan is qualified to deliver training and can provide this free of charge to groups.

Bike Maintenance Skills – Tam MacDonald delivers SVQ training at Dunoon Grammar School. CMB organised maintenance training for members (to encourage people to join).

Cycle Leader Training – Sara has been trained as part of the Breeze Network.

Bikes and Equipment

The Bike Doc - Duncan runs a bike repair service in Sandbank and provides Bike Doc services at events.

Dunoon Men’s Shed Bike Recycling – Tam MacDonald is taking in donated bikes and refurbishing them for re-use. Donations for refurbished bikes go to support the Men’s Shed project. Tam is inundated with bikes and has quite limited space to work in, so there is limited capacity for more people to help. John noted that the CMB club members are about to review how they can support Tam to meet the level of demand.

	<p>There is no formal bike hire available, but visitors can buy a bike for a short period and then donate it back.</p> <p>Dunoon Grammar School – has a set of twelve bikes, with tools and spares, bought through the Active Schools project more than ten years ago. These are currently underused and a use could be found for them. Update from Nicola: Live Argyll Active Schools team is currently looking at options and, depending on sourcing trained volunteers, may take the decision to move these bikes to the Queen’s Hall for potential bike hire and add to current stock, but we would need to get staff trained up on maintenance or outsource maintenance.</p> <p>E-Bike Supply and Conversion – there is a business based locally that supplies and converts e-bikes.</p> <p>Spares and Supplies – Campbell’s Decorators carry bike spares and supplies.</p> <p>Blairmore Gallery was recently gifted a spares and repair kit from a customer who works for Cycling UK. This could be an interesting item to offer in a variety of rural cafes and ferry terminals.</p>	
<p>Needs / Potential</p>	<p>Safe routes for those new to cycling – once children have developed beyond learning to cycle they need safe routes to extend their skills and develop their independence. A designated cycle path from Dunoon to Innellan would be ideal for this. Likewise, extending the cycle path from Sandbank to Cothouse and beyond would be welcome.</p> <p>Ann noted that Argyll & Bute Council has recently completed consultation on developing cycle lanes from Dunoon Pier to Western Ferries at Hunter’s Quay and from Dunoon Pier to Sandbank Business Park. Providing information on introductory routes could be helpful, e.g. the quiet side of Loch Eck and forest tracks.</p> <p>eBike Opportunities for Older People– eBikes can provide a perfect way for older people to continue cycling or to explore the forest tracks which might be too much of a challenge for their fitness on a standard bike. Access to eBikes for guided adventure cycles on safe routes could provide great benefits to health and wellbeing for older people (and others).</p> <p>Custom Bikes for People with Disabilities Tandems and wheelchair bikes can support people with a disability or additional support needs to get active. https://www.scottish-cycling.com/specialneeds.html</p> <p>Signage / Route Marking – there is a risk of confusion and misunderstanding between pedestrians and cyclists on the cycle paths along the East Bay due to the limited signage and lack of route marking. This could be improved with some basic marking on the path. Concerns about cyclists going too fast on these paths and creating a hazard for pedestrians were thought to be unfounded – confident, fast cyclists will tend to use the roads.</p> <p>Bike Hire – the initial outlay for a bike hire business could be significant, however there could be considerable interest. There could be scope in developing a network of bike pick up / drop off points (e.g. Benmore Gardens, Holy Loch Marina, Argyll Holidays, Western Ferries, Kirn, Dunoon Pier, Innellan). It was noted that the Gate House in Castle</p>	

	<p>Gardens could be an ideal location for a bike hire social enterprise / business. Examples of similar social enterprises in Scotland include: Velocity Inverness Social Enterprise http://velocitylove.co.uk/ Angus Cycle Hub Community Interest Company https://www.anguscyclehub.co.uk/ On your Bike Mallaig Leisure Trust https://www.mallaigleisure.org.uk/bike-hire-activities/ (bike hire, maintenance classes, service and repair, guided mountain bike rides, family guided rides, adult cycling groups, guided cycle trips) Loch Lomond & Trossachs Countryside Trust, ebike trial project for local communities http://trustinthepark.org/tred/</p> <p>Bike Maintenance – Cycle Bute voluntary group has raised funds to install a series of bike maintenance stands at key points around the island. There could be potential for something similar across Cowal to support road cyclists.</p> <p>Larger Pump Track for all wheeled sports – the mini pump track is suitable for small children and has a limited life-span. A full-scale pump track (see Wishawhill Wood Pumptrack) would suit all ages and abilities for bikes, scooters, skates and skateboards.</p> <p>Feeder Mountain Bike Locations to support Scottish Centres of Excellence – Cowal could develop activities as a feeder site for the identified centres of excellence.</p> <p>The Dunoon Project – has potential to bring increased visitor numbers to the area with a specific interest on outdoor sports. Services will be needed to support this increase in demand.</p> <p>Balance Bikes for Wee Ones –Ann noted that, If the paths were improved, Castle Gardens would provide an excellent adventure space for wee ones on balance bikes.</p> <p>Review of maps and signs / shared promotion – promoting routes, updating maps and improving signage across the area would have a positive impact.</p>	
<p>Making Connections</p>	<p>Cycling Scotland – information and support on all aspects of cycling development, including custom bikes, cycle leaders training. https://www.cycling.scot/</p> <p>The Bothy, Gourock Train Station – a new project by Cycling UK providing organised bike runs and access to eBikes in Inverclyde. https://www.cyclinguk.org/press-release/inverclyde-bothy-get-hundreds-people-cycling-and-walking</p>	

	<p>Scottish Mountain Bike Strategy 2019-2025 – aims to increase participation, to support developing athletes and to increase the economic contribution of the sector to the wider Scottish economy. Investing in the work of Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland, who play an important role in overseeing the strategy, and Mountain Bike Centre of Scotland, who will drive forward innovation across Scottish mountain biking. https://www.gov.scot/news/investing-in-scotlands-mountain-biking-success/</p> <p>Glasgow Community Cycling Network – Helen Voce The online hub for all things cycling in and around the city of Glasgow. Find out about bikes, maintenance, cycle routes, events, and all the organisations that support the cyclists of Glasgow. https://ayecycleglasgow.org.uk/</p> <p>Zero Waste Scotland (developing the circular economy) Samantha Moir https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/community-groups/what-we-can-offer</p> <p>Sustrans - National cycling network Local contact Tom Warren https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network</p> <p>The Bike Station, Glasgow – provides bike maintenance training. https://thebikestation.org.uk/about/bike-station-history/</p> <p>Energy Saving Trust eBike Grant Fund Category A Fund - up to £25K available for projects that will provide opportunities to trial eBikes. Closing dates 30 September 2019 and 29 November 2019. https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/grants-loans/ebike-grant-fund</p> <p>Social Housing Fund for improved walking and cycling facilities in social housing areas. Up to £25K available to social housing providers for shelters, street furniture, bollards, planters, seats. Bikes to Africa – Dougie regularly takes bikes which can't be refurbished locally to Evans Cycles, where they are fixed up and sent to communities in Africa.</p>	
<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>Ann agreed to investigate sources of information and funding, which are included above with web links.</p> <p>It was agreed that a further meeting should be arranged with a speaker from a relevant project elsewhere.</p> <p>Following the meeting Dougie sent the following proposal for discussion: 'Dunoon Cycling Centre</p>	

	<p>Source suitable premises. Large enough to accommodate a shop, workshop and a café area. Appoint staff. Manager and a full time mechanic/sales person. Seek franchise from one or more leading manufacturer. Buy a mini-bus and trailer. Provide training for cyclist at all levels, but with emphasis on the young, those wishing to return to cycling, the elderly and the disabled. Add specialist First Aid training, navigation and skill courses. Be prepared to run adventure cycling events both locally, elsewhere in Scotland and abroad. Expand this during the winter season to include skiing holidays. Once established the centre should become financially viable with an income from: Cafe Sales Bike repair and maintenance Adventure holidays I am happy to do whatever is needed and in any role to progress the project. We will, of course, need expert advice. Especially in terms of funding and charitable status.'</p>	
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