

# Tarras Valley Nature Reserve

## Autumn 2022 Newsletter

It's been a very busy year here at the Langholm Initiative with our epic 2<sup>nd</sup> buy-out fundraising campaign, legal transfer of the remaining 5,300 acres of the Tarras Valley, continuing to develop our community, schools and volunteer engagement work, welcoming numerous visitors to the reserve and kick-starting projects like our tree nursery.

Here's a snapshot of updates from the past few months!



## Second Stage Buy-Out Officially Completes!

We reached a major milestone in our community land ownership journey on 4<sup>th</sup> November when the remaining 5,300 acres of the Tarras Valley legally transferred from Buccleuch to the community of Langholm. This was following one of the South of Scotland's largest community buy-outs.

Together, with your amazing support, the town of Langholm has achieved its original goal of raising a total of £6m to create a 10,500-acre reserve to tackle the nature and climate crises, and boost community regeneration.

**This is a moment of history and hope.**

It shows how communities can achieve the remarkable when people work together, even when the odds seem impossible. The biggest heartfelt thankyou goes to the thousands of people who went above and beyond to make this happen, and to Buccleuch for working with us so positively throughout.

The climate and nature emergencies are one of the biggest long-term threats facing us all. Restoring nature on a large scale is one powerful solution – so we

are hugely proud to be playing our part, and we hope our story will inspire other similar projects across Scotland and beyond.

Here's to a bright and hopeful new chapter!

You can read more by following the links to recent media coverage at the bottom of this email.



## Future Plans for Tarras Valley

Now that the Northern half of the Tarras Valley has officially transferred to the community, work will now begin to create a collaborative 5 year action plan with the community which will set priorities for the reserve.

Although some projects are already underway such as Hallpath woodland restoration, the action plan is a really important document. It will set out what will be done and how. This is about the future and making sure this land is a rich and diverse community asset for generations to come.

Over the coming months, we'll be kick starting local conversations about different priorities for the action plan such as habitat restoration, access, tourism and buildings. There will be lots of community events and workshops to get ideas and feedback to start shaping the future plan for the land.

**Before Christmas, the Tarras Valley team will be at the following local events.**



**Late Night Shopping at the Old Post**

**Office – every Thursday from 1<sup>st</sup>**

**December 3:30 – 7pm:** We'll be teaming up with the Langholm Alliance and will be alongside lots of other local businesses in the mini market hall.

**Love Langholm Local Market –**

**Saturday 3rd December 9 – 1pm**

**Buccleuch Centre**





## Woodland Creation and Restoration

Although we are early in our ecological restoration work across the reserve, we have been working hard to put the building blocks in place to help restore and expand our native woodlands across the Tarras Valley alongside the Woodland Trust.

### Tree Nursery

A dedicated team of volunteers and staff have been hard at work getting the Tarras Valley Tree Nursery up and running ready for the autumn with the first arrival of 60,000 tiny native sapling trees! The seedlings include Birch, Rowan, Willow and Alder. They will all be grown right here on the reserve then planted to help expand native woodlands across the Valley.

These saplings will give us a head-start on our woodland creation project on the Lower Tarras Valley with the Woodland Trust, and we have also started collecting a variety of tree seeds from around the reserve to plant for use in the future! A big thanks to The Woodland Trust and Scottish Forestry who have helped and supported us to get this project off the ground.

BBC Landward visited the reserve in October, to learn more about the project and film some of the work going on in the tree nursery. You can watch the episode by clicking the button below!

### Ancient Tree Recording

We've been running a series of training sessions for local volunteers to start recording our oldest and nationally important veteran trees on the UK ancient woodlands inventory. Having better records of our trees helps us to be able to

protect our valuable tree heritage for generations to come. You can read more here about the [Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust](#).

### Tree Planting

Hats off to our wonderful volunteers Sam, Dom, Bernadette and Majk, who recently braved some awful weather conditions and helped prepare the ground to plant hundreds of native trees at Hallpath following the felling of the site after Storm Arwen. They did an amazing job! A huge special thankyou to Sam who runs [@stateofgreenmusic](#) and has fundraised the money for the native trees and wildflower mixes we'll be using the restore the site through the proceeds of his music.

We have created several new ponds across the site to improve wetland habitat and help hold rainwater. We'll be running community volunteer days to plant the site with native trees over the coming weeks.

Watch us on Landward here!



## Sunnyside Primary School

We recently welcomed Glasgow-based Sunnyside School of Conservation's Ocean Defenders, Polar Explorers and Wildlife Warriors to explore



the reserve and meet the team.

When the Langholm Initiative were fundraising for the first buy-out back in 2020, students from this school raised an amazing £400 towards the purchase, and were invited down to Langholm to see what their fundraising efforts had helped to achieve.

During the day the children visited the tree nursery, learned about the wildlife that lives in the Valley, met some of our sheep flock and got a very warm reception from the sheepdogs!

Watch the video linked below to see what they got up to.



## Biodiversity

We have been undertaking survey work this year to help provide us with a good baseline of ecological information about the species and habitats that we have on the reserve. This is to help us monitor changes over time and inform habitat restoration.

Here's a quick snapshot from data collected by ecologists, local volunteers and experts over the past year:

- Over 170 species of moth including Northern Drab Moth which was the first time it had been recorded in Dumfries and Galloway.
- 222 species of Bryophytes (mosses) recorded by experts from Edinburgh Botanical Gardens. On the reserve we have about 23% of the 960 Scottish species.
- 31 red and amber list species of bird including hen harrier, black grouse, cuckoo and grasshopper warbler.
- We have been very excited about the discovery of water voles which are one of the most threatened native mammals in Scotland.

Although we still have a lot of work to do and so much more information to collect, the initial results have been incredibly promising.

We are very excited about the impact we will be able to have on local biodiversity as we restore the land.

We'll soon be launching our Tarras Valley Nature Reserve website which will have an archive of all of the above data and survey readily available for anyone to access.



Caroline Blackie Photography

## Our Hen Harriers: Charlie and Aurora

Thanks to the satellite tags put on two of our chicks by [RSPB Scotland RSPB Birders](#) and [Hen Harrier Day](#) we have been able to get a unique insight into where they have been travelling since they started to leave the Tarras Valley where they were born.

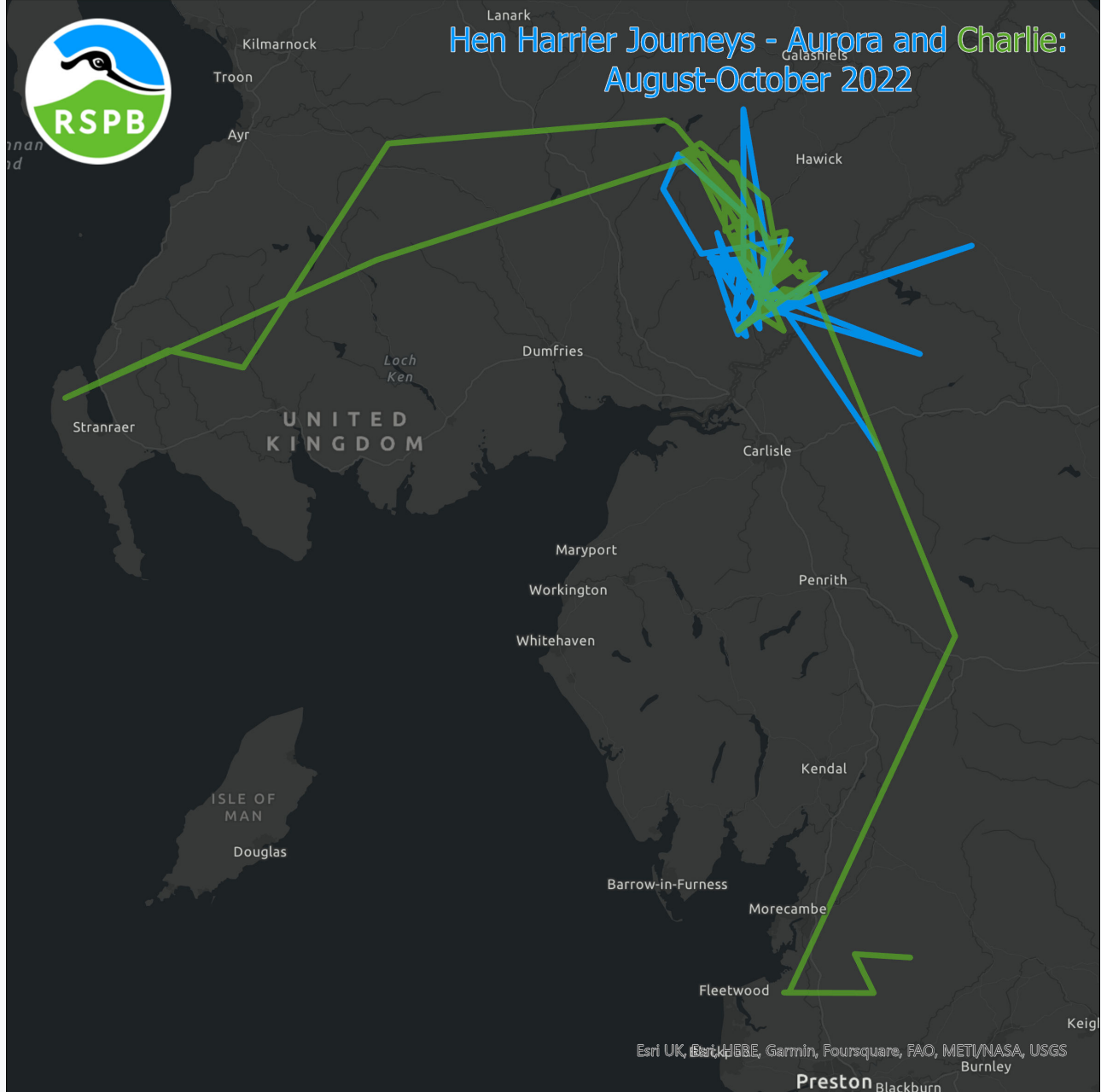
Charlie seems to be the more adventurous of the two birds travelling right to the coast at Stranraer and then off down to Yorkshire!

We're looking forward to continuing to follow their journey over the coming months.





## Hen Harrier Journeys - Aurora and Charlie: August-October 2022



## NatureScot Funding Announcement!!

We are delighted to have been selected as 1 of 7 pioneering projects nationally to receive funding from a brand new Investment Ready Nature Scotland Grant Scheme, funded by Esmee Fairbairn, NatureScot and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The fund is to help develop projects in Scotland that use private investment to finance the restoration of nature.

The funding that has been awarded to the Tarras Valley is to help us look at how we can make use of the empty buildings on the reserve for ecotourism, education, volunteering and other enterprise opportunities.

This is all about finding ways to generate income streams to reinvest back into the reserve and support the wider regeneration efforts in Langholm.

You can read more about this funding below.



## More than £500K announced for natural capital projects

Seven pioneering private investment projects to restore nature and improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy it, while mitigating and adapting to climate change, have been awarded Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (IRNS) funding.

[Read more](#)

## Recent Press Releases



11th November

**Community completes  
epic land buyout in**



5th August

**Community makes history  
as South Scotland's**



**'moment of history and  
hope'**

**biggest land buyout gets  
over the line to double size  
of nature reserve**

[View more](#)

Please follow our social media for further updates about our projects and the work we've been doing.

**With all our thanks,**

**The TVNR team and volunteers**

### **The Langholm Initiative**

Buccleuch Mill, Glenesk Road, Langholm  
United Kingdom

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