

Creating the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve

2025 – 2030

5 Year Action Plan for
Langholm's community land

Executive Summary



Volunteers tree planting on Tarras Valley

South Scotland's Largest Community Buy-Out

The Langholm Initiative (LI) is a charity - a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) - which was established in 1994 for the benefit of the communities of Langholm and Eskdale to help create a thriving place to live, work and visit.

Langholm made the headlines around the world when the LI achieved the South of Scotland's largest community land buy out and brought 10,500 acres of the Tarras Valley into community ownership in 2021 and 2022. We are now creating the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve (TVNR) which is one of the biggest projects of its kind in the UK for people, nature and climate.

Community land ownership is about creating something better to hand onto future generations and the land is a powerful resource to help us meet our community development objectives.

To help us turn aspirations into reality, we have created a five-year action plan. We are at an early stage in our journey, learning together about how to become sustainable custodians of this very special landscape.

What is the purpose of our 5 year plan?

This plan sets out overall priorities and collective direction for the Langholm Initiative through the development of TVNR. Our focus is getting the basics right over the next 5 years, building the right foundations for our community land to thrive in the long term. We have held over 50 different local events to get community conversations going, refresh our community mandate and used this feedback to help shape collective priorities for the next 5 years.

We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the action plan with their time, ideas and enthusiasm. We hope that we can inspire others and act as a real example of the true impact that communities can make in addressing the issues we face as a society.



A family walk through ancient woodlands in Longwood

Our Vision and Mission

Our vision is to:

A community owned landscape rich
in nature with people at its heart

Our Mission is to create:

- A place for nature to thrive
- A place for learning and discovery
- A place to call home
- A place to connect with nature and the land
- A place for work and enterprise
- A place that is diverse and welcoming
- A place for celebrating and valuing culture and heritage
- A place which supports wellbeing, health and happiness
- A place where we are adapting to our changing climate

The Tarras Valley means different things to many different people. As custodians of the land, it's our job to work together to balance these interests to create a sustainable community asset where nature is thriving, and the land continues to be a source of pride for the community.



Our Guiding Principles

We have created some core guiding principles to set out how we'll work together to restore the land.

People are at the heart of our work. We will ensure that:

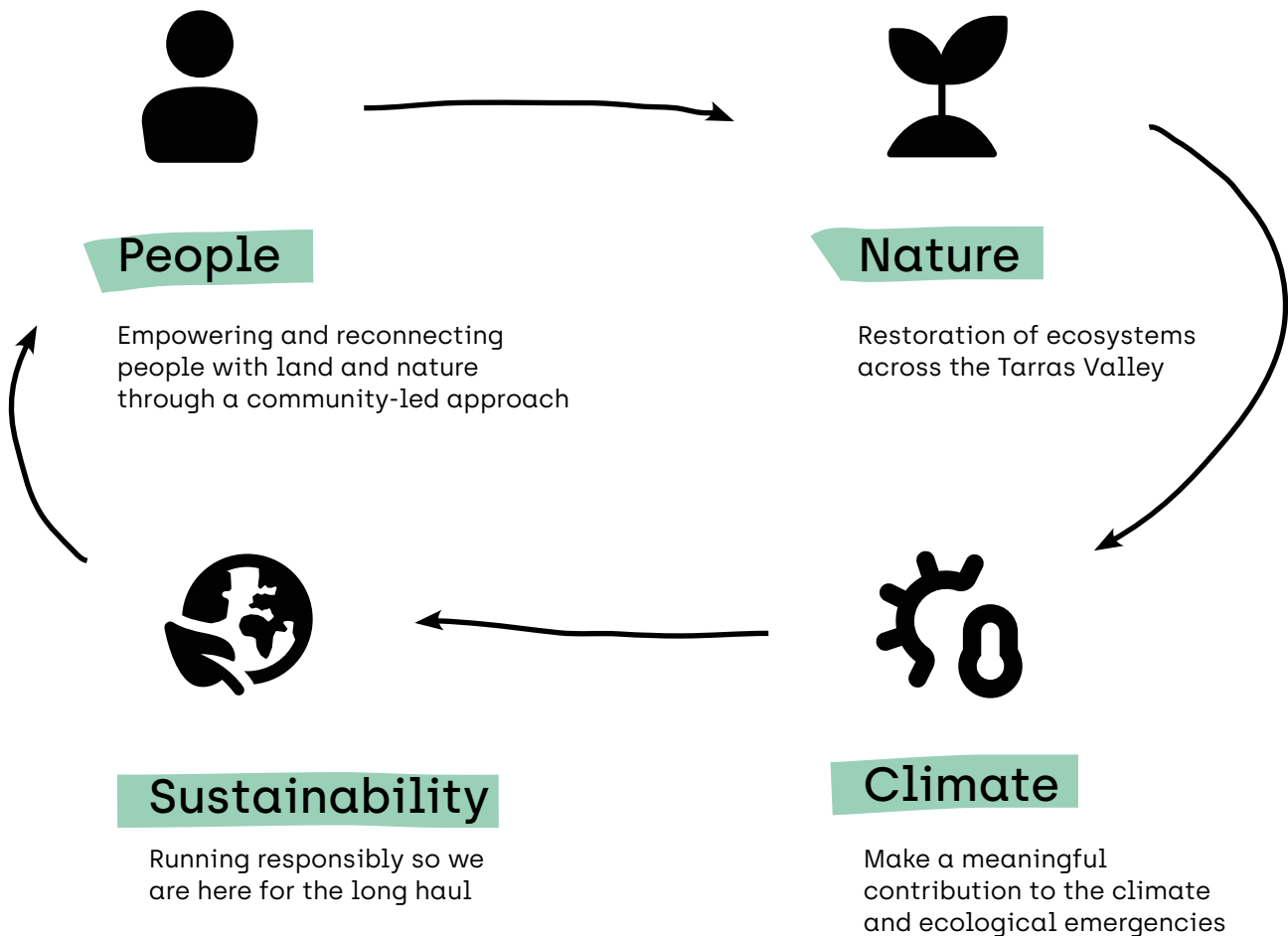
- We're locally rooted, community-led and local voices are heard and valued
- Local people have a means to shape what happens
- Everyone is welcome and respected
- We value local lived experience alongside scientific evidence
- We value and celebrate local heritage and cultural connection with the land
- We collaborate, share and work in partnership

To restore the land, we will:

- Allow space and time for nature to thrive, expand and shift back into balance
- Take a broad, holistic approach focussed on a 'helping hand' where it is needed to restore self-sustaining natural processes
- Work to create a rich dynamic mosaic of habitats
- Apply broad principles to our management and restoration of the land rather than a highly prescriptive approach
- Accept that we cannot predict and control every outcome and we must accept some uncertainty in the end result as things change

What are we trying to achieve?

There are 4 key objectives for our work:



Objective 1: People

Empowering and reconnecting people with land and nature through a community led approach



Ensure Langholm feels the economic benefits of the community land



Continue and expand our learning, discovery, skills building programme



Grow and diversify our community engagement activities



Provide a unique, welcoming and diverse visitor experience



Development of sustainable livelihoods and opportunities



Share our story to inspire and engage others

Objective 2: Nature

Restoration of dynamic ecosystems across the Tarras Valley



Continue to develop our learning and understanding about the land



Incorporate regenerative grazing with herbivores to encourage dynamism and help us restore the ecosystem



Restore the river system including wetlands and reconnecting the River Tarras with its natural course and floodplain



Restore native woodlands, scrub and plants to their natural limits and range. Prioritise natural regeneration as a primary method, only planting trees where enrichment is needed or seed source is absent or scarce



Restore our damaged peatlands and upland blanket bogs



Maximise biodiversity and encourage a complex, abundant ecological web

Objective 3: Climate

Make a meaningful contribution to the climate and ecological emergencies



Deliver carbon capture by restoring nature



Enhance our natural resilience to extreme weather as the climate changes e.g. storm, drought, flood



Make a contribution to local energy and food security



Reduce our own organisational environmental impact



Objective 4: Sustainability

Running responsibly so we are here for the long haul



Ensure the Langholm Initiative has the resources to support our aspirations for the Tarras Valley



Work towards financial resilience through development of diverse income streams



Build a more visible presence in Langholm to ensure our work continues to support wider community regeneration efforts



Maintain our land and buildings to continue creating a safe and welcoming place.



Ensure we encourage the next generation of leaders and stewards for community land



An emperor moth recorded on the Tarras Valley



Contact us

The Langholm Initiative
Bucleuch Mill
Glenesk Road
Langholm. DG13 0ES
01387 380914

hello@tarrasvalleynaturereserve.co.uk
www.tarrasvalleynaturereserve.org

Langholm Initiative is a registered SCIO: SC04 1085

Find us online





A schools outreach session on the Tarras Valley

First published by
The Langholm Initiative
January 2025

For the full version of our 5 year plan please visit:
www.tarrasvalleynaturereserve.co.uk

