



**We care for
a part of Scotland's history
which belongs to
our community**

NEWSLETTER No.19 - Spring 2020

We hope that you're all well, and coping with the lockdown.

The efforts made by Team Tarbert, the Community Trust, and other volunteers, to help those who need it, are remarkable, and our community is very fortunate to have such people around us in these trying times.

CASTLE SITE PROGRESS

Our own volunteers have been checking our sheep, but all other work on the site has more or less stopped.

During the winter, working with Tarbert Academy pupils and Guides, we planted some 200 trees. The woodland will be available for future generations, and this work expanded it close to the village. We also completed new handrails and safety strips on steps and landings.

The orchard trees have been all been mulched/pruned and, throughout the site, we've made progress with cutting back of rampant bramble growth. Unfortunately for our volunteers, we've no option but to keep on top of this repetitive task. Thankfully, though, there are other tasks available, so it never needs to become monotonous.

We started the work on the improved interpretation area, but had to abandon that during the present lockdown. We'll get back to it, as soon as we can.

FUTURE ACTIVITY

We now have Scheduled Monument consent in place for

- **A new archaeological dig, to explore the possibility of an eastern entrance**
- **Construction of the improved interpretation area**
- **Consolidation work to allow us to leave visible to the public the location of the discovered western entrance**

Securing these consents took considerable effort with Historic Environment Scotland (HES), mainly due to staff problems at the latter (now resolved). We express our thanks to Roddy and all those who supported us.

Design work is complete. and materials have been sourced for all of this work, so, as soon as we think it is safe to do so, we will progress it on site.

FUNDING

The new on-site visitor donation arrangements, which we organised last year, were working well, and our maintenance costs were on course to becoming sustainable. But, unfortunately, Covid-19 caused our income - in common with that of many others - to crash, and our visitor numbers are unlikely to recover in the near future. This may delay some activity, but we're looking at how to overcome the problem.

The plans for the improved interpretation area include preparation for contactless donations to be made on site, but, as this is costly to establish and run, we can't proceed immediately. However, it's almost certainly the way ahead for us, as soon as we can afford it.

MEANTIME

If there's anyone out there who can spare us an hour or two..... There are still brambles to be cut back in woodland areas. And

some strimming of new bracken growth, where we have planted trees this year, would be helpful and appreciated. In the shelter, there's a very long bent-prong rake which we've been gifted, and it is excellent for removing weed from the woodland pond.

Please bear in mind that, if you are working alone, you should take a mobile phone with you, in case of accident.

Keep safe,

Robert

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