

# Environmental Volunteer Network Newsletter

Spring 2017

## The Volunteer Network

South Lanarkshire Council's Countryside and Greenspace Service work with environmental volunteers across the county in a number of ways. We continue to work closely with a number of groups to help improve sites and engage with local communities.

In this newsletter we have updates from the Cambuslang Apiary Project, Badgers in the Landscape and an introduction to Stonehouse Park.

We also have the latest from CAVLP and details of an exciting competition, our wildlife challenge!

Learn more about the amphibians in our area and get inspired to do some biodiversity surveying, either on your site or out in the furthest reaches of South Lanarkshire!

We are also able to facilitate training for our volunteers and we are always interested in suggestions for potential

courses that would help fulfil your objectives and build capacity within your group!

- Emergency First Aid
- Outdoor Skills
- Getting to grips with Social Media
- Health and Safety
- Funding tips
- Bat survey training

Networking and skill-sharing is important too so again we are always keen to facilitate our groups and volunteers getting to know each other a bit better!

You never know, there may a funding whizz in a group who could give you some great tips and ideas about funding they have discovered they are eligible for, just from experience.



*Surveying in the sunshine*

# Cambuslang Apiary Project

## Who we are:

We are a small community group who started beekeeping a few years ago. None of us had much knowledge or experience so we decided it was best to learn together. As a group we can do a lot more and get funding to assist in our aims and objectives.

## Our Aims and Objectives:

We support and provide practical training for new beekeepers. Those with experience are encouraged to improve in competency and be able to demonstrate good standards. The group educates the general public on the benefit of pollinators during public events. If you would like a list of plants which encourage pollinators please use the email below.

## How we started:

A few potential beekeepers in Cambuslang were finding it difficult to get started in beekeeping, having no suitable location. Thankfully the Cambuslang Fire Station offered us a secure site for our community hives when our first location suffered vandalism. The Community Payback Team landscaped the area making it suitable for use. The honey bees thrive here due to the wild flowers along the banks of the river Clyde.

## What we do:

Opportunities are given to get close to the bees to see what goes on inside a hive. All equipment (bee suit and veil) is provided with experienced beekeepers at hand. This will allow you to decide if beekeeping is the hobby for you; or perhaps you are just curious and want to find out what beekeeping is like.

## Where to find us:

The Cambuslang Apiary Project has hives at Cambuslang and Shotts. We meet in Cambuslang every third Thursday of the month (except December) at 7.30pm to discuss business. The location may vary and can be found on our facebook or please email ([clangersbeekeeping@live.co.uk](mailto:clangersbeekeeping@live.co.uk)) for confirmation. Beekeeping is done on evenings and weekends subject to the weather of course, honey bees don't come out when it is raining. Occasionally unplanned visits are necessary as sometimes the bees like to catch you out and do something unexpected!

## In Conclusion:

Most of our members now successfully keep bees as individuals ranging from 1 hive to 14. This is a very challenging and enjoyable hobby and helps the honey bees at a time when they are struggling with reduced habitat and an increase in pests and disease. If you would like to be involved, you will find a very friendly and enthusiastic welcome from us all.



A Cambuslang Honeybee



Clydesmill Fire Station apiary

A colourful vista





## CAVLP Latest

What better time of year to get out and about in the Clyde and Avon Valley, as the weather warms up and the magnificent orchard blossoms burst in to life.

It's back and it's even bigger and better than before! The Clyde and Avon Valley Festival is a jam packed extravaganza of FREE walks, talks and activities for all ages, taking place Saturday 6 – Sunday 14 May. Kicking off with the ever popular Blossom Day at Overton Farm, Crossford, a suite of events are set to take place over the next eight days. Explore ancient wooded gorges, crumbling castles, orchards, wildlife and much more with an array of experts and local guides. For booking info, visit [www.clydeandavonvalley.org](http://www.clydeandavonvalley.org).

Art installations in Carluke, Glassford, Lanark, Larkhall and Stonehouse are set to be unveiled at the end of March. Six artists in residence have been working closely with local communities to create the site specific art works which draw on the landscape and heritage of the area. The installations are part of the #MakeYourWay arts, heritage and active travel campaign which encourages people to walk and cycle more in their localities.

The historical lives of people in the Clyde and Avon Valley are set to be laid bare in the Capturing the Past Exhibition at Flowers of Scotland Garden Centre, Rosebank, Saturday 25 – Saturday 8 April. The volunteer-led exhibits include historic artefacts, Medieval style tiles, textiles, cynotope photo montages and hanging displays.

21 Primary Schools have embarked on an exciting new project celebrating the return of the iconic salmon to the Avon Water. Led by Clyde River Foundation, the project follows the completion of two fish passes on the river, allowing fish upstream for the first time in over a hundred years. The multi-phase projects will culminate in a series of community events.

Jock's Burn in Carluke has been cleaned up as part of a volunteering project led by Clydesdale Community Initiatives.

Over 100 bags of rubbish were removed from the site by over 30 volunteers, making a startling difference. The woodland has been transformed into a much cleaner, safer and attractive place to be. South Lanarkshire Council lends litter picking equipment out to groups wishing to organise their own community clean ups. Get in touch on 01555 667 958.

Did you know that 2017 is the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology? Get in the #HHA2017 spirit by visiting the online Clyde and Avon Valley Museum at [www.clydeandavonvalley.org/museum](http://www.clydeandavonvalley.org/museum), where you'll find articles on geology, history, literature and art.

And there's plenty more going on. For full details on news, events, volunteering and ideas for getting out and about in the Clyde and Avon Valley, visit [www.clydeandavonvalley.org](http://www.clydeandavonvalley.org). Follow us on Facebook /Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, Twitter @ClydeAvonValley and Instagram @clydeavonvalley.



Taking a closer look...



Scenes from the past

# Tips and advice for increasing your membership!

Your group may be steaming ahead with plenty of members and productive activity, but sometimes you may feel as if things have stalled slightly or you feel like you could be doing with a members boost?

We have noted some pointers below which seem to have been effective for volunteer groups that we worked with, but please get in touch if you would like a chat about boosting your profile.

## Thinking outside the box when trying to recruit new members

Appealing to the different motivations of potential members can sometimes uncover avenues of recruitment that hadn't occurred before. Are there older students at the local high school who would be interested in volunteer work to bolster their University and college applications? Are they doing a John Muir or Duke of Edinburgh award?

Many university students are keen to do volunteer work if they are doing a relevant degree i.e. Zoology, so it may be a good idea to get in contact with local higher education centres and promote your group there! The downside of this approach may be that you don't retain these members long term if they move on to other things, but it could be useful for specific shorter term goals and projects.

## Social Media is important

This may strike fear into the hearts of some, but it's just a fact that most people will assume that your group at the very least has a website, but will most certainly have a facebook page. This is great for instigating regular interaction with your target audiences, and creates a quick and easy way for potential new members to contact you. This doesn't have to be an ordeal, we are available to run basic introduction courses and will advertise them within our Volunteer Network.

## Getting local schools involved

Many of our groups have gained new enthusiastic members through parents and helpers being involved with activities and learning experiences in conjunction with their group. We often hear

"I didn't know that this place was here!"

If children and young people are actively engaged with a site local to them, it can encourage extra-curricular visits and raises the profile of the site/group within the community.

## Having general family friendly events

The same benefits apply with this approach as with involving schools. If your group can engage with the community around you it can lead to the recruitment of new members. Perhaps someone may come along with their family to find out more about your group and be inspired to get involved.



Fun Outdoors!

# CAVLP Wildlife Challenge!

Pull on your wellies and grab a pencil - it's time to get involved in the Clyde and Avon Valley Wildlife Challenge and 500 Words Competition!

The Clyde and Avon Valley is home to a fascinating array of wildlife. The area is home to the Clyde Valley National Nature Reserve (NNR) which is one of the ecologically richest areas of Scotland, as well as other spectacular woodlands. The woodlands are often hidden in dramatic river gorges, creating ribbons of wild land that lace the local landscape where nature thrives.

The campaign, including wildlife spotting events and two competitions, focuses on 12 species that can be found throughout the year in local woodlands such as Chatelherault Country Park, RSPB Scotland Baron's Haugh, Dalzell Estate and Scottish Wildlife Trust Falls of Clyde. The species are goosander, otter, great spotted woodpecker, kingfisher, badger, blue tailed damselfly, bats, candlesnuff fungus, comma butterfly, nuthatch, roe deer and salmon.

Get involved to find out more about local wildlife, visit local nature reserves, take part in wildlife spotting events and help contribute to the iRecord wildlife database.

**There are two competitions you can enter as part of the campaign.**

## 1. The Clyde and Avon Valley Wildlife Challenge #CAVWChallenge

Complete the 12 species checklist from the CAVLP website, to be awarded with a certificate and be entered into a special prize draw.

Join in with wildlife spotting events (see below), download your own spotting guides and enter your findings to iRecord, to tick off the 12 species that you are challenged to find on the checklist - links and downloads are available on the CAVLP website.



## 2. The Clyde and Avon Valley 500 Words Competition

(open to children ages 5 - 9 and 10 - 12)

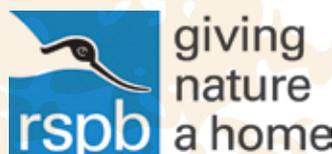
Pick one of the 12 species (goosander, otter, great spotted woodpecker, kingfisher, badger, blue tailed damselfly, bats, candlesnuff fungus, comma butterfly, nuthatch, roe deer and salmon) to write a fictional story or poem about, in under 500 words. Be creative! The more imaginative the better - perhaps it could be a day in the life of, or a funny story. Each entrant will win a certificate and be entered into a special prize draw.

Entries will be judged on originality, plot, characterisation, language and enjoyment by a panel of expert judges: C A Hope (author of the New Lanark trilogy), the Lanark Writers Group and South Lanarkshire Countryside Rangers.

Download and print the 500 Words Competition full guidelines and submission form by again downloading from the CAVLP website.

The Clyde and Avon Valley Wildlife Challenge and 500 Words Competition must be entered by Sunday 31 December 2017.

The campaign is a partnership project between Heritage Lottery Fund supported Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership, North Lanarkshire Council, RSPB Baron's Haugh, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Wildlife Trust Falls of Clyde and South Lanarkshire Countryside Rangers.



# Hamilton Natural History Society – Summer Programme 2017

This summer our outings programme runs from April to September and will take us to a variety of places - some local, some further afield. With trips to Falkirk, Cumbrae, Blane Valley, West Fife, Kilmarnock, Cambusnethan Woods and Greenhead Moss, there should be something for everyone.

Non-members are welcome to come along but pay £2 more than members and do not get priority booking. If you would like to come along, why not consider joining us as a member.

Further details on the programme and how to book are on the website ([www.hamiltonnaturalhistory.org.uk](http://www.hamiltonnaturalhistory.org.uk)) from April onwards.

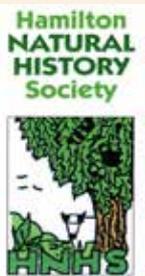
This year we also have a short programme of “super-spot sessions”. These are short (one hour), local, free events (in Hamilton) designed to let you practice and learn about nature on your doorstep. Beginners and more experienced spotters are welcome to a small, friendly group and a cup of tea afterwards. Just come along to the start point at the advertised time to take part (see website):

**Winter** – RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

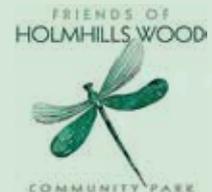
**Spring** – Botany

**Summer** – Invasive Species

**Autumn** – Fungal Foray



## Holmihills Park Community Woodland Clean-up Hero



Andy Wilson is a member of the Friends of Holmihills Park group, a recently constituted group supported by Countryside and Greenspace based in Cambuslang.

Every day when he returns from work in Glasgow, Andy heads through the park picking up litter and bagging it for the council to collect. He regularly takes it upon himself to clear out one of the three ponds in the park and dispose of all the rubbish dumped there by users of the park.

Amateur photographer Andy has a keen interest in wildlife and as well as removing litter from the pond daily he takes stunning photographs every day, which have generated much interest in the park.

In recognition of his achievements, Andy received the prestigious Clean Up Scotland ‘Hero of the Month’ award, which is organised by environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Clean Up Scotland is a mass engagement campaign led by Keep Scotland Beautiful, working to make Scotland the cleanest country in Europe.

For more information have a look at the website [www.cleanupscotland.com](http://www.cleanupscotland.com)



Andy Wilson Clean-up Hero

# Where's our Wildlife?

Get out and about this year and see what you can find – here are some surveys you can take part in, with lots of information and apps available to help you.



Common blue damselfly

## April

Froglife has lots of guides to spotting frogs, toads, lizards and snakes as well as a Dragonfinder App that will help you work out what you've seen. Why not take a walk down to your local green space, whether it's your back garden or a nature reserve, and see what you can find? [www.froglife.org/info-advice/wildlife-spotting/](http://www.froglife.org/info-advice/wildlife-spotting/)

## May

The National Mammal Atlas Project aims to produce the first atlas in over 20 years to really find out what is happening to mammals in the UK. The Mammal Tracker app will help you work out what you have seen, and you can send in your own photos for help if you're not sure. [www.mammal.org.uk/science-research/surveys/](http://www.mammal.org.uk/science-research/surveys/)

## June

The Sunset/Sunrise survey looks for bats between April and August, and you don't need to have experience of recording bats to take part. Simply head out at dusk or before dawn (or both!) and spend an hour in your garden or walking around your local area and look out for bats. [www.bats.org.uk/pages/sunset\\_sunrise\\_survey.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/sunset_sunrise_survey.html)

## July

Help take nature's pulse by taking part in the Big Butterfly Count from 14 July – 6 August. Download an identification chart from the website, or look for the free App for your phone. Pick a sunny spot in your garden or local park and count butterflies for 15 minutes; a lovely relaxing activity for a nice day! [www.bigbutterflycount.org/](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/)

## August

The Nature's Calendar survey runs throughout the year, and in Autumn looks for signs of the season, such as fruit on elder trees, fly agaric fungus and the arrival of fieldfare and redwing birds. Download a recording form and send in your sightings at [www.naturescalendar.org.uk/survey/materials.htm](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/survey/materials.htm)

## September

During Autumn through to early Summer, join Earthworm Watch. A project with Earthwatch, The Natural History Museum and Earthworm Society where you are asked everyone to dig for and count earthworms and categorise soils to help scientists learn more about the abundance and ecosystem services provided by earthworms in your soils. [www.earthwormwatch.org/](http://www.earthwormwatch.org/)

## Helpful websites:

iSpot: for identifying that unknown species [www.ispot.org.uk](http://www.ispot.org.uk)

Arkive: photographs and information on species around the world [www.arkive.org/](http://www.arkive.org/)

iRecord: add any of your wildlife sightings [www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/](http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/)

The NBN Atlas Scotland brings together all sorts of biodiversity information [www.als.scot/](http://www.als.scot/)

For everything you want to know about Scotland's Environment: [www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/](http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/)



Comma butterfly



Eadha Enterprises is a small environmental charity operating as a social enterprise, based in Renfrewshire. The organization was founded in 2011 with support from Oxfam's innovation fund to explore how derelict brownfield sites can be brought back into use as productive community woodlands using native pioneer trees. To date, aspen, a rare native species which is listed in the South Lanarkshire LBAP has been their focus. "Eadha" is the old Scots gaelic name for aspen and the organization is at the forefront of research, conservation and promotion and planting of aspen, which has been the neglected tree of Scottish forestry.

Eadha recognizes the huge opportunity for reforestation and rewilding presented by the availability of thousands of hectares of former opencast mine land across Scotland. Often these sites, which lack topsoil cover, resemble a post-glacial landscape. Given that aspen was one of the early pioneers to Britain after the ice age, Eadha saw a great opportunity to undertake some trials.

Following on from a trial in East Ayrshire

[www.eadha.co.uk/assets/0000/4630/Final\\_Report\\_July\\_2016.pdf](http://www.eadha.co.uk/assets/0000/4630/Final_Report_July_2016.pdf),

Eadha is undertaking a project at the former Glentaggart Opencast Mine thanks to funding from the Brown Forbes Memorial Trust and the landowner Douglas and Angus Estates. Here they are planting an innovative scrub and woodland establishment trial over three hectares of bare subsoil which has had no cultivation or amendments. Species being planted comprise an assemblage of rare native trees including native willows such as tea leaved and dark leaved and montane willows such as Mountain, Downy and Woolly, the latter two being UKBAP species, together with the aspen. Eadha has sourced cuttings of these species from recorded stands. A selection of hybrid willows have also been sourced from other mine sites. Part of Eadha's core work has been to collect samples of all the surviving aspen clones from Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Arran and Galloway to form part of a wider national clone collection. Samples of each clone are being planted in labelled blocks to test for clonal differences.

Enthusiastic volunteers



Gorse planting

There is no fencing or tree guards at the planting site as these are both costly and impractical given the ground conditions. Eadha is therefore testing innovative methods of deer protection including clump planting and using thorny scrub and sacrificial species to protect more palatable species. For this, gorse, hawthorn, blackthorn, alder and birch are being planted with the willow and aspen.

Other research elements include the trial addition of mycorrhizal fungi to the soil from a range of sources including forest soils and off the shelf products to see if this benefits tree establishment.

The proposed planting will have wider environmental benefits, with a likely positive impact on a remnant black grouse population by creating a buffer strip between an adjacent conifer plantation and open grassland areas.

Eadha is engaging with the local communities of Muirkirk and Douglas as well as with groups and individuals from the wider region to maximise public involvement in this project. This has included groups of refugees from the Maryhill Integrated Network, and volunteers from the Coalfields Environment Initiative. It is hoped that a local group will take an interest in the long term management and study of this site.

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Facebook: [Eadha Enterprises](https://www.facebook.com/EadhaEnterprises)



## Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI)

The Clyde Valley community are being urged to roll up their sleeves over the next couple of months and get behind a major clean up of Jock's Burn in Carluke. CCI are facilitating several volunteer days which started on the 17th January. For details please go to Events page on the CAVLP website.

[www.clydeandavonvalley.org/join-in/events](http://www.clydeandavonvalley.org/join-in/events)

Clydesdale Community Initiatives (CCI) are nearing the end of a 2 year contract to manage and develop the Forth Eco Project so it's all hands on deck to spruce the place up and complete several outstanding jobs. One of the jobs taking place is the erection of a beautiful willow tunnel in the kids play area.

Another willow project coming up is with the Lanark Grammar school group who are going to build a new willow tunnel at Castlebank Park.

February saw the launch of our new microbusiness group at Langloch Farm. This new group will be developing a range of natural skin care products which we hope will be for sale later in the year so watch this space!

The Crafty Connections group has been making beautiful handmade cards and a small range of them are now for sale at the Langloch reception area. Local organic apple juice is also on sale.

We have also launched our first ever crowdfunding campaign!

[www.crowdfunder.co.uk/ci-community-kitchen-growing-opportunities](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/ci-community-kitchen-growing-opportunities)

### Environmental tasks in the pipeline include:

- Monthly volunteering sessions at the Lesmahagow Allotments started on Tuesday 31st January. Please check the CAVLP Events page for details.
- Monthly slots at Castlebank Park (with Lanark Development Trust) and Stonehouse Park (with Friends of Stonehouse Park).



Jocks Burn Volunteer day

Please check the events page on the CAVLP website Events page for details of volunteering opportunities in your area!

For more information on CCI and how their work changes lives, visit [www.cciweb.org.uk](http://www.cciweb.org.uk)



# Biodiversity Focus!

Article by Erik Paterson  
Email: [erikpaterson@virginmedia.com](mailto:erikpaterson@virginmedia.com)

## Five Years of Frogs: The status of common frogs in East Kilbride



Common Frog

Back in 2011, I was chatting about amphibians with John Hawell, who was then the head ranger at Calderglen. He mentioned to me an old report from the year 2000 in which a now retired ranger had undertaken a survey of the frog breeding sites in and around East Kilbride. This sparked some interest for me so I decided to do a follow-up.

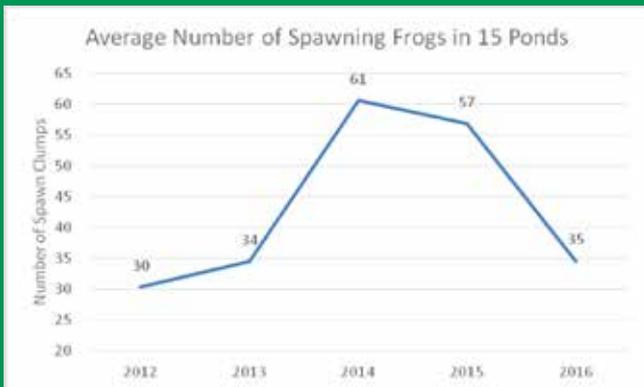
In spring of 2012 I undertook my first East Kilbride Frog Survey, I visited a total of 21 ponds and ditches throughout the town to look for frogs. Female frogs only lay one clump of spawn each year so by counting the total number of spawn clumps in each pond you can estimate how many frogs you have living in an area. The total count was 545 clumps of spawn ranging from 1 clump to 200 in each pond.

I wrote a short report which is available on the Caledonian Conservation website. I was hooked – I wanted to go bigger and better, over the next four years the number of ponds around East Kilbride that I survey annually has grown from 21 to 38, counting a total of 2040 spawn clumps in 2016. I now have five years of data for many of those ponds.

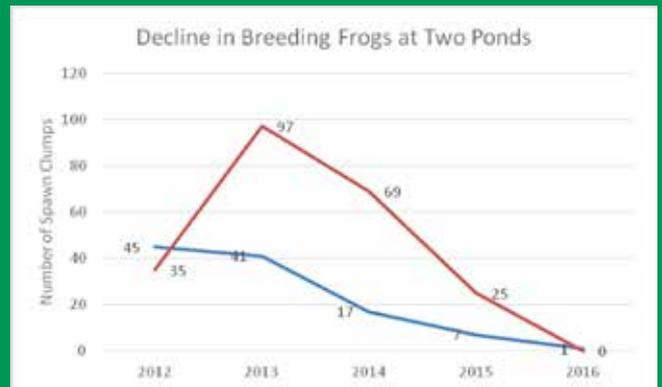
Using the number of spawn clumps as an indicator of the number of adult frogs breeding at a pond in each year, I noticed that there would be some high variations in the number. The maximum number of frogs breeding at a pond can fall by as much as 70% in the space of a year. This is thought to be because of what is called “density based regulation”.

What that means in this context is that the number of tadpoles that survive to adulthood in any given year could be at least partly controlled by the total number of tadpoles in the pond. For example, in a “boom” year, the tadpoles graze on the algae and other food in the pond. This depletes the available food quickly, as a result many of them will starve or begin to engage in cannibalism of the smaller tadpoles to survive. The net result is that fewer tadpoles might metamorphose in that year. In a few years time, as those adults return to breed, their numbers will be fewer and so too will be the number of tadpoles that season. Due to lower numbers, generally more will survive and thus we should see a cycle of peaks and troughs in frog numbers over a period of time. Though I only have data for five years, you can see that, for the 15 ponds I have surveyed every season, the average number of frogs in 2012 was 30, this climbed to 61 in 2014, falling back to 35 in 2016 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The average number of frog spawn clumps in 15 ponds over a five year period.**



**Figure 2. The declining numbers of two populations of common frog in East Kilbride.**



Generally speaking, all of the ponds surveyed are showing stable populations. There are however, two ponds which are showing a net drop in common frog numbers (figure 2). One is a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs) present in a development area where the terrestrial habitat has been completely removed and replaced with housing, and the other is a pond which is regularly traversed by quad bikes and dirt bikes. Both of these ponds are subject to great human disturbance and so this seems to be the likely cause of decline on both counts. The full results of the surveys were published in the Glasgow Naturalist 26 part 3 and are available freely to anyone who wants to read more.

The findings of these surveys are valuable to us in that amphibians are excellent indicators of ecosystem health so having detailed data available on the number of frogs helps us to monitor the status of the habitats in which they live. This is especially valuable to us as volunteers because we can determine where our management practices are failing or areas in which we might be able to step in. I would thoroughly recommend that anyone who helps to manage a wild space take up recording of breeding frogs and other amphibians. It's highly rewarding and the data collected can be incredibly useful from a local and national perspective. The Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group operate in South Lanarkshire and can advise on the best methods for surveying amphibians if you wish to explore these opportunities more.



Frogspawn



## Get in touch!

To see previous copies of this newsletter visit [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk) and search for "Volunteer Newsletter".

If you would like to join the volunteer network, suggest courses or events, or would like any more information, please get in touch with us using the details below.

## Contact us

We have a Facebook page! This shows events and lots of information on local wildlife and activities.



Like us at "South Lanarkshire Countryside Rangers"  
[www.facebook.com/CountrysideRangers](http://www.facebook.com/CountrysideRangers)

Email: [cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:cag@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

Phone: 0303 123 1015

Write to: Countryside Ranger Service, Calderglen Country Park, East Kilbride G75 0QZ

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1015 Email: [equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)