

Draft at December 2011

WALK THE PATH TO 2014



**Ramblers Scotland
Business Plan**

2011-12



Ramblers Scotland Business Plan 2011-2012

This Business Plan lays out the areas of work which Ramblers Scotland aims to complete over the period October 2011 – September 2012 and includes projects for which funding is being sought. This plan is set within the context of the Ramblers GB Business Plan 2011-12 and the Ramblers Scotland Vision Statement 2010.

From October/November 2011 Ramblers Scotland will have three permanent core staff and three fixed term posts which have the potential for extension, comprising:

- Director – Dave Morris
- Development Officer – Helen Todd
- Finance & Communications Officer – Kareen Robertson
- Games Legacy Advisor – Jeannie Cranfield (until May 2012)
- Medal Routes Officer - Jacqueline Ferguson (until October 2012)
- Project Support Officer – Callum McAleavey (until May 2012)

The Games Legacy Advisor is a short term core funded post created to develop and establish an Active Legacy for Scotland following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Scotland. The Medal Routes Officer is a 12-month externally funded post to develop and run the Medal Routes project. We have received funding through the Community Jobs Scotland programme for one project support officer post to run from November to May to provide assistance to the Project Officer, with a request for a further post running for the following six months.

What Ramblers Scotland is trying to achieve

In delivering our charitable aims in Scotland we have four main purposes:

- 1. Promoting walking**
- 2. Securing public access to land**
- 3. Facilitating the development of path networks**
- 4. Protecting the natural beauty of the outdoor environment**

These four aims are embedded in this business plan, but the plan also reflects the priorities contained within the Ramblers 2011-12 GB business plan which are:

- Priority 1: to stop the decline in membership
- Priority 2: to gain more charitable income
- Priority 3: to protect and improve access and the path network
- Priority 4: to promote walking

Aim 1: Promoting Walking – Walk the Path to 2014

Introduction

We aim to promote walking as a legacy benefit of the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games with the 2012 Olympic Games as a stepping stone. This programme will be delivered in partnership with others, so an over-arching requirement is to develop partnerships within the public and private sector, as well as with other voluntary organisations. We will be seeking external funding for most elements of this programme which we anticipate will be a major priority for our work programmes over the 2011–2014 period.

The Ramblers Scotland report “**Walk the Path to 2014**”, published in summer 2009 demonstrates clearly that it is very difficult for large sporting events to provide a lasting legacy for the general population, beyond the actual medals which may be won and any new sports venues which are built for the games. To secure a lasting physical activity legacy for Scotland, we believe that increasing the amount of walking done by the population as a whole is a key part of the answer. However, while the Scottish Government sees the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games as a catalyst for a wide range of legacy benefits, there is very little funding available for the legacy itself to be delivered. Most of the public funding associated with 2014 is committed to delivering the infrastructure requirements for the actual hosting of the Games. Therefore the Government is relying on other partners, including the voluntary sector, to be at the forefront in delivering many of the legacy benefits.

The Government’s legacy plan has four key objectives to create an:

- Active Scotland
- Connected Scotland
- Flourishing Scotland
- Sustainable Scotland

Ramblers Scotland is most concerned with the Active element. Discussions with the Government’s legacy team have resulted in all Ramblers Scotland walks which are under 5 miles and offered as part of the walks programmes of our 55 groups being branded on our website under the Active Nation banner. Our groups are being encouraged to use the logo on their promotional materials.

Our **Walk the Path to 2014** programme offers a range of projects and activities which will contribute towards the achievement of an Active Scotland. Our portfolio of projects aims to build on the advice of the UK Chief Medical Officers on how people of all ages can maintain fitness levels and stay or get healthy. The recommendation for adults is to achieve weekly targets of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity in bouts of ten minutes or more; for those with busy lives this can be broken down into 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week.

For children and young people (5–18 years old) it is recommended to take at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, and up to several hours each day, and for under fives, 180 minutes or three hours every day of physical activity, once the child is able to walk.

When launching these recommendations, the Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride, pointed out that it isn’t just about improving health; if people walk and cycle more often, this can also save on transport costs and reduce congestion and pollution.

Ramblers Scotland aims to build on these recommendations by developing a range of projects outlined below.

Games Legacy Advisor Post

Funding was secured from the Ramblers’ 2010-11 core budget for this post based in the Ramblers Scotland office in Milnathort, and it runs for 7 months from October 2011–May 2012. The post will focus on delivering physical activity and environmental legacy benefits for Scotland from the forthcoming 2012 London Olympics and 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. The priority will be to secure funding for a range of projects in the Ramblers Scotland business plan which help to promote walking to all sectors of society. The post holder will act as an advisor both to staff and

members in the Ramblers on how to deliver these legacy benefits, as well as external stakeholders who have a role to play in ensuring the success of these Games.

The aim is for this post to last until 2014, supported by Ramblers core funding initially, but with public and private sector partners supporting it in future years through the funding raised for the various projects established by the post holder. All activity in this area of work has the potential to gain significant numbers of new Ramblers members as well as delivering the public benefits expected from the 2014 legacy aims. **Walk the Path to 2014** will have a major role in delivering three of the four aims of the GB business plan: growing membership, attracting external funds and promoting and securing path networks.

Advisory Group

A key function of the work of the Games Legacy Adviser is to set up and run an external group of specialist advisors. Costs for supporting this work, in terms of holding meetings and travel expenses, are only partly contained within the £40K allocation for the Advisor post so further funding will be sought to provide a firm foundation for the Advisory Group. Group members will be seen as ambassadors for the promoting walking elements of the Games legacy plan.

Key Outcome

- Establish Advisory Group and hold first meeting by end of 2011

Target

- Contact 15-20 people in the sport, media, health, public and private sectors to seek their agreement to becoming members of the 2014 Advisory Group

Projects:

1. Take 30 Promotion – a 10 week self directed walking programme

The key message from the four UK Chief Medical Officers is that adults should be active daily for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more. One way to approach this is to take a brisk walk of 30 minutes on 5 days a week. Since two-thirds of the Scottish population currently fail to reach even this minimum standard, our Take 30 promotion project aims to raise the profile of this clear health message. This project will be driven forward by the Games Legacy Adviser to explore the options available and then implement a promotional campaign at national and local levels in appropriate media and for a variety of audiences.

It is envisaged that the Ramblers Take 30 leaflet, first published in 2002, and information on the current Ramblers' Get Walking Keep Walking website will form the basis for this promotion, updated to include messages relating to 2014. A marketing strategy will be developed following engagement with NHS Health Scotland to explore the wider promotion of the Take 30 idea, including potential GP referrals and further NHS/Ramblers Scotland projects. There should be clear links made to walking opportunities across the country, including those with Ramblers groups.

Key outcomes:

- Increased recognition of the Take 30 message.
- Increased participation in walking by the population as a whole.
- Increased participation in Ramblers groups' led walks.

Target:

- Produce package of marketing materials based on the Take 30 leaflet to be used in this promotion directed towards 2014 but also recognising 2012 as a stepping stone to greater fitness levels

2. Medal Routes – the development of short circular route walks, Phase One

Funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, Paths for All and Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust has been secured to implement phase one of this project, which will last one year and will promote new walking opportunities for people across Scotland to help achieve a physical activity legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

A Medal Routes Project Officer took up post in October 2011 and will involve many organisations in developing bronze, silver and gold "medal" routes of three lengths (eg, 15, 30 and 60 minutes), based on local walking hubs and using existing paths. A walking hub could be, for example, a community centre, library, farm shop, hotel, hospital, bus or train station, post office or school.

The Project Officer will help organisations to identify suitable hubs and routes, as well as coordinating the writing of descriptions, mapping the routes and then producing and distributing leaflets which are branded with the Ramblers logo and health messages about the benefits of walking. All the Medal Routes will be available to download from the Ramblers Scotland website, as well as from links to the routes on other stakeholder websites.

Phase two of the project will run up until 2014 and will extend the work done in phase one to new audiences; for example it could focus on economic regeneration and tourism, or promoting walking in workplaces.

Key outcomes:

- Increased opportunities for local people to enjoy the outdoors – Medal Routes are short walks using existing paths, yet many people do not know their own neighbourhoods on foot. Medal Routes can open up new opportunities for people to explore their local areas.
- Increased levels of physical activity - medal routes can encourage employees to walk to work or take a short walk in their lunch breaks, encourage families and school pupils to become more active or entice a visitor to step out of their hotel and explore their surroundings.
- Increased involvement in the local community – the Medal Routes project has the potential to help all members of the community to gain new skills and grow in confidence as they learn to set up new routes, promote their walks and work with others to achieve their goals.

Targets:

- Establish 50 walking hubs with Medal Routes in different parts of Scotland as part of this project.
- Secure funding for Phase 2 of the project.

3. Walk Forward – extending the short health walk programme

Over 20,000 people in Scotland are registered to take part in healthy walking groups run by Paths for All. These groups were set up as an intervention tool for physically inactive people, and involve a regular led walk of up to 30 minutes. Over time, some members of these groups become fitter and able to walk for longer than 30 minutes, but it is difficult to ask them to leave the group and give space for new entrants to start walking. The Walk Forward project will start by encouraging

existing Ramblers groups in areas where healthy walking groups operate to set up or further develop walking programmes to include shorter walks of 3-5 miles. The project officer will then work to enable health walk participants to move on to Ramblers walks, thus increasing their own fitness levels and also freeing up space within the health walks programme for new entrants.

This will be a refinement of a previous Walk Forward project which was funded by Paths to Health and Ramblers Holiday Charitable Trust and incorporating new delivery arrangements that have recently been pioneered by several Ramblers Scotland Groups. It is also envisaged that this project will spark interest in other diverse communities, such as amongst disadvantaged groups, and lead to uptake of walking within these groups. The Walk Forward project complements the work carried out by the Regional Development officers as outlined under Aim 4 below, and therefore these two projects could join together effectively, with the Regional Development officers delivering the Walk Forward project as part of their work programmes.

Key outcomes:

- Walkers moved on from health groups have increased levels of physical activity.
- More varied Ramblers walks programmes offering shorter walks of interest to new walkers will encourage greater levels of walking within a wide range of communities.

Target:

- Set up or further develop shorter walking programmes in 10 Ramblers groups.

**4. Active Nation Community – integrating walking and cycling into everyday life.
A pilot project, Kinross**

This one-year project aims to capitalise on the establishment of the Loch Leven Heritage Trail and improvements to the wider path network in the Kinross area. It will help form an exemplar for the ways in which local communities can promote and create paths and trails to improve levels of physical activity through walking and cycling and general enjoyment of the outdoors. Working with the local authority, local paths group, community campus, health centre and other groups, the project officer will identify opportunities to demonstrate how walking and cycling can be integrated into daily life to access services, education and the shops as well as for leisure activities, and how the access provisions contained within the Scottish land reform legislation underpin these opportunities.

A Ramblers Scotland application was submitted in December 2011 to the People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund for this project. Our partners in this initiative are Transform Scotland and Paths for All.

Key outcomes:

- Kinross will become the first centre for Best Practice and will be used as an exemplar for other communities across Scotland.
- Further walking and cycling opportunities around Kinross developed to enable everyone to walk from their door to access the shops or other services on foot.
- New visitors are attracted to Kinross and the surrounding area (research by Perth & Kinross Council into the Dunkeld & Birnam path network showed that 20% of overnight visitors stated that they would not have come to the area if the paths had not existed, and 80% of visitors to the Tourist Information Centre asked for information about local walking

opportunities. Visitors to the path network spent a minimum of £1.37m each year in Dunkeld).

- Increased levels of walking and cycling amongst the local population with resulting improvements in general health and enjoyment of the countryside.
- Use of new research facilities developed by SNH, **sportscotland** and NHS Health Scotland to target households with information tailored to their specific needs for walking and cycling.
- Supporting the climate change agenda with the reduced use of private cars for short journeys around the area.
- Strengthened relationships as a result of working with partners, and greater levels of community cohesion and ownership of the neighbourhood path network.
- In addition, greater support for the UK hosting of the 2012 Olympics and 2014 Commonwealth Games is engendered as people learn how to develop local activities linked to these nationally inspiring events.

Targets:

- A detailed project plan and project officer job description will be developed which will clearly set out SMART targets and provide a basis for the project partners to monitor progress.
- The creation of a series of Ramblers Medal Routes from 15 newly created hubs in the area. Medal Routes are short, circular routes of approximately 15, 30 and 60 mins in length (bronze, silver and gold routes) which help residents, employees and visitors go for short walks. The Medal Routes could start from a school or community campus, health centre, place of employment, farm shops, hotel, or cafes, etc
- Develop and implement a 12 week walking plan to enable the inactive in the community to become fitter and be walking briskly for at least half an hour on at least five days of the week. Part of the plan will be short led walks, the remainder will be self directed walking using a logbook to record daily walking and monitor progress.
- ED's Cycle Co-op will support the creation of a Kinross Cycle Co-op project through the creation of a Sunday Cycle Skool, aimed at getting families of young children, aged 5 to 7, on their bikes. ED's Cycle Co-op is a hugely successful community led project in Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire where there was an increase of 5% in children cycling to primary school from 2009 to 2010. The Kinross Cycle Co-op project will be established with the support and guidance of the co-op founder, Mark Kiehlmann. It will be delivered by the ED's Cycle Co-op team, with the support of parent volunteers from Kinross, with the view to them taking over the sustainability of the project after 6 months. In addition the co-op can offer certification and training in cycle skills and cycle mechanics, as well as advise on cycle festivals, cycle maps and other cycle promotional activities..
- **Trail Tales** is a walking programme for primary children that has been developed by Ramblers. Resource packs including a facilitator activity guide, a walking log book for the children, a set of small story books (6 in set) for children to read, a set of large story books for teachers and volunteers to read to the staff and stickers for the children to use in their log book. Teachers will be encouraged to use these materials as part of the curriculum over a 5-6 week period. Ramblers volunteers will recruited and trained to join the teachers

in taking the children out once a week for the duration of the programme on short walks using the resources provided which aim to promote walking as a fun, green and safe activity.

- Development of user friendly Active Travel Plans with case studies, active travel information, details of the benefits to health and the environment and maps. This would be designed, printed and distributed to all households in the area with more available in identified local “hubs”. A launch event would be held when the travel plan is complete and community meetings held to raise awareness and inform a before-and-after survey. Establish a Facebook group and Twitter account to encourage everyone to join, hear news and share stories. Establish a competition to see who can change their travel the most – The Kinross Active Travel Award. We will encourage the community to specify what they will do to increase their active travel – leave the car at home 3 days a week or walk 5000 steps a day or cycle 30 miles a week. This part of the programme will be carried out by Transform Scotland who will aim to engage with 50% of households in this initiative.
- The creation of an Active Nation Community website initially outlining the pilot project including: path networks, events, children’s Trail Tales (including their stories and drawings), young Xplore pages and blog (devised and written by the young participants), Active Travel news, community development, visitor information including local places of historic interest, wildlife and habitat, biodiversity and nature, and all the opportunities available for walking and cycling around the Kinross area for local people and visitors alike. As the project is rolled out it is envisaged this would become a national website detailing all Active Nation Community initiatives.
- The development and creation of a web-based, downloadable Active Nation Community toolkit to enable other communities to become Active Nation Communities and help them achieve this goal.
- Plan and deliver a showcase launch event at the Scottish Parliament, inviting MSPs and key civil servants, Chief Executives and Heads of Planning, Transport, Leisure and Sport from other authorities together with representatives from NHS Health Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, **sportscotland**, various community groups and the press and media to highlight the work of the community, gain recognition of the Active Nation Community initiative and generate interest in replicating the model.
- Engage with all ten Walkers are Welcome Towns in Scotland and encourage them to become leaders in the roll-out of the Active Nation Community concept across Scotland.
- Carry out a baseline survey and produce a concluding report on the project which will also highlight “missing links” in the path network for active travel, eg, short sections where there is no off-road route to link communities which limits the ability of local residents and visitors to walk or cycle to the next settlement. This will be put forward as a priority for future path development to the local authority and other interests.
- Continued monitoring and evaluation of the project using a variety of techniques will be used, from hand counts with primary children to surveys, questionnaires, and evaluation forms to show the impact the project has on the local community, evidencing the increased levels of physical activity and use of path networks in the area.

5. Xplore – a programme for children and young people

An Education and Training Officer post would be created to work with partners such as **sportscotland** and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland. This post would be based in Milnathort but with a close involvement with the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho and the National Outdoor Training Centre at Glenmore Lodge in the Cairngorms.

Xplore has two main aims. Firstly the officer will engage with the education system and develop programmes to run with schools (including residential schools), youth groups and those most vulnerable in our society, not in employment, education or training. The programmes would involve key Ramblers volunteers to deliver walking programmes across Scotland. For example, volunteers would work with local schools and groups to facilitate pupils going into the outdoors and helping them understand the principles of responsible access with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Further activities could involve one-day visits to the above outdoor centres by primary and secondary schools and youth groups in the Central Belt and northern Scotland. Half the day would be spent, for example, within the climbing arena with Ratho staff giving training on the climbing wall and other facilities, while the other half of the day would be spent in the surrounding countryside where students would learn about their responsibilities when enjoying the outdoors.

This programme could tie into Lead 2014, a leadership programme led by **sportscotland** and the Youth Sports Trust harnessing young people's abilities and developing their talents. With support young people themselves could manage, organise and lead walks for other young people in their area.

A second aim will be to engage with Ramblers groups and build capacity for them to evaluate the walk programmes which are offered by Groups in terms of an assessment of risk and suitability of proposed walks. This will help to improve leadership skills and enhance the quality of led walks at a local level, complementing the work which is being done on led walks at a GB level to provide an overall training framework for the organisation as a whole.

Key outcomes:

- Increased general awareness of walking and outdoor physical activity among young people.
- An increased number of young people participating in walking and outdoor physical activity as part of a healthy and active lifestyle.
- An increased number of people actively involved in promoting physical activity for young people in their communities.
- Groups in Scotland offer a programme of led walks which has been assessed to a higher level of competency than at present, which in turn gives members a higher quality of experience
- Ramblers Scotland builds up and maintains a group of trained walk programme assessors, increasing the skills and enjoyment of our volunteers.
- Walk leaders are more able to provide an appropriate risk assessment and to meet set criteria for their walks.

Target:

- Set up programmes with 5 schools for local walks.
- Set up programmes for Ratho/Glenmore Lodge for 20 school visits
- Identify 5 individuals and assist with training so that they can work with groups to evaluate programmes.

6. Walk the Path to 2014 – a 12 week walking programme for Community Sports Hubs

The Scottish Government are establishing Community Sports Hubs across Scotland aimed at providing more opportunities for communities to engage in an active healthy lifestyle and is key to the Scottish Government's 2014 Legacy plan.

Whilst each hub will focus on the needs of the particular local community in which it is based, Ramblers Scotland is well positioned to offer a range of walking projects that can improve the overall physical fitness of the community from short health walks to longer more challenging hill walking and mountaineering should the community identify walking as an interest.

A Project Officer post would be created to work with 5 hubs across Scotland to develop walking programmes suited to their community in addition to the general promotion of the Take 30 message – a ten week self directed walking programme. This project would also build on the hugely successful Ramblers Get Walking Keep Walking flagship project established south of the border, a 12 week walking programme which included a local programme of led walks and a database of suitable walks in an area. As participants' fitness levels increase through participation in these two programmes, longer more challenging walks would be developed and participants would have the opportunity to either join existing Ramblers groups in their area or to establish new Ramblers groups as part of the Community Sports Hub.

For those in the community already physically fit and interested in hillwalking and mountaineering, there would be the opportunity to either join a local Ramblers group for up to three "taster" programmed walks or, where there is sufficient numbers interested, the opportunity to participate in several specially designed and created walks for that particular Sports Hub.

Established for 76 years, Ramblers Scotland currently has 55 local groups running across Scotland which means we can provide sustainability and longevity for those interested in walking and are able to build on short walk programmes which aim to establish better health and fitness.

Key Outcomes:

- Increased number of people participating in walking and physical activities in communities
- Increase number of led walks developed and delivered in each area
- Development of short and long walks in the area and improved knowledge in the community of available walks
- Development of new walking groups to maintain momentum once the 12 week programme is finished.
- Increased recognition of the Take 30 message and participation in self directed programmes of physical fitness
- Easy access to route maps and local information.

Targets:

- Set up walk programmes within 5 Community Sports Hubs
- Establish 3 led walks programmes from each Community Sports Hub
- Produce and print 3000 individual 12 week walking plans
- Hold weekly meetings with groups to support and encourage completion of the 12 week plan
- Produce and print 5000 Take 30 posters and leaflets for distribution throughout Community Sports Hubs
- Creation of 3 Medal Routes per hub

- 25 route maps added to all relevant websites

Aim 2 – Securing and Facilitating Access

The work which Ramblers Scotland plans to carry out on access during this year will be predominantly core-funded. This work supports the GB Business Plan Priority 3: to protect and improve access and the path network. Some areas which we expect to be working on this year are listed below to give an idea of the range of issues covered by staff in working towards the effective implementation of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Some of this work will involve the engagement of members and key volunteers:

1. Permitted development rights with regard to electrified fencing and bulldozed hilltracks
2. Review of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
3. Law Commission/Scottish Law Commission review into the legal framework for level crossings. This is a GB-wide consultation and we have submitted recommendations in relation to Ramblers requirements in Scotland. This goes back to many problems with Network Rail closing private level crossings in Scotland in 2003 and claiming, incorrectly, that most people using level crossings in Scotland were criminal trespassers.
4. The Loch Leven Heritage Trail currently runs for two-thirds of the way around Loch Leven, ending at the RSPB Vane Farm reserve. We will be working with RSPB staff and others to resolve the issue of how the route can continue through their reserve to make a complete circuit of the loch.
5. Access through wind farms
6. Challenge to the Act through exemptions during deer stalking

In addition to these particular issues, we continue in our involvement with the National Access Forum and its sub-groups, as well as giving advice to members and members of the public on individual access issues and taking part in the Scottish Countryside Access Network. We will also continue to monitor the implementation of core path plans across Scotland and work at a strategic level to promote their use and development, as well as longer distance routes branded as Scotland's Great Trails.

1. Walking in Scotland Leaflet

Funding will be sought in the first instance from Scottish Natural Heritage for the re-issuing of our Walking in Scotland leaflet, first published in 2007, which gives guidance on Scottish access rights and responsibilities for walkers. The leaflet is a key educational tool to help people to understand the basis on which they take access in Scotland, and works to promote the Ramblers as an organisation with expertise in this area. It also indirectly acts a marketing and recruitment tool.

The previous leaflet was part-funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and the text will need to be adjusted to reflect the current situation now that the legislation has bedded down. We plan to distribute the leaflets through our Groups and individual members, as well as having it stocked in various locations.

Key outcomes:

- Ramblers Scotland's reputation as the leading organisation working on access rights in Scotland is strengthened.
- Increased understanding amongst the public both in Scotland and elsewhere of their rights and responsibilities when taking access.

Targets:

- Attend four National Access Forum meetings.
- Attend Scottish Countryside Access Network committee meetings, networking days and conferences.
- Distribute leaflet to all members and groups, SYHA and independent hostels, Tourist Offices, SNH and National Park offices, Glenmore Lodge and other outlets.

2. Path Infrastructure – off road routes

There are four projects listed under this heading for which we will fundraise separately over the coming year and up to 2014, with work beginning during 2011-12 on Community Connections. All these projects will contribute towards the implementation of core path plans around Scotland. It is likely that local authorities will be engaged in order to negotiate any land acquisition required or Compulsory Purchase Orders but we are not seeking other local authority funding. These projects will involve close cooperation with local authorities, landowning interests, government agencies and other organisations concerned with outdoor recreation and active travel.

a) Community Connections

People living in rural areas often have difficulty in using non-motorised means of transport to travel from one settlement to another, or to access nearby services because of the lack of infrastructure for walking and cycling. In many cases, communities which are just a few miles apart would hugely benefit from safe offroad paths running parallel to the main roads, enabling children to walk or cycle to school and giving adults the opportunity to leave the car at home. With funding to carry out initial research during 2011-12, this project will first document existing paths along this model, such as at Newtonmore to Kingussie, and then it will identify settlements across Scotland which would benefit from a community connection. The project officer will then work with partners such as Sustrans, local authorities and landowners to establish how off road community connections might be established.

b) Green Connections

The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) is a national priority within the National Planning Framework and will deliver improved recreational opportunities and environmental quality, helping to promote active travel and healthier lifestyles. The Green Connections project will continue the work outlined in (a) above but with a focus on the area within the CSGN. While this project is unlikely to receive any financial support during the 2011-12 year, it still forms part of our wider 2014 programme.

c) Orbital Paths

The above two projects focus on links between communities, but it is also important for people to have paths within their own communities which enable them to access shops and services or to go for a walk from their doorsteps. Orbital Paths provide an excellent way for local people and visitors to explore and enjoy the land around communities. Again, this project is part of our 2014 programme of work but we will not be working on it during this financial year. The project aims to focus on specific communities where core paths plans have identified a need for improved path networks and help to implement these plans.

d) Heritage / Pilgrim routes

Scottish Natural Heritage is currently working on a strategy to promote existing long distance routes in Scotland through the Scotland's Great Trails initiative, as well as supporting coastal routes through Scottish Coastal Ways. We believe there is much potential for promoting paths and creating new routes, especially based on Scotland's cultural and religious heritage. This would be

of benefit to local communities as well as at a national level, particularly in terms of economic regeneration as path users will spend money in rural communities along the routes. We will work with a variety of partners, including local communities, Scotways, faith groups and others to take this project forward in the period 2012-2014.

Key outcomes:

- More people travel on short local journeys by bicycle or on foot, with a corresponding reduction in congestion, pollution and accidents.
- Increased levels of physical activity in the local population.
- Improved quality of life and community cohesion as people leave the car behind and feel they have more control over their travel choices.
- Economic benefits from enhanced tourism opportunities.

Target:

- Complete research project to identify potential path and route options during 2011-12.
- Over 2,014km of paths to be established by the end of 2014.

Aim 3 – Protecting the Outdoor Environment

Ramblers Scotland continues to be a leading organisation in the effort to safeguard the quality of the outdoor environment through opposition to damaging developments or through the promotion of sympathetic and sustainable land use practices. Most of this work is carried out as a core activity, but in this plan we will give a brief outline of the areas of work we expect to be working on this year.

This year gives the opportunity to engage with the development of a number of governmental and policy initiatives, including the Scottish National Marine Plan and the Scotland Rural Development Programme. We have joined with land managing and outdoor recreation organisations in calling for substantial changes in the way that the SRDP operates so that the public benefits delivered include much better access provisions. We anticipate meetings with Ministers and officials during 2011-12 in efforts to resolve these problems.

We will continue to campaign against the Beaully-Denny pylons and other massive powerline and windfarm developments while at the same time supporting those aspects of renewable energy which are compatible with the wider interests. We will continue to scrutinise the practices of the two national parks and campaign for Scotland's third national park in the Western Isles. Most importantly, we will engage with deer management interests to ensure that recreation organisations are represented in discussions, for example in development of the pilot project launched in 2010 and extended in 2011 to provide a web-based version of Heading to the Scottish Hills, which it is hoped will replace the Hillphones system in due course.

Target:

- Attend three meetings relating to deer management.
- Respond to national park consultations
- Lobby those seeking election to the next Scottish Parliament to address the need to increase the levels of protection for wild land.

Aim 4 – Working effectively and efficiently
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We will continue to engage with colleagues within the Ramblers organisation and our members and key volunteers. We will also engage with and seek partnerships with other Scottish NGOs, the Scottish Government, MSPs and other bodies to help us achieve the work outlined above. We will hold Scottish Council 2012 in March and give appropriate support to members, Groups and Areas, as well as organising Scottish Council Executive Committee (SCEC) meetings. In November 2011 we will organise a training day for Walk Leaders, in response to a motion passed at Scottish Council 2011.

1. Restructuring study

This year we will support ongoing work carried out by the Constituent Parts Committee set up by the Board of Trustees to look into the restructuring of the Ramblers as an organisation. We intend to engage a consultant to produce a report to the SCEC on each of the various options for restructuring that are expected to emerge from the CPC, identifying both strong points and weak areas for improvement in the proposals. The consultant, who would need to be familiar with UK and Scottish charity governance issues and devolved government administrations, would also provide interim advice to the SCEC.

Key outcomes:

- Ramblers restructuring proposals are fully compatible with requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.
- These proposals are compatible with devolved government structures and likely to command strong public and political support in Scotland.

2. Regional Development Officer posts

The existing Area and Group structure relies on the work of committed volunteers but this needs extra impetus if our volunteer structure is to expand and flourish and our walking programmes deliver the benefits that are expected. We believe that the recruitment of two regional development officers covering east and west Scotland for a period of 3-5 years will help to strengthen the groups in various ways. These officers will be funded under the “Walk Forward” project outlined above, with its emphasis on helping those on health walks to progress to a sustainable commitment to walking through membership of Ramblers Groups. They will work with existing groups and help establish new groups to deliver stronger, more diverse walking programmes with increased membership from a wider social spectrum. Their activities will also help to support other projects outlined in this business plan and add value to the wider community across Scotland.

Key outcomes:

- Strengthened viability, effectiveness and membership levels of Ramblers Scotland groups.
- Enhanced fundraising and campaigning efforts at a local level.
- Enhanced reputation for Ramblers Scotland as a dynamic and modern organisation.

3. Parliamentary Reception

In May 2009 Ramblers Scotland held a highly successful reception in the Scottish Parliament to showcase the organisation and the work we carry out, and to introduce MSPs to Ramblers members within their constituencies. We will hold another reception in May 2012 to introduce MSPs to our organisation and help to gain influence in the political field.

Key outcomes:

- Ramblers Scotland is re-positioned as a key organisation in the area of recreational access and countryside protection, with a vibrant membership.
- Ramblers Scotland is recognised as a key partner with the Scottish Government in the delivery of a number of its aims, involving the protection and enjoyment of the outdoor environment.

Targets:

- We will increase membership of Ramblers Scotland by 5%.
- We will send out two newsletters to all Scottish members.
- We will achieve participation levels at Scottish Council of at least 100 participants and 35 groups.

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