



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

## **NEWSLETTER No.29**

### **Summer 2024**

#### **CASTLE STEPS**

We are delighted to announce that the three new flights of steps at the Castle are all now completed.



*Building the middle steps*

It has been a tremendous effort, which has taken several months and a lot of hard work by a number of hard-working volunteers.

It started with the original design by Robert McPhail. Thereafter, with support from Cour Wind Farm through their Fern Community Funds, the project was able to progress.

Some of the pieces were constructed offsite by Duncan MacGregor, and then used as a starting point for the remaining construction *in situ*.



***Building the long steps***

The team of highly committed volunteers did all the rest of the work, building the three magnificent sets of steps that should provide many more years of excellent access to Tarbert Castle for visitors and locals to enjoy.

A tremendous *"thank you"* is due to all those involved, who worked so hard to complete the project.





*The middle and bottom steps completed*

It's a magnificent achievement, and we are grateful to the Fern Community Funds for their support.

## **ORCHARD**

While the work on the steps was being carried out, the orchard and woodland could not be neglected, so other dedicated volunteers worked on maintaining the orchard by weeding, strimming, clearing brambles, and cutting back other vegetation, to let the fruit bushes and trees flourish.

The blackcurrants are fruiting well, and will soon be ripe.

The gooseberries have suffered from sawfly caterpillars, but have still managed to produce some fruit.





The rain has been good for growth, but we could do with more sunshine to help things along!

## **SHEEP**

The sheep continue to do a good job in keeping the grass short, although it is a pity they don't like to eat rushes or thistles!

Sadly, two of our old "ladies" died over the winter, but they had reached a good age. All the remaining thirteen are thriving, thanks to all the care and attention from the volunteers who clean out their shed, feed them over the winter, and dose and treat them when necessary.

It will soon be time for them to be sheared, and hopefully we will have some dry weather to enable us to do that easily. There are plans to improve the sheep pen over the coming months.





## **WOODLAND**

The woodland area and pond are doing well. We have trimmed the trees where they encroach on the paths, and extra gravel is being spread to keep them in good repair.

Volunteers did a lot of clearing of the pond in the winter months, which has helped to keep the water flowing and prevent it from getting blocked.

## **VISITORS**

It is lovely to see that lots of people continue to enjoy visiting the Castle and are appreciative of all the work that the volunteers do, on big tasks and small, and some in the background.

Thank you all for everything you do; it preserves and maintains the Castle and its surroundings for present and future generations. We also appreciate the donations that people give, which help us to buy materials, feed the sheep, and keep everything going.

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