

# **DALRY BIRD TOWN AND THE WATSON BIRD CENTRE & CELEBRATION**

## **Vision**

To inspire, enthuse and engage local communities and visitors and to encourage economic development by linking birds, landscape, arts and community in the Glenkens, and especially St John's Town of Dalry, stimulated by the work of Donald and Jeff Watson

## **Mission**

To develop Dalry as a Bird Town

## **Objectives**

- Celebrate the outstanding and unique contributions made to bird study, literature and art by father and son: Donald and Jeff Watson;
- Raise the profile of St John's Town of Dalry as the 'Bird Town' of south west Scotland, as part of the themed towns cluster;
- Develop community pride in the achievements of two famous citizens and inspire others;
- Increase economic opportunities through nature and arts based visitors and local participation; and
- Stimulate greater public use of all bird related facilities in the south west.

## **The Initiative**

The proposed Dalry Bird Town Initiative consists of both capital projects and celebration events.

### **1. Watson Bird Centre**

Purchase and refurbishment of Barone and adjacent land for development of the Watson Bird Centre as the key facility in Dalry Bird Town.

Current plans for house and grounds comprise:

- curators flat to accommodate 2 persons for Curator/Bird Town Director;
- ground and first floors: working space for artist in residence and visiting researchers, office accommodation for bird organisations (preference for RSPB), archive and library and web based research facilities, preservation of Donald Watson's original studio;
- basement (ground level at rear): public area reception, café, kitchen and toilets, retail area for birds, landscape and arts related materials, including Donald and Jeff Watson items (books, prints, photos and post cards), visitor information point for bird watching and walking: trails, observation points etc, and exhibition space on walls.
- Plans for grounds comprise: parking, nature trails, sculpture park, bird watching and outdoor artists areas.

### **2. Archive, library and exhibition development**

There are a number of components to the development of the archive at Barone.

#### **i. Archive**

Digitising, cataloguing and effective storage of the Donald Watson, relevant Jeff Watson and relevant Derek Radcliffe archives.

## **ii. Cataloguing**

Cataloguing Donald's pictures and their location, access and potential for loan for exhibitions.

## **iii. Oral archive**

Collection of memories of Donald and Jeff Watson from those in Dalry and The Glenkens and the wider birding community for use in exhibitions and for researchers.

## **3. Bird Town Celebration Events**

A series of celebration events to inspire and enthuse all ages are planned as follows:

### **i. Bird, arts and landscape competition**

Annual competition for all ages and abilities on broad subject of birds (science, observation, monitoring etc), linked to Dalry secondary and feeder primary schools, to commercial artists, and to all other interest groups.

### **ii. Artist in residence**

Rotating position of artist in residence at Barone to stimulate interest in the competitions, to raise the profile of Bird Town maybe linked to Springfling and other events in Dumfries & Galloway.

### **iii. Raptor Science Prize**

Periodic award for the best paper on raptors published in an internationally peer reviewed journal. Prize to be judged by independent panel of scientific experts. Prize winner to give public lecture in The Glenkens as part of the proposed Dalry Bird Festival.

### **iv. Bird Trails**

Development of further walking, car and cycling trails linked to bird observation throughout all seasons to include hen harrier and other moorland species, golden eagle, over wintering swans and geese, and linked to places where Donald Watson painted ad key roosting areas etc.

### **v. Bird Festival**

Annual event bringing together all of the outcomes from the various components in a festival based on Dalry Bird Town. Specific components would be: lectures, films, awards presentations for birds, arts and landscape competitions, guided bird watching, exhibitions of Watson and contemporary arts on selected birds/landscape themes: a mini version of the Rutland Water Bird Festival. First Festival planned for 1-2 October 2011.

## **4. Outreach**

Development of range of communication means, including web site for Dalry Bird Town. Key element is encouraging volunteers.

## **5. Governance and management arrangements**

The Dalry Bird Town and Watson Bird Centre is a programme of activity under the Glenkens Community and Arts Trust (GCAT). GCAT is an established charity with governance arrangements, bank account, and credibility in developing and implementing major projects in the area. The Bird Town initiative will help to

broaden the geographical focus of GCAT in accordance with its Memo and Articles.

### **Dalry Bird Town Steering Group**

The current membership of the Steering Group is:

Dalry community: Andrew Mellor, Pat Woodley, Tom Scott

Watson family: Louise Watson

Bird interest: Chris Rollie

Business and financial: Steve Davie

General environmental: Roger Crofts

GCAT: Cathy Agnew/Gill Khosla alternate

In addition, representation of scientific, land management and legal interests is under consideration.

### **Project development**

Applications have already been made for funding a part time Project Development Officer for 2 years. Big Lottery Awards for All have already approved funds for equipment etc.

### **Patrons**

The Duke of Buccleuch and Dame Barbara Kelly are patrons.

Others being considered.

Roger Crofts

Chair Dalry Bird Town Steering Committee

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