

More Paths for More People!

Lochaber Life October 2019



There has been a lot of focus over the last 5 years on the well-known and used paths in the Glen like the Ben Nevis mountain path and the All Abilities path, but there are several other routes that are also in need of attention!

One such route is further up the Glen from Paddy's Bridge along the south side of the River Nevis and over to Steall Falls. We have recently received funding from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and Friends of Nevis to upgrade this old stalkers route which will provide another excellent low-level path and poor weather option in the area.

This route provides an alternative route into the Steall Meadows area and access to the Mamore Hills and the popular "Ring of Steall " walk without either having to cross the wire rope bridge which can be an obstacle for some people, or fording the River Nevis if the water level allows. At the end of a long day in poor conditions this could be a very welcome alternative to the crossing of the Nevis by either route, making their walk much safer. It would also maintain access to Steall and the Mamores in the event of a land slip in Steall Gorge of which there have been several in recent years. Further for those who are able, there is the option of crossing the wire rope bridge to take make it a relatively short circular route returning through the stunning Steall gorge.

This project also brings environmental benefits by defining a line through the boggy areas, stopping the increasing erosion of caused by path braiding, and allowing the peatland areas to recover, although some intervention may help this process. Further, it would also provide the opportunity to

remove large sections of redundant, rusting metal and wire fencing from the local environment, providing safer and better access for people and wildlife.

At one time this was a very well-built path and certainly suitable for ponies over the steeper section to Steall, with carts on the lower route to the now ruined sheiling at Blar Ban. Much of this lower, flatter section has been lost in the bog and the chosen footpath is now following the riverbank. This is a very pleasant natural path winding through the woods and will not require any major work. There is still work needed to improve some boggy sections which the National Trust for Scotland Thistle Camp and our own TVRs have made a good start on, but it will remain an occasionally wet path for the slightly more adventurous.

It was a well made substantial construction but due to the fence line, years of land slippage and vegetation growth it has gradually disappeared. The route is now obvious as far as the first of many switch backs as the path heads up the hill. It is at this first switch back that walkers have mistakenly carried on heading for the gorge and into unpleasant, steep and potentially dangerous ground. Initially we may put a sign here to make sure the correct route is followed.

In the future perhaps a replacement bridge would be good. This would remove the obstacle to many people of the wire bridge and create a very enjoyable circular route at the head of the Glen. If this section is completed it would be a major step towards the overall aim of creating the Glen Nevis Heritage Trail, an off road route joining the low level footpaths in the Glen from the curling ponds to Steall Falls and back to the curling ponds.

So far we have only a small amount of funding for this project but with your help, we will be providing better access to a new walking experience in Glen Nevis. The money raised from the Nevis Fund is vital for securing the future sustainability of Ben and Glen Nevis and enhancing everyone's experience in this area.

There are many ways you can support the Nevis Fund, both as an individual or a business. You can donate via contactless at the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre or put some money in the Nevis Fund buckets if you see us out and about! As a business you can host a donation station in the form of a donation bucket or contactless giving device; make a regular annual donation or donate a percentage revenue so for example £1 on every booking. There will be more options available for individuals and businesses once the new Nevis Fund site is launched later in the year but if you would like to find out more about how you or your business can SUPPORT Nevis, please email jane@nevispartnership.co.uk.

