



Gladhouse Reservoir Newsletter

Introduction

The response and feedback from the visitor survey was incredibly useful and has helped us gain a more in-depth understanding of the visitor management challenges and needs at Gladhouse Reservoir. These insights are already helping to inform short- and medium-term activities to trial at site.

Our focus in the short term is investigating what we can achieve for the 2022 season. By season we mean the most popular months for visitors e.g. April through to Oct. Following this, we will review learnings and gather further feedback to assess the effectiveness of the measures put in place. This cycle of action and review will help to inform decisions and our overarching approach to visitor management at Gladhouse reservoir.

It is worth reiterating that visitor management is still a relatively new concept for Scottish Water and, as a pilot site, Gladhouse is a site where new activities are to be trialled and learnt from.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an overview of what we are working to progress for 2022. It is important to note that everything is still at a development stage with a lot of work still to do. As a result, we might not have all the answers yet and there could be circumstances out with our control which means we do not manage to achieve some elements for 2022. But we are working hard to get them in place and respond to visitor and local community feedback.

Car Parking

We are developing plans for a new car park facility. Parking was the biggest area for improvement highlighted in the survey, as well as being identified through experience and feedback from those who live and work at the reservoir. The car park would have a limited number of spaces (approx 40-50.) with a small financial charge for users, which will be reinvested into the site. We are looking to follow industry leaders such as Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) in how they approach this.

The location of the proposed car park is marked on the map below. The car park will be combined with road restrictions, to be implemented by Midlothian Council, to prevent parking on the road along the North shore of the reservoir. Discussions are also taking place to consider reducing the speed limit on this road.



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We are also investigating the provision of some portaloo style toilets for the car park. We are aware irresponsible toileting is an issue so would like to trial a toilet provision. These, like the car park, will require planning permission.

The location of the car park has been identified as the main access point for visitors and recreational water users. The hope is that by creating a sort of 'hub area', at the main entry point to the site, we will encourage people to access the reservoir from that point. This already happens informally. In this manner, and through positioning new welcome signage in that vicinity, we will attempt to develop a more defined and deliberate point of access. We will also look at introducing other accessible entrances along the fence which we believe would be beneficial in focusing access and preventing damage to the fence.

Management of the site

Management was the second highest area highlighted for improvement in our survey. We are investigating partnership options to provide a regular **Ranger** style presence which would help support responsible behaviour and visitor engagement. We are unable to share any further details now, while discussions are ongoing, but will provide further update in due course.

In addition, we will be commencing the development of permanent signage for the site – a **'Welcome To'** sign as well as some interpretation and orientation information. This will help share some important key messages for the site – including about its various listings (SSSI, SPA) to help inform and raise awareness.

We are also developing a suite of temporary responsible behaviour signs that can be placed in locations where there are known specific issues e.g., camping, fires, litter. These will be generic, covering common issues faced at Scottish Water sites across the country. The signs will be temporary so they can be easily rolled out and positioned where the issues are prevalent, with positions and effectiveness reviewed on an annual basis.

Wildlife

Visitors' strength of feeling towards the site's wildlife came through strongly in the feedback. In response, we are working with environmental specialists to determine what more could be done to support the sites' statuses. For example, we are keen to do more to improve the condition of the SSSI and will explore ways to do this in balance with maintaining people's right to access.

We are investigating the development of a biodiversity area close to the Scottish Water building at the North of the reservoir, near the dam. We see this as an opportunity to rewild one of the few areas of land Scottish Water own around the reservoir, which is also

close to housing and has suffered from vandalism to trees and plants in recent years. We also hope it will provide a focal point to offer information about the site's wildlife and biodiversity.

Visitor Impact

Tackling antisocial behaviour remains a significant challenge. Gladhouse is on Police Scotland's radar and part of their patrol pattern. We hope that the ranger service, if realised, could help to negate less desirable behaviour. Feedback from industry experts from 2020 and 2021 suggests that 'boots on the ground' at rural sites had a positive impact in this regard.

It should be recognised however that antisocial behaviour is an issue that is hugely challenging to prevent altogether. We hope that the measures we aim to trial in 2022 will help, but we also anticipate it will likely still occur. We continue to advise that if antisocial behaviour is witnessed, the public do not get involved and inform the police. If there is a clean-up required, please contact Scottish Water and we will have this arranged.

In terms of litter, while we do not plan to install bins, however we will be continuing the weekly litter picking service which we trialled in 2021. We will also look to arrange Scottish Water and community collaboration litter picking events. Many of you who took part in our



survey have expressed a willingness to get involved and volunteer time.

In terms of site users, such as those using the reservoir for groups and watersports hire or lessons, we are reviewing the terms under which these activities happen and engaging with all parties.

We will provide further updates throughout 2022 on the various activities outlined in this newsletter. Please feel free to share this with others and a copy and further updates will be available on our website – www.scottishwater.co.uk/Gladhouse