

<b>Report on</b>	Ballysaggart Lough Enhancement Scheme
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Nigel Hill Head of Service
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Paul Bailie Parks Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on recent works to upgrade and enhance visitor facilities at one of Dungannon's best known local beauty spots, Ballysaggart Lough.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The forty-two acres of Ballysaggart Lough, or better known locally as the 'Black Lough' is recognised by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust as a significantly important wetland area in the District after Lough Neagh. Ballysaggart Lough is one of a large number of eutrophic (nutrient rich) lakes occurring in inter-drumlin landscapes of South Tyrone providing a distinctive element of natural biodiversity. Ballysaggart lough is of particular value for birds demonstrated with a recorded annual peak count of over 500 migratory wildfowl across 19 species.
	<p>Ballysaggart Lough became an asset of Mid Ulster District Council from April 2015 under the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure transfer of Water Recreation facilities. The importance of the site at Ballysaggart is recognised under the Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA 03 Ballysaggart Lough).</p> <p>The LLPA is designated at Ballysaggart Lough and adjacent landscape, to help protect the area's visual amenity, nature conservation interest and recreational use. It is important that its banks and surrounding land are kept free from inappropriate and visually intrusive development. The northern bank of the Lough is overlooked by a localised hill, which contains significant areas of woodland around the historic 'Manse'. The open undeveloped northern slopes of this hill are important when viewed from Dungannon town centre, providing a backdrop of mature woodland on steeply rising ground.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>

3.1

Parks Service conducted a condition audit and walk over inspection of the site on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. A schedule of works was developed and communicated to Property Services for costing and coordination. The main scope of the works was to reinstate existing public paths back to their original width. Years of encroachment and erosion had resulted in the narrowing of the paths, in some areas to almost single file. The range of enhancement actions conducted by the Councils Grounds Maintenance function included –

- Enhancement works involving the scraping of existing path surfaces and the relay and rolling of approx. eighty tonnes of gravel.
- Cut back and clearance of overhead branches and a number of diseased trees were removed on the advice of a qualified arbortculturist.
- Contractual works were conducted to repair and resurface erosion in the public carpark area.
- Litter bins, picnic tables and seating were deemed as sufficient and will remain under review.
- New and additional dog fouling/control signage was erected.
- The painting of access gates and fencing has also been scheduled and will be completed, weather dependant.

Before and after photographs provides evidence of the quality and scope of works carried-out at Ballysaggart Lough, which has significantly improved the visual impact and quality of experience for visitors to the site.

3.2

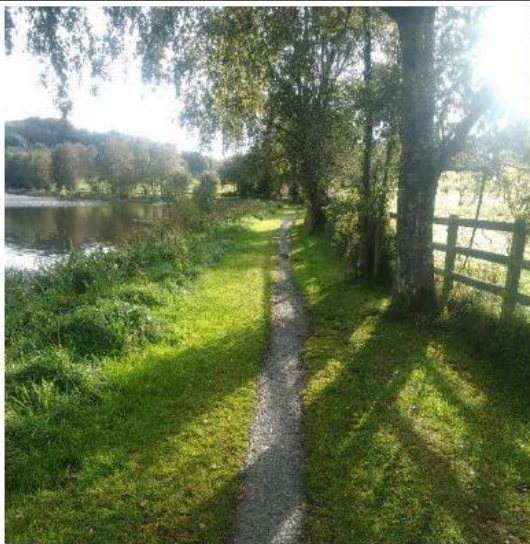


Before



After

3.3



Before

After

3.4



New Dog Control Signage



Carpark resurfacing and repairs

3.5



On-site seating, picnic tables and litter bin provision will continued to be monitored

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial: The scheme undertaken to date has incurred an expenditure of £3,500. An additional £1,500 is required to address stock proof boundary fencing and pedestrian access gate improvement works to be completed within current financial year.</p>
	<p>Human: Council's Property Service staff provided the majority of the labour for the scheme.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: The works completed will reduce the risk of potential slip, trip and fall injuries associated to poor surface conditions. The improved surface will enhance council efforts for increased accessibility and inclusiveness targets for access to the countryside.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: In line with Council Policy and Procedures</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: In line with Council Policy and Procedures</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	The report is for the purposes of updating members and associated information.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	N/A