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## **Dunollie GLAD Project**

### **Practitioners Brief: Plant Catalogue and Labels**

Location: Dunollie Museum, Castle & Grounds, Oban, Argyll

[www.dunollie.org](http://www.dunollie.org)

### **Project Focus**

To continue the work on creating a plant database for Dunollie garden and grounds and create suitable plant labels.

### **Dunollie GLAD Project**

Dunollie Glad Project establishes a route through the aftermath of the pandemic to provide structure, foundation, methodology for a sustainable new era for Dunollie Preservation Trust. The plan utilises the charity's expansive green spaces and its digital opportunities for physical additions, growing engagement and new opportunities and innovative approaches which will allow existing and new audiences increased access to our heritage safely and comfortably. The plan explores new methods for us to deliver benefits to our community, to re-build revenue streams, and support our local economy, to the standard that our exceptional operation was headed prior to the virus outbreak.

### **Plant Cataloguing Overview**

In 2018 a garden management plan (GMP) was completed which gave an overview of the historic use of Dunollie's garden and grounds.

The garden and grounds area which is the subject of the GLAD project consists of several different parts. The castle mound is tree covered with undergrowth of spring bulbs followed by ferns and herbaceous plants. Inside the castle enclosure the grass is kept cut and there are a couple of small planted areas.

At the entrance to the grounds is the World of Trees. Here are found some of the oldest trees and the grass between is carpeted with bluebells in the spring. One path from here leads up to the terrace in front of the museum and then through to the shrubbery. This has a backdrop of a large monkey puzzle tree and a wellingtonia with underplanting of rhododendrons, cherry tree, wych elms, fuchsias, camellias with ferns and herbaceous plants below. There is a small wildlife pond and there will be a new pathway created through the back of the shrubbery to allow more access to the visitors.

Beyond the shrubbery is the willow garden with 2 large living willow structures and the Raven knoll which is a natural children's play area. The path leads back down to the World of Trees. There are other areas in the grounds which are not under the care of the Trust.

There have been a number of plant surveys carried out in the past including one in 2011 which recorded over 100 plants and another in 2008 which detailed some of the medicinal plants to be found within the grounds. The GMP includes a plant list compiled from these previous surveys.

“Surveys carried out by LNHG in 2011 and 2018 identified over 110 plant species, within the grounds, some of which are garden escapes, many of which are food plants for a range of wildlife and some of which are classified as non-native invasive species (see below).

Hyacinthoides non-scripta, the native bluebell is widespread and is a protected species. Wych Elm, found in numbers along the old avenue, along the driveway to the house and in the vicinity of the shrubbery, is a UK priority species. Other species of note are Hemlock, Sanicle and Valerian which the medical herbalist Kerry Caldock believes may have been planted centuries ago as medicinal plants for the treatment of those living in and around the castle.”

As an addendum to the GMP a plant database was started for some of the most notable trees and shrubs. This designated an accession number to each plant as practiced by botanic gardens. One aspect of the GLAD project is to expand this database to detail more of the shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs found throughout the grounds. There is a further recommendation in the GMP to create plant labels to display information of interest such as name, common name, history, plant use etc.

“The Plant Database, included in Annex D, provides details of only a small number of the plants found at Dunollie. There is considerable scope both for the identification of additional species and for gathering of further information in relation to species already identified. As more plants are identified it is considered likely that further rare and unusual specimens will be found. This information would assist in the preparation of identification signage etc for plants and therefore enhance visitor experience.”

The project is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## **Outputs**

- 1) The production of a comprehensive plant catalogue / database.

Whilst this will probably remain a work in progress over the next few years it is hoped the bulk of the plants and plantings at Dunollie can be identified and entered in a database which can be made available to staff, visitors and other interested parties. The current database contains information on myths, herbal lore, medicinal use and other interesting facts and it would be the intention that this style would continue.

- 2) The design and production of plant labels to provide on site information to visitors.

This can take the form detailed in the GMP or other suitable design. It is the intention to label individual specimens but also to label planting communities if more appropriate. The

idea is to provide as much information as possible to the public about the plants found in the grounds.

### **Who are we looking for?**

An experienced plantsperson with the knowledge to identify species and cultivars. The GMP and current plant database will be available to provide the historic context and the state of current knowledge. The practitioner will work closely with the GLAD team and volunteers.

### **Timescale**

To work through July and August on the database with the production of labels to be completed over the winter

### **Available Fees:**

Fees - £1000

Labels - £1600 design and print

### **Contact Details**

To provide a quote or for more details, please contact Caroline Boswell (Heritage Garden Leader) by emailing [heritagegardenleader@dunollie.org](mailto:heritagegardenleader@dunollie.org), or calling 01631 570550.