



Boundary Features



LOCAL HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Current factors causing loss or decline

- Loss of walls and hedgerows by direct destruction and removal.
- Unsympathetic management for biodiversity of hedgerows.
- Over-grazing and neglect resulting in tall and gappy hedgerows with impoverished hedgebanks.
- Vandalism and removal of stones from stonewalls.
- Cost of repair and source of suitable stone for old stone wall renovation.
- Direct application or drift of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides onto boundary vegetation.
- Culverting or piping of ditches.

Current action

There is no existing policy in Glasgow to directly protect boundary features although their merits and mitigation measures are part of development planning control.

- SEERAD administer agri-environment grants (such as the Rural Stewardship Scheme), which help farmers to sympathetically manage, create or repair hedgerows and other boundary features.
- Ditches are protected by LERAPs, which limits application of chemicals adjacent to water courses.
- There are numerous sources of good management practices for hedgerows (e.g. FWAG).
- SNH provides discretionary grants for the improvement and creation of hedges and other landscape features.
- GCC-LS have conducted surveys of hedgerows and produced management guidelines.
- Article 10 of the EC Habitats Directive requires member states to encourage the management of hedges and other linear features.

Objectives and targets

The UK BAP Boundary Features Statement has a general aim to maintain the quantity and quality of boundary features, protecting features of conservation value and bringing derelict features into appropriate management. In Glasgow agri-environment schemes are important ways of effecting hedgerow management on farmland. In general there is a need for more survey and assessment of boundary features.

Object 1: Establish extent and quality of boundary features in Glasgow.

Object 2: Ensure no further loss or reduction of quality of boundary features.

Object 3: Promote positive management and restoration work on boundary features.

Object 4: Encourage the creation of new wildlife friendly boundary features.

Object 5: Promote awareness and the value of boundary features to landowners, managers and the general public.



LOCAL HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Current status

The scope of this plan covers hedgerows, walls (dykes) and ditches. In the modern intensive agricultural landscape these features, with their associate marginal herbaceous vegetation, can serve as important seminatural resources, with considerable nature conservation interest. This interest can also extend into urban areas when such features have been retained, or newly created, during developments. Roadside verges, parks and other open spaces are obvious locations but in urban Glasgow garden boundaries represent a large resource.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are typically linear, living features comprising shrubby, woody growth maintained by periodic cutting, with a functional role in retaining stock and providing shelter. **Hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*) is by far the commonest species on farmland supplemented locally by **blackthorn** (*Prunus spinosa*), **roses** (*Rosa* spp.) and various retarded tree species. In the urban areas, where stock proofing is not required, **Beech** (*Fagus sylvatica*) and **Common Privet** (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) have been commonly used, with additional exotic species (including conifers) in more recent times.

The highest conservation interest is normally focussed on ancient hedgerows, which tend to be species rich and may be relic strips of former woodland. In the local area most farmland hedgerows are more likely to have been planted during the last 200 years or so. However they can still be important for biodiversity when they comprise a number of shrubs with climbers, sometimes emergent trees, and a rich herbaceous hedgebank flora; in turn they support a rich array of mammals, birds and invertebrates. Even monotonous hedgerows can provide winter berry crops for birds as well as shelter for nesting and summer feeding. Additionally they have an important corridor function providing a habitat network, potentially linking fragmented habitats.

Hedgerows are most obvious at the remaining agricultural land in the City e.g. about Carmunnock, Summerston, Saughs, Leverdale and Darnley. Many are still under active management but the condition of several sections can vary from heavily maintained to overgrown or gappy.

Walls

Walls traditionally have been used as boundaries where soils are too poor for hedge planting or where there is a plentiful supply of stones. Old walls would utilise local stones (from fields or quarried) and the diverse geology can influence the plants and lichens that subsequently colonise (as can any mortar used). They are most common in upland areas so there are very few examples recorded at Glasgow farmlands. The most notable are in the Cathkin area with only scattered examples elsewhere. Other old walls are associated with old estates and houses, but information on distribution and biodiversity interest is limited.

Walls provide a habitat for various plants, notably mosses and lichens, which can add additional colour to the weathered stonework. Botanical interest can also be high on adjacent earthbanks, which may have escaped intensive agricultural management. A wide range of animals exploit the shelter and niches provided by walls and they are of additional value as basking places for invertebrates and reptiles.

Ditches

In low-lying areas ditches may serve as boundaries (usually with fences). The open water is an important habitat for many aquatic plants and animals. Emergent and inundated side vegetation also provide linear areas of marshland and, depending on grazing pressure, marginal herb-rich grassland above the banks. In the Glasgow area such habitats are very important for Water Voles as well as other mammals, birds, amphibians and invertebrates.

Properly functioning ditches need to be regularly maintained by periodic clearing of silt and vegetation. This work can be damaging to wildlife but with good guidance practices, management can be beneficial by retaining a mosaic of open water and vegetation types.

Action	Lead	Delivery	Objective
Policy and Legislation			
Ensure important boundary features are noted in Local Plans and Land-use Strategy documents.	GCC-LS	GCC-DRS	2
Ensure boundary features are assessed where affected by developments.	GCC-LS	FC, GCC-DRS, SNH	2, 3
Encourage the protection and management of boundary features in agri-environment schemes.	GCC-LS	FWAG, SNH	2, 3
Site Safeguard and Management			
Oppose developments, or seek mitigation, for land use, forestry or agricultural activities that will adversely affect boundary features.	GCC-LS	FC, GCC-DRS, SNH, RSPB	2, 3
Encourage landowners, managers and farmers to implement sympathetic management.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS, FWAG, SNH	2, 3
Discourage hedgerow cutting between April and December each year.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS, FWAG, SNH	2, 3
Encourage 3 year, or longer, hedgerow cutting cycles where appropriate.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS, FWAG, SNH	2, 3
Encourage gapping-up of hedgerows and coppicing of old growth.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS, SNH, FC	2, 3
Promote broad boundary marginal grassland strips and introduce positive management.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS	2, 3
Encourage long-rotation clearance management of ditches.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS	2, 3
Advisory			
Provide guidance on survey and assessment of boundary features.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), SNH	2, 3
Develop and promote guidance notes for good management practice.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG), SNH	2, 3
Liaise with landowners, farmers and land managers to promote sympathetic management.	GCC-LS	FWAG, GCC-LS(CG)	2, 3
Raise awareness of grants for management or creation of boundary features.	GCC-LS	SNH, FWAG	2, 3
Future Research and Monitoring			
Complete hedgerow survey and make data available to land managers.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS(CG)	1
Extend boundary surveys to include walls and ditches.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS(CG)	1
Identify key boundary features from survey information.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS(CG)	1
Communications and publicity			
Encourage public understanding and appreciation of boundary features.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS(CRS)	4
Links with other Action Plans			
Co-ordinate with Broad-leaved Woodland plan.	GCC-LS	GCC-LS	1, 2, 3, 4
Review the progress of this Action Plan by 2010.	GCC-LS	ALL	1, 2, 3, 4

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Glasgow City Council: Development and Regeneration Services(**GCC-DRS**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services(Conservation Group) (**GCC-LS(CG)**,

Glasgow City Council: Culture and Leisure Services (**GCC-CLS**), Glasgow City Council: Education Services (**GCC-ES**), Glasgow City Council: Land Services Countryside Ranger Service (**GCC-LS(CRS)**,

Scottish Ornithologists' Club (**SOC**), Greenspace for Communities(**GFC**), British Waterways (**BW**), Forestry Commission (**FC**), Farming Wildlife Advisory Group (**FWAG**), The WISE Group (**TWISE**),

Glasgow Natural History Society (**GNHS**), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (**RSPB**), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (**SEPA**), Scottish Natural Heritage (**SNH**), Scottish Wildlife Trust (**SWT**),

Clyde Amphibian and Reptile Group (**CARG**), Butterfly Conservation (**BC**).