



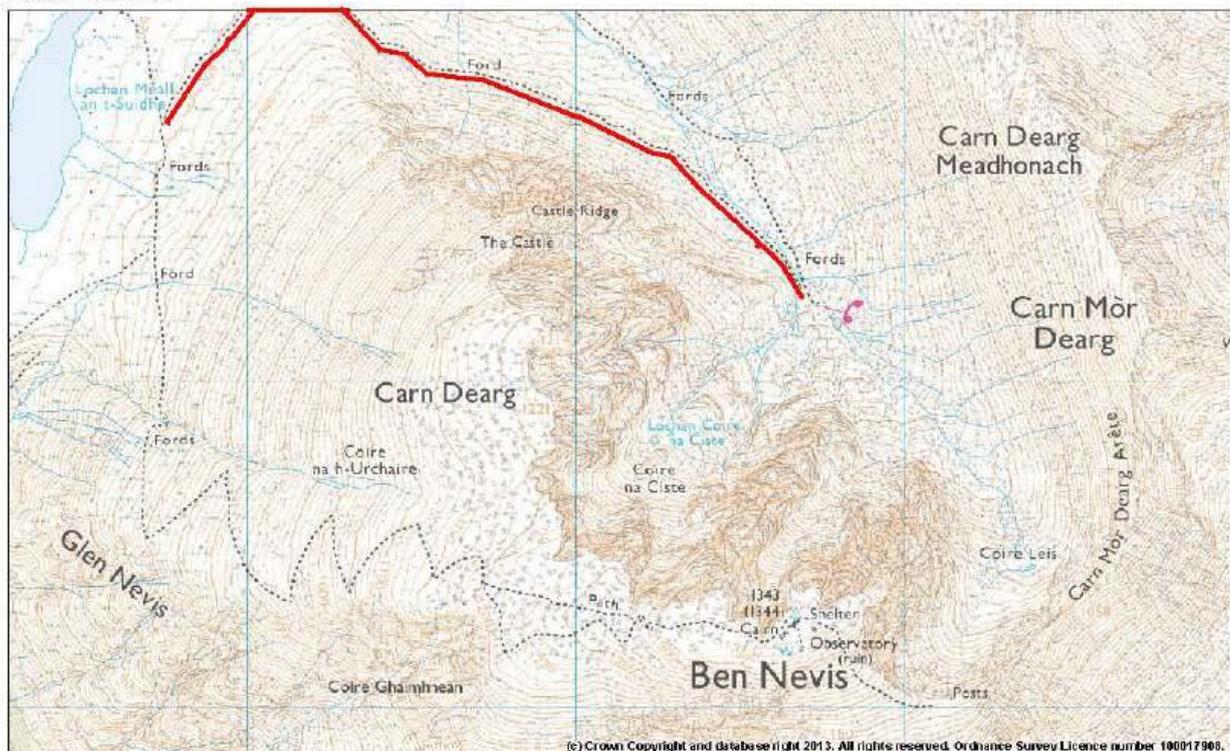
## Summary

This project will carry out conservation work and upgrading of the footpath which links the CIC hut and the halfway Lochan. The path, which is currently in a state of deterioration, contours around the iconic North Face of Ben Nevis. The project will involve a range of targeted solutions including restabilisation, surfacing, upgrade, drainage, pre-emptive erosion control and full rebuild in key sections. The project will take a 'light-touch' approach, to ensure the unique, wild character of the area is not impacted.

## Description

As the highest mountain in the UK, Ben Nevis attracts over a hundred thousand visitors annually. It is also the iconic heart of British mountaineering and continues to inspire and draw climbers from all over the world. There are currently three important paths on Ben Nevis. One (the Ben Nevis Mountain Path) leads visitors to the summit, the other (The Allt a' Mhuilinn track) takes climbers and mountaineers to the Charles Ingles Clark (CIC) hut under the North Face. The hut has a rich heritage (dating from 1929) and is still in use today as the only really Alpine style hut in the UK. The third path links these two paths, joining the CIC hut with the Ben Nevis Mountain Path at the Halfway Lochan.

## Ben Nevis



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Notes: "

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0  
km  
Map produced using Geo View 3.0  
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The path contours an existing 3 km line. It is in a state of disrepair, and is currently unsuitable for visitors. This project will make significant improvements to access around the UK's highest mountain and increase engagement with mountain heritage.

The completion of this project will link two historic paths and offer unparalleled access to, and views of, the iconic North Face of Ben Nevis. It will provide an alternative journey for thousands of visitors and a much improved path for climbers descending from the summit.

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North Face of Ben Nevis, Photo. - A Gillespie

The project is to be staged over 4 years. Works will be targeted as per detailed survey and design sheets. The design philosophy will be one of minimal intervention and a 'light-touch' to ensure minimal impact to the biodiversity, habitat and landscape character. The area has an especially wild sense of place which must not be eroded through inappropriate or 'heavy' infrastructure.

To ensure the project delivers beyond its budget, the Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) will contribute a dedicated Path Project Manager in conjunction with an annual workforce of Conservation Volunteers as part of the Nevis Training Programme.

## OBJECTIVES

Scheme Objectives		
Protect and enhance landscape character for future social and environmental benefit	1	✓
Encourage responsible access and mitigate visitor impacts	2	✓✓
Strengthen ecosystem resilience and plan for future adaptation	3	
Connect people with the landscape through meaningful and memorable experiences	4	✓✓
Increase learning and appreciation of cultural heritage	5	✓
Support community participation in conservation and visitor management	6	✓✓
Increase knowledge, skills and employability in conservation and eco-tourism	7	✓✓
Increase public awareness of the importance of biodiversity, ecosystem services and environmental pressures	8	
Adopt a partnership approach to visitor/land management, which is future focused, adaptive and landscape-scale	9	✓
Develop the local economy in a sustainable way	10	✓✓
Contribute to health and wellbeing by encouraging and improving access to the outdoors	11	✓✓
Provide an example of best-practice in sustainable nature-based tourism	12	✓✓

## **Specific Objectives**

Conserve and enhance access between the Halfway Lochan and the CIC hut  
Provide an alternative route, more suitable for many audiences who wish to see and encounter Ben Nevis  
Connect two nationally popular paths providing improved access  
Provide access to the heritage of the iconic North face of Ben Nevis  
Involve local community and volunteers in conservation  
Deliver training and increase skills in path construction and maintenance

## **Constraints**

The area where path works will be focused is within Ben Nevis SSSI/SAC. Consents will be required for works. The area is owned by one of the NLP partners, Rio Tinto Alcan, who will derive no direct benefit from the project.

## **Deliverable Outputs**

Conservation and enhancement of nationally important path - 3 km  
Essential link path between Ben Nevis Mountain path and Allt a' Mhuilinn track.  
Involvement of local community  
Delivering training in path building and maintenance

## **Delivery and Community Engagement**

The project will be managed by the Nevis Landscape Partnership Paths Project Manager. Significant added value will be brought to the project through the engagement of the Conservation Volunteer workforce who will provide skilled labour (at no cost) as part of the Nevis Training Programme, under the supervision of the Training Programme Co-ordinator and the NLP Path Project Manager. The NLP path project manager will develop detailed survey sheets, method statements and bills of quantities once in post to ensure maximum value for money and community involvement.

## **Wider Context**

The project will significantly add value to the Ben Nevis Mountain Path project, linking this with the CIC hut. The North Face footpath will also reduce the concentration of impacts on the upper section of the Ben Path where restoration work is extremely challenging. Furthermore, the path will increase access to the historically important CIC hut. The path will afford visitors a rare view of the North Face where the Partnership will be carrying out important survey work on arctic alpine species.

## **Outcomes**

Access to the iconic North Face  
Linking of two nationally important paths  
Landscape character protected and enhanced  
Improved access for climbers descending from the summit to the CIC hut.  
Habitat protected  
Quality of visitor experience enhanced

## **Heritage Conservation**

The project will protect landscape character and important habitat in this part of the Ben Nevis SSSI/SAC. The current path is in such poor condition as to be unrecognisable in sections. This leads to wide dispersal of impacts into sensitive habitats as people try to find the most comfortable route. Conserving the quality of existing paths helps protect surrounding habitat by reducing both 'path spread' and the creation of new 'desire lines'.

## **Beneficiaries and communication**

The project will have direct benefit for the local and national audience of climbers and mountaineers. The Conservation Volunteer workforce (as part of the Nevis Training Programme) will also directly benefit from having a project of national significance to work on. The project will be communicated to: the Polldubh Club; to the wider climbing community through the SMC and MCoFS, through climbing forums; to local College and adventure tourism students; Friends of Nevis and through the NLP communication channels including the Fort William Mountain Festival.

Beneficiaries will include:

National climbing and mountaineering community

Visitors

West Highland College adventure studies department

Adventure tourism businesses

local economy indirectly through improved access to nationally important area

## **Budget**

Total Value = £80,000

VAT = £16,000

## **Permissions and compliance**

Prior to the commencement of any path works, detailed proposals containing risk assessments, a method statement and site management plan (demonstrating compliance with Site Designations, Access Legislation, Health and Safety Regulations) will be sent to and be approved by the landowner (RTA), planning authority and other agencies (SNH, THC, SEPA) as required. All parties contracted to carry out path works will be required to provide satisfactory, documentary evidence of appropriate competence, certification, insurance and standard operating procedures which adhere to HSE guidance and regulatory requirements.

All parties contracted to carry out or manage path works will hold full public liability insurance.

All parties contracted to carry out or manage path works will hold full responsibility for Health and Safety management within the area designated as a site of work during operations.

Liability for workers, volunteers and work affecting visitors will not fall to the landowner. During operations, liability for works within the site area will reside with either an appointed Project Manager or the party contracted to manage the works.

The Landowner (Rio Tinto Alcan) have provided 'consent in principle', pending satisfactory evidence of compliance with the above requirements.

## Legacy and maintenance

The maintenance for this path will be provided by a combination of volunteer work and professional services provided by Friends of Nevis and the Nevis Partnership.

## Risks

As the key agencies and landowner are involved in the Landscape Partnership there is a low risk of non consent for works.

The Project Manager will upon completion of the survey and statement of works produce a full risk assessment.



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