



Galloway Forest Dark Sky

Annual Report 2018

Contact

Established at Gold Tier in 2009. Keith Muir remains the core link for Dark Skies in Galloway. Keith.muir@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Biosphere Dark Sky Rangers

It has been a year of good activity with a lot of very happy visitors learning about the wonders of space and understanding light pollution and how they can help.

It is also heading in to a period of change as some move on to pastures new and we look

to recruit more rangers to take up the slack. More information on this will follow over the coming months.

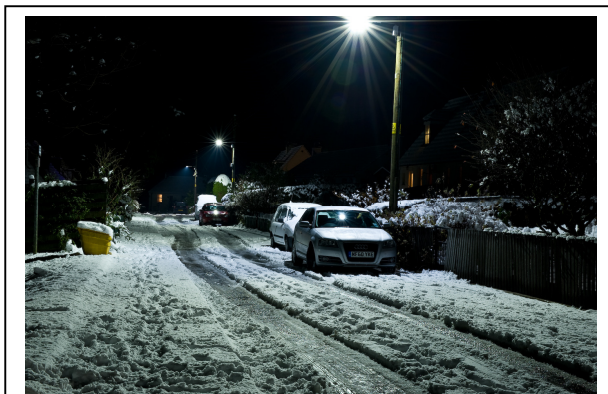


Digital Media

Discussions are currently underway to see where the best place is to host dark sky information. A new Facebook page is being created for Galloway Forest Park and this might become the new location for all things day & night. A decision will be made in the next couple of months.

<https://www.facebook.com/darkskygalloway>

Communities:



Glen Trool village with cool LED lights above 3000 kelvin!

With the ever increasing rate of replacement of sodium to LED across the globe there is a real requirement to push for the warm below 300 kelvin diodes to be used.

In and around Galloway it is noticeable how much the night sky has improved from switching to the very poor sodium to the LED fixtures. However, this is only part of the story and journey. 100% of them are a straight replacement of the

lantern leaving the fixtures as they are. In most but not all cases this means a patch work of lighting and a lot of lanterns with a 2degree upward pitch. This then means that the flat glass structures are no longer completely horizontal and residents are seeing the diodes directly from their homes.



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The Dark Sky Park is now working even closer with the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and both are receiving letters from concerned residents about the increase in the sky glow in places as indiscriminate replacements take place in larger conurbations under the simple ethos to save money on maintenance. There is little regard taken to light trespass or the harmful effect of the rich blue light on the living planet!

As a result the Biosphere in conjunction with the dark sky park are - we hope if agreed by the board - going to create a policy on light pollution. This will further enhance the guidance notes already in place for planning but emphasise the need to reduce the colour temperature of all new fittings and fully consider the design of both structures and poles to match that of the actual purpose of the lights.

There have been no new installations within the dark sky park.

Funding

There is no specific funding for dark skies. As a result all activity comes from Forestry Commission Scotland principal recreation budget. This has not changed but the funding from the Scottish Government is reducing year on year and we are now in a position where the main Forest Park let alone the Dark Sky park is struggling to keep standards at a high level. We will persevere and ensure each and every visitor has a great time.

The Future

Forest Enterprise Scotland is coming to the end of a major restructuring project and on April 1st 2019 will leave the Forestry Commission on its 100th year and become Forest & Land Scotland - an Agency of the Scottish Government. At the time of writing this report it is not clear the impact of this work on the Dark Sky Park & its staff which remains a major attraction in the south of Scotland & a beacon of light in the fight against light pollution across the UK. As a result partnership working with the Biosphere and in the future the new Dark Sky Visitor Centre in Kirkcudbright will be the key to its and their success. [Biosphere](#) [DarkskyCentre](#)





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Arts and Culture

In partnership with the University of Glasgow who in turn are working with the Astronomy, arts and Humanities departments within the University a PhD was offered called 'Skies Above, Earth Below: Mapping the Values of the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park'. Natalie Marr became the student and has been working over the past 2 years to build up her research and understand what the dark sky park can do for the area. Natalie has been working closely with local communities and the Biosphere using workshops and events to get under the skin of what makes the DSP special and what could be done to make more of it. We are looking forward to seeing her final report when all her research is complete. Natalie always appreciates contact with other likeminded people to further her research.



The now renowned Sanctuary event is not going to be run this year as the artists who run it are currently on yearlong dark sky residency. They hope to be back and looking at the event in 2019.

We continue to look for funding to realise an excellent educational arts project known as 'Quatanus'. Created by Max Alexander a renowned portrait photographer and space enthusiast, the project puts space in to a scale that humans can relate to. The sun is the size of a grain of sand and everything else is plotted around it accordingly. Its home will be the centre of the Forest Park in Galloway and radiate outwards. This means that if funding can be



found there is then the opportunity for other dark sky places to add to the global sculpture as a known feature in the universe. All benefactors welcome!

<https://www.facebook.com/MaxAlexanderPhotographer/>



Outreach

Our outreach programme is almost entirely led by our dark sky rangers and they continue to deliver an excellent service to a range of audiences. Some of the school and group requests are still met by the dark sky team AKA Keith!