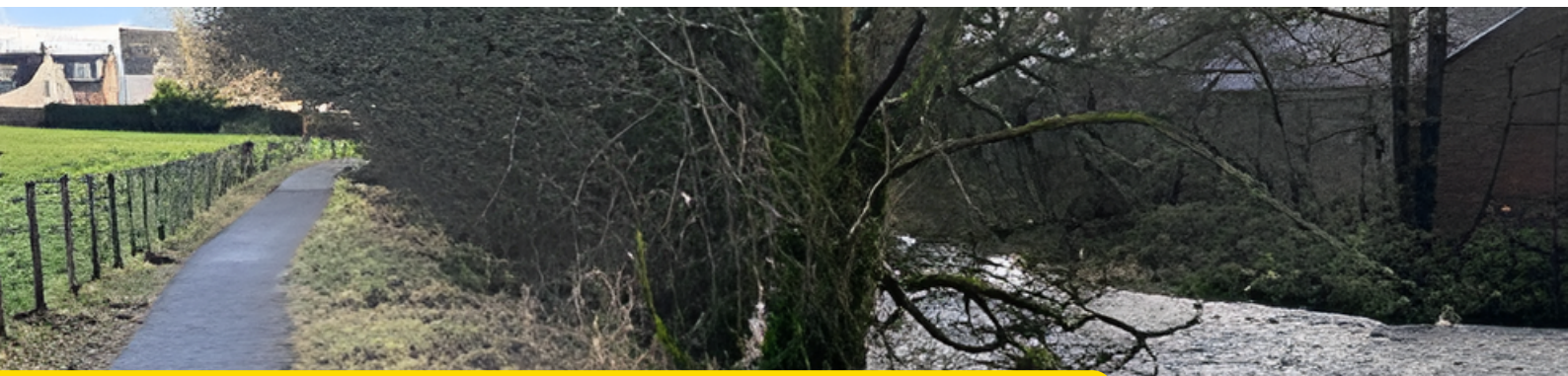




Case Study: The Waterlip Pathway - Solar Lighting, Darvel

Project Overview

Located in Darvel, East Ayrshire, within the scenic Irvine Valley, the Waterlip Pathway is a key traffic-free walking and cycling route connecting residents to schools, shops, parks and community facilities. The Waterlip Pathway Solar Lighting Project has delivered a major improvement in safety, accessibility and year-round usability by installing solar-powered LED delineation studs along the route.

This project represents a national milestone - the first installation of Solarlite Path in Scotland and currently the longest SolarLite Path installation in the UK, covering an impressive 750 metres. Funded by Walking Scotland, with match funding from Clearview Intelligence, the initiative enhances visibility while protecting the natural riverside environment.

The scheme builds on previous investment in resurfacing the pathway and responds directly to priorities identified through the Darvel and Priestland Community Action Plan, reflecting strong community-led planning and delivery.

The Challenge

Despite being a popular and essential active travel route, use of the Waterlip Pathway was significantly limited during darker evenings and early mornings. Local residents expressed concerns about personal safety, visibility, and confidence during autumn and winter, restricting walking and cycling for commuting, school travel, and recreation.

Traditional street lighting was ruled out due to high installation and maintenance costs, potential environmental impacts, and concerns about wildlife disturbance along the river corridor. A sustainable, low-impact solution was required to improve safety while preserving the area's natural character.

The Solution

The project installed Solarlite P solar-powered LED path studs, supplied by Clearview Intelligence, along the 750m length of the Waterlip Pathway. These innovative ground-level lights provide 360-degree route delineation, improving visibility without generating upward light spill.

Key features include:

- Solar-powered operation, requiring no mains electricity.
- Up to 240 hours of illumination from a single day's charge.
- No upward light spill, protecting wildlife and the night sky
- Robust, weather-resistant construction with an expected lifespan of up to eight years.
- No trenching or cabling, reducing disruption and installation impact.



This proven technology has already demonstrated success on other active travel routes in the Irvine Valley, including the Chris Hoy Cycle Route and the Strath Path, providing confidence in its effectiveness for Darvel.

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Community-Led Delivery

The project was developed and delivered by DART, in partnership with Cycle Station, a local not-for-profit organisation promoting walking and cycling across the Irvine Valley.

Community involvement played a central role throughout the project lifecycle:

- The need for improved lighting was identified through local consultation
- Community partners contributed to project design and delivery
- Cycle Station incorporated the upgraded route into led rides and school bike bus initiatives

This collaborative approach ensured the project met local needs while fostering strong community ownership and pride.

Environmental Benefits

The Solarlite Path installation demonstrates how safety improvements can be delivered without compromising environmental sustainability:

- Zero operational carbon emissions
- Minimal disturbance to wildlife, due to ground-level lighting and no upward light spill
- No excavation or cabling, protecting the riverbank and surrounding habitat

The project preserves the natural riverside setting while improving safety and accessibility.

Maintenance and Sustainability

The lighting system is designed to be low-maintenance and self-sufficient, with routine visual inspections carried out by local partners and volunteers. Its durability and solar-powered operation ensure long-term value, minimal ongoing costs, and continued community stewardship.

Looking Ahead

The success of the Waterlip Pathway project provides a scalable model for future improvements across Darvel and the wider region. Plans are underway to extend similar solar lighting along the Morton Park riverbank path, further strengthening local walking and cycling routes.

This project demonstrates how small-scale, community-led initiatives can deliver lasting improvements in safety, accessibility, environmental sustainability, and quality of life in rural towns.



Outcomes and Impact

Feedback following installation has been highly positive, both on-site and across social media. The project has already delivered measurable benefits, including:

- **Improved safety and confidence**, encouraging use during darker hours
- **Increased year-round access**, supporting commuting, school travel, and recreation
- **Enhanced active travel opportunities**, including expanded bike bus and led ride programmes
- **Reduced reliance on car journeys**, supporting healthier and more sustainable travel choices

The Waterlip Pathway now serves as a reliable, inclusive and well-lit link within Darvel's growing active travel network.