Introduction

CRN is a network which:

- Covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- Gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- Reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Networks thousands of interested people

CRN is funded by a range of Government Departments, Agencies and other bodies who share an interest in countryside recreation issues. CRN contracts its administration to Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI), Belfast.

Aims and Objectives

To work together for people outdoors, to:

- Share knowledge
- Gather evidence
- Develop ideas
- Promote good practice

Management:

Chairmanship
Jo Burgon, Independent

Vice Chair and N.Ireland representative
Mike McClure, Sport Northern Ireland

Budget Officer and England representative
Wendy Thompson, Natural England

Communications Officer and Scotland representative
James Ogilvie, Forestry Commission Scotland

Research Officer
Alison Darlow, Natural England

Ireland representative
Sharon Roulston, Waterways Ireland

Staff:

Secretariat
Kathryn Callaghan, ORNI

Finance Manager
Sylvia Watson, ORNI

Business Address:
Countryside Recreation Network
c/o Outdoor Recreation NI
The Stableyard
Barnett's Demesne
Malone Road
Belfast BT9 5PB

Tel: 028 9030 3937 Email: kathryn@countrysiderecreation.org.uk
Fax: 028 9062 6248 Web: www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk
Reflections from the Chairman

Jo Burgon

We have just welcomed 80 people to our annual conference to exchange ideas and good practice in increasing participation in Outdoor Recreation. This was the first event under our new name of the Outdoor Recreation Network. But this report covers our activities in 2013/14 under the old name.

The focus for the year in our spring and autumn meetings and in the theme of the journal was on the importance of urban green space for outdoor recreation. The visits to Lisburn and Belfast in the spring and then to Glasgow in the autumn, where we viewed some of the venues for the Commonwealth Games, stimulated a debate not only about a name change but more importantly made us realise, if we didn't know already, how vital access to high quality green space close to where people live is for the daily fix of fresh air and exercise.

A return visit for me to Divis above west Belfast with marvellous views to the west of Lough Neagh and to the east the city gave me great heart as I discussed with the National Trust ranger how this site, once in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence, now meant so much to local people as an accessible and safe place for walking, running and an increasing range of outdoor activity.

One of the key developments for the network this year has been the opening up of the seminar sessions, which have been a key feature of network meetings for many years, to local supporters. It has been very heartening to see the interest in our seminar sessions which included a day considering research topics in outdoor recreation. Early days, but I hope these seminars will become a key part of our programme and will attract much interest. We shall share these events through the normal web channels.

Glenn Millar from the Canals and Rivers Trust and Sean Prendergast from the Peak District National Park, were two long standing and loyal advocates of CRN. They brought much to our meetings through their humour and wisdom. The deaths of these two stalwarts in a year has been hard. In professional networks losses of this kind are deeply felt but memories of good times together are lasting.

My thanks to Kathryn Callaghan and her colleagues in ORNI for keeping the Network in good administrative order and for the member management group in providing the planning and development steer as we seek to offer opportunities for subscribing members and supporters to examine and share good policy and practice in outdoor recreation. I also extend my thanks to sportscotland, Sport NI, Lisburn City Council and Natural England for hosting our agency meetings and seminars throughout 2013/14. Without this sort of support from members we would find our gatherings difficult to organise.
Membership

The members of CRN develop its activities, and ensure that it continues to meet their needs and the needs of the sector as a whole. CRN has historically been at the forefront of identifying issues, barriers and emerging themes within outdoor recreation. The Network has been instrumental in developing new thinking in many facets of outdoor recreation and much of this is derived from the bringing together of experts within the field for round table discussions, site visits and collaborative thinking and working. CRN exemplifies joined up and strategic thinking between organisations and each of the nations represented.

During the year CRN reviewed and revised its membership categories to reflect the nature of its current activities. There are now 3 categories of membership:

1. Network members - 1,547

Open to individuals and organisations, who receive a journal twice a year, an e-zine 4 times per year, and invitations to 3 seminars per year.

2. Support members – 8

Support Membership is open to organisations that have:

- A significant role relating to outdoor recreation; and
- A national, regional or local perspective on and active engagement with relevant issues for outdoor recreation.

Support Members must also have at least one of the following:

- Experience in direct management of land, water space or facilities; or
- A research capability; or
- A role to represent professional staff; or
- Involvement in training/education of leaders and or practitioners; or
- Planning, management or policy in outdoor recreation; or
- Significant role in funding in outdoor recreation

Support Members:

- May bring 1 member only to attend the quarterly Network meetings and be involved in specific working groups.
- Must agree to work within the terms of reference for ORN activities.
- Receive a 10% discount off delegate fees for all ORN conferences
- Receive one free place at all ORN seminars and 10% off any further delegate fees
- Have the opportunity to develop networking opportunities across agencies and countries including joint research projects
Executive members – 13

Executive Membership is open to organisations that may be from the public, private or voluntary sector. Such organisations must have:

- A significant role relating to outdoor recreation; and
- A national or regional perspective on and active engagement with relevant issues for outdoor recreation.

Executive Members must also have at least one of the following:

- Experience in direct management of extensive land, water space or facilities; or
- A strategic role in policy making; or
- A research capability; or
- A role to be representative of professional staff; or
- Involvement in the training/education of leaders and or practitioners
- Planning, management or policy in outdoor recreation; or
- Significant role in funding in outdoor recreation

Executive Members:

- May bring 2 members of staff to attend Network meetings and be involved in specific working groups.
- Must agree to work within the terms of reference for ORN activities.
- May be a member of the Executive Committee which helps determine the direction and relevant issues that ORN deals with and brings forward.
- Have the opportunity to develop networking opportunities across agencies and countries including joint research projects
- Receive a 15% discount off delegate fees for all ORN Conferences
- Receive two free places at all ORN seminars and 15% discount off any further delegate bookings

The following organisations were members of CRN during 2013/14:

Executive members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Association of National Park Authorities</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Canal and River Trust</td>
<td>Tony Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forestry Commission England</td>
<td>Paddy Harrop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Forestry Commission Scotland</td>
<td>James Ogilvie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. National Trust</td>
<td>Philip Broadbent-Yale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Natural England</td>
<td>Wendy Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Natural Resources Wales</td>
<td>Elinor Gwyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Scottish Government</td>
<td>Helen Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Scottish Natural Heritage</td>
<td>Rob Garner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sport Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Mike McClure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sport Scotland</td>
<td>Campbell Gerrard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Waterways Ireland</td>
<td>Sharon Roulston</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Heritage Council Ireland</td>
<td>Beatrice Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Historic Scotland</td>
<td>Martin Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lee Valley Regional Park</td>
<td>Nigel Foxall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Northern Ireland Tourist Board</td>
<td>Rosemary Lightbody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Caro-lynne Ferris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scottish National Parks</td>
<td>Fran Pothecary / Douglas Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sport and Recreation Alliance</td>
<td>Martin Key / Simon Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Welsh Assembly</td>
<td>Manon Philips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outputs

Events

During 2013-14 CRN organised a number of events to allow its members to network with each other and with regional and national industry experts. The overarching aim of these events is to share information, knowledge, best practice and ideas.

The following events were delivered during 2013-14:

Agency Meetings

1. May 2013, Lisburn, Northern Ireland

Theme: Urban outdoor recreation
Host: Sport Northern Ireland
Attendance: 13

On 9th and 10th May, CRN members met in Northern Ireland to explore developments in the Lagan Valley Regional Park and in the Belfast Hills. Members cycled the towpath between Lisburn and Belfast, explored a section of the new mountain bike trails in Barnett Demesne and walked to the summit of Divis Mountain - all doorstep opportunities for Belfast and Lisburn residents.

Speakers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jim Bradley</th>
<th>Belfast Hills Partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dan Clarke</td>
<td>Lagan Valley Regional Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel Maguire</td>
<td>Belfast Activity Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site visits guides:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liam Baxter</th>
<th>Outdoor Recreation NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dermot McCann</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. September 2013, Glasgow, Scotland

Theme: Urban outdoor recreation and the Commonwealth Games legacy
Host: Sportscotland
Meeting attendance: 16
Seminar attendance: 30

This event also explored the theme of urban outdoor recreation but with the additional theme of the Commonwealth Games and its legacy running through the visit.

Day one site visits included the new mountain bike trails that were developed in Glasgow for the Commonwealth Games; the redevelopment of Cunningar Loop (next to the national sports arena for informal recreation), which aimed
to create an attractive green resource in a deprived areas of Glasgow; and finished with the £100m Emirates Sports Arena (including the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome) and athletes village that was developed for the Commonwealth Games.

On day two, the seminar delved into how Scotland’s access rights are delivered and addressed across Glasgow; followed by a presentation on Forestry Commission Scotland’s Commonwealth Community Woodlands Initiative (part of the Commonwealth Games national legacy plan); and lastly, Scottish Canals’ work on recreation provision in and around Glasgow on the canals network, with a focus on their paddlesport facility in the heart of the city.

This was the first time since 2011 that CRN made its meeting seminar available to a wider audience. Via CRN’s e-newsletter database, the wider network of subscribers were invited to attend. This resulted in an additional 14 delegates joining the event, which in turn improved the networking and information sharing opportunities.

Speakers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andy Watt</th>
<th>Pinkston Paddlesports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hugh McNish</td>
<td>Forestry Commission Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Millar</td>
<td>Scottish Canals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Hilder</td>
<td>Glasgow City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site visits guides:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allan Maclean</th>
<th>Glasgow City Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Wallace</td>
<td>Forestry Commission Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob MacFarlane</td>
<td>Scottish Cycling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Theme: Countryside Recreation Futures: towards a new research agenda
Host: Natural England
Meeting attendance: 6
Seminar attendance: 41

This event was designed to bring together the academic, policy and practitioner communities to find and share common ground in respect of future research priorities for CRN. The aim of the day was threefold:

- To provide a forum to debate and discuss a new research agenda for countryside recreation research
- Develop a shared understanding of research and evidence needs and priorities for the sector
- Identify tangible ways of achieving better join up between academics, policy makers and practitioners

On the day we had a range of delegates from across the outdoor recreation community, including academics, research consultancies and member agencies. We had a mixture of stimulating and high quality presentations, workshops and plenty of lively debate. The wide ranging discussion at the seminar led to the identification of the following as priorities for CRN in developing its future role in relation to research:

- Establish a CRN Research Group
- Gap analysis/research prioritisation
- Knowledge sharing
- Quality and standards
Speakers:
Lynn Crowe, Sheffield Hallum University
Dave Stone, Natural England
Simon Butler, Sport and Recreation Alliance

Delegate feedback:

Additional comments:
“Do again! Very useful day, my first time with CRN, will come again”.
“Good event, well done”.
“Very informative. Well run”.

Annual Conference - March 2014, York, England

Theme: Participate Outdoors
Host: Forestry Commission England
Attendance: 80

This conference examined the changing trends in participation in outdoor recreation and sport and explored why and how to deliver increased opportunities for participation. The event was designed to help delegates learn what motivates people to participate and the way in which participation trends are being shaped and changing. Two keynote presentations set the scene and 8 workshop sessions provided ample time for discussion, learning and information sharing throughout the day.

Speakers:
• Simon Bell, Openspace Research Centre
• Andrew Denton, Outdoor Industries Association
• Simon Hodgson, Forestry Commission
• Urusla MacPherson, Mountaineering Ireland
• Catherine Miles, Snowdonia-Active
• Kelly Brindley, Forestry Commission
• Clare Parsons, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
• Amanda Searle, Walk Unlimited
• Alan Eves, Forestry Commission
• Wendy Thompson, Natural England
• Philip Broadbent-Yales, National Trust
• Rob Joules, National Trust

The proceedings from the conference have been collated into a special edition of the journal to be published in April 2014.

Delegate feedback:

![Overall response to event](chart.png)

Comments from the delegates:

“Great networking events. Has given a lot of ideas for future and ideas to try. Learnt a lot of new ideas/companies”.

“Good venue, well organised, good food”.

“This was a great chance to share experiences and hear how others dealt with similar challenges”.

“Very useful overall. Networking is the most valuable part”.

“Good to catch up with people and developments. More ORN events please!”

Communications

Journals

In September 2013 volume 22 of the CRN journal was published. It was guest-edited by James Ogilvie of Forestry Commission Scotland. The theme was Accessible Greenspace on your Doorstep, which contained articles and brief reports from a range of industry specialists from the following organisations:

• Natural England
• RSPB
• Belfast Activity Centre
• Dartmoor National Park Authority
• Forestry Commission England
• Box Moor Trust
• Countryside Mobility
• Venture Outdoors
• University of Copenhagan
• The Steel Valley Project
• The Woodland Trust
• Forestry Commission Scotland
• Forest Research
• OpenSpace Research Centre
• Greenspace Scotland
• Canal and River Trust

1,129 copies were mailed to the CRN database and 1,547 were emailed. The journal was also made available as high and low res files on the CRN website.

Volume 23 is planned for completion by the end of April 2014. This will include the March 2014 conference proceedings as well as articles from each of the conference speakers.

E-newsletters
During 2013-14 2 e-newsletters were published and disseminated in May 2013, October 2013. These were based on CRN agency meeting seminars and linked to guest speaker presentations. The winter edition was not sent because the seminar proceedings have not been completed from the January meeting.

Website
Google Analytics show that from April 1 2013 to March 31 2014, www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk received 3,607 unique visitors, who spent an average of 2 minutes and 6 seconds on the site per visit. 73% of these people were first-time visitors. The 10 most popular pages were:

1. Home
2. Journals
3. Events
4. Research Archive
5. News
6. Other reports and publications
7. E-newsletters
8. Participate outdoors conference
9. Member updates
10. Contact us
Gender breakdown of visitors:

![Gender breakdown chart]

Visitors by country (top 10):
1. UK – 3,949
2. USA – 167
3. Ireland – 84
4. Germany – 57
5. Canada – 39
6. France – 39
7. Australia – 34
8. India – 31
9. Brazil – 25

Browsers used by visitors:

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<tr>
<th>Browser</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of Total 100.00% (4,769)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet Explorer</td>
<td>2,140</td>
<td>44.87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chrome</td>
<td>1,246</td>
<td>26.13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firefox</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safari</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
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<tr>
<td>IE with Chrome Frame</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Android Browser</td>
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<td>0.80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safari (in-app)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Konqueror</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Opera Mini</td>
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<td>http</td>
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<td>0.38%</td>
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Devices used by visitors:
1. Desktop – 4,373
2. Mobile – 200
3. Tablet - 184
Visitors found the website using the following top 10 search keywords:

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<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(not provided)</td>
<td>1,583</td>
<td>59.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>countryside recreation network</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>8.87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>countryside recreation</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>growth in outdoor recreation</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>countryside recreation journal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>http countrysiderecreation erg downloads conference flor layers</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>countryside recreation jobs</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>outdoor recreation network</td>
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<td>green connect</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>countryside recreation network</td>
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<td>0.30%</td>
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Unaudited Accounts 2013/14*
Balance brought forward from 2012/13 £22,263.00
Income £26,275.00 See table 1
Expenditure £31,326.96 See table 2
Balance carried forward to 2014/15 £17,211.00
*Fully audited accounts will be published later in 2014

Table 1 - Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Amount £</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Fees</td>
<td>19,400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from one conference</td>
<td>4,994.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from two seminars</td>
<td>1,175.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>295.00</td>
<td>Bike hire</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>161.50</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>250.00</td>
<td>Journal advertising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,275.00</strong></td>
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Table 2 - Expenditure

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<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Spent</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Subsistence - Chairman</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
<td>955.17</td>
<td>Cost to attend agency meetings and conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel and Subsistence - Secretariat</td>
<td>1,800.00</td>
<td>887.77</td>
<td>Cost to attend agency meetings and conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference journal (electronic)</td>
<td>1,800.00</td>
<td>1,057.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal (printed)</td>
<td>4,150.00</td>
<td>3,855.70</td>
<td>Published September 2013</td>
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<td>Salary of Secretariat</td>
<td>16,201.00</td>
<td>16,514.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overheads (15% of salary)</td>
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<td>2477.14</td>
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<td>Web/IT</td>
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<td>367.63</td>
<td>Rebranding</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3,161.24</td>
<td>Meeting and conference costs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>295.00</td>
<td>Bike hire for site visit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>800.00</td>
<td>Solicitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,403.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,326.96</strong></td>
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