



Welcome

to this Autumn edition of forthvalleygisnews

Inside you will find all the usual features and information relevant to Forth Valley GIS customers.

What's inside?

- Meet the team
- News
 - business
 - data & technology
 - staff & training
- Tips and tricks
- Refuse & Recycling Route Design Tool
- Clacks Going Mobile
- Stirling going underground
- Training News
- ... and much more

Forth Valley GIS goes Limited!

As a result of the continuing success and growth in services provided by Forth Valley GIS, it has been decided to establish a new local authority company, Forth Valley GIS Limited, to take forward the business.

So why the change?!

The formation of the company brings about a number of benefits to the Councils and the team:

- The Company is a more sustainable model and allows for ongoing business growth
- Improved staff retention and development opportunities
- Longer term planning and investment is now possible
- Wider opportunities for sharing services with other public organisations
- Opens up opportunities for new alliances with other partners

The new company was officially established on 1st July 2007 following a well-attended signing ceremony on 29th June.

This change builds on the highly successful partnership between Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils over the last 11 years and marks a significant episode in the ongoing development of shared GIS services. The new company, limited by shares, will be controlled under a shareholding agreement, founded by the existing partner Councils, that will support other local authorities or public sector organisations joining the company in the future.



Forth Valley GIS Limited will continue to offer the same high quality, market leading GIS services to public sector customers across Scotland while extending the benefits of a new business model.

Official Launch Event!

As part of National Customer Service week and to mark the creation of Forth Valley GIS Ltd an official launch will be held at the Inchyra Grange hotel, Falkirk, on the 5th October 2007.

National Gazetteer Custodian

The National Gazetteer custodian role is being provided by Forth Valley GIS on behalf of the lead council, Stirling. We have an experienced team dedicated to the operational management of the National Gazetteer. Our top priority is to ensure that 32 Council Gazetteers are uploaded into the National Gazetteer ready for the launch of the Citizen's portal later this year. The Citizen's Account needs addresses to register users of the portal, who can take advantage of a basket of local and national services, starting with Entitlement Cards.

Other work in progress includes: establishing support services, coordinating migration to the new British addressing standard BS7666: 2006, monitoring and reporting on national quality targets, revising data conventions and progressing integration work between Councils and Assessor.

For more information, contact the Gazetteer Service Desk via gazhelp@forthvalleygis.co.uk, or keep up to date with the National Gazetteer community via the Improvement Service website: www.improvementservice.org.uk/national-gazetteer

Headlines

Dear Colleague

This edition marks a major milestone with the formation of Forth Valley GIS Limited, a new local authority GIS company founded by the existing partner Councils. This is a strong testament to the growing importance of geographic information to sharing and improving public services.

Recognition and thanks must go to all current and previous staff, customers and partners of Forth Valley GIS for the last 11 years of business growth. Thanks must also go to the senior management team and wide-ranging support service staff who have been working on the company formation over the recent past.

The formal launch is taking place in National Customer Service week and I'd like to assure everyone that the new company will continue to offer the same high quality, market leading GIS services to customers across Scotland while extending the benefits of an exciting new shared service business model.

Best Regards

Alan

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

- FVGIS is delighted to have been selected to deliver corporate GIS services to Dumfries and Galloway Council, following a full OJEU tendering process. Work is already underway on the project, with plans to deliver significant elements of corporate GIS infrastructure within the financial year. The project will build on FVGIS' extensive experience and good practice in local authority corporate GIS implementation.
- Both East Renfrewshire and Scottish Borders Councils' CAGs are fully live and kicking! This represents a significant milestone for both organisations. See **below for more details!**
- Work is well underway on the development stage of the Forth Valley Antisocial Behaviour Information Sharing System. The aim is to provide a framework for partner agencies in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Community Planning Partnerships to contribute, share and access information relating to antisocial behaviour.
- ArcView 9.1 has been successfully implemented across the three partner Councils as the default desktop GIS platform.
- Based on the earlier audit work managed by FVGIS, Falkirk Council have identified nearly two hundred priority Open Space sites for qualitative field survey. They have also started a process of consultation with the public and interested parties on the use and value of open space in the Falkirk Council area.
- An ArcGIS 9.1 version of RoadNet, the FVGIS application for maintaining the local street gazetteer (LSG), adopted roads and related maintenance information, has been released to the three partner Councils.
- A new version of the Monitoring of House Building application (MHB) for managing the housing land audit has been released for Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils.
- Stirling's Sites and Monuments Record is now available online. See inside for more details.
- A web-GIS based Refuse and Recycling Route Design tool is now being used by Stirling Council Waste Services. See *inside for a full account.*



Scottish Borders and East Renfrewshire CAGs reach a successful conclusion!

Over the last few months, FVGIS has been working with both Scottish Borders (SBC) and East Renfrewshire (ERC) to help each create a definitive Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG).

The Scottish Borders CAG went live on 26th June. The wider project has included putting in place a CAG Data Management Plan and Data Quality framework – and providing training and advice to the newly formed CAG Team.

Sandra Cairns, managing the CAG at SBC, said:
"The partnership between Forth Valley GIS Ltd and Scottish Borders Council has

been second to none. By working together, the project stayed on target and went live on the day intended - a significant achievement.

The Corporate Address Gazetteer is a fundamental corporate building block within the Council and will bring significant benefits to all business areas"

East Renfrewshire went live in July after a similar project focused on providing support, guidance, documentation and some basic hands on data cleaning.

Mark Amos, project managing the CAG at ERC said:

"The efforts and cooperation of all involved, especially across our Planning, Roads, and EGovernment Services, combined with our closely integrated partnership work with FVGIS, achieved a very successful project outcome.

We aimed to produce a CAG, which was not only accurate for going live but, importantly, sustainable thereafter. FVGIS were invaluable in their guidance and operational experience which continues to help us towards achieving our objective."



Meet the team



This edition we meet Colin Wright, one of our experienced team of GIS developers...

Tell us about your role at Forth Valley GIS?



These days I spend most of my time in the techy world of programming. Lately I've mainly been doing web-based development work, but I've also been involved in developing various tools and extensions for desktop GIS as well, including the re-development of our Street Gazetteer maintenance tool - 'Roadnet' - for ArcGIS9.

What was 'the time of your life?'

Spending 6 months cruising around the Caribbean and through the Panama Canal to New Zealand and back. It was aboard a cargo ship, but unfortunately I was only 5 at the time... Holidays since then have never quite measured up!

Best thing about working for FVGIS?

The fine people I work with! (and the excellent cakes brought in on birthdays have absolutely nothing to do with this statement!)

Worst thing about working for FVGIS?

I rarely seem to get the opportunity to actually use GIS myself these days. That's why it is good to get out and meet the GIS users from time to time - it reminds me that there is more to mapping and analysis than pages of code!

How do you like to spend any spare time you have?

Out in the garden, up in the hills, or curled up with a book.

Who would you most like to meet?

Stephen Hawking - I want him to explain "A Brief History of Time" so that I don't have to finish the book.

A typical day is:

Heads-down programming, interspersed with liberal doses of meetings, system maintenance, emails and time recording, all washed down with plenty of caffeine.

It may not be fashionable but I like:

Dr Who? Since it came back to our screens I've re-discovered the back of my sofa

The best invention ever...

The electric toaster - the best thing since...err...

Staff News

Welcome to Alex MacDonald who is joining FVGIS on a temporary basis as our Oracle DBA. Alex is an experienced DBA and brings a wealth of experience gained through previous work at Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Western Isles Council, the Scottish Police Information Strategy, Intelliscan Ltd and many others.

1st Class Customer Service

Congratulations to Linda Workman (FVGIS Office Manager) and Stephanie Gallen (FVGIS Support Officer) for recently



attaining the Institute of Customer Services Silver or "Solutions" award. This award builds on the skills and experience gained from the Communications level of the award. Stephanie and Linda were required to demonstrate consistently high levels of customer service and to continue to meet the ICS professional standards.

FVGIS continue to be committed to providing a 1st class customer service! Well done Linda and Steph!!

Climb every mountain!

In June, a group of FVGIS staff took to the hills as part of the WaterAid Munro Challenge. The challenge was to simultaneously put a team on the top of every munro (mountains over 3000 ft) within the UK between the hours of noon and 2pm. Luckily the sun shone and the team bagged their 2 munros (Geal Charn and A'Mharconach, near Dalwhinnie) in the allotted time. In doing so, the team managed to raise around £500 for WaterAid.



CAG News ...

Effective CAG data management continues to provide opportunities for integration – at a national, regional and local level.



At a **national** level, integration of the three local CAGs into a national address dataset is progressing with the local focus being on ensuring the quality of the data provided to the national hub. Results of initial quality tests have now been received, with all three councils achieving excellent results when tested against the nationally defined quality tests.

At a **regional** level, FVGIS has been working with Central Assessors to integrate their existing intranet GIS solution with CAG and other data held in GeoStore, the tri-council spatial data warehouse. Following completion of initial development work by FVGIS, the new version of the Assessors GIS application is now being refreshed with weekly, rather than monthly feeds of tri-council CAG data.

Work on **local** integration projects is also continuing. Projects to integrate the Clackmannanshire CAG with the Environmental Health and Leisure systems are both well underway, while in Falkirk the CAG has been used to facilitate spatial analysis through the geo-referencing of house sales data as well as housing data held in the Council's SAFFRON system. Stirling's CAG is key to the success of the Council's recently launched Refuse and Recycling Route Design Tool - see over for more details.

Data News

Fiona Thomas, FVGIS Data coordinator brings us all the latest data news for the partner Councils...

Points of Interest - September 2007 enhancements



Over 700 classifications exist in the "Points of Interest" (POI) data. POI is a data product licensed to the three authorities through Landmark Information Group / Ordnance Survey. POI shows the location of facilities such as cash machines, post offices, businesses, libraries, doctors and dentists, etc., and also holds a variety of useful information (attributes) such as addresses and telephone numbers, where appropriate.

The September 2007 release of POI will incorporate a range of classification changes (including deletions, additions, amendments) to existing classifications. These latest changes mainly relate to POI information sourced from the Department for Education and Skills. There should be no major impacts resulting from these changes within the GeoStore / GeoLink environment.

Clackmannanshire Council - Greenspace

Clackmannanshire's Greenspace Mapping data is now complete and available on GeoLink. The data consists of detailed and categorized mapping of vegetated land or water within or adjoining urban areas.

Snippets

● End of the Map Return Scheme

Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils will no longer be operating the Map Return Scheme. This scheme previously allowed the authority to produce and distribute Ordnance Survey (OS) maps to members of the public (for the purposes of Planning Applications).

Members of the public will now be redirected to a commercial OS Mapping and Data Centre. The Local Authority planning teams will be communicating this new arrangement at a local level.

● Watermarking and Planning Applications on the Web – some clarification!

Ordnance Survey issued a letter to authorities in May stating a mandatory requirement to watermark all planning applications on the web (scanned after May 2007). After receiving considerable feedback over the conditions set out in the letter, OS has since reviewed the decision. If Authorities wish to use a watermarking on planning applications they publish on their web sites, they may do so at their discretion (i.e. watermarking is not mandatory after all!).

Stirling Council Waste Services

Refuse and Recycling Route Design Tool

Stirling Council Waste Services provide refuse and recycling services to households and businesses across the Council area. As part of a wider ongoing commitment to improving the efficiency of these services, Forth Valley GIS were commissioned to develop a Web GIS-based Refuse and Recycling Route Design tool.

The application provides a number of tools to improve the management and day-to-day operations within Waste Services. There are map-based tools for route design, reporting and performance monitoring, as well as options for the automatic generation of operational 'beat sheets' (a list of the streets to be included on a particular beat along with notes of those houses which require a special service – such as assisted bin or box pullouts for the elderly).

The tool has been developed as an extension to GeoLink, the Council's intranet GIS and is fully integrated with the Council's centrally managed spatial database (GeoStore). As such, routing tools are based on a highly accurate address database – the Councils Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG).



Benefits

The system has helped Waste Service to make the transition to a fleet of new 'high efficiency' vehicles. These vehicles require new beats and significant changes to working practices. The Route Design tools mean that staff can rapidly re-model routes and test different scenarios. Furthermore, the beats can be re-evaluated, as necessary, to take account of, for example, new housing developments or changes in recycling uptake.

As well as improving route efficiency, the new Web GIS application can help with missed bin monitoring (it links to the Councils CRM system) and to improve communications, for example, improving recycling uptake through generating mail lists for public education campaigns.

David Hopper, Waste Services Manager, Stirling Council said:

"The waste routing application means that the collection service operates with high confidence in that the route data capture is correct. Linking the routing software to the CAG has significantly reduced the amount of missed bins and complaints. The routing application has been an essential component in delivering a modern and effective collection service."

Waste Services are currently considering potential developments to the application, for example, functions to help with the management of 'special uplift' services.

Forth Valley GIS are establishing a growing expertise in the area of routing data and software applications. The technical solution builds on the core corporate investment in centralised GIS and associated spatial data warehouse infrastructure, and inherits associated benefits.

GIS Tutor – Accuracy and Precision

Accuracy and precision are two terms that are often used in relation to the quality of spatial datasets. Both are important. Confusingly, however, the two terms are often used to refer to the same thing.

'Accuracy' is the measurement of how close the reported co-ordinates of a feature are to the actual location. A point referred to as "accurate to 1m" could in reality be up to $\pm 1m$ from the recorded location.

'Precision' can have a number of meanings. In geographic terms it most commonly refers to the number of 'significant figures' used to store a coordinate value. Precision is also used to describe how consistently an instrument (e.g. a GPS) measures the same location.

The "target" analogy

Imagine recording four GPS point readings for the same location. The closer to the centre of the target the higher the accuracy of each point. The smaller the "cluster" of points the higher the precision of the readings.



"High accuracy but low precision"



"Low accuracy but high precision"

It is possible for features in a spatial datasets to be precise but not accurate, accurate but not precise, accurate and precise or neither!

Webwatch: Old, fat and gnarled... Ancient Tree Hunters Ahoy!

Are you a potential ancient tree hunter or hugger? ... (that's ancient trees rather than ancient hunters/huggers!).

Since 2004, the Woodland Trust has been working in partnership with the Ancient Tree Forum (ATF) and the Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI) to encourage greater awareness of ancient trees by developing an on-line interactive map of the UK's ancient trees.



"We're asking people to look out for and record trees which are particularly old, fat and gnarled" said Woodland Trust President, Clive Anderson, "so obviously I am just the person to get this message across".

The Ancient Tree Hunt (ATH) involves thousands of people in finding and mapping all the fat, old trees across the UK and is right at the heart of the Woodland Trust's ancient tree conservation work.

The project has already collected more than 6,000 records. It aims to record at least 100,000 ancient trees throughout the UK by 2011.

The website www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk allows you to find details of ancient trees near where you live or places that you visit frequently. The database is also accessible through a nicely presented flash-driven web mapping interface, allowing users to add/remove various ancient tree related layers, pan and zoom, as well as query the various data directly via the map. The Ancient Tree Hunt relies on the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers so get involved! Hug a tree (with a tape measure) today!



Some random ancient tree facts:

- Ancient woodland is land that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD.
- The UK is one of the least wooded places in Europe. Only 12 per cent of the UK is woodland, compared to an average of 44 per cent in other parts of Europe. Ancient woodland now accounts for only around 2 per cent of the UK's land use.
- Of the remaining ancient woodland in the UK, 85 per cent has no legal designation.

Going Forth



Going Mobile in Clacks

Clackmannanshire is investigating the use of cutting-edge mobile technology to enhance its service provision. IT and Housing Services are teaming up to trial a variety of hand held devices as part of a wider assessment of the use of mobile technologies across the council.

The Housing Services Community Wardens and Estates Managers will be able to access their jobs through 'hand-helds' and update location details using Global Positioning System (GPS). Using GPS means that when staff require to, for example, raise a new job line, the exact position can be transferred through to the response service. This makes it quicker and easier to identify their location.

The trial will establish the coverage of the telecommunications infrastructure, and identify any 'black-spots'. It will also establish the value of mobile technology and the potential for other services to enjoy the benefits of mobile working.

Going Forth



School Planning for the future at Falkirk

Local Plan decisions are currently being finalised on many new housing developments that will be phased to proceed over the next 15 years. One of the many considerations for long-term strategic planning is the likely effect that this will have on school capacities up to 20 years from now so that sufficient infrastructure can be planned for.



Richard Teed of Falkirk Council Education Services needs to anticipate school roll levels for when current developments and proposals are built. School roll projections can provide a 5-10 year view but this is inadequate for long-term strategic planning and negotiation of 'planning gain' (the amount that developers must pay the local authority to offset the costs of building new schools, maintaining roads etc) for some of the larger developments.

Richard has found that a useful proxy for school rolls can be derived from the number of dwellings (both flats and houses) in a catchment area. Future changes in the number of dwellings can then be compared with the current school

rolls in those catchments that have a comparable profile just now. Using a spatial join in ArcGIS, it is straightforward to identify the number of domestic CAG (Corporate Address Gazetteer) points within each of Falkirk's 57 school catchment areas. This analysis, however, does not make the important distinction between the number of flats and houses. A far higher proportion of children live in houses. Unfortunately, neither the CAG nor Ordnance Survey's Address Point have a field to separate the two.

To get around this Richard assumed that all residential CAG points with matching 12-figure grid-references (i.e. address at the same location on the ground) can be assumed to be flats. This is not 100% true, but close enough for a broad-brush analysis such as this.

Of the resulting statistics, Richard says:

"I now know with a degree of confidence whether existing or planned capacity at our schools will be sufficient to sustain the new housing planned over the next 10-15 years and I have further evidence to support any requirement for planning gain to cover necessary investment in new capacity."

If you would like any more information, please contact Richard Teed via richard.teed@falkirk.gov.uk.

Stirling: Going Underground

Did you know that the Council Headquarters at Viewforth was built on an old Bronze Age burial ground? Stirling has been inhabited for thousands of years, but traces of the people and their settlements have disappeared or been covered by modern development.

With Stirling and Clackmannanshire's Sites and Monuments Record you can uncover the past beneath your feet! For the first time, monuments and sites records have been made available online to the public through the council website, so you can find out what the archaeologists have been digging up in your area.

You can type in a location or use the map to locate the area you are interested in. Then just switch on the relevant layer to reveal archaeological sites or finds. You can also base your search on a specific time period or use the 'identify' tool to get a short description of the site or find.

Give your walks a historic dimension by checking out the archaeology before you go!

Forth Valley GIS host the archaeology information and make it available to the site using web services. We worked closely with the Council Web Team to develop the mapping application and search facilities for the site.

Follow the links from www.stirling.gov.uk/archaeology





Back Bit ...



Scottish Government ePlanning Programme

Forth Valley GIS is currently bringing it's expertise in project management, web mapping and data management to the Scottish Government ePlanning Programme. The programme is one element of 'Modernising the Planning System' in Scotland.

Tom Moore (FVGIS Senior Analyst) is currently seconded to the programme. Tom is the project manager for the Online Local Plans work stream which has GIS, data management and web mapping at it's core. The project aims to put local plans online and allow comments on the plans to be submitted online. The e-planning programme is ambitious and will bring a wide range of benefits to the organisations that deliver the planning system and the users as communities and businesses.

Tom is also advising on other elements of the programme, including Ordnance Survey licensing issues and National Gazetteer integration with the centralised applications and appeals website.

Training News

The timetable for GIS training courses through to early 2008 is now available – check out the training section of Geolink for details! Courses include the new GIS data management training course aimed at people who capture, update and maintain geographic data.



Forth Valley GIS is currently working with the Boundary Commission for Scotland to train a number of representatives from the political parties represented at the Scottish Parliament to use ArcView. This training will provide these organisations with the skills needed to examine proposals arising from the Commission's ongoing review of Holyrood constituencies when they are made available for general public consultation early in the New Year.

The Commission considers that the use of GIS will allow the parties to better consider amendments to/alternative proposals for constituencies across Scotland. It will also greatly assist the Commission to receive proposals from the parties electronically in formats that can be examined directly by GIS software.

Diary Dates '07

- 25-26 September** - CAPS National User Conference 2007, Nottingham
- 2 October** - Challenge Day - Public Sector Spatial Data, Stirling Highland Hotel
- 4 October** - AGI Emergency Planning Event, Birmingham
- 5 October** - Formal Forth Valley GIS Ltd Company Launch
- 16 October** - AGI Crime and Disorder SIG Event, Liverpool
- 24 - 25 October** - OS Seminar - Getting the most from OS Mastermap Dunblane Hydro
- 14 November** - GIS Day
- 15 November** - Inspiring Scotland 2007 - AGI Annual Scotland Event, Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh
- 22 November** - AGI Annual Awards Dinner, London

please contact:

For further information please contact
 Forth Valley GIS, Viewforth, Stirling, Scotland FK8 2ET.
 Tel 01786 442976; Fax 01786 442818;
 Email; fvadmin@forthvalleygis.co.uk; www.forthvalleygis.co.uk