

PLANS FOR MAJOR REGENERATION PROJECT IN WEST OF SCOTLAND UNVEILED

£100million Landmark development could bring more than 400 jobs and thousands of tourists to Irvine Valley area

Plans for a new 'destination resort' complex in the West of Scotland have been unveiled. Local landowners, Andrew and Jennifer Malcolm are pushing ahead with the ambitious five year project that will see completion of Phase 1 of the 'Allseasons at the Meadows' development by 2009. The completion date is timed to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the birth of poet Robert Burns and the British Open Championships being held at nearby Turnberry.

Allseasons at the Meadows will be an environmentally led hotel, holiday and visitor resort built around a man-made 25-acre loch. Phase 1 of the project will see the loch completed to incorporate beautiful islands, wetlands and grasslands and preserve the natural habitat beauty and wildlife of the local area. A luxury waterfront hotel with health facilities and a restaurant is also included along with 100 New England style lakeside holiday lodges. Phase 2 will include a picturesque modern harbour with moorings and boardwalk alongside bistro/coffee shop units to link with a garden centre and wildlife watching areas.

The project is the brainchild of Andrew and Jennifer Malcolm, who are about to present 'final plans' for the latest stage of the development to East Ayrshire Council. It is their vision to create a superb inland tourist destination that perfectly balances the natural beauty and ecological benefits of the area with a luxurious and exclusive resort that will provide a restful and tranquil place for local, national and international visitors. A key element for the creation of the resort site is winning Council approval for the enablement building of new housing which will include affordable homes providing easy links for young families to walk to school or work.

Andrew and Jennifer live in Ayrshire and purchased the land in 1996. Andrew previously owned a landscaping business but found that the industry was becoming too overly competitive and at that point he decided to take his environmental interests in a new direction.

Commenting on his plans, he said,

"This development will be a first for Scotland in terms of providing an environmentally led tourist destination. It has its 'roots' in green tourism – the loch will have islands and roosting sites for the hundreds of birds that already visit the site and all the lakeside lodges will have nesting boxes incorporated into their design. The hotel we are planning will be powered by

solar panels and wind turbines to make it environmentally friendly and sustainable and wildlife viewing areas will allow all visitors to see Scottish wildlife in their natural habitats including fox, roe deer, and otter.

“We want to enhance the ecological beauty of the area and preserve and promote the natural assets of south-west Scotland including the history and culture of the local area, and those truly Scottish outdoor pursuits of walking, fishing, boating and golfing.”

A stunning Gateway is planned to the landmark scheme which will feature specially commissioned sculptures reflecting the heritage and potential new future of the area along with striking new waterways and water features culminating in a central focal sculpture representing a tree of life and a flock of birds taking off. Designed by landscape architects and consultants, Ash Design + Assessment, the approach will coincide with a proposed new roundabout as visitors enter the Gateway from the west of Galston.

On the approach to the new roundabout, a series of distinctive timber and bronze sculptures of the same design will act as countdown markers to the central flock of birds creation at the heart of the roundabout. The actual image of the sculptures will combine a flying shuttle to represent the weaving and textiles heritage of the Irvine Valley combined with a stylized heron which has been adopted as a symbol of the future of Allseasons at the Meadows development as a sustainable tourist and wildlife destination.

Commenting on the Gateway, Andrew added,

“What we have planned so far is all about changing the image of the valley and creating a development that will benefit the community across the region. Beginning with the Gateway we want to build on the identity of the valley and establish a new era of arts and crafts. It is also envisaged that the other gateways could be improved by the use of similar symbols to those we have planned and we are inviting the local community to give us feedback on what these symbols could be and we would be thrilled to have a permanent icon which represents the development and positive future of the area.

“East Ayrshire has tremendous potential in its people, products and locations, but the pace of development needs to be stimulated more. It has taken 10 years of consistent effort and immense hard work to bring the project to the final stages for planning approval and building.”

Allseasons hope that the identity of the Valley and its associated history, culture, wildlife, fishing, walking, golf and scenery plus the increased access to the area via the new M77 will all serve to position the Meadows to become known as one of Scotland's most attractive areas to visit and spend time. With its central southwest location, the development is just five minutes off the M77 and within easy reach of Glasgow, Prestwick and Edinburgh airports.

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

- Images of the proposed Gateway to the site, hotel and harbour area of 'Allseasons at the Meadows' are available on request
- Allseasons at the Meadows was awarded a first for Vision In Business for the Environment of Scotland by SEPA for the West of Scotland category in 2005.
- VisitScotland recognises this project as a first for Scotland and acknowledges its potential contribution to tourism from the national and international markets.