



**'Working with WordPress'
Training Report
15th July 2013
The Melting Pot, Edinburgh**



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Introduction

This is a report on a training day on 'Working with WordPress', on 15 July 2013. It was delivered by Reforesting Scotland as part of the Community Woodlands Association's Knowledge Share Programme. The venue was The Melting Pot on Rose Street in Edinburgh, well situated for national public transport access. There was a good response to this course, with 15 bookings and 12 people attending on the day. Feedback from attendees was very positive, with requests for more training and suggestions for other related topics which this one-day course was not able to cover in depth.

Purpose of the workshop

Over the last few years there has been an increasing move from 'static' websites, maintained by experts and professionals, to 'content management systems'. These modern sites offer more flexible presentation of information whilst also allowing non-specialists to have a very hands-on role in producing and maintaining that information. WordPress has emerged as one of the most popular and user-friendly tools for doing this. Reforesting Scotland identified a need to train core volunteers to take on our own new WordPress website. We realised that other groups would have the same need, and anticipated that a shared training day, looking at a different groups' websites and needs, would provide a richer experience for all concerned.

'Working with WordPress' Course Content

The aim of the course was:

To help participants become familiar with the workings of WordPress in order to help set up and maintain their community websites to be as fresh, exciting, dynamic and as up to date as possible.

The objectives of the course were:

- To look at examples of community websites and why WordPress can be a useful tool for community organisations.
- To introduce the WordPress user interface, and look at ways of using WordPress to arrange and present website content, using practical examples from the Reforesting Scotland website.
- To give delegates the opportunity to create some website content, at a level to suit their skills and confidence, working alone or in groups.
- To discuss the skills and team of people needed to keep a WordPress website current and communicative.

Event trainer:

Emma Chapman



List of course participants

Name	Group Name
Kayt Howell	Fintry Development Trust
Sally Macpherson	Reforestation Scotland
Susan Goldwyre	Friends of Ironmills Park
Joyce Faulkner	GreenFerry
Fi Martynoga	Reforestation Scotland
Donald McPhillimy	Reforestation Scotland
Mandy Meikle	Reforestation Scotland
Colin MacDowell	The Organic Growers of Bothwell
Norma Hay	The Organic Growers of Bothwell
Iwan Thomas	The VAT Run
Alan Carter	Reforestation Scotland
Piers Voysey	Anagach Woods & Reforestation Scotland

Course activities

- Introductions - who's here, and what are our website experiences, skills and needs? *(participants speaking for themselves)*
- Why WordPress? - Including example blogs and websites *(presentation)*
- WordPress: behind the scenes *(demonstration)*
- WordPress: behind the scenes – your turn to create some content! *(participants working singly or in groups)*
- Building a website team: tasks, pitfalls, deciding who does what, practical examples *(facilitated discussion)*
- Brief closing discussion – What next for each group here? What are you taking away from this workshop?

Findings from the day

- The idea of drawing on each group's situation and experiences was well-received and helped to form a co-operative group learning situation. There was an impressive level of skills in the room, ranging from technical web skills to insights into the dynamics of community groups, and everyone had something to contribute. People reported benefit from meeting others with diverse experiences and similar goals and interests.
- Participants came with a range of different needs - some were looking for inspiration and motivation to get on with sites they'd already started; some wanted to revise skills, some to gain basic understanding and confidence; some wanted to set up new sites; Reforestation Scotland members wanted to learn more about their new site. All felt they'd got something of value from the course.

- Two participants who were looking for specific knowledge on setting up websites from scratch were disappointed by the course content. With hindsight the course description should have made it clearer that the emphasis was on the more basic WordPress skills needed for updating existing websites, rather than on more 'web designer' aspects such as hosting, choosing themes, and moving away from the 'bloggy' feel of a basic WordPress site.
- As well as the interest in how to set up a website from scratch, there was a call for further WordPress training e.g. on working with images.
- All participants had very practical and immediate uses for the skills and knowledge gained, and gave a sense that they were going to go away and use them.



Feedback from participants

"Inspiration was delivered. Thank you."

"Good technical skills and overview"

"Supervised, knowledgeable access to what WordPress can do and sharing with others' experience"

"[I gained...] ...information and confidence"

"...a better understanding of up-front planning"

"...confidence to take on updating the site"

"...knowledge of how WordPress, blogs and websites work"

"Excellent course. Loved it."