

Woodland Crofts Route Map

This 'route map' takes as its starting point a decision by a community to progress a woodland crofts project. Some groups may however enter the route map at a later stage. Note that help is available from various support agencies throughout the process, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland, Community Woodlands Association and the Scottish Crofting Federation.

The timeline below indicates the broad sequence of actions required, but at many stages of the process there is a degree of flexibility about exact timings, and some stages may proceed in parallel to others. Some timings however are critical; for example a community can only apply to create new crofts once it owns the land in question.

	Milestones	Actions & Options	Guidance
SCOPING	Confirm need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Public meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Local questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> Formal needs analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand <u>why</u> you need them; this will shape <u>how</u> you develop them
	Confirm opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify local woodlands & their owners <input type="checkbox"/> Assess local woodlands <input type="checkbox"/> Formal feasibility study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suitable site must be available • Are any woodlands already for sale? • Are any sites already in community or public ownership?
SECURING ACCESS TO LAND	Establish Community Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Define community <input type="checkbox"/> Choose appropriate structure <input type="checkbox"/> Legal incorporation <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit members, elect directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally based on geographical community • Type of structure will affect both purchase & fundraising options • Consider charitable status
	Secure site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Application to National Forest Land Scheme (FCS Woodland) <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Community Right to Buy option (other woodland) <input type="checkbox"/> Or negotiate with willing seller 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFLS¹ option available at any time • CR2B² only available if registration of interest in land is achieved before land is offered for sale • NFLS & CR2B both involve formal process (valuation, community ballot etc) • Woodland crofts more straightforward through ownership rather than leasing
	Develop Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify expertise in community <input type="checkbox"/> Engage professional help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should cover acquisition and first 5 years in detail; indicative thereafter • Must be financially sustainable!
	Secure finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Funding applications <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial loans <input type="checkbox"/> Community fundraising <input type="checkbox"/> Community investment <input type="checkbox"/> Existing income streams (eg renewables income) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community fundraising demonstrates local support • Consider beneficiary contributions (eg croft entry fees) • Possible sale of timber

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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	Identify prospective tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Design allocations process ❑ Advertise opportunity ❑ Select tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process should be open & transparent • Consider community needs • Tenants can be identified at any time, however tenancies can only be let once crofts have been created • If exact no. of crofts is still tbc, consider a shortlist of preferred & reserve applicants
	Detailed site survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Compile woodland information ❑ Assess soil/ground conditions for access & development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing information may be available • Specialist input likely to be needed
DELIVERING THE CROFTS	Design croft areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Confirm number & location of crofts ❑ Map areas & boundaries ❑ Decide whether a 'common woodland' is to be created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise efficient use of infrastructure eg roading • Location of any housing needs to be agreed with planning authorities at the outset • Balance between woodland croft areas and wider community woodland
	Purchase woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Appoint solicitor ❑ Draw down funding ❑ Complete contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider timing of purchase carefully, if flexibility exists
	Develop woodland plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Identify objectives for woodland ❑ Stakeholder consultation ❑ Base proposals on UK Forestry Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider scale of management • Integration of croft woodland activity with wider management
	Create crofts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Application to Crofters Commission by community landowner ❑ Commission publishes notice of application & invites comments ❑ Commission makes and publicises decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early dialogue with Commission advised
	Let crofts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Application to Crofters Commission by community landowner ❑ Advertise application in local newspaper (inviting comments) ❑ Commission gives consent based on application & any representations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy will be subject to statutory conditions of let unless otherwise stated • Varied conditions of let may need Scottish Land Court approval • Proposed tenant completes part of application

1 National Forest Land Scheme

2 Community right to buy [Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003]