

# Community Woodlands Association



CWA E-NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 25

Welcome to the CWA E-newsletter, Autumn 2015 Edition. Thank you to everyone who contributed, we had a great response from our members offering their stories which we hope will inspire and motivate, and give you the opportunity to catch up on what other CWA members have been up to over the past few months.

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## CWA Conference August 2015 "Working in partnership"

22nd & 23rd August 2015 at the at The Royal Marine Hotel, Hunter's Quay, Dunoon, Argyll



have a go at learning some green woodworking skills with Mark Bamford from Kilfinan Community Forest Company.

We would like to offer a big thank you to Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust, Kilfinan Community Forest Company and Glenfinart Walled Garden (Ardentinny Community Trust) who provided us with inspirational site visits. Thanks also to the various speakers and workshop hosts who are a vital part of our conference, to the Borland Ceilidh Band for putting on a great performance, and most of all thank you to everyone who made the journey to the Cowal Peninsula to help CWA and make the weekend as enjoyable and informative as ever.

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual CWA Conference which took place on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015 at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dunoon, Argyll attracted 67 delegates from across Scotland, England and Wales. Our theme this year was "Working in partnership", and focussed on the opportunities (and challenges) for community woodlands working with private, public and other voluntary sector bodies in a wide range of contexts, from timber harvesting and conservation of biodiversity to healthy living initiatives and citizen science.

As ever, the CWA conference offered delegates plenty of opportunities to network, share experiences and be inspired by a diverse line up of speakers, workshops and site visits.

Delegates were also able to get together for informal discussions on The Making Local Woods Work project with Jon Hollingdale, Woodland Crofts with Jamie McIntyre and to



Next year... CWA will be holding its 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at the Findhorn Foundation, Moray. Hope to see you all there!



CWA is working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to deliver the following 3 workshops - dates yet to be confirmed for late 2015 or early 2016.

#### *Community Woodland Burials - Aigas, Inverness-shire*

This event aims to cover: planning and legal regulations, choosing suitable sites, infrastructure requirements, burial options, memorial areas, resources and supply chains and marketing and will be hosted by [Aigas Community Forest](#). A date is yet to be confirmed but is planned for Jan/Feb 2016.

#### *Hutting in Community Woodlands - Stronafian Forest, Argyll and Bute, 22nd January 2016*

This event aims to cover: background information to the hutting movement, planning, tenure and other legal issues, site selection, service provision, management of huts in a community setting, income generation and manufacture of huts. The venue will be Stonafian Forest and hosted by [Colintraive and Glendaruel Trust](#) on 22nd January

2016. More details to follow soon.

#### *Leases/licences/tenancies for individuals in community woodlands - Laggan, Inverness-shire*

This event aims to cover: background information about the history of leases / tenancies within woodlands, the range of options, legal requirements, exploration of relationships between community landowners and individual tenants / licence holders, potential spins offs and income generation opportunities. The venue will be Laggan Forest and hosted by [Laggan Forest Trust](#). A date is yet to be confirmed but will be planned for Jan/Feb 2016.

The workshops will be held in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) area and travel expenses will be available to support representatives of community groups travelling from within the HIE area. Dates and venues are yet to be confirmed however if you would like to indicate interest in attending or find out more please email Caroline at [admin@communitywoods.org](mailto:admin@communitywoods.org)



## **Pilot projects being sought for Making Local Woods Work**

CWA are very pleased to announce that expressions of interest are now being accepted for *Making Local Woods Work*, a new project working to help support and grow woodland-based social enterprises across the UK. The project is being led by the Plunkett Foundation in partnership with the Community Woodlands Association and a range of other organisations.

The project will work with 50 woodland social enterprises across the UK over the next three years. It will provide them with a range of support tailored to their individual needs; all 50 will receive four days of specialist support, and there will be some additional support available for 30 of these, which is likely to take the form of a further 12 days of support per group. In addition, a series of training and networking events will be organised to help anyone interested in woodland

social enterprise (not just the fifty pilots) to achieve their ambitions.

The project is seeking applications from groups who are looking to undertake new activity that will help to bring a range of benefits for local people, bring woodlands into active management and generate trading income. We will be accepting expressions of interest until February, and we expect to announce successful projects in waves as applications are reviewed. First deadline is 15 December 2015.

For more information on the project and to fill out the online expression of interest form, please click on the link: [www.plunkett.co.uk/woodlands](http://www.plunkett.co.uk/woodlands)

If you want to discuss your group's plans and whether *Making Local Woods Work* would be appropriate for you, please get in touch with Jon Hollingdale via [jon@communitywoods.org](mailto:jon@communitywoods.org)



## Wardlaw Community Woodland Eadha Enterprises



Eadha Enterprises has established a new community woodland in North Ayrshire with funding from Community Windpower. The 7 Ha Wardlaw Community Woodland lies within their windfarm site near Dalry and forms part of a compensatory planting scheme.

Eadha designed the native woodland to not only enhance the landscape and provide a new wildlife habitat but also to provide a future economic resource for the local community in the form of biomass.

Fast growing species were selected which would tolerate the harsh conditions experienced by this exposed upland site which lies at 290m above sea level. The majority of the woodland comprises aspen, silver birch and alder which were planted in blocks to be grown as a potential short rotation forestry crop. The woodland will act as a trial for upland biomass production and provide a useful comparison of aspen relative to other native species in challenging conditions.

A total of 4000 native aspens were planted, these trees having been grown by Eadha Enterprises, with some help from local school children from St Palladius Primary School in Dalry. This represents the largest native aspen woodland in southern Scotland! At least 80 clones were selected

from the national clone collection to ensure genetic variation and we believe this clonal diversity to be unprecedented in a new woodland in Scotland.

Fringe areas of rowan, downy birch, eared willow, hawthorn and holly were also planted, as well as an area set aside for a hazel coppice.



They were successful in involving 100 volunteers in the planting, and involved a number of organisations including Kilmarnock College, Forestry Commission Scotland, SRUC, North Ayrshire Council (Active Learning Group), East Ayr-

shire Woodlands, Princes Trust, RPSB, and AEA Ricardo.

Eadha are hoping that this woodland becomes a genuine community resource, offering the potential for future community management and sustainable use. They are exploring opportunities to work with local colleges to develop footpaths and other improvements as part of their training.

Eadha Enterprises are now looking for the next opportunity to create new productive community woodlands.

For more information on Eadha Enterprises please visit: [www.eadha.co.uk/](http://www.eadha.co.uk/)



## The Centre for Stewardship at Falkland - New Woodland Initiative at Falkland



The Centre for Stewardship at Falkland is about to take another leap forward by establishing a new base for woodland learning, creative enterprise and rural skills in the heart of the Forest of Falkland. Building on the pioneering work that has taken place in Falkland Estate's inspiring landscape – from the Big Tent Festival to the Fife Craft Collaboration in 2014 – the centre is in the process of creating a new facility that will provide opportunities for the next generation of skilled and creative practitioners to make the most of the forest.

Some of the initiatives that are being considered include: woodland crafts; furniture making; foraging; beauty products; woodland events; rites of passage ceremonies; and hut-building.



*Some huts under construction at the old saw mill site on Falkland Estate, by young designer Euan Gray*



*The potential to build and create more from our woodland resource has been a long term aspiration for the Centre for Stewardship, based on Falkland Estate*

The new facility will work closely with well-respected craftsmen, Dave and Jim McKeen who have been developing their own wood-based businesses in recent years, making furniture and craft products.



*Dave McKeen, craftsman at Chancefield*

Key to success will be the engagement of enterprising and creative young people who are inspired to learn and work with wood and woodlands. This will be achieved in tandem with WoodWorks, an innovative training programme being piloted on Falkland Estate for young people who wish to realise their potential by adding value to Scotland's woodland resources.

Others supporting the Centre for Stewardship in this work include: **University of Dundee's Design in Action team**; the **Heritage Lottery's Young Roots Fund**; the William Grant Foundation; Fife Council; Fife Youth Arts Hub; Hot Tap Media; and Aberdeen University.



The next event for young people who wish to have a taste of one of the programmes will take place on Falkland Estate from 10.30 am to 4.30pm on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November.



*Working with storm-felled trees to create an arboreal cloister, one of the new ways that you can come through the storms of life*

The Centre has been keen to promote local craft, particularly woodcraft. Last year they organised the first Fife Craft Collaboration, a week-long event bringing together local and international artists and crafts people to make new work and experiment with natural materials. The Craft Collaboration provided participants with the opportunity to push artistic boundaries, share skills and celebrate the natural surroundings.

The feedback they have had from the participants was very positive with a strong desire to Future activities within their craft programme include the creation of a Craft Hub at the Stables, available both to inspiring practitioners and providing the Centre with an additional

income stream.



*Some of the collaborative pieces produced*

The project is also seeking to recruit a Project Coordinator (three days a week for 18 months) to help develop the project and support young people – as well as building a creative bank of knowledgeable and creative practitioners to inspire, coach and mentor young people who wish to carve their careers in the woodlands.

If you are interested in contributing in some way to this unfolding work, please contact them at:

[info@centreforstewardship.org.uk](mailto:info@centreforstewardship.org.uk)  
[www.centreforstewardship.org.uk/](http://www.centreforstewardship.org.uk/)



## The Three Hares Community Woodland Community Woodland Woodland Design Courses

The Three Hares Community Woodland have rescheduled their Woodland Design Course to :  
*28th & 29th Nov 2015 & 9th & 10th Jan 2016*

*Venue : 3 Hares Community Woodland, Auchendinny, Penicuik, Midlothian.*

*Prices are on a sliding scale depending on your income. £80/£140/£200/£240*

*Main Teacher : James Chapman*  
James is a specialist in large, complex site designs.

### *Prior Learning*

You need to have completed a Permaculture introduction weekend, Permaculture Design Course or your Diploma in Applied Permaculture to attend this course. *\*If you are working on your diploma, the design work on this course can be counted as one of your projects.\**

For more information or to register for the course please complete [this form](#) You can also request more info by emailing:  
[courses@jameschapman.org.uk](mailto:courses@jameschapman.org.uk)



## Lower Braes Woodland Group

Urban Warriors Falkirk - New woodland school project comes to Falkirk,  
*Our Explore, discover, conserve and celebrate project starts here.*



The Lower Braes Wildlife Group was established by members of WWG, Lower Braes Community Council, Urban Warriors team of volunteers and more. Essentially they are a community group with the intention of working together to clean up the glen and develop a space for people to discover and explore, discover nature and get wild in the local area. The glen is a haven of wildlife, incl. trees, beasties, flower and badgers. It is also a place worth conserving and enabling people to visit whether that is to play, walk, cycle or just relax.

Urban Warriors may just be one year old but they have achieved so much in a relatively short time. The first half of the year was spent exploring and mapping their 3 sites on the John Muir Way at Westquarter, Callendar Woods and Muiravonside Country Park, and removing over 400 bags of litter from the first 2 sites.

**Now it's time to celebrate their success and** translate the discoveries into skills and learning. The past 3 months have been a whirl of activity and a long journey of discovery and learning thanks to a grant of £9527 from Awards for All & the Big Lottery. The key principles for this project are Explore, Discover, Conserve & Celebrate Nature.

The funds have encouraged them to build on their clean-up work and enabled them to establish a woodland school project to engage with the local communities they work in. The curriculum follows the concepts of the John Muir awards and will enable them to attend courses and conferences, provide training courses and qualifications for volunteers and make new friends.

### Courses

Their first residential training session was on 1<sup>st</sup> August when they visited Kilfinan Community Forest in Tighnabruich for a wood craft training course. They went home with handcrafted bow-saws, knife sharpening kits and a carving horse

which started life as logs from the Kilfinnan Community Forest.

In *August* they then had a series of in-house courses which included induction, health and safety awareness; research and interpretation skills with the glorious gardens heritage project; mental health awareness training and a visit to Stronafian Community Woodlands as part of the CWA Annual Conference in Dunoon.



*September* saw them qualify as Outdoor First Aiders with the First Aid Cooperative; Learning how to interpret historical maps with The Glorious Gardens Project; attending a forest skills class with TCV and taking part in a taster ancient tree hunt event at Loch Katrine with the Woodland Trust.

*October* brought them 2 full days training courses as part of their history and heritage project for Spring 2016. The Ancient Tree ID & Recording course was a wonderful day was spent in sunny Westquarter Glen, learning how to record and



identify ancient and notable trees with Clair Macfarlan the senior verifier from the Tree Register of the British Isles (TROBI). For more info see <http://www.treeregister.org/>



The Urban Warriors also spent a day with Olivia Lelong from the Glorious Gardens Project exploring and interpreting the history of Powfoulis House and Gardens. This involved using old maps and tablets to record and identify how the past has influenced the future. Coupled with their skills from the ancient tree hunts they will be able to map the sites and translate and interpret the history of Westquarter, Muiravonside and other notable lost properties / gardens. <http://www.gloriousgardens.org/>

Additionally, learning coordinator Sonia McLay also qualified as a sighted guide with the new my Guide Project with Guide Dogs Scotland. My Guide scheme is a partnership between Guide Dogs and community organisations, which helps people with sight loss get out of their homes and back into the community. Sonia was delighted to



be accepted as a my guide volunteer subject to a second round of training.

**Sonia said** *“I am delighted to be part of this unique project my training will enable urban warriors to engage with people with a disability and help them to get out into*

*nature on our 3 sites”*. **Group volunteers also attended** an environmental art class with TCV at Mortonhall where they learnt willow weaving, how to make string from nettles and create wondrous pictures in an outdoor setting.



In August they achieved a Level 3 Award at the



**It's Your Neighbourhood Awards, and will join** their celebratory awards event on 28<sup>th</sup> October in Stirling.

They also established a new woodland school project in Hallglen on 17<sup>th</sup> October and will use the banner *Explore, Discover, Conserve And Celebrate* to enable young people, project leaders and volunteers in the community to achieve a Level One John Muir Award by Spring 2016.

**Sonia said** *“This project will enable us to map the local areas and capture the history and heritage of our 3 sites and inform our history and heritage project in January 2016”*.

The history and heritage project in the new year will be a unique project that will bring their learning and discoveries at the woodland school together as a booklet and series of interpretation materials, which will be available to the public, and used as presentations to schools and community groups in Falkirk in the spring

This year Urban Warriors also joined TCV, Farm Garden and the Community Woodland Association. The 3 organisations have all been very supportive and so much has already been learnt in the 3 short months of the woodland school.

Training is free and available to everyone in the Falkirk area; they can also deliver the courses to other woodland groups for a small charge + travel and subsistence costs.

For more information on Urban Warriors please contact: Sonia McLay, Urban Warriors Falkirk via email at; [soniamclay@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:soniamclay@blueyonder.co.uk) or Tel: 07730447212

For more details on Lower Braes Woodland group visit: [www.fresh-futures.co.uk/lower-braes-woodland-group.php](http://www.fresh-futures.co.uk/lower-braes-woodland-group.php)





## Aultnaskiach Dell: a Woodland in the City

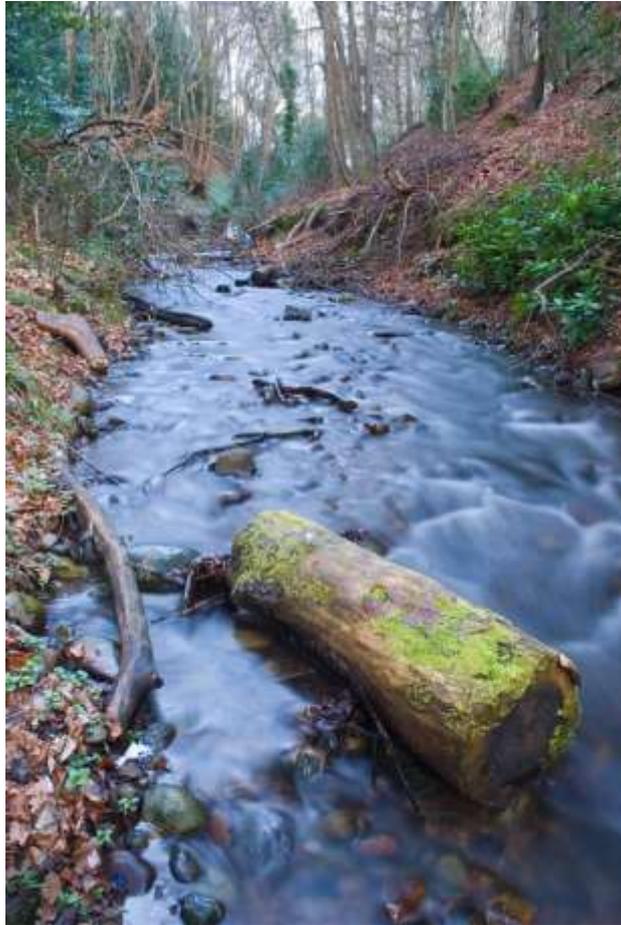
**By Gina O'Brien (Aultnaskiach Dell SCIO Chairman)**

The woodland behind our house is a place of beauty. It has a touch of mystery and feeling of remoteness that is startling to those who first chance upon it, as it is not far from the city centre of Inverness. The wood is in a steep-sided valley, formed by the Aultnaskiach Burn where it gurgles and splashes its way down to the River Ness.

We have lived in this neighbourhood for over thirty years and I was always aware of the wood, walking it often with our children when they were young, however it was not until 2010 that it began to have a greater significance; and that all started with a knock at the door from the owner, who had arranged a meeting locally to see if the community were interested in taking on ownership.

From that meeting a steering group was formed to investigate this possibility and two and half years later, after a full consultation with the local community, endless discussions on gabions, sewage, telegraph poles and many many other issues a group formed to take forward this idea and the Aultnaskiach Dell SCIO was born!

Further work was undertaken, in particular to ascertain the real costs of this venture, and as the trustees realised the extent of work required a plan was made to lease the wood for a period of three years to allow time for the raising of the required capital. In November 2013 we took on the management of the wood for the princely sum of one pound rent annually! Our goals were



to encourage greater biodiversity in the woodland and to facilitate community volunteering.

At first we were real novices, only one of the trustees having a background in forestry and it was a steep learning curve. We had funding from Highland Council's Common Good Fund for necessary tree work along with support from H.I.E., local authority wards and the Forestry Commission Seed Corn Fund. We also visited and got advice from other community woodlands to ascertain the priorities for work in the wood.

There was plenty to occupy us in a woodland that had largely been untouched for fifty years. The wood contains elm, oak, ash, birch and holly and is home to a variety of fauna including red squirrels, tawny owls, roe deer, woodpeckers and dippers. In the 1950's former pasture surrounding the wood was converted into urban development so many of the mature and over-mature trees back on to people's houses and sheds. Initial work has consisted in a programme of selective felling and replanting and this phase is nearly complete.

Trustees have gained new skills in chain-sawing and dealing with the felled wood, and we currently have a very healthy membership of around 57 people who assist on volunteer days when we cut back non-native species and bag and sell firewood. We are aiming at raising a fund of £20,000 in order to take the woodland into community ownership.



At present we still have some way to go. We would be glad of any donations that would assist in making community ownership a viable proposition.

In the meantime the wood is beginning to show signs of renewal as it is actively cared for by people: wonderful contoured paths made by the Victorians are opening up once again and ground flora is restoring as light can now reach the wood-

land floor. I recently saw grey wagtails in the burn and bees are enjoying all the new plant life. Local children are playing in the Dell again and recent school trips by Millburn students have identified over thirty three species of plants.

If you are interested in more information or would like to contact us you can do this at [aulnaskiachdell.blogspot.co.uk/](http://aулnaskiachdell.blogspot.co.uk/)

### Evanton Community Wood - Award winner



The woodland cabin in Evanton Wood, Dingwall, Highlands, which was completed a few months ago, is in good use and has been joined by a composting toilet. In July Simon Harry, their Education and Outreach Coordinator, travelled with pupils and staff from Dingwall Academy, to the Royal Highland Show, Inngliston.

community ownership and have benefited greatly from their experience in the wood. The increased demand by schools and other groups has led them to install a fully accessible, wooden-clad, composting toilet near to the cabin but shielded by the trees. The design was chosen on the basis of good feed-back from other user groups. In June we launched our Education pack and mean-

while there has been much positive feed-back to the improvement of the paths network and the development of the pond area which was done in conjunction with Froglife's Dragonfinder project, jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery. Here they jointly received the Scottish Finest Woodlands Awards Schools Award – principally for the involvement of pupils in the building of the woodland cabin. Minister for the Environment Dr Aileen McLeod presented the award of £500 together with a tree growing kit, a carved squirrel and a magnifying post.



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For more information about Evanton Wood please visit: [www.evantonwood.com](http://www.evantonwood.com)

The Dingwall Academy autism base have been coming to the wood since the early days of com-





## North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd Community Woodland Welcomes First Eagle Chicks



North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd (NWMCWC) has become

the first community woodland in Scotland to host a successful breeding pair of White-Tailed Sea Eagles. Co-operation between the local community, forest managers, Tilhill Forestry, harvesters and the RSPB has ensured that these protected birds were given the best possible chance of success. Two chicks were ringed in June this year, and fledged the nest in August.

This milestone coincides with the 40th anniversary of the reintroduction of white-tailed sea eagles to Scotland, and the pair are one of a hundred now breeding in the country.

Mull has been home to breeding sea eagles since 1985, with numbers increasing to 20 pairs in 2015. The female of this pair is a local girl having hatched on Mull in 2006 and has attempted to breed previously but unsuccessfully at a nearby site.

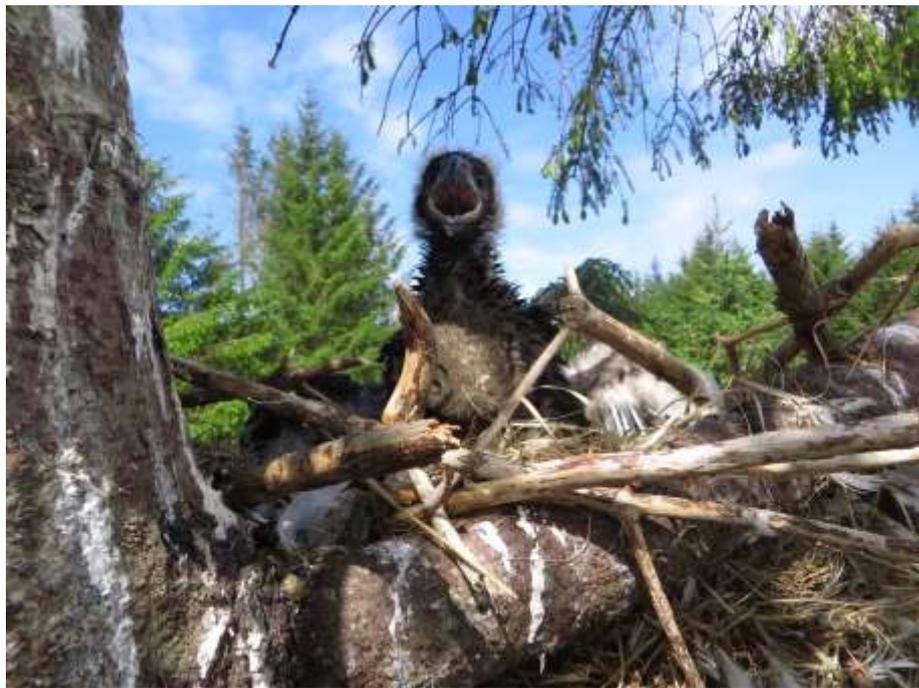
The male is a younger bird who displaced his rival during the winter months. There is considerable optimism that the pair will return to this nest, which is built in a safe and sheltered location. Colin Morrison, Chairperson of NWMCWC, said:

*“We have worked with our harvesting partners and RSPB to ensure best practice has been adhered to. This has meant the sea eagles could breed successful-*

*ly whilst harvesting also continued in the vicinity. We are now considering the possibility of creating viewing opportunities next year should the eagles breed again in the same site.”*

Dave Sexton, RSPB Scotland Mull Officer said: **“Within certain limits, sea eagles are capable of happily co-existing in active commercial forestry as this case shows. They are quite curious and tolerant of human activity and even seem to like to watch what’s going on! All the partners in this remarkable case worked very closely together to ensure the 2 chicks fledged successfully and it’s one of the most satisfying projects of its kind I’ve ever been involved with.”**

Iain Moody, Tilhill Forestry Harvesting manager said:



*“The key to this good news story has been the close co-operation and regular communication between the local harvesting contractors, ourselves as Works Managers, the Landowners and, especially, the local RSPB officer. A suc-*

*cess like this shows us that active timber harvesting and wildlife conservation need not be mutually exclusive.”*

For more information about North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd please visit: <http://nwmullwoodland.co.uk/>

**Photograph credit: Rachel Moore**



## Aigas Community Forest Community Woodland Group is Flourishing



A community-owned community group near Beaulieu is expected to unveil ideas for long-term timber production in the next few weeks.

Aigas Community Forest was bought six months ago by residents in Aigas, Kilmorack, Kiltarlity, and surrounding areas after they voted to bring it into local control. The 700 acre woodland in Lower Strathglass was previously owned by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) which declared it surplus to requirements.

This week marked a major step forward in building an educational Partnership with Aigas Field Centre and Teanassie Primary School, whose pupils and staff spent the day enjoying the woodland. Activities included shelter building and a sponsored walk to help provide funds for further outdoor learning opportunities.

A long term plan has been drawn up after a public consultation and will be revealed to the community and other relevant organisations next month. Andrew Leaver, community forest secretary, said they hoped to go down the non-traditional approach by creating a continuous cover forest, as opposed by the more common method of blanket planting followed by large scale felling operations which produce substantial income at certain times then nothing for a long period of time.

*“Continuous cover will produce a lower level of income but it is more stable.”* **Mr Leaver said** *“You*

*end up planting trees in a slightly less compact way. It creates an inviting environment and encourages people in so that helps with engagement”.* *“The technique is very common on the continent especially in Scandinavia”*

Their Forest Development Officer, Donnie Chrisholme, learnt about the continuous cover forest approach and other methods after a year-long stay in Finland.



Both Donnie and Mr Leaver were among the forest representatives and four rangers from the Aigas Field Centre who spent the day with more than 40 pupils and staff from Teanassie Primary School.

*“We were able to have a hugely successful day and I am convinced that pupils from Teanassie Primary School will benefit from learning in the forest for many years to come”* Mr Leaver said.



The pupils did a 4 mile sponsored walk. P4 and P7 pupils also had ago at providing a shelter for themselves, while the P1 to P3 pupils created a habitat for mini-beasts.

The acquisition of the community forest was made possible thanks to the £740,000 from the Scottish Land Fund plus grants and donations from other organisations and individuals.

For more information on Aigas Community Forest visit: [www.aigasforest.co.uk/](http://www.aigasforest.co.uk/)



## *Friends of Newtonhill Group A Tale of Two Woodlands*



In the very far north of Scotland the town of Wick had its own community woodland, situated on an old landfill site. It had both mature and young trees and, giving much needed local sheltered walking, was very popular with local dog owners, horse riders, joggers, families, pensioners, bird watchers, photographers and artists. The site was managed by the local countryside rangers, helped by a Friends of Newtonhill Group. In 2007 it logged over 25000 visits.

In 2008 Highland Council published the results of their test drilling for methane – no gas, but a lot of contaminated **“hotspots” with lead, arsenic, PCBs and asbestos.** The woodland was closed to all, much to the disappointment and consternation of local residents. The Friends group held public meetings and lobbied the council to re-open the site, with warning notices. All to no avail.

In September that year a local councillor alerted the Friends to a nearby croft that was vacant and for sale, and said he thought the Forestry Commission for Scotland (FCS) were running a scheme called Woods In and Around towns (WIAT) in other parts of Scotland. The Friends took up the challenge and contacted FCS about them establishing a new community woodland on the empty croft, home to only one mature tree – a sycamore – and some scrub willows.

FCS were interested and after meetings locally to gauge support, set about the process of de-crofting the land and purchasing it for the community woodland. This was a long process and it was two years before the land was legally theirs.



FCS explained that they had no money for paths, only for buying the land and planting 40,000 trees. The Friends learnt that a local windfarm developer, E-ON, might be looking for a local project to fund. Again we were back in the business of pitching our case, backed by Highland Council countryside rangers, for the new woodland to be a suitable cause to invest in. Luckily our proven track record since 2002 in the old woodland stood us in good stead. In June 2011 we received a cheque for £70k. The paths would go in.

In the meantime FCS had informed us that their policy was to clear the croft of all buildings. We argued a case for the need for shelter on such an exposed site and had a friendly architect and joiner inspect the old stone built cottage to see if it was worth restoring, as it had lain unoccupied for twenty years. They were positive and we asked FCS to let us fund raise for moneys and then grant us a lease on the cottage. We got their agreement, the cottage was spared, as indeed was the central part of the old steading, now a useful store for FCS themselves, the Friends and the rangers.

For the Friends it was now on to the funding treadmill, luckily not an entirely new route, but a time consuming one. The architect was hired, planning permission and building warrants obtained, and slowly piece by piece the funding package put in place thanks to RWE Renewables, Caithness and North Sutherland Partnership, Foundation Scotland and HC Ward Discretionary Fund, along with moneys from our own funds. In November 2013 we were set to go, a local builder chosen by the architect, but no lease – these things take a long time we found. Our own law-



yer was very positive in getting things moving and in March 2014 we signed the dotted line. Work could begin.

J W Sutherland and Son under the supervision of Paul Sutherland, really got to grips with the project. The derelict croft was sympathetically restored by the firm using traditional materials and methods. The original slated roof has been repaired, the walls have been picked and pointed with lime mortar, wood panelling has replaced plasterboard, a flagstone floor has been installed and a wood burning stove fitted. A wood panelled porch has replaced the old breeze-block extension. The Friends have researched local sources with regard to its heritage and materials have been gathered illustrating its past as a working croft.



The cottage got its final approval in Spring 2015, and local groups began to use it. It was then officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Caithness, Miss Anne Dunnett, in early summer. We were now really open for business.

The cottage has already provided a suitable venue for a variety of community events including wind-farm fund meeting, Caithness Outdoor Access Forum, Ladies walking groups, Gardening club meeting, Milton Residents childrens' sponsored

walk, Countryside Ranger events with schools, cub scouts and families, a craft workshop, Bumblebee trust flower seed gathering training). A scything course, dry stone walling courses and other rural skills and crafts events are planned.

The Conservation Volunteers Green Gym use it weekly as do other volunteers at the site.

We had the usual ups and downs in our journey, but a good committee and a lot of local backing has got us to the stage where our dream is now reality.

Our trees are now up to shoulder height and the croft is beginning to look like a woodland. We will run our second annual census day shortly.

Maybe we will soon approach the figures for the old woodland.



The old woodland is abandoned to nature, home to roe deer, foxes and rabbits, buzzards and song birds, but we are not allowed to enter – it is the “**forbidden forest**” in the words of a local artist.

For more information or to contact Friends of Newton Hill Community Woodland please visit: [www.tannachanddistrict.org/joomla30/index.php/friends-of-newtonhill-community-woodland](http://www.tannachanddistrict.org/joomla30/index.php/friends-of-newtonhill-community-woodland)



## Community Shares Scotland Comrie Development Trust Cultybraggan Camp 21 Community Shares



You are invited to invest in shares in *Cultybraggan Heritage Self-catering* to save part of our nation's heritage. You can help support a community self-catering business to secure the long-term future of 10 listed buildings at Cultybraggan Camp and support the protection of a historic environment of international significance.

Cultybraggan Camp, in Perthshire, is the last remaining WWII high security POW camp in the U.K. The Comrie Development Trust, on behalf of the community, acquired the camp in 2007, from the army, to ensure that it survived intact. This is no easy task with over 80 Nissen huts to maintain and find uses for, given the Trust has limited resources.

Some 30 huts are listed, by Historic Scotland, for special protection, which means that the exterior of the buildings cannot be altered and that makes it even more difficult to find a suitable use. Creating a self-catering enterprise can provide the income to maintain 10 of these huts over the long-term. Any surplus profits will also be re-invested in maintaining the rest of the camp and in other projects that benefit the community. As a shareholder you will have a say in how the business is run by the community benefit society set up for this purpose: *Cultybraggan Heritage Self-Catering Limited*. Thanks to the generosity

of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland and the Scottish and Southern Energy Sustainable Development Fund, a total of £632,500 in grant funding has been given initial approval. But that leaves a shortfall.

Through this share offer they are seeking to raise £35,000 to bridge the gap in project funding. You can invest as little as £25 and up to £5,000. If they exceed this target they will continue to accept share applications up to a maximum



of £45,000. This additional £10,000 will provide the business with a working capital "cushion" to start trading. If the maximum target of £45,000 is achieved the offer will be considered to be fully subscribed and will be closed. They hope

you will support this offer and help protect this unique site, make it economically viable in the long term, and ultimately preserve it for future generations.

Follow the link to the youtube film: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMPfTR3rGcs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMPfTR3rGcs)  
Follow the link to their Microgenius page where people can buy shares: [www.microgenius.org.uk/project/cultybraggan-heritage-self-catering-38](http://www.microgenius.org.uk/project/cultybraggan-heritage-self-catering-38)





## CWA News

### Join the CWA

Voting membership of CWA is open to incorporated community woodlands groups: meaning any democratic, community-led organisation engaged in aspects of woodland management on their own or in partnership with others.

The annual fee for *Full* membership is £30. *Basic* membership (annual fee £10) is available for new and small community woodland groups with an annual turnover < £1000.

Individuals who support the CWA aims and objectives may become *Individual* members (annual fee £10), and other organisations working to support community engagement with woodlands may become *Associate* members (annual fee £100).

Application forms can be found at [www.communitywoods.org/projects.php](http://www.communitywoods.org/projects.php)

Please contact us if you are unsure which category you fit into.

CWA Members receive our regular newsletters & e-bulletins, access to our e-groups, the Woodland Voices magazines and invitations (and often subsidised places) to our programme of training and networking events, including our annual Conference.

CWA Membership continue to grow and we would like to give a warm welcome to new members: Cormonachan Woodlands Association (Argyll), South Loch Awe-side Community Company (Argyll), Argyll Small Woods Co-operative (Argyll), Enzie Crossroads Community Woodland Association (Moray), Beechbrae (West Lothian), Balloch Wood Community Project (Dumfries & Galloway) and 8 new individual members.

Like us on



Facebook

Follow us on



Twitter

Find us on



Flickr

Watch us on



YouTube

### CWA Staff & Directors

#### Jon Hollingdale CEO

Jon is responsible for the promotion and representation of the community woodland sector and offers specialist forestry advice to member groups across Scotland.

Steding Cottage, Craigfield Farm, Kintessack, Forres, Moray IV36 2SP Tel: 01309 674004 | Mob: 0779 202 8675 | [jon@communitywoods.org](mailto:jon@communitywoods.org)

#### Caroline Derbyshire, Administrator (p/t)

Caroline provides administrative support to the CEO and is responsible for the CWA e-bulletin, newsletter and conference.  
c/o Steding Cottage, Craigfield Farm, Kintessack, Forres, Moray IV36 2SP Tel: 01309 674004  
[admin@communitywoods.org](mailto:admin@communitywoods.org)

#### CWA Directors:

Ian Hepburn (Isle of Mull)  
Jean Barnett (Dunnet)  
Gordon Gray Stephens (Kilmartin)  
Amanda Calvert (Kingussie)  
Diane Campbell (Ullapool)  
Alison Macleod (Applecross)  
Chris Marsh (Skye)  
Robert Borusso (Kilfinan)  
Nigel Lowthrop (Hill Holt)  
Dr Jane Rosegrant (Borders Forest Trust)

**Keep up to date with what's happening by following CWA on [Twitter \(@communitywoods\)](#) and liking us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Communitywoods](http://www.facebook.com/Communitywoods)** This is a great tool to publicise your work/events/ course etc. for free!

Please send news & stories for the next newsletter to [caroline@communitywoods.org](mailto:caroline@communitywoods.org)