



Cricket & Rugby Club, Helensburgh – Tuesday 1st September 2015

A networking event for those who are or wish to become involved in forests which are community owned or managed for community benefit

Agenda:

- 10.00 *Arrival and coffee*
- 10.25 **Welcome** – Elaine Jamieson, Policy, Support & Development Officer, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) Perth & Argyll Conservancy
- 10.30 **FCS Funding Schemes Update** – Elaine Jamieson
- 10.45 **FCS Update** – Bob Frost, Community Development Policy Advisor
- 10.55 **Forest Enterprise** – Craig Millar, Communities & Rural Development Coordinator
- 11.05 **Community Woodland Association** – Diane Oliver, Training & Development Manager
- 11.15 *Coffee break*
- 11.45 **ACT Argyll Ltd** – Douglas Grierson, Skills & Contracts Manager
- 11.55 **Helensburgh Community Woodland** – Kathleen Siddle, Secretary
- 12.05 **Kilmahew St Peters** – Clare Simpson, NVA
- 12.25 **Friends of Duchess Wood** – Sandy Kerr & Stewart Campbell, Chairperson
- 12.45 *Lunch*
- 13.45 **Duchess Wood** – Site Visit
- 15.15 *Coffee break*
- 15.30 **Hermitage Park** – Melissa Simpson, Argyll & Bute Council
- 15.50 **Stronafian Forest** – Eamon King, Project Officer, Colintrave & Glendaruel Development Trust
- 16.00 *Finish*





Attending:

Julie Young & Douglas Grierson (Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust); Melissa Simpson (Argyll & Bute Council); Grace MacLeod & Pete Creech (Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise); Eamon King (Colintraive & Glendaruel Development Trust); Diane Oliver (Community Woodlands Association); Douglas Locke (Cormonachan Woodlands Association); Craig Miller (Forest Enterprise), Bob Frost, Elaine Jamieson and Cameron Maxwell (Forestry Commission Scotland); David Lewin, Stewart Campbell, Alastair MacBeth, James Ashby, Fiona du Boulay, Morag Young & Richard Horrell (Friends of Duchess Wood); Mary Campbell & Jim Stewart (Glendale Estate Charitable Trust); Alastair Hodgson & Kathleen Siddle (Helensburgh Community Woodland Group); Elizabeth Lambert (Helensburgh community groups); Gordon Gray Stephens (Native Wood Co-op); Gordon Stephenson (Woodwatch Heritage Bute); Rebecca Powie and Clare Simpson (NVA)

Apologies:

Arlene Cullum & Anna Watkiss (Argyll & Bute Council); Mercedes Douglas (Glendale Estate Charitable Trust); Nick Blackwell (CWA member); Louise Errington & Anne Hodgson (Helensburgh Community Woodland Group); Nikki Brown (Kilfinan Community Forest Company); Colin Fulcher (Argyll & the Isles LEADER Programme); Neil Donaldson (Argyll Small Woods Cooperative); Richard Bolton (Cassiltoun HA Community Woodland); Liz Evans (Cormonachan Woodlands Association); Matt Huddleston (Forestry Commission Scotland); Charlie Cairns (Lower Clyde Greenspace); Ian Hepburn & Malcolm Ward (North West Mull Community Woodland Company) and Tom Cooper (Urban Roots).

Welcome:

Elaine Jamieson, Forestry Commission Scotland welcomed everyone – especially those who hadn't been to one of these events before - to the eighth Argyll networking event. The aims of today are to:

- allow communities and related interests to share experience of a variety of community based woodland projects
- to encourage networking between key interests

FCS Funding Update – Elaine Jamieson, Policy, Support and Development Officer

This presentation is available to view online at <https://youtu.be/M6H6FhGnU4s>

Elaine gave an overview of the Forestry Grant Scheme. She focussed on the following schemes:

- Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG) Woodlands in and Around Towns (WIAT) which supports the sustainable management of urban woodland for public access. Groups falling within the WIAT scope must be woodlands within 1km of a settlement which is greater than 2,000 people. To apply groups must have appropriate supporting information including the WIAT Urban Woodland Management Plan and WIAT Operational Plan. The fund is for capital items.
- Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF) WIAT aims to support the sustainable management of urban woodland for public access and is based on annual payments.
- Improving public access, the Agri Environment Grant is for capital items similar to WIAT except that it covers rural areas defined as land other than settlements, which have a population of over 3000.
- SMF Rural Woods aims to support the costs of maintenance of public access in woodlands with standardised payments for up to 5 years. To apply groups must have an approved Forest Plan for woodlands > 100ha and an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan for woodland areas <100 ha.



Templates for supporting materials are available online and the online guidance is a good place to find out more information. Elaine highlighted that in the scoring systems 5 points are scored for being a community woodland.

Forestry Grant Scheme information is available online at <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/grants-and-regulations/forestry-grants> and is run via the Rural Payments and Services website <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/>

Elaine highlighted the FCS Community Fund which supports community groups and projects with projects which facilitate greater use of woods by people for health, wellbeing and community benefit. The Perth & Argyll Conservancy has £60,000 available in 2015-16 and c.£35k is currently allocated. Groups should get in touch with Elaine at the earliest opportunity to discuss their project proposals. The information leaflet is available to download at <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/fcs-community-fund-15-16.pdf>.

Finally the FCS Seedcorn Fund is a small budget aimed at helping to facilitate projects that fall outwith the Community Fund remit eg materials and tools.

Elaine also introduced Cameron Maxwell who is the new Conservator for Perth & Argyll Conservancy and Catherine Kennedy, Woodland Officer. Elaine can be contacted at elaine.jamieson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. More information about Forestry Commission Scotland can be found on their website <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/enjoyscotlandsforests and you can follow them on Twitter @FCScotlandnews and @fscotland.

Forestry Commission Scotland – Bob Frost, Community Development Policy Advisor

Bob highlighted that this networking event is unique across the country and frequently envied elsewhere, however, it is only here, if people find it of value, therefore it is important to feedback and make use of the links, contacts etc to ensure it continues. FCS have found this event a very positive way to engage with the social forestry and community woodland sector.

Bob is based in the national FCS office and updated re the Community Empowerment Scotland Act (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>) which became law in July 2015 and will impact on many things and specifically the National Forest Landscape Scheme (NFLS). FCS has 12 months to update their systems to bring them in line with the Act. He also touched on the Land Reform Bill which is being debated at the moment (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/90675.aspx>).

The FCS Community Fund (which Elaine updated on from a local perspective) has now been going for 5 years and FCS have tried to keep the paperwork to a minimum and the process simple. CWA will be coordinating feedback from groups about the scheme. FCS would also like to know where/if there are gaps in the scheme and keen to make a strong case for continuation, as money gets tighter. It should be noted though that FCS has never spent the full annual allocation and it is difficult to justify budgets in such cases.



The WIAT scheme which will now run for 5 years (builds on the previous 10 years) and a policy statement on the benefits of woodlands near settlements will be launched in a couple of months. Forestry is a long term business and FCS continue to make the case for long term project support.

FCS is currently developing an information package for community woodlands about working with the private forestry sector and this will be due out soon. They are also working with CWA to deliver a Mentoring Scheme where forestry experts can support community woodland groups with advice.

Forest Enterprise Scotland – Craig Millar, Communities and Rural Development Officer

Craig is based in Fort William where they are seeing a rise in small groups expressing an interest in NFLS. He is now working to respond to the recommendations arising from the Forest Enterprise Scotland Review (more information about the review can be found at <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/communities/how-we-work-with-communities/community-health-check>).

He will be focusing on 4 main priorities:

- New guidance note – for both staff and community groups. Will be published at the end of September on Forest Enterprise Scotland’s web site. Once published the aim is to user test the guide hopefully receiving feedback from both Community woodland groups and staff. . Ideally he is looking for 2 groups who are in the early stages of their project to carry out an informal pilot. The feedback would be around sense checking, terminology etc during a pilot phase until the end of 2016
- Training for staff who work with communities (fits with Community Empowerment Act)
- Agreements – reviewing the need for a range of simplifies agreements
- Case studies on website

Community Woodland Association Update – Diane Oliver, Training & Development Manager

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/RjXpdo3tSNM>

Diane gave highlights from this year’s CWA Conference ‘Working in Partnership’ – held in Dunoon and showcasing many of the partnerships in the area. A full report from the conference will be available on the CWA website in due course and copies of the presentations from the day are available online at <https://youtu.be/PPYwOzqzerl> and https://youtu.be/f5_8twJpEQ4.

CWA is planning 3 seminars around hutting; woodland burials and woodland leases/licences – more information will follow and funding will be available to assist those from Highland and Islands Enterprise areas with travel costs. The seminars are free and open to all community woodland groups.

CWA is working with others to deliver a UK wide project – Making Local Woods Work. This aims to:

- provide consultancy and training support to 10 Scottish groups looking to develop new, innovative social enterprises
- deliver social enterprise related training events open to all community woodland groups

The Mentoring Scheme aims to fill the gaps between group’s general forestry knowledge and bringing in consultants to write management plans etc. CWA has a group of volunteer foresters who



are willing to give their time and expertise to groups to help with identifying their needs, answer questions etc.

Diane added that she is leaving CWA although not planning on going too far. Caroline Derbyshire at admin@communitywoods.org will be the main point of contact for this group in the interim.

The CWA website contains a range of information including back copies of all the Wood of Our Own reports (www.communitywoods.org/about-documents.php and scroll down). More information about CWA can be found on their website www.communitywoods.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Communitywoods and you can follow them on Twitter @CommunityWoods.

ACT Argyll Ltd – Douglas Grierson, Skills & Contracts Manager

This presentation is available to view online at https://youtu.be/7NS_6fUAV1U

Julie Young, Trust Development Officer outlined the background and purpose of Argyll & the Islands Coast & Countryside Trust. She introduced Douglas who has recently started as Skills and Contracts Manager for ACT Argyll Ltd which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trust. Act Argyll's function is to deliver environmental contracts e.g grounds maintenance and path improvements whilst gaining practical skills and qualifications. Initially Act Argyll will have 2 teams – Helensburgh and Oban, each with a Chargehand, 2 trainees, and a number of Assistant or volunteer places. The teams have been launched with the support of West Highland Housing Association and Dunbritton Housing Association, and much of the initial contract work will be based around those sites. The Teams will be available to work in community woodlands, and will host places for volunteers. The Helensburgh chargehand takes up post on 7th Sept and Douglas offered to return to a future event to showcase some of their work. Douglas can be contracted on (e) douglas@act-now.org.uk and (t) 01546 602755.

More information about ACT Argyll and Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust can be found online at www.act-now.org.uk/en/ on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Act and on Twitter at https://twitter.com/act_aicct.

Helensburgh Community Woodland Group – Kathleen Siddle, Secretary

The Woodland Group aim to enhance and protect 2 local woodlands:

- Castle Woods (5.2 acres and listed in Scottish Directory of Ancient Woodlands) which runs contiguous with Duchess Woods and
- Cumberland Avenue.

The woods were originally part of a woodland setting for Ardencaple Castle and were acquired by the MOD in 1950 (the castle was demolished). In early 2000s the MOD applied for planning permission for housing for 4 areas of the woodland – planning was refused, however the MOD sold the land to a developer in 2004. The developers were successful in securing planning permission on the 2 smaller areas and these now have houses on them. The local community formed the group to work to ensure the remaining 2 areas of woodland survive, however, the Cumberland Avenue site was clearfelled by the developer 4 years ago and the trees left in piles and the site has become a bit of a local eyesore, storing building materials etc.



The group continue to try and find the best way to protect and manage the woodlands and are considering exploring community right to buy opportunities that could now arise thanks to the recent change in legislation (Community Empowerment Act). The group has a management plan, local support and good links with local politicians and Council officers. Unfortunately a recent report about the woods confirmed that they remain at risk due to the threat of neglect and potential development. Helensburgh Community Woodland Groups can be found online at <http://hcwg.co.uk>

Kilmahew St Peters – Clare Simpson, NVA

This presentation is available to view online at <https://youtu.be/7RcMG1CN8xc>

Clare gave the background to NVA – an arts organisation based in Glasgow which makes powerful art connecting people to their environment. They are best known for their large scale dramatic events ie The Storr, Skye and The Path, Glen Lyon. Other previous work has included the Hidden Gardens, Glasgow which opened in 2003 and involved lots of public interaction in the development in a local multicultural community.

NVA are now working on a project at Kilmahew St Peters which is located on the former Kilmahew House (demolished). The site was owned by the Archdiocese of Glasgow, who in 1960s commissioned Gillespie, Kidd and Coia (leading modernist architects of the time) to design and build a seminary. The building, which is of international significance operated as a seminary for a very brief time, then as a rehab centre, finally closing in 1984 and left to become a ruin.

NVA are working towards creating new productive ways for people to engage with the landscape so the building is a trigger but not necessarily the main focus. This is a nature and landscape project rather than pure architecture focus. The site covers around 105 acres with a number of other features including medieval remains of Kilmahew Castle and the Victorian landscaping from Kilmahew House which includes a walled garden and stables – both of which are in various states of ruin.

The development will take 2 years (from when all funding is in place which will hopefully be Spring 2016) resulting in the project being open to the public in Spring 2018. The overall project has many layers including hosting public performances; creating permanent exhibition and performance spaces; plus longer term opportunities around the walled garden and other potential development. The performance programme will focus on heritage, learning and creating volunteering opportunities.

NVA can be found online at <http://nva.org.uk/artwork/kilmahew-st-peters>, on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NVAprojects> and on twitter at https://twitter.com/_NVA_

Friends of Duchess Woods – Sandy Kerr and Stewart Campbell

This presentation is available to view online at <https://youtu.be/jmoBUaR9qLQ>

Sandy began the presentation by setting the geographical and historical context, focussing on the Duchess of Argyll and Ardencape Castle as she began the development of woodland on her estate around the 1790s. The existing Duchess Wood is what has regenerated on the site following clearance over the years. In 1998, the 23 hectares of Duchess Wood was designated a Local Nature Reserve and Stewart highlighted the range of biodiversity on the site.

Duchess Wood is owned by Luss Estates, managed by Argyll & Bute Council and ‘run’ on a local basis by Friends of Duchess Wood (FoDW). The Council and FoDW work closely in terms of management planning and practical maintenance of the woods and path network. The woodland is home to a variety of community activities including dog walking, horse riding, theatre performances, a small planted orchard, forest schools and now an outdoor nursery. FoDW has produced a range of information leaflets and are now working towards the next 10 year management plan for the woods.

More about Duchess Wood can be found online at <http://duchesswood.org.uk>.

Site Visit to Duchess Woods

The group split in to 2 and were led by Sandy and Stewart round the woods.



More photos are available online at the CWA Flickr site at <https://flic.kr/s/aHskk4qPny>

Hermitage Park – Melissa Simpson

Melissa gave some of the history of the Park and outlined plans for the future.

Hermitage Park is an urban public park located close to the centre of the town within the Helensburgh Conservation Area, characterised by its grid of tree-lined streets set on a south facing slope. It is the only remaining urban park in the local authority area and covers an area of approximately 3.83 hectares (9.39 acres) It is a place of great significance in the history of Helensburgh both from its time as a private pleasure garden and as a public park for over 100 years, with features of importance from both periods of its development, including the remains of Milligs Mill, which led to the founding of the town of Helensburgh and the towns A' Listed war memorial designed by the renowned architect A. N. Paterson. Today it is a very characterful and distinctive public park with a variety of recreational spaces; a large play area, a bowling and putting green, and an interesting collection of plants from all over the world as well as seasonal planting displays.

Argyll and Bute Council, in Partnership with the Friends of Hermitage Park Association, have applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund; Park's for People for a grant with a view to restoring the park, interpreting the heritage and attracting more visitors to the park to learn about its history and to take part in its ongoing development. They should hear by late December 2015 if they have been successful. The restoration of the centrally located Hermitage Park has a crucial role to play in creating a better place for the people of Helensburgh, and in attracting visitors to the town.

Below is a copy of the masterplan showing proposed developments.



Some information is available online at <http://argyllcommunities.org/friendsofhermitagepark>.



Stronafian Forest – Eamon King, Project Officer, Colintraive & Glendaruel Development trust

This presentation is available to view online at <https://youtu.be/dziBNPdgmDY>

Eamon focussed on the recent Volunteering Project which has been running recently at Stronafian Forest led by himself and occasional specialist skill providers. Stronafian Forest (605 hectares) was purchased by Colintraive & Glendaruel Development Company through the NFLS scheme. The volunteer project focuses on employability and participants receive training from specialist trainers as required as well as gaining practical experience on site. 5 out of the original 7 participants have moved on to employment and felt that they secured their jobs by being able to talk about their work in the woods at interview rather than just saying there were currently unemployed. The aim of the project is not about getting folks into forestry jobs as such, but more about supporting people to find their passion for what they want to do and regain enthusiasm through working in the forest.

Eamon also highlighted the range of projects in various stages of planning and implementation for the Forest.

Colintraive & Glendaruel Development Trust can be found online at <http://cgdt.org>.

Closing Remarks

Cameron Maxwell, FCS Perth & Argyll Conservator closed the event by thanking all those who attended, especially the speakers, hosts and caterers.

Glossary and Who's Who

SRDP – Scottish Rural Development Programme

WIG – Woodland Improvement Grants

SMF – Sustainable Management of Forests

WIAT – Woodlands in and Around Town

NFLS – National Forest Landscape Scheme

FCS – Forestry Commission Scotland

FES – Forest Enterprise Scotland

Responsible for managing the national forest estate on behalf of FCS

CWA – Community Woodlands Association

Membership organisation established in 2003 to support and promote community woodland ownership and management in Scotland. Receives core funding annually from FCS to help deliver targets around social forestry, NFLS, etc. Currently also funded via FCS Perth & Argyll Conservancy Community Fund to deliver the Wood of Our Own events.



Feedback Summary:

General verbal feedback was very positive and 10 feedback forms were completed. Delegates were asked to score the following (none scored poor):

	Organisation	Location	Venue	Catering	Speakers	Site Visit
very good	10	9	9	9	10	10
good		1	1	1		

All 10 delegates who returned their feedback forms felt the event met their expectations.

Delegates felt they gained the following benefits:

- Always a great opportunity to network and share ideas
- Lots of information and informal contacts
- The overview of FCS, including funding was very helpful
- Meeting people involved in similar projects
- Site visit was inspiring
- Networking/ info on local initiatives
- More info on grants
- Greater knowledge of funding
- Meeting others with similar interests
- Sharing ideas and contacts

Next meeting location suggestions included:

- Helensburgh/ Dunoon
- Happy for it to be anywhere in Argyll
- It would be nice to host a visit to Kilmahew if possible
- No preference – still exploring
- Stronafian/ St Peters / Hermitage Park
- Helensburgh

Next meeting agenda suggestions included:

- Updates on todays groups
- News of new groups
- The present mix of updates and new projects with site visit seems to be a good formula
- Examples of community woodlands
- More about volunteering – it seems many projects have a need for volunteers
- Volunteer management

All would recommend others to take part in similar events, because:

- Invaluable
- Contacts and shared experiences
- Good source of info and long term contacts
- To get better understanding of needs of woodlands

Delegates would like further training and events in

- How to complete community empowerment applications
- More of the same!

Other comments included:

- Many thanks – most interesting and enjoyable

