



Argyllshire Community Woodlands Networking Event REPORT

Friday 8th March 2019

Ardentinny Village Hall (*a.m.*) & **Glenfinart Walled Garden** (*p.m.*)

AGENDA

- 10:30** **Welcome/Introduction** – Chris Marsh, *Community Woodlands Association*
- 10.35** **FCS project support/funding update**
 – Elaine Jamieson, *Ops & Dvlpmnt Officer, FCS Perth & Argyll Conservancy*
FCS/Scottish Forestry: organisational changes, forestry strategy update
 – Cameron Maxwell, *Conservator, FCS Perth & Argyll Conservancy*
- 11:00** **Cormonachan Woodlands update**
 – Douglas Locke, *Secretary, Cormonachan Woodlands Association*
- 11:15** **Argyll Small Woods Co-operative update**
 – Neil Donaldson, *Secretary, Argyll Small Woods Co-op*
- 11.30** **Bute Community Forest update**
 – Richard Whitcomb, *Trustee, Bute Community Forest*
- 11.45** **Tyndrum Community Woodland update**
 – Kelly Clapperton-Bates, *Development Officer, Strathfillan Comm Dvlpmnt Trust*
- 12:00** **Mull community woodlands round-up (MICT, SWMID & NWMCWC)**
 – Chris Marsh, *Community Woodlands Officer, CWA*
- 12.15** **General Discussion**
- 12.45** **Glenfinart Walled Garden background & site briefing**
 – Lynn Kerr, *Secretary, Ardentinnny Community Trust*
- 13.00** **Lunch & Networking**
- 14:00** **Glenfinart Walled Garden - Site Visit**
 Hosts: *Ardentinny Community Trust*
- 16:00** **Finish & Depart.**



Attending:

Chris	Marsh	Community Woodlands Association
Lynn	Kerr	Ardentinny Community Trust
Jim	Urquhart	Ardentinny Community Trust
Jeannie	Urquhart	Ardentinny Community Trust
Anna	Williamson	Ardentinny Community Trust
Bill	Williamson	Ardentinny Community Trust
Neil	Donaldson	Argyll Small Woods Co-operative
Sally	Wilkin	Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise
Richard	Whitcomb	Bute Community Forest
Douglas	Locke	Cormonachan Woodlands Association
Elaine	Jamieson	Forestry Commission Scotland
Cameron	Maxwell	Forestry Commission Scotland
Craig	Ward	Friends of Glenan Wood
Inge	Bos	Kilfinan Community Forest
Andrew	Donald	Helensburgh Community Woodland Association
Phil	Yielder	SW Mull & Iona Development
Kelly	Clapperton-Bates	Strathfillan Community Development Trust
Ellen	Cattanach	Strathfillan Community Development Trust
Jessica	Herriott	Wood Watch Heritage Bute
David	Herriott	Wood Watch Heritage Bute
Gordon	Stevenson	Wood Watch Heritage Bute
Ciara	Donnelly	Independent, ex-Comrie Croft

Apologies: Gordon Gray Stephens (Native Woods Co-op); Andrea Dow (Bute Comm Forest); Dinah McDonald (Benmore Forest Group); NW Mull Community Woodland Group; Mary Lou Anderson (Kilfinan Community Forest); Mull & Iona Community Trust.

Welcome:

Chris Marsh welcomed everyone to the 14th Argyll community woodland networking event, funded by Forestry Commission Scotland. There were 11 woodland groups represented today with a couple of new groups/individuals in the room and one or two that had not been to an AWOO event for some time.

The aim of the day – as always – was to provide an opportunity for groups engaged in community woodlands to network and share experience of projects. There was also a chance to visit Glenfinart Walled Garden – one of the earlier community acquisitions from Forestry Commission Scotland in 2012 – in the company of owners Ardentinnny Community Trust (ACT). Chris thanked ACT members and their secretary Lynn Kerr for all the organisational arrangements for the day and the Ardentinnny Bowling Club for the catering.

There were 8 presentations as follows: -

Seedcorn & Community Funds *update* – Elaine Jamieson, *Operations & Development Officer, FCS Perth & Argyll Conservancy*

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/jxwDTc1-bfy> and covers Elaine’s topic - but also Cameron Maxwell’s follow-on presentation on FCS re-organisation & Scottish Forestry Strategy.

Elaine gave an overview of the two main FCS grants relevant to community woodland groups available through application to the local Conservancy. Her accompanying powerpoint presentation outlined their salient features and uptake/expenditure for the 2018/19 financial year: -

- The ***FCS Community Fund*** supports community groups and projects that encourage greater use of woods for health, wellbeing and community benefit. This can include equipment (e.g. tools for volunteers) as well as financial support for groups contemplating Community Asset Transfer Scheme application (e.g. valuation & feasibility work). There is up to 100% funding for projects under £5k; 90% for £5-20k projects; and 75% funding for >£20k projects. The Perth & Argyll budget for 2018/19 was £22k (in 2017/18 this was £60k) and was now fully committed (5 projects supported – summary slide shown below).
- The ***FCS Seedcorn Fund*** has a smaller budget aimed at helping facilitate projects that fall outwith the Community Fund remit such as one-off events, specialist consultancy, or funding other community resources and tools. Again, the budget for 2017/18 was now allocated (£14k – as per slide below).

Forestry Commission Scotland		Community Fund
Stramash - Nurture in Woodland	16,210	
Cormonachan volunteer training and equip	3,712	
Cormonachan volunteer equip	499	
Ardura - re-valuation	400	
Dronley Community Woodland	1,200	
Total	22,021	

Last years budget was £60K

Forestry Commission Scotland		Seedcorn Fund
Lovely Bugs	2,649	
Dronley Woods	240	
AWOOD	1,500	
CATS - Mull - Gantry	525	
CATS - Mull - Childcare Facility	411	
CATS - Benmore	1,000	
Kilmun tree labels	1,200	
Kilfinan Community Engagement	500	
Argyll Small Woods Co-op- events	3,000	
St Andrews Preservation Trust	3,000	
Total	14,025	

Last years budget was £25K

Elaine was hopeful that these two funds would continue in the same – or at least very similar - guise beyond April 2019 when the FCS become Scottish Forestry and so encouraged groups to get in touch with her or other Conservancy staff (details in presentation) if they are exploring projects that might fit the eligibility criteria of either fund. There are no online applications forms however the process is relatively easy with contacting Elaine being a formative step in progressing any proposal.

Until 1st April, Elaine can be contacted at elaine.jamieson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk She will ensure that CWA are provided with new telephone and email contact details (under the new Scottish Forestry regime) once these are finalised and these can then be disseminated via the AWOO mailing list. Main office numbers will not change but direct lines to individual staff members will. Also (for the time being) more info about FCS can be found at <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk> and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ForestryCommissionScotland>.

FCS/Scottish Forestry: organisational changes, Forestry Strategy update – Cameron Maxwell, Conservator, FCS Perth & Argyll Conservancy

The final stages of devolving all forestry matters to the Scottish Government are almost complete and as enshrined in the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018. The grants and regulatory arm of the Commission will become 'Scottish Forestry' and the state-forest-managing Forest Enterprise Scotland will become 'Forestry and Land Scotland'. Alongside visual changes in corporate livery & branding (site signage, uniforms, letterheads and web-based imagery), there will be new contact email addresses and telephone numbers for staff (but not main offices). The re-organisation has been taken as an opportunity to overhaul and realign many internal administrative and technical systems/processes and, as a consequence, has been a busy - often bewildering - period of transition which will soon be complete. Whilst there are boundary changes for the 10 FES forest districts which will become 5 FLS regions, the Scottish Forestry conservancy areas are not changing. Ongoing Brexit deliberations may in time bring changes to SRDP's forestry grant structures and terminology, but for the time being there will be little regulatory change. For the private and community woodland sectors possibly the most significant changes will be in regulations relating to felling and restocking – making these processes simpler, more transparent and allowing greater Conservancy control over inappropriate deforestation. New guidance relating to these changes will be issued shortly.

Cameron went on to summarise the salient features of the new 'Scotland's Forestry Strategy' (replacing the 2006 one). It is a ten year action framework – and a fifty year vision for the country's trees and woodlands. He urged everyone to download a copy and familiarise themselves with its aims and ambitions as these set the context under which we all work in forestry and woodland management.

Cormonachan Woodlands update – Douglas Locke – Secretary, Cormonachan Woodlands Association

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/1FweHM90bqc> & a Squirrel Trail video - which we were unable to run at the event due to time constraints - is also available at <https://bit.ly/2lc21n9>

Situated on the west shore of Loch Goil, Cormonachan Woodlands are owned by FES but managed as a partnership of FES, the Ardroy Outdoor Education Trust and the Cormonachan Woodlands Association (CWA). The woodlands are historically Atlantic Oakwood with extensive areas of hazel but also with under- and inter-planted conifer plantation. FES have been felling maturing conifer stands since the 1990's to restore and extend deciduous forest cover and the CWA – through volunteer effort and fund raising – have been tackling rhododendron encroachment, trail development, Outdoor Centre participation (>1k children p.a.), new car parking and interpretation as well as general forest management/maintenance tasks.

Douglas' update (last one given last February) included news that their new Red Squirrel wildlife hide, squirrel ropes and feeder stations were completed during 2018. The hide is now a well-used and much-loved facility (current nuts bill: £135 p.a. though donations box already bringing £100+ and rising). Other significant volunteer work through last year has been spruce and vegetation clearance to enhance the view from the Contemplation Shelter and the usual (lots of) access maintenance work. Some volunteers received FCS-funded pesticides training to equip them to treat rhododendron regrowth on previously-cut stumps. Volunteer numbers are good at present (about 25 regulars from a CWA membership of 104). Changing the regular day to a Friday has helped and they also get some (not a lot) support from the National Park volunteers. Community engagement highlights for 2018 included a Shakespeare walking theatre production in the woods and usual presence and interaction at Gala Day and Carrick Fair stalls.

The big project which began taking form in 2018 is a new 2.5km trail development proposal (£300+k total cost). This will extend the current path network up to three impressive waterfalls and to the ruins of an old cleared settlement (which has good archive records). With no income other than member subscriptions and donations – and no timber income – they are trying to raise at least 5% of the cost themselves to use as match funding in bigger funding applications. They have an online donations system set up ('Donate' button on their website) and have already raised over £3k in the first few weeks.

Asked about membership fees, Douglas explained fee structure: £10/yr locals; £5/yr associates & 16-18 yr olds; £10/yr second homes; £50/yr businesses; Life Membership: £250. Asked about trail popularity/foot fall: Douglas said they don't have any data (sensors or surveys) on current trails but know from feedback from local tourist providers and residents that the trails are very popular. They plan to use counters (sensors) on new trail thresholds.

Cormonachan Waterfalls



Rhododendron re-growth for spraying



You can find out more about Cormonachan Woods at www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk and at <https://www.facebook.com/cormonachan> and contact CWA at Secretary@cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk.

Argyll Small Woods Co-operative *update* – Neil Donaldson – *Secretary, Argyll Small Woods Co-operative*

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/-eJDrua7cVA>

The ASWC offer a forestry support service to small woodland owners across Argyll and the islands. Neil provided an update on last year's presentation – at which time there had been a lot of ongoing work to develop the proposal for a Shared Forester post. This proposed role was to provide a service to small farm forestry owners (over 100 engaged through a woodland owners survey) in terms of woodland management planning, collaborative working and developing value added timber marketing opportunities. Unfortunately ASWC and other partners had ultimately been unsuccessful with bids for funding of the overall project and as a result decided to try and pick out some separate elements of the broader project and progress these. They continue to promote the MyForest mapping freeware (developed by Sylva) which a number of woodland owners have already adopted and ASWC hope to get at least another 3 forests completed this year. There is now a MyForest Premium edition (which includes a paid-for licence) which allows maps to be presented on Ordnance Survey backdrop tiles which is an important condition in submission of maps in support of SRDP grant applications. Other functionality such as a Wildlife toolkit (for environmental/species auditing) and a 'dashboard' query function that allows woodland owners to work and plan on a landscape/collaborative scale are also now available.

ASWC receives some funding from FCS and WTS which has supported 5 knowledge sharing events through the year (details in slides below) and also some chainsaw training courses on Islay. Another significant project getting underway is a 2-year feasibility study, in conjunction with the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society, looking into the practical use of timber residues (woodchip, bark and sawdust) in livestock bedding scenarios on a number of farms throughout Argyll.

Looking further into the future, ASWC are busy compiling a new long term business plan, beginning to think more strategically about training provision (provision scheduled over many years rather than year-to-year) and of developing a role as a 'forestry facilitator': trying to bring together the wide – but fairly disparate – range of farming, forestry, wildlife and enterprise support organisations across the region – with the intention of integrating resources and support mechanisms wherever possible and opportune.



Events and training
The Coop obtained funding support from the Woodland Trust, Croft Woodland Project, and Forestry Commission Scotland to run 5 events and chainsaw courses in 2018-19.

Growing trees from seed workshop – August 2018
12 people attended this event. The workshop was aimed at people wanting to learn the basics of nursery production on a small semi-commercial scale, with the minimum of equipment and expertise.

Hardwood assessment workshop – October 2018
15 people attended this event. The workshop covered: how to grade timber; methods of sale, the market, inspection of stems, spotting problems in standing trees, pricing and sales information.

Woodland restoration, small scale harvesting and extraction demonstration - October 2018
17 people attended this event. The event featured a range of demonstrations in the oak woodland using small scale equipment. Demonstrations included a range of extraction methods, and primary processing equipment. The event also examined the commercial viability of bringing small and sensitive woodlands into management, from the standing timber to product.

Argyll Small Woods Cooperative | Supported by Forestry Commission Scotland



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Woodland establishment and management workshop – November 2018
14 people attended this event. The workshop took participants who were considering planting their own woodland from concept to establishment and future management.

Aspen propagation workshop – February 2019
13 people attended this workshop, which covered taking cuttings from stock trees, how to take cuttings from Aspen clones in the wild and processing root cuttings into raised beds and potting up sectors.

3 maintenance and crosscut chainsaw training courses on Islay – November 2018
We organised and ran two 2 day maintenance and cross cut courses, and 3 people were re-assessed.

Argyll Small Woods Cooperative | Supported by Forestry Commission Scotland

You can find out more about ASWC at <http://www.argyllsmallwoods.coop/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/argyllsmallwoods/> Neil can be contacted at mail@donenvironmental.co.uk.

Bute Community Forest *update* – Richard Whitcomb, *Trustee, Bute Community Forest*

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

Richard Whitcomb introduced himself as one of a number of new trustees for Bute Community Forest (BCF) who were now settling in on the Board of the company and beginning to get the community forest properly functioning again. He admitted that – after a fairly ambitious 'fanfare' at the outset of ownership, it had been a difficult struggle to maintain early momentum and ambition and consequently a lot of morale and support had ebbed away in subsequent years. As a member of a new 're-motivated' Board, Richard felt that things were very much in a transitional phase towards a brighter future for the forest.

Most fundamentally, BCF have begun a vital process of trying to re-engage with the local community. At 160 ha the forest is a fantastic asset which they don't yet feel has even begun to fulfil its potential. There are three separate 'zones' to the forest: roughly one-third is SSSI-designated Atlantic oakwood, one-third maturing commercial plantation and one-third other native woodland. They have now run some well-attended community events: a treasure hunt attracted over 70 people, an autumnal fungal foray was similarly popular – and just last week there was a Bird Box Making day where they ran out of wood! Wood Watch Heritage has been helping them with these events as well as with other courses/workshops including running a Branching Out programme.

The Board are now beginning to tackle bigger land and forest management issues: access-, drainage- and deer management, invasive species control, future felling and restock considerations – there is still a lot to get their heads around but they are slowly but surely getting to grips with things. They want to develop more trails and are keen to explore possibilities, pros and cons, of a red squirrel introduction project. Richard was pleased to have been able to come and familiarise himself with AWOO and hear about and meet other projects and people which will undoubtedly help them going forward.



A productive fungal foray in the forest, September 2018



A popular Birdbox Making event, March 2019

You can find out more about Bute Community Forest on their website at www.buteforest.co.uk or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ButeCommunityForest/>.

Tyndrum Community Woodland *update* – Kelly Clapperton-Bates, *Strathfillan Community Development Trust*

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/5jGTQh0RsNQ>

Kelly introduced herself as the part-time Development Officer for Strathfillan Community Development Trust – an organisation that works in tandem with the Strathfillan Community Council in local project delivery. SCDT's involvement in community woodland management stretches back to a lease signed with FC in 1996 to manage an area of woodland local to Tyndrum. The community oversaw local seed collection and extensive replanting works at the turn of the century under the Millennium Forest for Scotland programme – ultimately buying 96 ha of forestry from FCS in 2006. There have been peaks and troughs of concerted management input and project work over the last decade or so as they have no consistent, sustainable income stream and need funding to implement more ambitious project work. They have tried to establish a woodfuel business but this was not particularly successful. The woodland has the West Highland Way footpath passing through which brings significant maintenance responsibilities, but they have had FCS and Paths for All funding in the past (for volunteers tools, chainsaw courses and new interpretation), and get some support from the National Parks volunteers. They try their best to stimulate and sustain a core of local volunteers but this is very difficult to do particularly as there is a high proportion of transient seasonal workers in Tyndrum and it is has proved difficult getting them engaged in community/volunteering work to date. Currently they employ a Woodland Officer 1 day/week (Tesco Bag for Life funding) and have developed good schools relationships: high school students doing Duke of Edinburgh work and primary school pupils doing forest schools activities on a regular basis.

SCDT have two large projects on the go at present: They are trying to develop a new 1km path that will improve the off-road link between Crianlarich and Tyndrum. This may ultimately require (private) woodland purchase to bring to fruition. As well as contemplating a Scottish Land Fund application to progress this, they are simultaneously trying to engage with Network Rail, BEAR and the local council over public road and rail corridor issues that impinge on the project. This is proving to be very time consuming and incredibly frustrating in terms of making meaningful contacts and progress. The second project is the development of a new Bike Skills Park in the Tyndrum community woodland. LEADER funding has allowed them to employ a professional design consultant and the final park specification should be complete in another month or so with construction (hopefully!) over the next twelve months. One final issue beginning to raise concern over the future management of the community woodland is a new commercial goldmine to be opened on adjacent land. This will certainly cause increased traffic and disturbance at the wood and SCDT are contemplating ways to best address this.



The Forest Classroom area



An annual Community Volunteering Day.

You can find out more about the projects, news and activities of Strathfillan Community Development Trust on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Tyndrum-Community-and-Visitor-Hub-300211344146813/> and <https://www.facebook.com/StrathfillanCommunity/>

Mull community woodlands update – Chris Marsh, Community Woodlands Officer, Community Woodlands Association

Chris gave a round up of work at Mull community woodlands. The presentation is at <https://youtu.be/1yk2gBKMvQo>

Mull & Iona Community Trust – not currently woodland owners – are very busy trying to acquire the 200ha FES Ardura Forest (110ha of commercial plantation) south of Craignure on the main road to the Ross of Mull and Iona. Since being notified for disposal in 2017, MICT have been working on the various aspects of planning to satisfy the Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) and on applications for funding (most notably the Scottish Land Fund). The forest is seen as a means of generating some core funding for MICT, for environmental improvements (through native woodland restructuring) but also a variety of new community engagement projects: woodland crofts, forest school, new access trails and heritage work for locals and tourists. Much of 2018 was spent working up business and future forest plan proposals, initially with the intention of collaborating with a neighbouring estate in a large landscape scale ecological restoration proposal. However this partnership proposal was eventually dropped and their CATS application was finally considered and approved back in December based on ‘go-it-alone’ business and forest plans. MICT are actively preparing a bid to the Scottish Land Fund that is due for consideration and a decision by May this year. Perhaps the most sobering development in the evolution of MICT’s ownership ‘journey’ was the huge increase in the valuation of the forest over just seven months in 2018: £255k in May; £537k in December.

You can find out more about MICT at <http://www.mict.co.uk/> and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mullandionacommunitytrust

NW Mull Community Woodland Company are very busy with new land-owning responsibilities for the isle of Ulva. Indeed staff and Board members were actually at a Westminster parliament reception today for the project and thus unable to attend/present at today's meeting. After a number of years developing forest roads and addressing large clear felling operations in maturing plantations, the emphasis of management has shifted towards community oriented work in and around the two community owned forests near Dervaig. Nine forest crofts have been let and a lot of effort is being expended by the new tenants fencing, clearing, de-stumping and re-planting in-bye ground and establishing on-croft enterprises including horticulture and tree nursery businesses. The local sea eagle pair continue to breed successfully (and annually) in the forest and are a big draw through partnership in the Mull Eagle Watch programme. A micro-hydro scheme has been constructed and is now exporting power to the grid but is also designed to provide direct power to new affordable housing units that NWMCWC are developing with the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. New footpaths have been developed in recent years and an annual archaeological dig is unearthing a rich archive of artefacts dating back as far as Neolithic times. NWMCWC have considerable restock obligations to address after the early years of clearfelling. Concern over pine weevils and a reticence to use pesticides on restock transplants has led them to use a fallowing period to mitigate potential weevil predation losses. Chris was unable to get an up-to-date statement from NWMCWC for the meeting as to exact timings now envisaged for addressing restock work. Hopefully the group will be on hand at the next meeting when Restocking may feature as a major topic for the event: discussion/information sharing on ground prep, timing, species choice, restock densities, techniques etc.

You can find out more about NWMCWC at <http://nwmullwoodland.co.uk/> and at <https://www.facebook.com/nwmcwc>

SW Mull & Iona Development – SWMID gave a summary of Tiroran forest activity at the last AWOO meeting (Feb 2018). Since then, CWA has provided interim forest management support to SWMID whilst they have been without their own Woodland Officer. 2018 was another busy year of large-scale felling and export work – which has to be integrated with tight seasonal constraints on haulage on fragile public roads and with on-site breeding sea eagles. Tiroran forest has had nine separate larch disease felling orders to tackle in the first four years of ownership. These have been an additional administrative as well as economic burden for SWMID as this work has to take precedence over their own felling ambitions for the forest. Like NWMCWC, they now have large areas of felled ground requiring restocking and also want to minimise (hopefully avoid) pesticide use in any restocking. Recently they were awarded LEADER funding to run a two-year trial of planting wax-coated tree transplants on weevil-infested ground to monitor its efficacy prior to larger scale restocking effort begins. The funding also covers additional community engagement work and consideration of new social enterprise projects for the forest. A new Woodland Officer has been employed (started just this week) and is at the meeting today.

You can find out more about SWMID on their website at <http://swmid.co.uk> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/southwestmullandionadevelopment>.



Sea eagle chicks (summer 2018) in West Ardhru forest, NW Mull



Press coverage of local concern over pesticide use for weevils

Glenfinart Walled Garden – *background & briefing* – Lynn Kerr, Secretary, Ardentinny Community Trust

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/wn7oO4Ove8k>

Glenfinart walled garden was originally constructed in the 1840's as part of the estate of Glenfinart House. The majority of the estate was split up and sold in the 1930's with a lot of land (and walled garden) bought by the Forestry Commission. Over the next few decades, the garden served as a tree nursery for raising planting stock for large scale afforestation work undertaken by the Commission in the region - also providing, for some of this period, allotments for the migrant workforce housed in Nissen huts elsewhere in the village. By the end of last century, the garden was no longer in use. In 2012, the community bought it from Forestry Commission Scotland (along with a small amount of surrounding woodland and car parking) through the National Forest Land Scheme.

The first community project was the re-planting of the orchard area - done in early 2013 – using a wide variety of apples, pears and plum varieties known to do well in west coast conditions. A polytunnel was erected in the same year initially with the purpose of raising ornamental plants and substantial scrub and ground clearance was undertaken to create vegetable growing strips. Experience over the last five years has shown that growing veg at this scale and in open ground is very laborious (and back breaking!). Consequently, a gradual transition to setting up raised beds has been going on (using Bute forest sawmill timber). Tending crops at knee and even waist level is much easier where, especially for children, the plants are at convenient height for sowing, weeding and observing!

The largest transformational project in the early days was the creation of a Sensory Garden with design assistance and help from BBC TV's Beechgrove Garden. Over just an eight-day period, monumental amounts of earth were barrowed and sculpted to create the circular 'mandala' which was then planted up with Sight, Sound, Touch and Smell plants bisected by winding pathways and ornamental seating.

The gardens are a focal point for all manner of community get-togethers and celebration throughout the year with a host of seasonal gatherings, activities and festivities. Over the years, the number of barns and sheds has increased offering tool & equipment storage and vital wet weather, midge-free, indoor social space. There is also a very impressive diesel engine pumped storage water system installed - to pipe water from the local river (regulated summer quantity is agreed) to keep summer plants irrigated. A Willow Park and Dome – utilising woven osier willows as living interactive structures for children has been a great addition in recent years.

Other areas of the walled garden are still being developed and some are yet to be 'tamed' (where close to unstable sections of wall). Alongside a regular programme of local volunteering, they have benefited from Community Payback teams and the National Park volunteers. This year there are plans and funding in place to install compost toilets and there is always the perennial search for the substantial funding needed to renovate the perimeter wall.

Find out more about Ardentinny Community Trust at <https://ardentinny.org/category/ardentinny-community-trust/> and news and activities in the walled garden at <https://www.facebook.com/GlenfinartWalledGarden/>



The gardens in 2012 prior to purchase



Creative summer growing: strawberry "beds"!



The Sensory Garden during creation/filming in 2013



The Sensory Garden: Summer 2018



The polytunnel (in summer months)



A powerhouse of plants, projects and colour



The AWOO guided tour (with Willow Park beyond)



The Sensory Garden: colour and structure in March!



Event Feedback Summary

Please rate the following by ticking the statement which best matches your opinion:						
	Organisation	Location	Venue	Catering	Speakers	Site Visit
very good	8	6	6	8	5	5
good	1	3	3		4	2
fair			4			
poor						
n/a				1		2

Do you feel that the event delivered your expectations?

Yes: 8 No: 0 Partly: 0 no answer: 1

What benefits do you feel you gained from attending the event?

Networking is always valuable. Knowledge and advice from others.

Made aware of possible training.

Knowledge – re volunteers, others have the same problems. People management.

A great deal of useful information, visibility of other groups, contacts. Very useful.

Very informative – e.g. felling/restock obligations (even more would be helpful); e.g. volunteering – lots of good ideas; learning from other's experiences.

General cross-section of information from various disciplines – Informative and Enjoyable.

You always learn something new, meet new people and the networking is useful.

An update on issues facing small woodland owners.

Hearing what other projects are doing, how they are funded, networking, meeting new people.

Where would you like the next event to be held?

Mull. (x2)

Don't mind/No preference. (x12)

Potentially Colintrave? – with a visit to Bute Comm Forest (or year after).

Anywhere in Argyll.

Like to see a more practical field session – perhaps on agroforestry.

Kilfinan.

What would you like to see on the agenda for the day?

Similar to today (x2).

Felling/restocking issues. Income streams. Improving the user experience (paths, signage, interpretation)

Funding advice – funders attending.

Possibly a meeting of community owned forests with a discussion/workshop on how they can support other woodland owners in their area.



Would you recommend others to take part in such an event?

Yes: 7 No: 0 no answer: 2

Please explain why / why not:

It gives a broad view of what's going on.

Of use to fellow trustees/volunteers.

To get a fuller cross-section of opinion.

Increases your knowledge about others' woodlands experiences.

Please list any other training/ events you would like to see organised: (no responses)

A best practice overview of community land purchase (buy-out) may be helpful.

Woodland management: how/what. Chainsaw training and test.

First aid training.

First aid training (2 day ones).

Any other comments:

Very useful and great learning exchange, recommended for all who are new to comm wood work.

Perhaps an earlier start so we could split off into smaller groups for discussion on topics of mutual interest.

Well organised by Chris Marsh.