

Delegates chose 1 of the available options for the site visit.

Castlemilk Park

Host: Cassiltoun Trust
Guide: Stuart Whittaker
Report: Andy Rockall CWA
Photo credits: Andy Rockall CWA



Nine conference delegates went to Castlemilk Park on the South side of Glasgow where Stuart Whittaker gave a fascinating guided tour around an urban project in an area with a significant history.

Project offices are in a stable block dating back to 1790 which is the last remaining structure of an old estate that was taken over by Glasgow Council after the owners moved south. The stables and surrounding area were used by the council as a nursery where they grew on their plants for the parks department.



The big house on the estate fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1969, there are just a few ruins showing where it stood. What remains is the woodland planting by forester William Gilchrist who was working in the 1860s when he planted over 390,000 trees. There are now mature oak, beech and lime trees as well as 5 Giant Sequoias which were planted along the old drive to the house.

Castlemilk Park is owned by Glasgow City Council and managed by a project led by Cassiltoun Housing Association which started in 2009 and has employed a woodland officer since 2011. The Park is surrounded on all sides by housing and a dual carriage way to the south. A burn runs through the site and there are significant issues of anti-social behaviour. Historically (1980s) parts of the area were used to meet and settle disagreements physically and were perceived as “no go” areas to anyone from outside the area.



All signs have been designed to minimise the possibility of “tagging” so finger posts are unusually high, notice boards made from easy clean materials which means the entry sign cost approximately £2,500, £4,000 including design and a run of leaflets, but graffiti wipes off.



For a small area surrounded by housing there is a remarkable abundance of wildlife with 14 badger setts, (one main, one annex and 12 outlying) there is a large amount of badger sign in the woods. The burn has dippers and eels, and the pond is full of mallard. Grey squirrels are present and Soprano Pipistrelle bats use the bat boxes positioned to be out of sight of the footpaths and so not get vandalised.



Volunteers are active in woodland management with an area of hazel coppice being brought back into rotation and footpath clearing work done to make it easy to access. Volunteers include some regular and some less so with refugees from many countries working on the site from time to time.

Malls Mire Community Woodland

Host: Urban Roots

Guide:

Report: Sharon Smith CWA

Photo credits: @urbanrootsglasgow Instagram



Malls Mire Community Woodland is a Local Nature Reserve in Toryglen in Glasgow. Urban Roots, the group in charge of the woodland, has worked with the community to improve the woodland for people and wildlife since 2009. They run a wide programme of activities including woodland conservation, wellbeing sessions, outdoor education, children's clubs and family events.

Malls Mire was the first Community Woodland in Glasgow, planted in 1992 on what was once a commercial forest, which then became a golf course. Fortunately, the community woodland are now able to use what was once the golf clubhouse as their inside accommodation. The site was made a Local Nature Reserve in 2015. Green Infrastructure work in collaboration with Urban Roots to help support the pathways within the community woodland.

Malls Mire Community Woodland is found within the parameters of the motorway, rail line, supermarket and fast-food establishment and, as a result, some difficulty can be encountered with anti-social behaviour and littering. Furthermore, the woodland crosses the boundary of Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire Council.

As a result of the ownership and lease agreements for the site, Urban Roots have created one management plan for the whole site, which takes cognisance of the different responsibilities and accountabilities within that.



The main focus of Urban Roots is to engage the local community in their woodland and to share learning opportunities to support the ongoing wellbeing of the local residents.

Urban Roots has a number of plans in the place to support ongoing developments of the site. They are looking to move the pond from where it is currently, as it dries out too quickly, stopping the full development of growing insects. They are also using the suds ponds, created because of a new adjacent housing scheme, as source of further exploration due to its usefulness for biodiversity. They also wish to create a willow coppice and grow willow for crafting.

Urban Roots also wish to ensure they support local educationalists develop their confidence in leading outdoor learning opportunities with their young people. As a way of ensuring that, Urban Roots are creating a Reptile Hub at Malls Mire, to support teachers in their confidence building in this area.



Teucheen Wood

Host: Inchinnan Development Trust
Guides: Donna, Maggie, Lacey and Duncan
Report: Piers Voysey CWA
Photo credits: @inchdevtrust Instagram



Guerrilla tree planting, tree terrorists. We have seen it all now, perhaps. With the wanton felling of the Sycamore Gap tree, the poisoning of mature sycamore trees on the edge of Teucheen Wood is a bit more obviously understandable, but still not excusable! Oh, the delights of being a peri-urban community wood and having to work with neighbours who do as they please rather than discuss and collaborate!



In our tour of Teucheen Wood, guided by Maggie Morrison (Development Officer), Lacey and Duncan Kennedy (regular volunteer) from IDT, we were shown the skeletal remains of 5 or more substantial trees that had been poisoned by someone, probably because they were overshadowing the homes and gardens of a new development that had been built far too close to the northern edge of the wood. IDT now have the responsibility and expense of removing the dead trees, including securing the TPO permission to carry out the work. Fortunately the developers of the new homes, in some acknowledgement of their responsibility for building homes hard up against the wood, contribute financially to enable IDT to manage the boundary trees.

IDT have had better support from longer established neighbours to reign in their garden expansion into the wood, recognising that they have the whole wood to enjoy, in common with others from the village, instead of manicuring a small chunk for themselves. Now that the wood is cared for by the community there is less temptation to dump stuff over the garden fence into the wood. The legacy of garden and other waste was removed by volunteers into at least two skip-fulls of metal, treated timber, concrete and plastic.



Teucheen Wood is a good tangle of woody growth; an overstorey of mature trees dating from the late 19th C, and an understorey of scrambling holly, sycamore and beech. Cool in the summer, sheltered in the winter. A network of paths (mainly desire lines) criss-cross and circle the wood. Since taking ownership in 2022 IDT have focused on creating a formal access path into the wood, putting up signs and interpretation, running volunteer events and enabling Little Forest Friends host Forest School nursery & play sessions in the wood, and manage the risk of falling trees and limbs. Donna, who runs Little Forest Friends had set up a fire and refreshments to ward off the gathering rain and stoke us up before departing the wood.

Thank you Donna, Maggie, Lacey and Duncan.