



Community
Woodlands
Association

CWA Newsletter

October 2023

Welcome

Welcome to the autumn edition of the CWA Newsletter.

On page 2, in amongst other communications information, you'll find details about the CWA Members Google Group. If you're a member of CWA but not currently a member of the Google Group, you might want to consider joining - it's a great way to have direct contact with other CWA Members, to ask questions, share information, and to draw on the expertise and experience in the CWA community.

Please get back to us if you have any comments or suggestions for the Newsletter, we're keen to make it as useful as possible for everyone.

Best wishes, the CWA Team

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What's happening in your woodland?

The Newsletter is a great opportunity for members to raise awareness of what's happening in their woodland. Whether celebrating achievements or developments, or highlighting challenges, sharing your woodland stories is a great way for the CWA community to find out about and learn from one another.

The winter edition of the Newsletter is due out on or around December 1st. We're looking for short pieces - roughly up to 700 words, with some images to accompany the text. If you'd prefer not to write the piece yourself, please send me the basic information and I can draft something. Thank you!

Please send to jen@communitywoods.org by the **15th November**.

Get in touch!

For general enquiries email us on: admin@communitywoods.org

For enquiries about a specific topic check out the Staff page on our website to see who is the most relevant contact: www.communitywoods.org/our-staff

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(and share posts)



Visit the Website

www.communitywoods.org

Bulletin

Sent out on or around the 20th of every month, the monthly bulletin features the latest:

- news
- events
- training
- jobs
- funding opportunities

If you want anything included in an edition, please send to admin@communitywoods.org, by the 15th of the month.

Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter (sent out on or around the 1st of March, June, September, and December) is the place for members to share their woodland stories – these could be celebrations/ challenges/ developments, or whatever you think might be helpful to share with other members.

If you want to send an article for inclusion in the next newsletter, please email:

admin@communitywoods.org, by the 15th of the month preceding the publication month.

Members are automatically added to the Bulletin and Newsletter mailing list, but anyone can join: www.communitywoods.org/newsletters-and-bulletins



CWA Members Google Group

The Google Group is a way for members (and CWA) to make direct contact by email to ask questions and share information. Any email sent to the group is first moderated by CWA staff, before being forwarded to the rest of the group.

To access the group successfully, any email address registered for the group must be associated with a google account.

If you would like to add email address/es to the Google Group please email:

admin@communitywoods.org



Share the news

To help ensure better sharing of information, CWA group members are encouraged to register more than one contact email for the Bulletins and Newsletters, and the Google Group.

If you have a woodland bulletin board you might also want to pin up the bulletin and newsletter to share with others.

News from North Harris Native Habitat Restoration Project

This multi-year habitat restoration project in North Harris is about to enter its second season, after a successful first year resulting in 22,500 trees planted between Gleann Lacasdail and the shores of Loch Trolamaraig, in the 1000ha restoration area in the south-east of the estate. It has been a great summer for growth, and wonderful to see trees looking healthy, with a high success rate. The dry spell experienced in spring stressed a few saplings, but most are on the way to becoming established.

As natural regeneration is well under way in Àird Mhulaidh Community Woodland which was planted some 25 years ago, we are confident that this new area will also yield good results. While it will take many decades for trees to mature, it will only take a few years for a host of young, healthy saplings to make a noticeable impact in the landscape.

This is only the beginning, as we plan to plant over 150,000 more trees over the coming few years and are aiming for 50,000 this winter planting season. Our dedicated staff is sure to put their back into it, but we always welcome volunteers who are willing to take up a spade and contribute to this project. A bheil dòigh sam bith nas fheàrr airson Gàidhlig a chleachdadh na bhith a' cur craobhan sna h-Eileanan co-dhiù?

Fa'ich Bihan-Gallic, North Harris Ranger, ranger@north-harris.org
01859 570600

The North Harris Trust. www.north-harris.org Scottish Charity No SCO 33413.
A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, No 235889.

Volunteering opportunity with the North Harris Trust

The North Harris Trust will continue its habitat regeneration project this winter by planting native trees on the estate. Volunteers will be greatly welcome to carry out this work alongside our staff. Planting will take place every week from 23 October to 19 April. We are also planning special volunteer weeks with Mon-Fri planting at the following dates:

- 23-27 October
- 30 October - 3 November
- 20-24 November
- 11-15 December
- 22-26 January
- 19-23 February
- 25-29 March
- 15-19 April



You can contact the North Harris Ranger (in Gaelic or English) if you want more information or are interested in taking part, at ranger@north-harris.org.



Ticks

Lyme Resource Centre, a Scottish charity, has partnered with the What Makes Viruses Tick? project run by MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research and are installing interactive tick awareness signs across Scotland, with the help of organisations..

The What Makes Viruses Tick? project is mapping the locations of where ticks are found and the QR code takes the user to a website where they can record the location of any tick sightings.

The second QR code takes the user to the Lyme Resource Centre website, where they can find a large amount of information about ticks, how to prevent tick bites and how to recognise symptoms of Lyme disease.

The signs are designed to be attached to wooden fence posts with small screws, for easy installation / removal. They measure 80mm x 235mm.



The photos show examples of how the signs can be installed on existing infrastructure within woodlands to help educate visitors about ticks and how to reduce the risk of tick bites.

The signs are available free of charge but we need to work out how best we could get them to interested woodlands. There are also a range of indoor posters and awareness leaflets available. If you're interested please get in touch with me:

jen@communitywoods.org

Stories of People and Trees

Listening to music inspired by our human connections to trees - in the company of trees. Read on to find out how you can enable visitors to your woodland to do just that, by hosting a QR code from Stories of People and Trees.



In June 2023 two hundred people gathered for the sell out premiere concert of a suite of new music written for string quartet 'Glisk' and Jessica Kerr on cello, inspired by tree stories collected in Stories of People and Trees. Sat in the Hidden Gardens in Glasgow, we were surrounded by trees, plants, birds and their song, all weathers, and an added human soundscape of children playing, distant traffic and murmurs of conversation.

With five new string quartets and 2 pieces for solo cello, we were even able to perform one of our new pieces of music under the very tree that inspired it, the Ginkgo Biloba that graces the lawn in the Hidden Gardens.

The final part of the Stories of People and Trees project is to record the new music, then offer QR codes to woodlands and tree sites, which link up to the online collection of stories and music. This means that audiences are able to listen anywhere – but most of all I would love for visitors to tree sites to be able to listen to the music in the company of their own much loved trees. In the same place you can also read the larger collection of stories, from a tree garden on Tiree that provides valuable habitat for migratory birds, to an Afghan apricot tree that connects a grandfather to a time when the whole family shared the same garden.

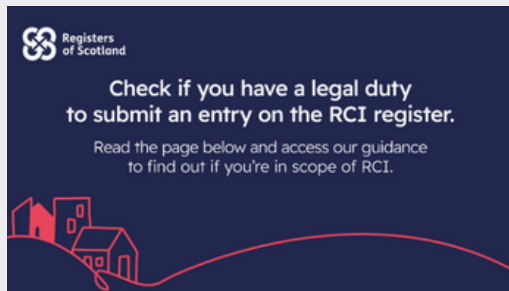
In terms of logistics, I can work with you to establish the most useful format for your site's QR code. If you have a noticeboard, then perhaps a card copy or laminated flyer would be most useful, or maybe you would prefer to affix a metal or wooden plaque to an information post. Stories of People and Trees is funded by Creative Scotland, so I'm able to provide these QR code plaques to sites at no cost.



Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions or to request a QR code. They'll be allocated on a first come first served basis, with a deadline for requests of 20 October 2023.

Use the contact form on the website at www.storiesofpeopleandtrees.com to get in touch, or email **Jessica** at storiesofpeopleandtrees@gmail.com

Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land



CWA was contacted recently on behalf of Registers of Scotland and The Scottish Government about the new Register of Persons with a Controlled Interest in Land in Scotland – or RCI, for short (<https://www.ros.gov.uk/rci>).

The RCI is a Registers of Scotland register, required by law, that was launched on 1 April 2022. It's relevant to CWA members, as you may be legally required to submit to the register before the deadline of 1 April 2024, after which point you could be liable for a fine of up to £5,000.

Find out more on the [Registers of Scotland website](https://www.ros.gov.uk)




Rewilding Britain Challenge Fund

The Rewilding Britain Challenge Fund is now open for applications and are very keen to see applications from community-based projects in Scotland.

This major fund of up to £100,000 will be awarded to the rewilding project which shows the maximum potential to work with others to scale up rewilding on land or at sea. Rewilding Britain are looking for diverse groups (landowners, sea-users, organisations, communities, businesses etc) who want to work together to develop innovative models to upscale rewilding. Find out more on the [Rewilding Britain Website](https://www.rewildingbritain.org)

- The fund's theme is 'Think Big, Act Wild', so they expect the total project area of the project to be at least 1,000ha/10km², the majority of which is contiguous and proposed for rewilding
- Within this, they will prioritise those which restore and reinstate natural processes, habitats and missing species to the maximum extent across land, sea or both
- They are particularly interested in community-led/co-designed approaches to rewilding which bring lasting social, economic and ecological benefits for local communities
- Successful projects will need to be eligible to join the Rewilding Network and must be prepared to share knowledge and experiences in an accessible way
- The fund cannot finance capital works or land purchase

The deadline for expression of interest is 12 October.



Community Tree Planting Support for Scotland

For the last 100 years [International Tree Foundation \(ITF\)](#) has supported communities to achieve their tree planting ambitions. In the UK, we offer funding and expert consultation for a range of different project types and scales. It's an extraordinary brief, and it's led to the creation of a diverse range of planting schemes. 'Community-led' can mean so many different things, and we try to keep a very open mind about the types of projects we support. Not everyone has access to a lot of space and we don't want to preclude people getting involved with tree planting just because they only have a small patch to work with. This has meant that we've supported projects that range from tiny community orchards of 10 trees, all the way up to community-led landscape-scale restoration of hundreds of thousands of trees.

ITF are particularly keen to expand their work in Scotland. With its generous access laws, high rainfall, and low population density, community tree planting in Scotland can often take place on a larger scale than other areas of the UK. In the past few years, we have supported many projects, from urban planting in central Glasgow to community buyouts on the Isle of Skye and we would love to continue further with this.

Within its package of support, ITF only has a few requirements. One is that the trees be 'owned' by the community that planted them. We want local people to be able to get involved in the planting of the trees and to then be able to stay engaged with that project as it matures. Watching the trees changes across the seasons and years is an inspiring sight and tree planting projects only get better as they mature. We want as many people to experience this feeling of optimism and hope that you can get from seeing a small woodland slowly grow up into a forest. ITF's model is to have as light a touch as possible in the creation of a project, stepping in only we think there's a real need to do so or if asked. We don't want anyone thinking that the trees belong to ITF – instead, we want local people to feel ownership and engagement with these trees.

The benefits of this are many-fold:

- firstly, it empowers local people in having a say over how their local green spaces are managed
- secondly, it introduces many people to the topic of trees and tree planting, many of whom won't have engaged with it before; and thirdly, it means there's a fully-engaged volunteer force ready to look after the trees in their first few years

This last point is an important one. We're increasingly hearing about tree planting schemes failing, where millions of trees have been left to die on the sides of hillsides and motorways because no one is factoring in any watering into their maintenance. What we've seen in the past few years is even areas where you would expect a steady fall of rain throughout the year, droughts can occur and result in the mass die-off of young trees.

In this light, the community model is robust, adaptable, and engages many people in the topic of trees. It is our hope that the simple act of planting trees will inspire both children and adults into appreciating the trees in their local area, to thinking where more could be planted, and finally to reimagine a world where trees are given the importance they deserve.

People all over the world are starting to see their local areas in new lights, and starting to demand more trees. Across the UK, various 'green groups' have formed, not to mention the swathe of community buy-outs in Scotland. The community movement has truly begun and ITF are here to help support and accelerate its growth.

A Collaborative Route to Support in a Crisis



The perfect storm of covid, Brexit, funding constraints and severe cost increases are putting exceptional pressure on the community, third and social enterprise sectors in Scotland. An increasing number of organisations are finding themselves in highly challenging circumstances. This can range from financial viability to governance and organisational dynamics.

Scotland has a well-supported eco-system of support but we know that it can be hard to find and access that support when groups are stressed about the future. The support that exists must be easy to find and simple to access, especially for those in crisis. To address this four key agencies, (Scottish Community Alliance, Development Trust Association Scotland, CEIS and Community Enterprise) have come together to collaborate on providing that support.

A new Crisis Recovery button has been added to the social enterprise support map which can be accessed here <https://sesupportmap.scot/recovery/>. This will lead to a very quick "request for support" form which will be assessed within 24 hours and a support package put in place. Crucially this is not a new service or programme. It is a smarter, quicker and more collaborative way to access the eco-system of support that already exists. Please spread the word to organisations who need support at a challenging time.

Forest Plastics

Working Group

What is the Forest Plastics Working Group?

The use of plastics in woodlands is complex, here Mike Appleton introduces us to the 'Forest Plastics Working Group' and outlines their work and aims in moving to more sustainable practices.

As woodland creators, we observe the growing public concern and scientific scrutiny of plastics in the environment, and the establishment of trees and woods. The establishment of broadleaf trees is usually for public and environmental good through public capital investment.



The use of tree shelters and guards is a relatively recent development that started in the 1980s. Whilst they can be effective, there are significant externalised costs and unintended consequences associated with their use. Too often they are not managed in a closed loop lifecycle system and considerable numbers are lost in storms, gales, and floods, or simply neglected and left on site to degrade into microplastics remaining in soils and the wider environment. Evidence also shows us that tree shelters and guards should not be used near riparian zones where there is a direct pathway to aquatic environments.

Recovering used shelters for recycling leads to an additional 30% cost. We have very limited options to recycle PVC spiral guards. The widespread and often profligate use of plastic shelters and guards in conservation, amenity, roadside, and woodland situations is a huge challenge.

The Forest Plastics Working Group (FPWG) grew out of plastics reduction initiatives in the North of England in Autumn 2019. The FPWG is aided by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and Confor, with further broad sector support from across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Partners include Environmental NGOs (Woodland Trust, National Trust, Community Forests), forestry companies, nurseries, National Parks, the Chartered Institute of Waste Management and public bodies (Coillte, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales, Forestry England, Forestry Commission, Forest Research, and Defra).

The Working Group have a shared vision to increase woodland creation whilst actively reducing the use and impact of plastics. The key message is to diversify our approaches through alternative and complementary silvicultural solutions: some traditional like the use of fencing, better management of deer, increasing

planting density and adjusting species selection are all relevant. There are also more recent developments like repellents, low intensity cultivation and weeding, and raptor boxes and perches.

One size doesn't fit all, and sites need ongoing assessment and management. We can also learn from or colleagues in Europe who use either significantly less or no plastic at all in tree establishment whilst facing the same challenges.

The Working Group supports the key principles: the Waste Management Hierarchy and the Circular Economy. Group members advocate best practice across their respective organisations. They raised almost £250,000 for an independent field trial of alternatives to fossil polymer shelters. The trial is ongoing, is led by Forest Research and comprises a lowland site (Norfolk) and an upland site (Cairngorms). The group are researching the use of other plastic products in woodlands such as signage and plastic tree bags. Many different trials are underway and FPWG is liaising with sector partners to find the best way forward.

There are a range of strong policy drivers that guide us to reduce the reliance on plastics and better manage waste from woodlands including the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan, the UK Forestry Standard, the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, the England Trees Action Plan, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Assessment of Agricultural Plastics and their Sustainability.

In line with the UK Government's 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy, it is clear we need to make better use of our resources, keeping them in circulation for longer and moving towards a circular economy. The new biodegradable and compostable shelters are inherently single use, and generate CO2 and waste. In April 2021, Defra published their response to the call for evidence on the need for standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics (biopolymers).

Repeated concerns are raised regarding the extent to which products marketed as biodegradable or compostable actually degrade in the open environment. Defra also heard from waste processors of the challenges that biodegradable and compostable plastics present in contaminating recycling streams.

There is a lack of independent knowledge of the ecotoxicological impacts of these materials. The group has been working with UCL and other universities to understand what happens to bioplastics / biopolymers and Polylactic acid (PLA) shelters in the environment. UCL has shown that when fossil polymer shelters are recycled they are a more sustainable choice than single use 'bio' shelters. However, whilst the volume of plastics used in forestry is relatively low their impact is high, waste and litter problems remain whatever materials tree shelters and guards are made from.

The group has also produced a guidance document on plastics use in woodland establishment alongside best practice case studies and is asking people to send locations of redundant plastic shelters through the website.

To find out more visit www.forestplasticsworkinggroup.co.uk