

Woods Report

May 2023

Key outcome:

- Maintain the all-access pathways through the woods and improve drainage

Last quarter

In Speedy Wood, the path has been redressed following completion of the ash dieback felling and extraction. The damage was considerably less than anticipated. Two drainage ditches have been created either side of the path at the top of Speedy Wood to improve drainage. New water bars have been added across the path to try to stop water channelling down the path.

The Fawn Wood path has also been redressed to repair the damage caused by Storm Arwen.

The area around the Welfare Camp has been resurfaced to make it more accessible.

Plans

The fence on the boundary with Gifford Bank needs to be repaired after the ash tree extraction, which Nev can cover, but long term this boundary fence will need some attention as it is in a very poor state. Costs would be shared between both land owners.

Some areas of the paths will need to be sprayed to reduce/halt encroaching vegetation. Nev will cover this, hopefully with some volunteer assistance as we now have a second backpack sprayer.

Key outcome:

- Manage the woodland to make the forest more resilient, including wildlife surveys and pond creation
- Ensure the safety of the woodland by removing hazardous trees

Last quarter

100 pine trees were planted in Fawn Wood during a Family Volunteer Day. 10 very rare black poplar trees were planted in Speedy Wood by volunteer Paul. There are thought to be fewer than 7,000 black poplar trees in the UK and, of that number, only 700 are thought to be female. We have pre-ordered some female trees to plant next year. 9 larger aspen trees and 9 larger pines have been planted in stockades, the former in Speedy wood and the latter Fawn wood.

In Speedy Wood, 2 compartments badly affected by ash dieback disease were clear felled. The areas have been replanted with native trees. The larger logs that were sold in bulk have been extracted and uplifted. The remaining logs are being processed by volunteers for sale as wood fuel.

More trees were felled than previously anticipated, but the extra timber will raise more income. The cost of felling and extraction was considerably higher than anticipated (£8,300 against original budget of £3,000) Nev, Roo and Ian assessed finances on Monday 8th May and will report back.

Plans

Our half-yearly tree inspection will be carried out in June/July and again next December/January

One large ash tree north of the bridge closest to Broadwoodside and several smaller ones on the hill parallel to the Broadwoodside Road still need to be felled. We will need a contractor to deal with the larger tree (preferably quite

quickly), but Nev will deal with the others, with volunteers, once we're out of nesting bird season.

The map on the Entrance Sign/noticeboard is to be updated to highlight the wildlife pond.

Key outcome:

- Eradicate rhododendrons from the woods

Progress

Lothian Conservation Volunteers were onsite on 12th March, 23rd April and 13th May. A further date is also scheduled for 27th May. LCV have paused visits to the woods on Wednesdays, because of nesting birds. All cuttings are getting burnt or chipped as the rhododendron is cleared, minimising new debris piles.

Plans

As part of the ash dieback management plan, it was intended that the existing piles of cleared rhododendron would be collected and burnt, along with the felled ash tree crowns. For now only new piles, mainly of ash crowns, recently sorted for tree planting will be burnt and chipped as they won't have birds nesting in them. Dealing with these piles and tree weeding will be the priority for the next few volunteering days with LCV. Rhododendron clearance will recommence in September.

Key outcomes:

- run volunteer days for skills development and social opportunities

Progress

We ran a very successful Family Volunteer Day in March to plant trees in Fawn Wood. Over 100 trees were planted by 22 children and their families. The feedback forms indicated that people enjoyed feeling a sense of community and they were pleased that the children had learned new skills. The following day there was a volunteer-led Easter Decorations event in the Village Hall where

people of all ages could come and customise wooden Easter decorations. Again we received very positive feedback about the event.

So far this quarter, we've had 13 volunteer days to plant trees, process wood fuel and clear rhododendron. A further day is scheduled for 27th May.

Volunteers continue to assist with Forest School sessions and 2 of our volunteers have secured funded places to do their Forest School Leader's Qualification: Holly Briggs started in March and Corinna Dawson will start in August.

We welcomed a new youth volunteer group, The Green Team, to the woods in April and a second visit has been scheduled.

A number of volunteers have been in touch to register interest in training options, including chainsaw work and tree inspection. Nev has updated the training plan (see below) and is finalising dates and attendees.

Training Priorities	Unit Cost	Provider	Number	Total Cost
Forest School Leader	£ 1,200.00	Newbattle	0	£ -
Outdoor First Aid (compulsory for Forest School Leader)	£ 130.00	Newbattle	2	£ 260.00
Chainsaw Crosscutting and Maintenance	£ 250.00	Alan Scott (in woodland/Sheriffside)	4	£ 1,000.00
Chainsaw Maintenance, Cross-cutting, Felling and Processing Trees up to 380mm	£ 1,056.00	Treevolution	2	£ 2,112.00
LANTRA Woodchippers (Operation & Maintenance)	£ 264.00	Treevolution	1	£ 264.00
LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection Training Course	£ 180.00	Treevolution	3	£ 540.00
			Total	£ 4,176.00
			HLF Budget	£ 4,140.00
			Remaining	-£ 36.00

Plans

We have agreed with Forest School Leader Liz Doig that we will run a Summer Camp during the week beginning 10th July and we will be looking for volunteers to help.

We will be supporting Holly and Corinna with their Forest School Leader Qualifications. Both of them will need to lead Forest School sessions in the woods, under the supervision of a qualified leader.

Training courses/dates to be finalised.

Key outcome:

- develop youth group events shaped by young people for skills learning supported by training providers

Progress

As mentioned above, we held a very successful Family Volunteer Day and Easter Decorations event. We are now working with youth volunteer group, The Green Team, to provide practical woodland volunteering opportunities.

We have set dates for a Forest School Summer Camp in July and for an outdoor woodland cinema event on Saturday 30th September.

Plans

We have completed over 100% of the target for youth events that we set as part of the Heritage Lottery Funding project. The trustees can now consider a longer-term strategy for youth events.

Key outcome:

- offer school and nursery trips to enable children to learn about natural heritage and how to care for it

Progress

We ran 5 Forest School sessions with Yester P2 this quarter and we've started a new 8-week block with Yester's Nurture Group.

Plans

We intend to continue weekly Forest School sessions with Yester after the summer holidays. Nev will continue to make arrangements with individual class teachers when learning opportunities arise. We will support Holly and Corinna to complete their Forest School Leader Training, which will give us greater capacity to offer additional Forest School sessions to Yester.

Key outcome:

- provide events for local community groups to benefit from the woodland, increase wellbeing and enjoyment
- develop adult learning events to increase skills and knowledge that will help us care for our woods

Progress

Scotland's Rural College visited the woods in March.

Buck & Birch arranged a sell-out birch tapping course in March. The tickets were sold through their own marketing channels, with proceeds generously being donated to the woods.

Wild Galloway Foods are running 2 events in May. On 9th May there is a Foraging Walk. Tickets are being sold through Wild Galloway Foods, with 15% of proceeds being donated to the woods. On 10th May there is a free Accessible Foraging Event, which has been planned in consultation with Irene Purcell of Disability Information Scotland.

We have a 'Meeting with Moths' on 14th May where Dorothy Lyle will be opening moth traps set the night before in the woods.

Plans

Nev has scheduled his annual woodland fungi foray for the 9th of September and tickets are now available via Eventbrite. The woodland cinema event has been scheduled for 30th September. This is normally informally advertised within the local community.

Key outcome:

- to ensure the sustainability of Gifford Community Woodland for future generations and find ongoing ways to cover the costs of woodland management and community engagement activities

Progress

A further 45% of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant was paid at the end of February taking the total paid to 90%. The final 10% will be paid on completion of the goals set out in the application. We also need to ensure that the independent evaluation is completed before we can submit the final request for payment. The deadline for completion of the HLF goals is 29 June 2024. The HLF goals are:

- to run 60 volunteer days to enable people to learn new skills, benefit from social engagement and gain a sense of shared ownership of their woodland (90% achieved)
- to run 60 school and nursery visits trips to enable children to learn about the natural heritage and how to care for it (75% achieved)
- to run 24 youth group events shaped by the young people will enable them to learn new life skills, supported by training providers (100% achieved)

- to run 18 adult learning events will enable a broader range of adults to learn about the natural heritage and how to care for it, and learn new skills (89% achieved)
- to run 15 events for local community groups to access the woodland enjoying fun and educational activities while increasing their wellbeing and understanding of natural heritage (73% achieved)
- Nine whole community events will enable a greater number of people within the community to benefit from social engagement and gain a sense of community ownership of their woodland. (100% achieved)
- Through the project's volunteering programme all rhododendron will be eradicated from the woods.
- The woodland will be managed to make the forest more resilient through wildlife surveys, expert advice and the creation of a pond.

We've applied for Area Partnership Funding to cover the cost of a log splitter. This is currently with the Area Partnership's 'scrutiny committee' and will hopefully be presented at the next meeting in June. The log splitter will significantly increase the amount of wood fuel that can be produced, which gives the woods a valuable source of income.

Woods volunteer, Ruth Gilchrist, hosted her first volunteer day, overseeing the planting of around 120 trees.

Plans

The trustee vacancy needs to be filled.

Ian and Jill will co-ordinate the admin required for the next payment request to the Fallago Fund in July. This will cover costs incurred between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

AOB

Disabled parking spaces. Two disabled parking spaces have now been created on Station Road, near to the junction with Tweeddale Avenue.

Storage of Woods Equipment. The trustees are looking at options for long-term storage of woods equipment.

Use of the Welfare Area for children's parties. Following an inquiry from a local resident about this, the woods trustees will consider policy options. One suggestion is that anyone wishing to use the firepit would need to hire Nev as a facilitator. Exceptions may be possible for people with suitable qualifications.

Housekeeping Schedule

DUE DATE	TASK	ADDITIONAL INFO
January	Agree dates for Trustees Meetings, Open Woods Meetings and AGM	Quarterly meeting cycle is currently Feb, May, August and November
March	Annual Confirmation Statement due 28th March annually (with 2-week window for completion)	Online via Companies House (c.£13 pa). Reminder email goes to Roo.
April	Woods Insurance Policy Renewal (current policy expires 24/4/24)	Email renewal. Policy currently with Keegan & Pennykid. Encompass Charity Scheme: Policy No - RKK958436. Reminder email goes to Graeme.
June/July	Tree Inspection	Completed bi-annually (June/July & Dec/Jan).
August	Give notice of AGM	Courier Advert and noticeboard
August/September	Update Directors details to reflect any changes made at AGM	Online via Companies House
December	Trustees Annual Report to be submitted to OSCR	Currently done by Roger
December/January	Tree Inspection	Completed bi-annually (June/July & Dec/Jan)

Items to be included:

- Annual Companies House return
- ongoing schedule for newsletters
- any accounts info?