

# Forestry and Woodland

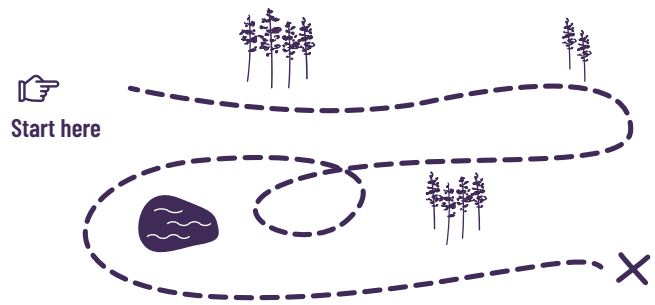
An Introductory Guide for Community-Led Projects



## Overview

There are around 200 community woodland groups across Scotland that are involved in the management of thousands of hectares of woodland and open space. Just over half own their woodlands, others lease the land, have a management agreement or work under a variety of formal and informal partnerships. Some woodland groups have purchased the land only and made an arrangement for Forestry and Land Scotland to continue to manage the timber crop. This may be for a temporary period or only apply to part of the forest.

There can be a number of motivations for community involvement in managing woodlands. These include environmental benefits, such as enhancing biodiversity, creating a sustainable timber harvest and providing a local wood fuel supply.



Increasing access to woodlands can also be a driving factor, with projects aimed at transforming woodlands into educational resources and recreational spaces which benefit the community.

Projects may combine several of these objectives, but share one common goal: granting the local community a stake in decision making around a significant local resource, in line with community goals or aspirations.

## Starting Points

### 1. Engaging the community:

Community participation in both the planning and implementation of activities in a community woodland is essential to its long-term success. Some woodlands will be more suited to certain types of activities than others, so these will need to be balanced with community interests.

A broad range of community involvement including schools and local youth organisations can be encouraged from the start.

### 2. Developing a Forest Management Plan:

Development of a Forest Management Plan (FMP) early in your project will set out a path for sustainable management of the woodland. This is likely to involve habitat and species surveys to establish an appropriate management strategy. The FMP can be used by the community to communicate their objectives, how these will be achieved and is a key tool in preparing **grant** funding applications.

Other matters to consider in your FMP include landscaping, archaeology and access, the location of any Special

Protected Areas of Conservation, peat, or the presence of protected species. If any areas of the woodland have been felled, any associated restocking or replanting obligations should be taken into account.

### 3. Licensing:

Scottish Forestry provides guidance and issues licences for certain forestry operations including felling licences. Check if you need a licence before starting any work and consider how you will manage access safely whilst work is in progress.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) can also be required for certain forest operations; check with Scottish Forestry.

### 4. Generating income:

Consider the on-going costs of managing the woodland and how these will be covered. Most woodlands will support a range of activities that have the ability to generate some income. This could be through timber harvesting, the sale of firewood, or educational and recreational activities that will enable the project to become more self-reliant.

### 5. Community Asset Transfer Schemes:

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) is the Scottish Government agency responsible for managing the national forests and land. It provides information for visitors and forest users and operates the Community Asset Transfer Scheme that enables communities to apply to purchase land managed by FLS. Applications to the scheme will need to show how the proposal will provide increased benefit for the local community.

### 6. Partnering with the private sector:

The private forestry sector delivers a range of services including land and forestry management advice, alongside timber harvesting and processing, managerial, and operational services. 'Community Woodlands and Private Sector Forest Companies' is a guide for community woodland groups that are considering contracting private sector forestry organisations – it includes case studies highlighting different approaches used for contracted services.

## Sources of advice and information

Organisation	Remit	Community Focus	Case Studies	Technical Information	Networking Opportunities	Information on Funding
<b>Scottish Forestry</b> – contact your regional office for advice and support.	Is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations. It sets the national <b>Forest Strategy</b> and manages the <b>Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)</b> .			✓		✓
<b>The Community Woodlands Association</b>	A membership organisation and representative body of Scotland's community woodland groups.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>NatureScot</b>	The public agency that works to improve the natural environment in Scotland.			✓		✓
<b>The Woodland Trust</b> – the website has an A-Z of British trees & directories on woodland wildlife	To promote the planting, protection and restoration of woodlands in the UK. It manages woodlands, conducts research and lobbies for the protection of woodlands.	✓		✓		✓
The <b>UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)</b> .	Defines standards and requirements for sustainable forest management. Gives guidance on development of a Forest Management Plan includes a comprehensive list of legislation relevant to forestry and a glossary of terms.			✓		
The <b>Scottish Outdoor Access Code</b>	Provides information and guidance to help manage public access to land.			✓		
The <b>Association of Hardwood Sawmillers</b>	A cooperative of small & medium sawmills in Scotland; these can provide an outlet for selling hardwood timber.			✓	✓	
The <b>Forest Policy Group</b>	An independent think tank that aims to bring new ideas to forestry policy in Scotland. Local control, small scale working and diversity are its key elements.	✓	✓			

## Funding for Forestry Projects

[The Forestry Grant Scheme \(FGS\)](#) offers financial support for a range of activities including the creation of new woodland, the sustainable management of existing woodland and to facilitate key 'landscape scale' projects involving a number of landowners. It can fund equipment to aid local small-scale harvesting and processing.

[Scottish Forestry Community Fund](#) – supports groups and organisations to use forestry more.

The **Woodland Trust** has advice on funding including [grants](#) for community groups and tree planting.

[South of Scotland Tree Planting](#) Grant to support small scale tree planting projects.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code website lists [sources of funding](#) for access-related projects.

# CASE STUDIES

## Moffat Community Woodlands (MCW), Gallow Hill.

Gallow Hill was a commercial conifer plantation, clear-felled by the previous owner in 2014. It was purchased in 2016 to create and maintain a mixed broadleaf community woodland. Key aims were to avoid future clear-felling, improve the visual environment, involve the community and increase biodiversity. Two project officers were appointed with a first task to set up a community engagement exercise. This identified the development of minimal and sympathetic amenities as a priority and now picnic tables, an outdoor classroom and natural play equipment have been created in the wood.

A planting plan was agreed with Scottish Forestry and has formed the basis for funding bids. A strong volunteer base of over 100 people have been involved in tree planting and maintenance in the last four years;

as this takes effect, greater biodiversity is already evident. MCW is working with brokers for carbon offset payments, who have provided around 16,000 trees and tree protection products. The group has active partnerships with Borders Forest Trust, two nature reserves and Space to Grow, Moffat.

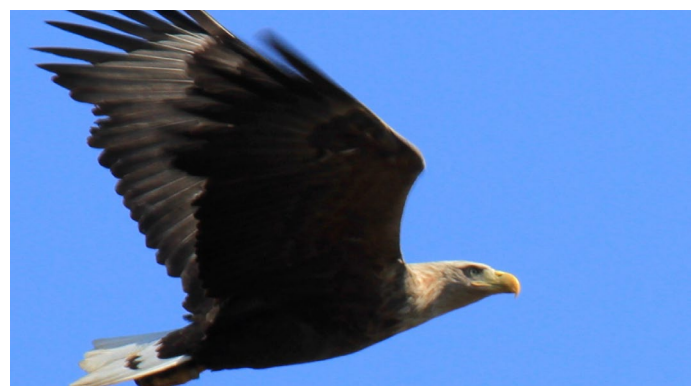


## North West Mull Community Woodland Company

North West Mull Community Woodland Company manages an ambitious forestry project blending commercial conifer plantations with the creation of new native woodland. Other uses of the land include installation of a 95kW micro-hydro electricity generating scheme, creating nine forest crofts and establishing Island Woodfuels, a firewood business that now supplies logs and produces all the island's woodchip. NWMWC was set up in 2006 to purchase two areas of forestry - Langamull 251 ha and West Ardu 421 ha - when these were put up for sale by the Forest Commission. The timber crop was close to maturity but the forests had been considered unharvestable due to the location and poor transport links. Undeterred the community created a 16.5km haul route at a total cost of £2.3 million to enable extraction.

The capital was raised through a combination of grants and loans, the latter being fully repaid through the sale of timber by January 2015. Proceeds from the next timber harvest will be used to fund other community projects.

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South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) is the economic and community development agency for Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. We offer support, funding and specialist knowledge to help community initiatives and social enterprises across the South of Scotland to grow and achieve their aspirations. To contact SOSE:

- Go to <https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/contact-us> and fill in the enquiry form
- Call 0300 304 8888.