



ARKAIG
community forest

Community Forester's Report

Presented to: ACF Board Meeting

Date: Wed 2nd December 2020

Person Presenting Report: Gary Servant

Purpose and Summary or Report Update on CWDO activity Sep-Oct-Nov 2020

1. Community asset-based development

Progress CATS transfer

Ongoing discussions with our solicitors and with the FLS CATS and FLS Land Agents to progress the conveyancing process. We have been waiting for a response and first draft of title deeds from the FLS solicitor since mid September as they have been considering what to do about the fact they own the water supply for Clunes - and if they dispose of the forest school they will no longer have an interest in that supply. We had anticipated exchange of missives by mid-October, but we are now looking at December at the earliest. The delay in purchase has a knock-on effect upon what we can deliver e.g. in terms of any significant upgrades to the fabric of the building and the site, what funding we can apply for etc.

Community garden and food production

Strimming, weeding and tidying up around the place in September/October.

Forest School maintenance and repairs

Purchased additional cleaning materials and hand-sanitiser etc.

Cleaned out gutters

Regular weekly cleaning duty.

Installed some coat hooks. Installed printer-scanner-copier.

Developing list of tasks requiring attention.

Improve workshop and storage facilities

Replaced door to the workshop and fixed the hole in the floor and the rotten cladding in the corner.

Cleaned out gutters.



Funding applications

Reviewed/investigated funding for venison larder project; ongoing discussions with WT and JMT (Ali)

Support ACF board - admin and accounts

Preparing 2019-20 accounts for audit by VAL accountant, finalising these accounts ready for submission to OSCR by ACF before end Dec 2020. Responding to recent donation to ACF from L. Johnston and arranging gift-aid forms. Investigating 'Amazon Smile' program for online shopping donations. Setting up online banking registration for the ACF bank account online system. Arranging Zoom meetings and preparing minutes of ACF meetings. Organising ACF google drive and email system.



2. Developing new income streams

Arranging **contract between WT and ACF for forestry agency services** to develop an application on behalf of WT for the Sustainable Management of Forests – Native Woodlands grant for the native woods and PAWS on the WT Arkaig land-holding. Much of my ACF time in Oct and Nov has been spent on delivering this contract for ACF and

WT – and WT are now awaiting approval of the FGS application and are hopeful of receiving around £20 000 per year from 2021-2026 for this grant.

Discussing **future delivery of aspects of the SMF NW activity** by ACF for the period 2021-2026. For example – aspects of deer management related to the community venison project/deer larder, monitoring of regeneration and herbivore impacts, monitoring and maintaining fences etc.

Developing proposals for **firewood production/sales** and **woodlots**.

Possibility of **hire of Clunes forest school building** for outdoor learning events and activities.

Discussion around setting up a **tree nursery** at Clunes with Craig and Rodney Shearer (Proven Trees Ltd) and with Henry and Jessica.

3. Conservation, woodland management and food production

Develop **Covid19 risk assessments and procedures** relating to ACF volunteer garden and forest days. Organising and managing volunteers at the **Garden day at Clunes** (25th October) and attending the first WT 'Woodland Working Group' **volunteer tree seed collection session** (6th November).

We have recorded around 15 hours of **practical volunteer work** on the site, with the main emphasis being on strimming, tidying up debris around the building and tidying up and weeding the nursery beds.



Partnership working with WTS, including

Developing SMF NW Application and WIG thinning/LISS proposals for WT ground.

Site visits to Dalvenvie (FLS) to look at **peatland restoration** work.

Developing **roundwood building project** – including arranging site visit and meeting to Alan Reeder's roundwood cabin at Murlaggan (by Roybridge) and meeting with Cormac Seekings (builder/wood-worker) with Henry and Jessica.

Developing **community venison project** – meetings with Henry, Jessica, Ben Harrower, Ross Watson of WT and Ali (JMT) to develop and progress ideas for siting a deer larder at Clunes. Further consultation work with neighbours and with Highland Council required (plus funding in the region of £50 -70 000).

Preparation for and contribution to WT-ACF **partnership review** meeting.

Developing **community firewood sessions** for Dec 2020, proposed horse logging demonstration (mid Dec) and possible community firewood enterprise.

Taken delivery of around 150 baby juniper trees and heeled them in at the forest school. These trees were supplied by Taynuilt Trees to the WT Croft Woodlands project and are looking for a new home at Arkaig – possible tree planting session in January.

4. Education and interpretation – communication - engagement

FB and twitter - update profile and posts from garden day

Updating report on the March 2020 Knoydart Forest Trust **learning exchange visit** and submitting for circulation in the last CWA newsletter.

Supporting the use of the forest school by the **Outward Bound outreach** team (Laura and Nathan) – working with Spean Bridge Primary School P2/3 group on two occasions in late Nov/early Dec.

Partnership working with WTS

Working with Jessica and Henry plus the James Hutton Institute team (Scott and Alice) on the **‘scenario planning’ project** – to develop and test ideas for future management of the Arkaig and Clunes woodlands and to feed into policy development for Scottish Government via their research.

Developing **‘Storymap’** project with WT – looking at the history and usage of the pinewoods over time and integrating that with maps and graphics to explain and explore various aspects of the story.

5. Tourism and recreation

Logging usage of the Great Glen Way cycle track by walkers and cyclists during Sept and Oct, and usage of the car park and informal campsite during the same period. Clearing up litter left by campers and visitors.

Arkaig Community Forest SCIO is set up as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation – Charity Number SC045209.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Don't hesitate to get in touch with Gary or the ACF board – contact details below.

