



Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba

Community Asset Transfer Scheme

**Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
5th Annual Report**

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 5th Annual Report

Launched in January 2017, Forestry and Land Scotland's Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) sets out how we deliver the asset transfer rights for communities (Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Part 5) for our national forests and land.

This fifth annual report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. During that period, Forestry and Land Scotland has:

- **validated four requests for ownership** of sites on our national forests and land
- issued decision notices **to approve five requests**
- **completed four transfers of ownership and one lease transfer**

One of the validated requests was for land notified for sale under our previous New Woodland Investment Programme. The other three requests were from communities that had identified areas of our national forest and land that could contribute to their objectives and benefit their communities.

Since the scheme launched in January 2017 up until 31 March 2022, FLS had received a total of 26 requests. 25 have been approved, of which:

- 15 sales have completed, totalling 516 hectares
- 2 renewables leases have completed, and are in construction
- 6 sites are under offer and in progress to complete
- 2 approved requests have been withdrawn by the community

A full list of asset transfer requests received for Scotland's national forests and land, and progress to date is shown in Annex 1.

Since 31 March 2022, Forestry and Land Scotland has completed 2 further transfer of ownership.

Empowering Communities

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) was formed on 1 April 2019, to manage Scotland's national forests and land. Our Corporate Plan for 2022-2025 sets out our priorities and how we will help deliver across all eleven National Outcomes, including empowering communities.

This included a commitment to produce a Communities Strategy. The [draft Communities Strategy for Scotland's National Forests and Land](#) which sets out the principles and strategic priorities for how we work with communities to make best use of Scotland's national forest and land, was published for consultation on 31 May 2022.

We are inviting feedback from people across Scotland on how to further grow our work with communities and to let us know what is working well, what can be done better and what challenges and barriers need to be overcome so that more communities' ambitions can be realised.

The Communities Strategy will sit alongside our [Visitor Services Strategy](#), and will focus on how communities can get more involved in the decisions, management and use of the national forests and land, including for health and wellbeing.

The consultation is open for responses until 23 August 2023 and you can submit a response online [here](#) or by emailing fls.communities@forestryandland.gov.scot.

Engaging communities in decisions relating to land

People can find out more about the land that we manage from the map based [Register of Land](#) and from the [OpenData](#) website, which has much more spatial data that people can explore. Further guidance and case studies on community projects and activities on the national forests and land are also available on our [Communities web pages](#).

We engage communities in the land management decisions we make through public consultations on our Land Management Plans. These plans set out how we intend to manage a specific area of forest over a period of ten years. The plans are published online and we engage communities and other stakeholders to gather a range of views. After public consultation and approval, land management plans are put into action by our local teams.

We are currently running 55 formal consultations on plans which are up for renewal, and many other plans that are at various stages in the process of review and informal consultation. In total we have 360 active land management plans, covering most of

Scotland's national forest and land, which are available [online](#) or by contacting your [Regional office](#).

Engaging communities in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

Our national forests and land are used by many groups for a huge range of activities, many of which can be freely carried out in our woodlands. Groups can also get permissions for activities which require more formal arrangements, such as sporting events, habitat management, or path maintenance to improve access to a woodland.

We also work with communities to carry out projects and longer-term activities through agreements and leases. These range from woodland management agreements, to leases for renewables projects or community buildings. We also work with communities of interest including environmental NGOs, sports clubs, history and arts groups, and in partnership with communities and other bodies to support a programme of activities.

Currently, we have 94 partnerships, agreements or leases with community groups, taking the total to 144 communities that are actively engaged or developing projects.

We work closely with communities to put in place the right agreement that will both deliver their objectives and manage our national forests and land responsibly and sustainably.

Examples include the **Friends of Newtonhill Woodland** near Wick who have, amongst other things, improved recreational access by developing a new path network and refurbished an old croft for use as a base for a volunteer program; **Banchory Paths**, a group of volunteers managing paths around Banchory, who have raised funding to upgrade the paths in Corsee Wood to improve access for all; **Kilsture Forest Community Group** who organise community walks and talks, wildlife conservation and work with FLS to improve paths; **West Fife Woodlands Group**, who created the West Fife Woodlands Way running through Balgownie and Devilla Forests; and the **Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group** in Perth (see below).

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Kinnoull Hill, Perth –The Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group

The [Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group](#) represents a wide range of users of the Park, from horse riders to orienteering groups, to walkers, cyclists, photographers and nature lovers.

The Group is a registered Scottish charity and gets involved in many projects, such as conducting Core Path Planning in the Park and helping manage the arboretum in the Woodland Park.

The Group carries out practical volunteer tasks on the hill in conjunction with the Countryside Ranger Service. Tasks includes scrub clearance, tree planting and footpath repairs.



*Volunteers at Kinnoull Hill
(photo courtesy of the Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group)*

Community Asset Transfer Scheme

The [Community Asset Transfer Scheme \(CATS\)](#) enables communities to take greater control of the land through ownership or lease. Over the last year, we have completed the sale of two further sites to communities, supported by grants from the Scottish Land Fund. As at publication on 30 June 2021, 19 transfers of ownership and two leases had been completed.

We continually engage with communities across Scotland to provide information on the land we manage and talk through options and solutions to best achieve their aspirations. Our Community Asset Transfer Manager and the National Community Advisor, together with our Regional land management and Estates Development teams, meet with communities to discuss proposals and options for the use or transfer of land, and to signpost communities to relevant support, such as is available from the [Scottish Land Fund](#) and [Community Ownership Support Service](#).

The last two years have been challenging for all, and although some larger projects have suffered delays as a result, we have approved four asset transfer requests this year:

- **Inchree Barn:** the Nether Lochaber Community Association plan to transform a derelict barn at Glen Righ Forest into a community hub and café, with gallery/workshop space, and venue for events.
- **Lower Ardoch:** Glengarry Community Woodland are working with the Communities Housing Trust and Woodland Croft Partnership to create four woodland crofts above Loch Garry. The project aims to tackle local housing needs and strengthen the community socially and economically. The Communities Housing Trust is acquiring a smaller adjacent area from FLS for affordable housing and to pilot two woodland croft models.
- **Dyemill Mountain Bike Skills Trails:** Arran High School Mountain Bike Club is taking on an area within Dyemill Forest, close to Lamlash, to build, manage and maintain an accessible, inclusive and safe, all weather skills trail facility for mountain biking.
- **Littleburn Road:** FLS approved the sale of former forestry offices at Munloch on the Black Isle to Roots & Growth for an ambitious community hub and wellbeing centre. Unfortunately, Roots & Growth have been unable to build up the capacity to take forward the project and have withdrawn their request. FLS has subsequently enabled Roots & Growth to feedback on the process and challenges they faced.

And we have a pipeline of around 25 projects in development, many supported by the Scottish Land Fund's Stage 1 funding.

Community Updates

Over the last year, three sales have completed including **the Inverawe Community Woodland**, near Taynuilt and **Insh Woodlands and Grazing** near Aviemore.

Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) also completed the lease for the **Abhainn Greadhain Community Hydro Scheme** at Glenachulish. LEG set up a community benefit society, LEG Power Lochaber, to build and operate the scheme, and their community shares offer has successfully raised the target of £1.8 million. This is the seventh community hydro scheme on the land we manage, with what is understood to be the largest community hydro scheme in the UK on the **Barr River** commissioned by Morven Community Development Company in July 2021.

The **Scottish Crannog Centre** has also been making good progress with its plan for the new crannog centre and museum at Dalerb on Loch Tay (see below).

In instances where there is clear community benefit and support, and to keep the process as straightforward as possible, we also enable community transfer bodies to acquire smaller assets as direct sales outwith the formal process. Examples include the transfer of the **Ettrick Marshes** to Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company, which successfully raised funding to restore the marsh boardwalks and employ two wildlife rangers; and the transfer of **Achnamara Village Hall**, originally built by members of the new forestry village in the 1950s, to the Achnamara Community Trust to enable it to make improvements to the venue for a wide range of community activity.

Scottish Crannog Centre, Dalerb, Loch Tay

The [Scottish Crannog Centre](#) acquired the Dalerb site on the north shore of Loch Tay with the aim of creating Scotland’s most sustainable museum, with a new visitor centre and new crannogs. The Centre’s Chair has set out their ambition to be “a national treasure admired by all with social justice firmly at our heart. We will be a world-class centre for learning, social action, research and education, attracting new interest from all over Britain, Ireland and beyond, honouring the story of our predecessors and the national heritage of Scotland.”

The transfer completed in June 2021, which allowed the Centre to focus on their future plans, following the devastating fire which destroyed the existing crannog on the south of the loch. Buoyed by the tremendous support they received to rebuild, the Centre has continued its employment and training programmes working with volunteers, students, and vulnerable groups, and many workshops and events, as well as developing the concept for the new centre to build on and expand this work. The proposals are now in planning, and include a state of the art museum to house the internationally significant archaeological collections, an Iron Age-inspired craft village and a café and visitor centre.

The Centre aims to build partnerships with local communities, schools, other visitor attractions, social support and care networks and other social justice organisations. FLS continues to work with the Centre to link to FLS visitor trails and interpretation at Drummond Hill, probably Scotland’s oldest managed forest which contains the remains of an Iron Age Hill Fort. More information about the Centre’s plan is available [here](#).



Visualisation of the new Scottish Crannog Centre at Dalerb

CATS Evaluation Panel

After nearly two years of online meeting and online “site visits”, the CATS Evaluation Panel met again in person at Dronley Community Woodland with members of the community. The Panel was shown around the woodland by Dronley Community Woodland Chair, Daniel Gilmour, and other Board members. Despite the cold January weather, the Panel spent a very enjoyable and interesting afternoon seeing the new paths and shelter the community has put in place and hearing from Dirk Sporleder, Community Woodland Manager, about the community’s forest management plans for continuous cover forestry and increasing biodiversity in the woodland



With some Panel members reaching the end of their term, we launched a recruitment for new Panel members, which received an overwhelming response (further information about the CATS Evaluation Panel is available [here](#)). We hope to announce the new appointments soon.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming months we will finalise the Communities Strategy for Scotland’s National Forests and Land, following analysis of the response to the consultation. This will inform the Communities Action Plan and we will arrange communication and engagement events to develop the Plan, which will deliver on the principles set out in the Strategy.

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ANNEX 1: Forestry and Land Scotland: Asset Transfer Requests

Table 1: Requests validated 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Inchree Barn , Inchree, Highland	Nether Lochaber Community Association	28-Apr-21	0.05	Purchase	Community hub and café	Approved 23-Aug-21	Under offer
Lower Ardochy Invergarry, Highland	Glengarry Community Woodlands	05-May-21	47.4	Purchase	Woodland crofts	Approved 06-Sep-21	Under offer
Littleburn Road Munlochy, Highland	Roots & Growth	25-May-21	0.45	Purchase	Community hub and wellbeing centre	Approved 30-Sep-21	<i>Withdrawn</i>
Dyemill MTB Trails Lamlash, Isle of Arran	Arran High School Mountain Bike Club	15-Dec-21	5.7	Purchase	Mountain bike trails	Approved 07-Mar-21	Under offer

ANNEX 2: Previous Requests

	21 January 2017 to 31 March 2021
	1 April 2021 to 21 March 2022
	Progress since 31 March 2022

Table 2: Requests validated 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
The Scottish Crannog Centre , Dalerb, Loch Tay	The Crannog Centre	7-Apr-20	4	Ownership	New museum and visitor centre	Approved 16-Jun-20	Completed 11-Jun-21
Insh Woodland and Grazings Insh, Newtonmore,	Inch Community Holdings	25-Aug-20	6.3	Ownership	Community woodland and grazings	Approved 05-Nov-20	Completed 14-June-21
Abhainn Greadhain Hydro Scheme , Glenachulish	Lochaber Environmental Group	23-Sep-20	28*	Lease	Hydroelectric scheme	Approved 01-Mar-21	Completed 12-Aug-21
Ardlarach Quarry Tain	Tain Rifle & Pistol Club	24-Nov-20	5.3	Ownership	Target and outdoor shooting range	Approved 24-Mar-21	Under offer
Broch Field Strathyre	BLS Community Trust	12-Mar-21	1.9	Ownership	Community recreation area	Approved 17-Jun-21	Completed 20-Apr-22

Table 3: Requests validated 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Clunes Buildings and Woodland Clunes, Highland	Arkaig Community Forest	3-Sep-19	6	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 06-Jan-20	Completed 25-Jun-21
Corsee Wood Banchory, Aberdeenshire	Deeside Bike Collective	3-Sep-19	13	Ownership	Mountain bike trails	Approved 02-Mar-20	Completed 22-Apr-22
Coilhullan Wood Callander, Stirling	Callander Community Development Trust	23-Oct-19	83	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 21-Apr-20	Withdrawn
Inverarish hydroelectric scheme Isle of Raasay, Highland	Raasay Development Trust	17-Dec-19	18	Lease	Hydroelectric scheme	Approved 29-May-20	Completed 7-Jan-21
Inverawe Woodland Inverawe, Argyll & Bute	Inverawe Community Woodland	19-Mar-20	6	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 08-Jun-20	Completed 7-Jun-21

Table 4: Requests validated 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Ardura Craignure, Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	03-Apr-18	201	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 21-Dec-18	Completed 13-Sep-19
Seneval Carradale, South Kintyre	Carradale Community Trust	22-Oct-18	1.9	Ownership	Community services	Approved 07-Feb-19	Completed 16-Sep-19
Glenan Wood Portavadie, Cowal	Friends of Glenan Wood	02-Nov-18	144	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 10-May-19	Completed 20-Dec-19
The Gantry Craignure, Isle of Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	15-Nov-18	0.35	Ownership	Community services	Approved 7-Feb-19	Completed 5-Feb-21
Muirdrochwood Carsphairn, Galloway	Carsphairn Community Woodland	7-Nov-18	324	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 03-May-19 Revised 07-Jan-20	Completed 31-Mar-21
Corrow Gravel Pit Lochgoilhead, Cowal	Lochgoil Watersports Cub	21-Nov-18	2.15	Ownership	Recreation	Approved 15-Feb-19	Completed 30-Oct-19

Table 5: Requests validated 21 January 2017 to 31 March 2018

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
<u>Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes</u> Ettrick, Scottish Borders	Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company	26-Jun-17	173	Ownership	Community woodland	Refused 03-Nov-17	Refused following Review by Scottish Ministers
<u>The Fairy Pools Car Park</u> Minginish, Isle of Skye	Minginish Community Hall Association	16-Aug-17	12.3	Ownership	Parking facilities	Approved 03-Nov-17	Completed 06-Jul-18
<u>Carron Valley</u> Carron Bridge, Stirling	Valley Renewables Group	20-Dec-17	21.3	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 28-Feb-18	Completed 12-Oct-18
<u>Leadburn Wood</u> Leadburn, Scottish Borders	Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland	26-Feb-18	9.4	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 28-Mar-19
<u>Dronley Wood</u> Auchterhouse, Angus	Dronley Community Woodland	19-Mar-18	50.7	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 28-Mar-19
<u>Eshiels Wood</u> Peebles, Scottish Borders	Peebles Community Trust	22-Mar-18	6.9	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 15-Jan-19