



# **Community Asset Transfer Scheme**

**Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015  
2nd Annual Report**

**1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019**

# Community Empowerment

## 2nd Annual Report

### Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 2nd Annual Report

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

This second annual report covers the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. During that period, Forestry and Land Scotland has:

- **validated six requests** by communities for ownership of sites on our national forests and land.
- issued decision notices **to approve seven requests**
- **completed five transfers of land to communities**

Three of the requests validated during the last year were for land notified for sale under our New Woodland Investment Programme. A further three requests were for areas of our national forest and land that communities had identified to contribute to their objectives and benefit their communities.

In summary, since the scheme launched in January 2017, a total of 12 requests have been received, 11 have been approved, of which five transfers have completed.

The review by Scottish Ministers of the decision to refuse one request for ownership, under Section 87 of the Act, has not yet reached a conclusion.

A full list of asset transfer requests received for the National Forest Estate, and progress to date is shown in Annex 1.

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Since March 2019, Forestry and Land Scotland approved a further 2 requests for ownership.

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### Empowering Communities

On 1st April 2019, Forestry and Land Scotland was created as a new agency to look after Scotland's forests and land, for the benefit of all, now and for the future. We published a new [Corporate Plan](#) for consultation on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019. This reaffirms our commitment to involve communities in decisions about our national forests and land and to support communities to make use of this resource for their benefit.



Over the coming year we will develop a Community Strategy in consultation with communities and other stakeholders. Our draft Corporate Plan sets out how Forestry and Land Scotland will contribute to Scotland's National Outcomes.

The Community Strategy will look at our current work with communities and how it can increase the contribution of our national forests and land to the key objectives :

- Supporting a sustainable rural economy
- Looking after Scotland's National Forests and Land

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- Scotland's National Forests and Land for People

### Engaging communities in decisions relating to land

People can find out more about our national forests and land from the map based [Register of Land](#). A range of spatial data with richer functionality, is available from the [OpenData](#) website. We have also published guidance and case studies on how communities can get involved to deliver activities and projects on our national forests and land.

Forestry and Land Scotland engages communities in the decisions we make about how we manage our national forests and land through public consultations. Our land management 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 currently have 33 active consultations, and 116 agreed land management plans, all of 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 activities 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.

A summary of current activity of communities getting involved on the national forest estate:

- Partnerships / agreements / leases: 84
- Actively engaged / empowered / submitting asset transfer requests: 116

This is a significant increase on the 45 of community projects reported in the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report. This results from thorough review of community activity with Regional staff and the

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inclusion of wider definition of communities to include the many communities of interest who make use of our forests and land such as environmental, sporting and heritage groups.

Our staff work closely with communities locally to put in place the right agreement to deliver the community's objectives and manage our national forests and land responsibly and sustainably.

The FLS Community Activity map below shows the projects, partnerships and programmes with local communities and interest groups across our national forests and land.

### 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 sales of 5 sites to communities, 4 supported by grants from the Scottish Land Fund. A further 6 requests have now been approved. On Skye, the Minginish Community Hall Association has completed Phase 1 of the transformation of the Fairy Pools Cark Park since taking ownership in June 2018. In November 2018, the Valley Renewables Group launched the Carron Valley Community Woodland and are working on their plans for new paths, wildlife ponds and woodfuel supply, with local community involvement through volunteer days and community events.

We have continued to work closely with other organisations, particularly the [Community Woodlands Association](#), [HIE's Community Assets team](#) and [DTAS Community Ownership Support Service](#) to make sure community groups get the right support and advice to develop their project. The Scottish Land Commission's [Review of the effectiveness of current community ownership mechanisms and of options for supporting the expansion of community ownership in Scotland](#), conducted by SRUC, identified CATS as a "model of good practice for translating the 2015 Act into a transparent and accessible procedure".

Our [CATS Evaluation Panel](#) has continued to provide independent and impartial advice to Forestry and Land Scotland. CATS Evaluation Panel members visited 7 sites over the last year to meet communities to discuss their requests and inform the evaluation process, as well as giving constructive feedback to the groups to help improve and strengthen their proposals.

We also have maintained a pipeline of between 40 and 50 projects in development over the last year, many supported by the Scottish Land Fund's Stage 1 funding. The Community

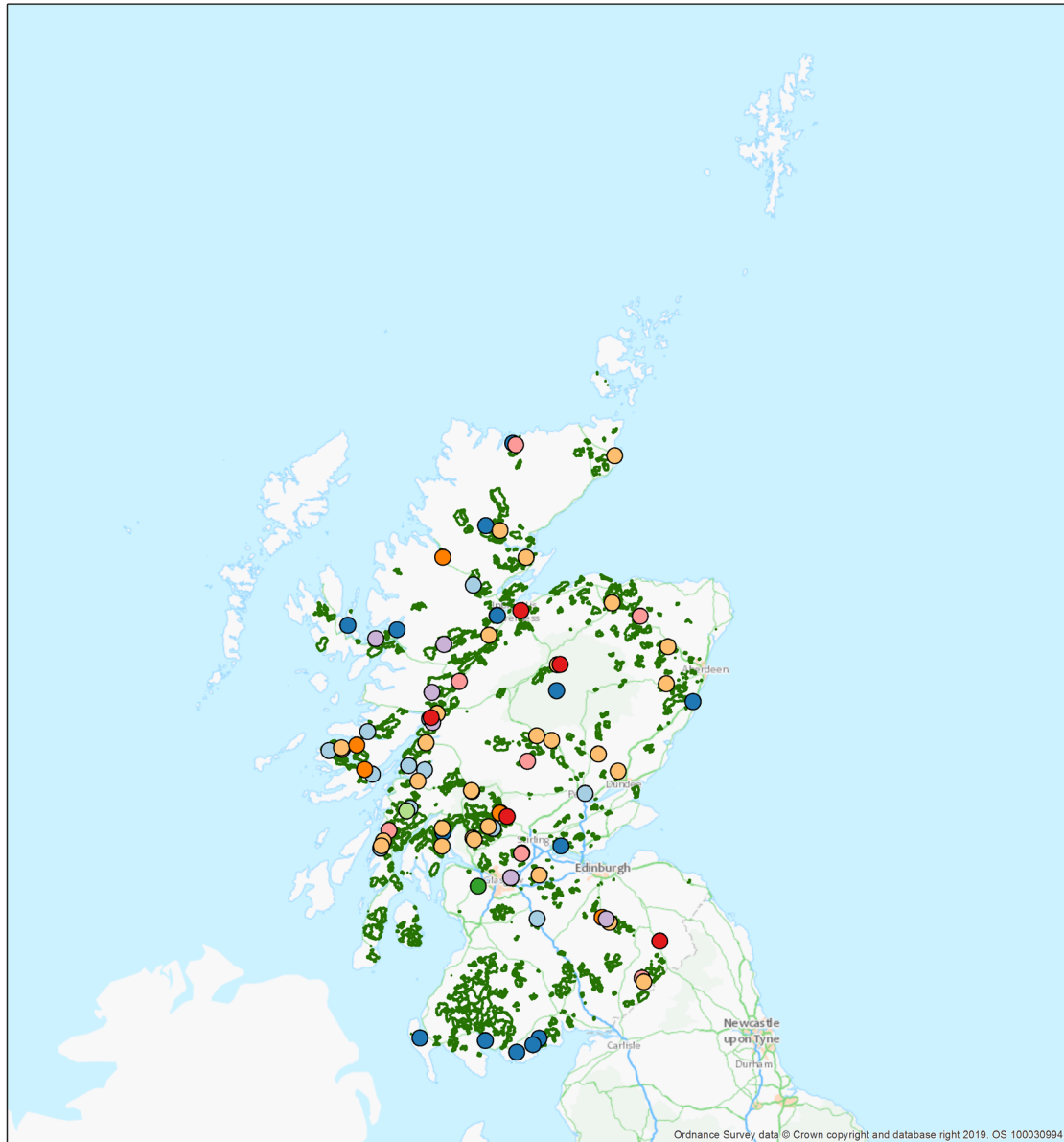
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Forestry and  
Land Scotland

Coilltearachd agus  
Fearann Alba



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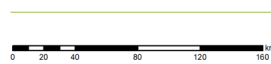
### Legend

#### FLS Community Activity

Scale @ A3: 1:2,500,000

Date: 06/06/2019

Author: Deborah Hide



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#### FLSCommunityActivity\_June19

- Community amenity and services
- Community woodland
- Education
- Health
- Heritage

- Programme
- Recreation
- Renewables
- Wildlife and natural heritage

#### Blocks

- Blocks

Scotland's National  
Forest Estate is  
responsibly  
managed to the  
UK Woodland  
Assurance Standard.



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Asset Transfer Manager and our Regional staff have attended over 30 meetings with community groups across the country to advise on the CATS process and provide information on the woodlands to help develop requests.

The Community Woodland Association ran a second [CATS workshop](#) in January 2019, with 30 participants, including representatives from 12 community groups ranging from Ullapool to Sorbie in Galloway. We have also worked on improving our guidance for communities, particularly on the legal aspects of making an offer once a request is improved, developing standard templates to simplify the process.

### New Woodland Investment Programme

Forestry and Land Scotland's [New Woodland Investment Programme](#) allows us to invest in the creation of new woodlands to increase public benefit from our national forests and land. To support this investment, from time to time, we identify sites for sale. Communities have the first opportunity to register an interest and we will work with the community to see if ownership will deliver a benefit for the community. If so, the community can make a request through our CATS process. If the community does not see any benefit from ownership, we will put the site up for sale on the open market.

Over the last year, communities registered interest in 16 out of 26 sites where we notified community groups and other stakeholders of our intention to sell in June 2018. 4 were subsequently withdrawn and 12 community groups are now working to develop asset transfer requests.

### Looking Ahead

Over the coming year, we will consult with stakeholders to develop a Community Strategy. This will set out the many ways in which communities are involved in our decision making and the opportunities to make use of our national forests and land.

We will also:


- continue to review and improve our CATS guidance
- Improve the information available on existing community projects and how communities can make better use of national forests and land
- put in place further training and support for our staff in their day to day work with communities
- run further CATS workshops for communities developing asset transfer requests

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### ANNEX 1: Forestry and Land Scotland: Asset Transfer Requests

Requests validated 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

 Progress since 31 March 2019

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Initial request date	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
<a href="#">Ardura</a> Craignure, Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	22-Mar-18	03-Apr-18	201	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 21-Dec-18	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">Seneval</a> Carradale, South Kintyre	Carradale Community Trust	22-Oct-18	22-Oct-18	1.9	Ownership	Community services	<b>Approved</b> 07-Feb-19	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">Glenan Wood</a> Portavadie, Cowal	Friends of Glenan Wood	2-Nov-18	2-Nov-18	144	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 10-05-19	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">The Gantry</a> Craignure, Isle of Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	6-Nov-18	15-Nov-18	0.35	Ownership	Community services	<b>Approved</b> 7-Feb-19	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">Muidrochwood</a> Carsphairn, Galloway	Carsphairn Community Woodland	7-Nov-18	7-Nov-18	324	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 03-May-19	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">Corrow Gravel Pit</a> Lochgoilhead, Cowal	Lochgoil Watersports Cub	7-Oct-18	21-Nov-18	2.15	Ownership	Recreation	<b>Approved</b> 15-Feb-19	Awaiting offer



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Requests validated 21 January 2017 to 31 March 2018 (1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report)



21 January 2017 to 31 March 2018

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Initial request date	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
<a href="#"><u>Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes</u></a> Ettrick, Scottish Borders	Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company	23-Jun-17	26-Jun-17	173	Ownership	Community woodland	Refused 03-Nov-17	Review
<a href="#"><u>The Fairy Pools Car Park</u></a> Minginish, Isle of Skye	Minginish Community Hall Association	16-Aug-17	16-Aug-17	12.3	Ownership	Parking facilities	Approved 03-Nov-17	<b>Completed</b> 06-Jul-18
<a href="#"><u>Carron Valley</u></a> Carron Bridge, Stirling	Valley Renewables Group	14-Dec-17	20-Dec-17	21.3	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 28-Feb-18	<b>Completed</b> 12-Oct-18
<a href="#"><u>Leadburn Wood</u></a> Leadburn, Scottish Borders	Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland	26-Feb-18	26-Feb-18	9.4	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 28-Mar-19
<a href="#"><u>Dronley Wood</u></a> Auchterhouse, Angus	Dronley Community Woodland	2-Mar-18	19-Mar-18	50.7	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 28-Mar-19
<a href="#"><u>Eshiels Wood</u></a> Peebles, Scottish Borders	Peebles Community Trust	9-Mar-18	22-Mar-18	6.9	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 15-Jan-19