

*After a challenging last year, 2023 has started well for GCW: the planning and fundraising that occupied much of last year has paid off, and we are now in a strong position to move forward with all of our projects. Here's an update on where we've got to, and where we're heading.*

### **Glengarry Forest Cabins**

Getting the cabin business up and running is a priority; it will generate important revenue to support our organization.

**Community Shares:** We're pleased to confirm that the Community Share Offer which ran between October and December was hugely successful. More than two-thirds of the investors are residents of Glengarry, and the total amount raised is £280,000. Some costs have to be deducted from this total, but it has nonetheless put us in a very strong position to get moving onto the next phase.

**Construction begins:** If you've passed by the Community Woodland recently you may have noticed that work has started to improve drainage around the depot, and upgrade the track that leads into the woodland up to the cabin site. The track will service the cabin business, but it also means, for the first time, we can get into the woodland with our own machinery, which until now has not been possible. Elsewhere on the project, fabrication of the cabins themselves has begun, and some cabin parts have been delivered to our yard, where they'll remain until the cabin site in the forest is fully prepared. The new Short Term Let Licensing Scheme will apply to our cabins; fortunately, as a new business we already have a lot of the requirements in place, but with the timeframe for processing licence applications set at 9 months, the new scheme may impact the date at which the business is permitted to take bookings.



*The new track leading into the woodland opens up new possibilities*

### **Lower Ardochy Forest Update**

After the land at Ardochy was finally transferred to community ownership last autumn, work has begun with our partners at the Communities Housing Trust, and the Woodland Crofts Partnership to plan for the new affordable homes and woodland crofts. The next step is the development of a Woodland Management Plan for the site, designs, and some of the legal work around the Rural Housing Burden.

**Woodland Management Plan:** The area that is now under community control at Ardochy was formerly under the management of FLS and as such was part of an old management plan which covered a much wider area. One of the first pieces of work therefore is to establish a new plan, which needs approval by Scottish Forestry, to cover the new area. The new plan will transfer the legal obligations that come with owning and managing a forest from the previous owners. Importantly, it will also identify areas of open space in the forest that are suitable for new homes. The new plan will also set out management principles that incoming crofters will have to adhere to, such as the use of low-impact methods which ensure continual forest cover.

**Master Plan:** Before applying to purchase the land at Ardochy, consultation with the Highland Council instructed us to develop a project Masterplan as a first step before applying for planning permission. Linking in with the Woodland Management Plan, the Master Plan will provide an overall view of how the homes will sit within the forest, including detail such as the footprint of buildings, their position, and indicative designs for how the new homes will look. To support us with this piece of work, we have chosen to work with [Catoe Brown](#) architects, Inverness.



*Catoe Brown's award winning affordable housing development at Ardgael (pictured above) is a good precedent for our project at Ardochy*

## A Community Action Plan for Glengarry

Last year we announced that Glengarry Community Woodlands has gained recognition as a Development Trust. This is largely as a result of the much wider scope of work that we have taken on for the community: projects to tackle the local housing needs, and our eco-tourism project which addresses the need for economic regeneration in the area, as well as the other social and educational work that we do. Development Trusts tend to work on a much wider range of projects than would take place within a community woodland, and to direct their work, and to make sure it is driven by the community, Development Trusts in Scotland work from a Community Action Plan.

GCW was recently awarded funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise to engage an independent consultancy to develop an action plan for Glengarry in 2023. It will be an opportunity for everybody in Glengarry to have a say in how they want the community develop over the coming years. It will identify and prioritise new projects, and propose how they can be achieved, and by whom.

With so much new development being proposed and starting in our area (such as Coire Glas) and new renewable energy schemes, it is important that the community has a solid and legal plan that everybody has had a chance to contribute to so that as a community, we can take full advantage of opportunities for community benefit payments that arise from developments. Community Planning is a process that is likely to be 'live' for months, and we will keep everybody informed once we know when it will start.

### Update from the Community Woodland Officer

Spring is in the air and a young child's mind turns to thoughts of Into the Woods!

With the Easter Holidays less than a month away, here at GCW we're busy planning events and activities for all the family. For children in Primary 1 to Primary 6 we have our well-established forest club – Into the Woods. From den building to campfire cooking, and much more besides, Into the Woods is the place for your kids to explore their wild side.

For older kids between P7 and the end of high school, we run our Junior Rangers club. Come along to learn about our local wildlife, forest crafts, outdoor skills and bushcraft, and, of course, a bit more campfire cooking. Easter at GCW wouldn't be complete without our annual Family Easter Event. This year

we're trying something a bit different, with an alternative look at old Scots springtime traditions – Join us to help the careless Gowk (Cuckoo) find her missing eggs. Everyone is welcome, so come for Easter fun, face painting, tea and treats on the fire, and meet our Forest Folk who are trying to get those eggs back to the forgetful Gowk.

Before and after the holidays we are also running sessions for Glengarry Primary School to come to the woodlands and learn about, among other things, ecology, forest work and woodland crafts. We've already had the big class visiting with Mr Perkins and Mrs Riddle during February for a look at winter wildlife. Mr Perkins' imitation of a yellowhammer was the highlight of the visit (if you can imagine it!) We look forward to welcoming the little class soon, and to more sessions for the whole school as we move into the summer term.



*Junior Rangers (2019) navigating their way through the woods*

### Dates for Your Diary

**Into the Woods (P1-P6)**

Tues 4<sup>th</sup>, Wed 5<sup>th</sup>, Tues 11<sup>th</sup>, Wed 12<sup>th</sup> April

**Junior Rangers (P7-S6)**

Thurs 6<sup>th</sup> & Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> April

**Family Easter Event (All Welcome!)**

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2-5pm

**Dawn Chorus (& campfire breakfast)**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 7am @ the Depot

**Green Woodworking Drop-in Sessions** (dates TBC)

*If you're interested in any of these events please contact Bruce on 01809 501287 or by email: [bruce@glengarry.org.uk](mailto:bruce@glengarry.org.uk)*