

As we begin the new year, we look back at an eventful busy season of activities in the woods and around the yard. Much has been achieved and even more is in the pipeline for this year that we are excited to share with you soon.

### Board training day starts new discussions

What makes you excited to be part of Glengarry Community Woodlands? What are GCW's values, vision and mission – and how are they different from one another?

These questions and many more were asked of the board on a rainy Saturday in November last year when they gathered in the community hall for a full day of board training and development. The training was delivered by renowned community organiser and social entrepreneur James Hilder. Some members of the board have many years of experience with community groups and have



*Board and Staff members sit down to lunch in the Hall.*

been involved with GCW since its early years; others have more recently connected with our organization through our children's activities and events. This spread of experience and perspectives allows our board members to best fulfil their role: to reach consensus about the overall values and mission of Glengarry Community Woodlands - which then in turn influence the day to day operations and priorities. Board work can be challenging, and the training day

included strategies for communication, consensus building, and encouraged board members to be confident in sharing their views.

If you want to know more about who is on the board and how you can become a member, go to [glengarry.org.uk/governance](http://glengarry.org.uk/governance).

### Information needed to set strategic direction

Since Glengarry Community Woodlands was founded in 2015 a lot has happened. And so we are going to build on this board training with another training session to further delve into our vision (the fantastically big picture), our mission (the goals we are setting ourselves towards that) and our values (the principles which we abide by along the way). What our board members bring to the table will be front and centre, but we are also looking forward to the outcomes of the Community Action Plan that Slikk7 are producing with funding from HIE. The plan's findings will be relevant to many organisations in our community and we look forward to carefully analysing how its findings impact our organisation.

We have heard from the consultants at Slikk7 that the information gathering phase for the Community Action Plan is nearly complete. All relevant community groups have been approached and stakeholder meetings are nearly all done – what's left is to hear from residents in the community. We've heard that surveys have now been posted to all households in Glengarry, and the deadline to respond either by post or online is the 22nd January. As a piece of research, the plan will inform many decisions in our community in the coming years and so we are hoping and asking you all for your response and participation. It is in the interest of everyone that the plan reflects as many views as possible.

## Looking back at a whole year of woodland activities

Our events this year started in April, with our kids' clubs: Junior Rangers and Into the Woods, plus our family Easter event, Hunt the Gowk, where the kids helped the forgetful Cuckoo to find her eggs while learning about traditional woodland work. May was a month of wild things here in the woodlands, starting with an early morning Dawn Chorus walk, to experience the wonderful spring birdsong, followed later in the month by a culinary tour of the woods with our Wild Food event. In June, during the driest month of the year, we held our late-night event full of music and stories: Midsummer at Midnight, where participants brought a tune or a tale to share, and enjoyed food cooked on the campfire. July and August saw the return of Into the Woods and Junior Rangers. Into the Woods is our club for primary school children, up to P6, where we take them to play and explore in the forest. Junior Rangers is our club for older children, where we explore ecology and outdoor skills. September is another good month for looking at wildlife, and we took the chance to hold a bat walk at the beginning of the month, giving participants the

chance to experience our secretive, wild, pest control officers (did you know a single pipistrelle bat can eat 3000 midges in a single night?!). Later in the month we explored the underground world of Mushrooms, and found out about the Wood Wide Web, a mysterious network of underground fungi that allows all the trees and plants in the forest to communicate with each other! The school holidays in October brought another round of the Kids Clubs followed, at the end of the month, by our annual Family Halloween event. Here, after an evening of games and crafts, we followed the mysterious Alastair Mor a' Bhochdain (Big Sandy of the Ghost) into the forest to discover the spooky tale of the Black Dog of Invergarry. Our last event of the year was a Christmas Craft Afternoon at the beginning of December, where everyone was welcome to come along and try winter woodland crafts to hang on your Christmas tree or put out in the garden to feed the birds. We're looking forward to running another packed events programme this year, with some new ideas for everyone to enjoy. Look out for our posters in the spring, as the Easter holidays approach.



## A YEAR IN NUMBERS

### 2 new groups/courses

Gardening Group met four times and Green Woodworking Group met five times.



### 8 seasonal Events

Between wildlife walks, seasonal celebrations for all the family, and lots of fireside cooking we had over 150 attendees.

### 22 days of kids clubs

Junior Rangers and Into The Woods enabled 25 local children to explore the woodlands during their holidays.

### 71 Orders of Firewood

