



Cambusbarron Community Development Trust

AGM

Tuesday 31/08/21 at 8pm

in the

Community Centre.

**Prior to the AGM starting we will have a
info session at 7pm. Come along to share
your ideas, opinions or ask questions about
Cambusbarron Community Development Trust**



Cambusbarron
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

For further
information
on CCDT
checkout
www.CCDT.org.uk



Draft Woodland Management Plan Explained

CCDT has been awarded funding to commission the development of a Woodland Management Plan that will lay out a long term 25-year vision for the woodland. We will also create a shorter and more detailed 5-year work plan. This ensures that activities and actions in the woods are carried out in a logical way. The Draft Plan is being developed by an independent adviser, Jon Hollingdale of the Community Woodlands Association, supported by Amos Higgins, our Community Forest/Woodland Manager. This means that our plan is being developed by people who have both the knowledge and experience of woodland management to benefit both biodiversity and in using the woodland as a resource to benefit the community.

The Draft Plan includes plans for improving access, improving biodiversity, looking after the history and heritage in the woods, and also plans for removing trees and replanting them.

When the initial draft of the plan is completed, it will then be open for consultation. We expect that the initial draft of the plan will include all potential options for developing the woods. CCDT will be asking various stakeholders, especially community members, for their views on it before a final version is agreed. This ensures that everyone has the opportunity to have their say in what happens in our woodland.

We want to explain a bit more about the proposals that will be in the Draft Plan and outline some of the pros and cons of doing or not doing them, to help everyone to take an informed view in responding to the consultation.

Once accepted and submitted the Woodland Management Plan will allow us access to grants to support the activities detailed in the plan.

What's going to be in the draft plan?

The Draft Woodland Management Plan lists the following forestry proposals for the area of Gillies Hill owned by the community – 64 Hectares (ha) in total. We've included all possible activities for consideration as we can remove activities following consultation, but we can't add anything in. This represents all options on the table and will be presented in the Draft Woodland Management Plan for consultation so anyone can tell us their views on the proposals.

1. Signage, waymarking and interpretation boards
2. General footpath maintenance and enhancement
3. Upgrades to about 1.2km of footpaths to increase accessibility
4. Rhododendron control
5. Coppicing of 0.5ha per year
6. Thinning of Larch over an area of 17ha and replanting
7. Clear felling of the 'Dark Wids' (2.2ha) and replanting

We'll be providing more information on the proposals to explain why they've been suggested and outline some of the pros and cons of doing them or not doing them.

<p>Why would you want to manage the woods? Why not just leave the woods to be 'wild'?</p>	<p>There is almost nowhere in Scotland that is truly 'wild' – nearly all our landscapes are the way they are because of thousands of years of human activity working alongside nature. Much of our native wildlife has evolved in woodlands that have been managed by humans – for example cutting woodlands for resources or clearing areas to attract prey - and active sustainable management of woodlands maintains a mix of habitats, from dense undergrowth to open glades. According to Forest Research, a number of studies have shown that in the UK managed woodlands increase in biodiversity value.</p> <p>The Wildlife Trusts has some useful information on managing woodlands for wildlife here: https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-advice/how-manage-woodland-wildlife</p> <p>Gillies Hill woodland has been managed as a working woodland in the past. The Murray family managed the woodland mainly for ornamental value. Subsequently the woodland was thinned and planted with the conifers that we see today (mostly Larch, Douglas Fir and Spruce). The sawmill, owned and run by the Brownlie family, extracted, and processed the timber, which included oak, and planting was also carried out. The Larch was thinned in the 70s, but woodland management has been absent up until the CCDT came into ownership for the community in 2019. Up to now our woodland management has been light touch – mainly felling dangerous trees and starting to clear Rhododendron.</p>
<p>What are the proposals for signs and footpaths?</p>	<p>A survey was carried out in summer 2020 asked the community's views on developing the paths in the woods. It showed that a majority enjoyed the 'wild' and unmanaged nature of much of the paths in the woods, with support for minor works to stop erosion, creating an all ability path to improve accessibility for more of the community, as well as for limited signage or waymarking. A more recent survey asked for views on a proposed route for an all ability path from the primary school to the walled garden and 90% supported this. Creating an all ability path will create some disruption in the short term along the proposed route whilst it is constructed, and depending on the route taken may require the removal of some trees, though this will be minimised as much as possible. Not creating the path would mean that those in our community who are less mobile will not be able to enjoy the benefits of enjoying our beautiful woodland.</p>

What are your plans for managing Rhododendron?



The story so far on the castle driveway

Rhododendron ponticum is an invasive, non-native plant. There are some fine examples of ornamental rhododendron around the castle, but Rhododendron ponticum (common rhododendron) has spread all over the hill. It is a smothering plant that prevents many other native plants as well as trees from getting established, covering the ground and blocking sunlight. Removing the rhododendron is an important as a first step towards getting the woods in better ecological condition, as well any potential further management. It does provide some nesting habitat for birds and it does also provide a nectar source for bees. However, these can be catered for with native flowering shrubs such as elder, hawthorn, rowan etc. that would be able to grow if the rhododendron is controlled. Holly and yew would provide good nesting habitat but are currently in short supply. Removing the rhododendron will be carried out mostly by volunteer and using hand tools over the winter to avoid disturbing nesting birds. If left unmanaged the rhododendron will continue to spread throughout the woodland creating a very uniform habitat that is poor for biodiversity.

What are your plans for producing wood fuel?



In developing a local wood fuel supply we expect that the majority of wood will come from trees we have to fell anyway (e.g., for safety reasons, or to clear the walled garden).

Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management which exploits the capacity of many species of trees to put out new shoots from their stump or roots if cut down. Tree stems are cut down to near ground level, and it grows back with many stems. Over a number of years (e.g., 3-20 years) these new stems can be harvested again. Coppicing is carried out in rotation on with a small area felled each year. The harvested wood is easy to handle and process as the stems are straight and not too thick – it's a particularly sustainable method of providing fuel wood. Carrying out coppicing creates a variety of habitats – areas of mature trees, freshly cut areas open areas where flowers can grow (good for butterflies), and all stages in between, so it is good for biodiversity as long as it is managed.

A recent survey on developing a wood fuel supply from the woods answered by 121 people showed 103 (85%) would be interested in purchasing and collecting firewood from Gillies Hill Community Woodland and a further 18 would be interested if a delivery service was available.

Why are there proposals for thinning larch trees?



One night's wind damage in 1968



The larch we have was planted many years ago and has been thinned before. It is an excellent timber resource. Harvesting some of it on a small scale would allow access to this resource to build things in the woods- this has already been done using larch trees that have fallen down/been chopped down before we came to own the woods – for example building the benches in the tennis courts. It would also help to open up the canopy to allow light in for tree regeneration. Another concern is that there is a disease affecting larch trees mostly in the west of Scotland (*Phytophthora ramorum*). This disease has been detected on the hill (though not on the land owned by CCDDT) and that resulted in the Forestry Commission imposing a Plant Health Notice on the landowners ordering them to remove every larch tree within 100m of the affected tree. Thinning the larch trees will help to reduce transmission of the disease (social distancing for trees). The mature larch we have do provide a food and nesting resource for red squirrels. The harvesting intensity proposed is around 350 trees over a 5-year period. Thinning the larch would be done on a small scale and using appropriate machinery that minimises ground damage in the surrounding woodland.

What is being proposed for the 'Dark Wids'?

This photograph taken in the 60's shows the castle viewed from the walled garden before the sitka were planted but showing other deciduous trees planted on the hill these native trees were cut down to be replaced by the sitka as a commercial crop



The 'Dark Wids' is a stand of sitka spruce (a very common tree in commercial forestry plantations), was planted in the late 60s and has now reached maturity. Some people in the village will remember a time before the Dark Wids were there. The trees planted have never been thinned so it has thinned itself, resulting in many dead stems as the more dominant trees suppressed the others. Sitka spruce plantations planted like this are not a good habitat for wildlife, but the trees do provide food for birds such as finches and goldcrests, as well as red squirrels. Typically stands of sitka spruce like this would be removed by 'clear felling' (removing all trees at once) at around this age. If this was done the area would be replanted with species such as oak, douglas fir and other trees that would be more beneficial to wildlife. Thinning the trees, rather than clear felling, risks the remaining trees being blown over as they are so tightly packed at the moment and have not been exposed to wind. If it is left as it is, it would probably result in further 'self-thinning' (i.e. trees blowing over).

The Dark Wids do represent a good commercial timber resource and therefore financial resource. If they were to be felled the Trust would likely sell the trees as they are 'standing' to a forestry contractor who would then remove them. The area would then be replanted with a mix of trees with a focus on benefitting wildlife. In the short term it would be a big change to an area of the woods, and forestry operations would restrict access at certain times, but in the

<p>What is being proposed for the 'Dark Wids'? cont.</p>	<p>longer term replating would benefit the biodiversity of the woods.</p> <p>The money received from the sale of the timber would be used by the Trust to benefit the woods (e.g. maintaining paths, funding educational activities for all ages and improving access to this natural environment.) As noted above however, the proposal to fell the Dark Wids is not primarily to raise revenue, there are good management and environmental reasons too.</p>
<p>What will happen to any money made from selling timber?</p>	<p>As landowner the CCDT has several ongoing costs (such as insurance, fuel for any tool use, subcontractor costs for any work our Community Forest Manager cannot do) and it is important to consider ways that we can provide a sustainable income to meet these costs and ensure we keep the woodlands as a place for the community to enjoy for years to come. All money made from selling timber would be available for the Trust to use to achieve its charitable goals.</p> <p>CCDT is a democratic organisation which anyone can join also anyone can propose project ideas whether or not they are a member.</p> <p>The charitable goals of the Trust are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance environmental protection or improvement including preservation, sustainable development and conservation of the natural environment, the maintenance, improvement or provision of environmental amenities for the Community and/or the preservation of buildings or sites of architectural, historic or other importance to the Community. • To provide or assist in providing facilities for recreation and other leisure time activity, which will be available to members of the Community and public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life of the Community. • To advance the education of the Community about its environment, culture, heritage and/or history. • To manage community land and facilities for the benefit of the Community and the public in general. • To advance community development within the Community.
<p>How will I be able to give my views?</p>	<p>We welcome everyone to give their views directly to us. If you wish to put your views in writing you can either send to woodland@ccdt.org.uk or via post to CCDT, c/o 58 Gillies Hill, Cambusbarron.</p>

During July we held two Woodland Forum Sessions where we enjoyed chatting to members of the community who came along to discuss progress so far and give their ideas and opinions.

This was also an excellent opportunity to see how they could take a more proactive role in our plans for developing the woodland. We are only a small team of volunteers and a part-time Community Forest Manager so any additional support would be welcomed.

If you are unable to attend our sessions but would like to comment on the information you have read here or other ideas you may have please e-mail woodland@ccdt.org.uk

The Woodland Management Plan which will be published on our website will be a **draft format** which can still be changed. Comments will be invited for one month after it is published, the consultation period will then end. The draft plan will be updated following the results of consultation and once a finalised Woodland Management Plan is in place funding will be applied for to take this plan forward.

There will be an evening information session in the Community Centre prior to our AGM on Tuesday 31/8/21 from 7pm. Come and join us for tea/coffee, cake and a chat about your local community. If there is a project, idea or area that the community could benefit from developing, we'd welcome your ideas come along and share them with us.

