

CCDT Chair's Report 2025 to 2026

Since our last AGM in August 2025, we have made good progress on our key aims to support the sustainable development of our community and take forward our agreed woodland management plan.

All this good work for the community is reliant on the dedicated effort of our volunteers, trustees and members. We will need their continued support in 2026/27 under the newly elected Board. We will also need to encourage new volunteers and trustees to join the Trust so that we have more capacity to sustain the projects we are already delivering and take forward new ideas that would benefit the community. We summarise our main achievements below.

Woodland Management

- Managing the 'Dark Woods' – Following an independent review that recommended clear felling and restocking of the Dark Woods the Trust appointed woodland consultancy TreeStory to manage the restructuring of the site on its behalf and this project was overseen by two volunteers from the Trust - Angus & Tim Elliot. The felling work commenced late October 25 and all work was completed by March 26. The income from the timber paid for the consultancy fees and will also cover the costs of replanting the site. We will be consulting on the plans for the felled area soon
- Wildlife and Habitat Conservation – Restoration work continued at the Lily Pond, with clearance of invasive Rhododendron Ponticum and construction of leaky dams allowing the pond and surrounding understorey to recover and support more wildlife. Species recorded in the area during the year include badgers, foxes, red squirrels, hares and pine martens.
- Improving Tree Safety – The trust continued to monitor tree safety with the support of trained volunteers and professional contractors sympathetic to the woodland objectives. More recently we have found evidence of fungus "Dyers Polypore" which infects conifer trees and causes them to rot. The trust is assessing how best to manage any health and safety risks this may bring.
- Woodland Replanting – We completed replanting of the area of felling for the SPHN notice – 1850 saplings were planted in March 26 including two volunteer days..
- Signage – Volunteers installed new signs at Gillies Hill, Whinneyknowe and the Castle Drive to highlight the many features of interest within the woodland and to help people navigate their way around.
- Mine entrance – The mine adit entrance within the woodland was secured with the installation of a secure frame covering the entrance.

Walled Garden

- Community larder – The garden continued to provide produce for the community larder from plantings in restored ground, raised beds and polytunnels.
- Beehive – In April this year we introduced a beehive to the Walled Garden, and it has produced 20 jars of local honey that will be on sale at our AGM.

Firewood club – The firewood club established in May 2024 continued to be successful with strong sales over the winter season, with all seasoned firewood sold out by February 2026. Stocks of seasoned firewood are now building up for another winter season. It meets every Thursday evening and offers volunteers the opportunity to chop their own firewood and process firewood for sale to CCDT members.

Woodland Nursery (Cambusbarron Village Nursery)

- Planning application – the planning application for a woodland nursery on a site neighboring the Walled Garden was approved. The Trust is supportive in principle of this proposal, and ongoing discussions continue before the terms of the lease can be finalised with the Trust.

Woodland Access

- Anti-social behaviour – Sadly, there were continued reports of antisocial behaviour in the woods (fires, vandalism, theft, motorised vehicles). Where required you should contact the police if you see antisocial behaviour.
- All abilities path – This project has been on hold due to lack of capacity. We hope to submit a planning application for the route during the year ahead.

Village Projects

Save Gillies Hill – Following the winding up of the campaigning charity Save Gillies Hill at its AGM on 6 August 2025, £3,683.92 was transferred to CCDDT. These funds are restricted for use in monitoring the 16 planning conditions imposed on the quarry developers, with any funds remaining after three years to transfer to the Trust's unrestricted funds.

Developing the Trust

- Membership - Thanks to Emma's work as Membership Secretary, we continued to grow our membership with 36 new members joining since the last AGM.
- Trustees and Volunteers – We are supported by dedicated hard-working volunteers and trustees, but we recognise that we need to attract more volunteers and trustees if we are to ensure the continuation of our existing projects and the ability to undertake new projects. We thank Stewart, Andy and Kirsty for their valuable work as Trustees.
- Updating our approach to Health & Safety – We were able to renew our public liability insurance this year.
- Developing our funding model – We continue to seek and secure grant income, but we also looked for opportunities to generate income to cover the annual running costs of the Trust.
- Grant Funding – We have been successful in securing money for our work and projects from a range of funders during the year and we would like to thank them for their support:
 - Cambusbarron Community Fund (Business support)
 - International Tree Foundation (Woodland replanting)
 - Stirling Council Community Pride Fund (various projects)
 - Community Led local Development (woodland base)

Saying Goodbye - Very sadly, two of our volunteers died this summer. Mark Gregory suddenly passed away in June 2026, and our thoughts are with Pam and Cara. We also lost Finlay McIntosh in July, and we wish his wife Kate all the best. Mark's work in the woodland and Findlay's in the walled garden will be hard to replace, and both will be remembered fondly for a long time.