



What is a Community Woodland?

*“A **Community Woodland** is one partly or completely controlled by the local community, through a community woodland group. The woodland may be owned or leased by the group, or managed in partnership with another organisation.”* Community Woodland Association

From small beginnings in the late 1980's, there are now over 200 groups across Scotland, involved in or responsible for the management of thousands of hectares of woodland and open space.

Community woodlands are extremely diverse, embracing all woodland types from ancient semi-natural woods to extensive conifer plantations, and ranging from less than a hectare to over a thousand hectares in size.

Likewise, the communities involved range from crofting townships in the far north and west to small towns and inner-city communities in the central belt.

Some of the larger groups now employ staff to manage and develop their woods, while others are managed entirely by volunteers. Whilst the aims and objectives of individual groups vary according to local needs and aspirations, and the type and scale of the woodland managed, all are working to build sustainable, flourishing, creative, resilient and vibrant communities.

Individuals, groups and their own communities, are increasingly recognising woodland and associated activity as being an important part of their cultural heritage.

What do Scotland's community woodlands deliver? Scotland's community woodlands deliver a huge range of public benefits, including:

- **Recreation** - providing wide-ranging opportunities for outdoor recreation, from informal paths and 'all ability' facilities to mountain bike trails and orienteering courses;
- **Biodiversity & Conservation** - restoring and expanding native woodlands, and carrying out habitat improvements within other forest types, to conserve and enhance Scotland's biodiversity and contribute to climate change mitigation;
- **Economic development** - increasing the value of forestry to local communities, creating jobs and developing local processing and markets for timber and non-timber forest products;
- **Renewable energy** - developing local supply chains and markets for woodfuel, to help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and support sustainable forest management;
- **Social inclusion** - involving all sections of the community in planning and decision-making, and ensuring that the benefits of community woodlands are available to all.