

Scottish Land Fund  
Ionmhas Fearainn Na H-Alba

# Easter Breich Wood Community Group

SC051201



**Annual report 2021-22**

# Our first year: buying the woodland

## Why we did we start?

When our local woodland was put up for sale during the pandemic, we formed a community group with the aim of taking it into community ownership.

Our community group became a charity in August 2021, when we adopted our new constitution as a SCIO. Our aims are:

- To secure Easter Breich Wood for the benefit of the community. (i.e Seafield, Polbeth, West Calder and Harburn).
- To maintain and improve the woodland in order to advance environmental protection and community health and development
- To involve the community and work with partners.

## Buying the woodland

Our main focus in our first six months was completing the purchase of the woodland. Thanks to funding from the Community Land Fund this went through in March 2022.

In April our official 'launch event' was attended by Angela Constance, MSP and was covered by Edinburgh Live, the Courier and Daily Record. Thank you to everyone who attended our coffee and cake stall and all those who donated. The event raised £260 which will help with maintenance work over the year.

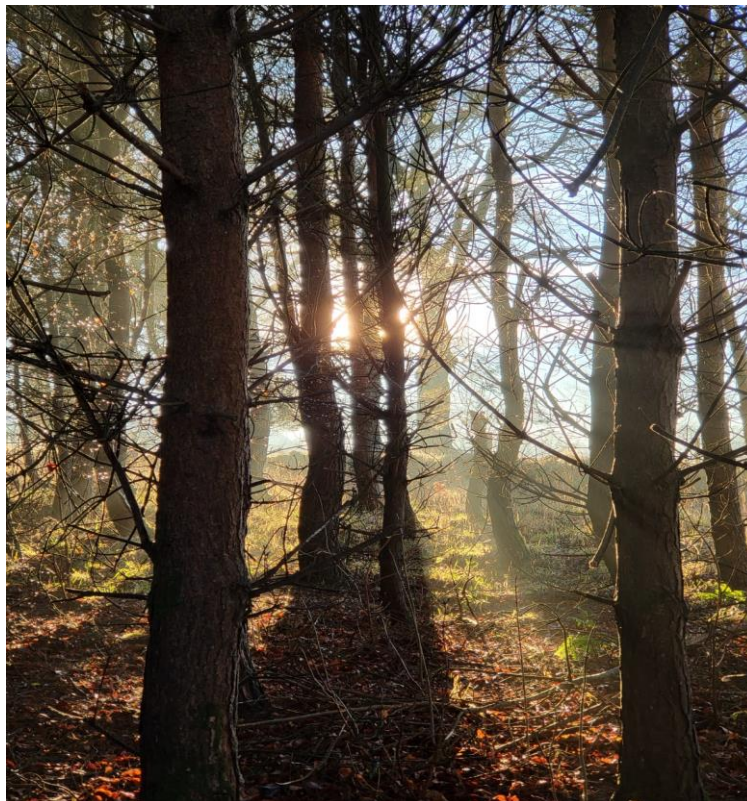


## Working with partners

To help us get established, the National Lottery grant included funds for [West Calder and Harburn Development Trust](#) to work with us for a year from March 2021.

We've set up a partnership with West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust and the Polbeth Community Garden to support woodland, events and partnership management. The partnership enables access to staff in the Polbeth Community Garden who have the necessary woodland management and volunteer experience together with a stock of tools required for maintenance of the wood. Some of the staff have countryside ranger skills and are available to lead community activities such as nature walks and other activities for the benefit of the community. West Calder and Harburn Development Trust have expertise in event management and publicity including the development of social media and have access to a wide range of potential partners and sources of funding who it will be beneficial for us to work with going forward.

We've also made links with the [Shale Trail](#) – which runs through the woodland, the [Lothian Amphibian and Reptile Group](#), [SSPCA](#), [the River Almond Action Group](#) and [West Lothian Litter Pickers](#). And we've built links with other community woodlands – in Carron Valley and [Skolieburn Meadow](#), Addiewell.



# Wildlife monitoring

We're trying to understand what wildlife and plants we have in the woodland – so that we can understand how to protect them. We've taken part in national wildlife monitoring and reached out to other groups to help us.

In May we did a Water vole survey. While we didn't find any signs of water voles, we did see possible signs of otter.

In August we took part in the 'Big Butterfly Count'.

The results of both were included in national records.



Later that month we made links with the [Lothian Amphibian and Reptile Group](#). We plan to have a full survey of the pond area next spring.

We also recently worked with the SSPCA, releasing eight 'rescue' hedgehogs in the woodland.



We hope to build on this start to develop links with local wildlife groups and develop this into educational events over the course of next year.

## Path maintenance

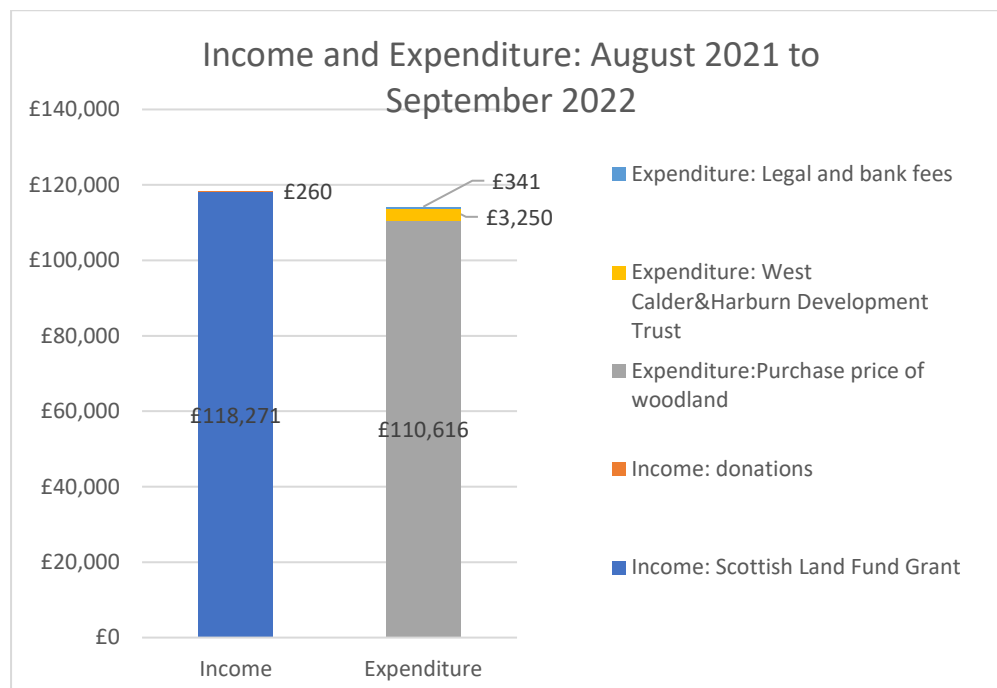
In July, West Calder and Harburn Development Trust helped organise a volunteer maintenance afternoon, cutting back vegetation that had over-grown the paths. Although quite small scale, it provides a good starting point from which to build more involvement of members as volunteers.

We'd also like to thank Gordon Clarke for all the work he's done through the year cutting the grass and the hedge.



We plan to hold regular volunteer maintenance events over the year.

# Summary of Accounts



We received £118,271 from the National Lottery who administer the Community Land Fund on behalf of the Scottish Government. This was used to pay the purchase cost of the woodland - £110,616 and legal fees. The balance is paid to [West Calder and Harburn Development Trust](#) under an agreement with them to help us establish our way of working in our first year and find other sources of funding for future years. £3,250 is the first of four payments, the remainder of which will fall in 2022-23.

## Reserves Policy

We manage Easter Breich Wood on behalf of the community, including encouraging community access by maintaining paths. A certain level of reserves is needed in case of unexpected, urgent path repairs or urgent tree removal along the roadside boundary.

This year we are putting £250 toward reserves.

This will be reviewed annually in the light of costs actually incurred. Regular path maintenance and an annual tree condition survey will reduce the risk of unexpected urgent work being required.

## Our Trustees

- Bryan Coyne, Chair
- Heather McClafferty, Treasurer (from 8 April 2022)
- Camilla Kidner, Secretary
- Niamh Coyne, membership and communications
- Rhoda Lawton
- Grant Knight
- Norman Lannigan

### ***Previous trustees during the year***

- Jessie Robertson, to November 2021
- Dorry McLaughlin, Treasurer to 7 April 2022



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