



Forestry and  
Land Scotland  
Coilltearachd agus  
Fearann Alba

# Community Asset Transfer Scheme

**Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015  
4th Annual Report**

1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

### Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 4th Annual Report

Forestry and Land Scotland's Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) was launched in January 2017. CATS sets out how we'll deliver the asset transfer rights for communities, covered in Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, for our national forests and land.

This fourth annual report covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. During that period, Forestry and Land Scotland has:

- **validated four requests for ownership** of sites on our national forests and land
- **validated one request for lease** of a site
- issued decision notices **to approve seven requests**
- **completed two transfers of ownership**
- **completed one lease transfer**

One request validated during the last year was for land notified for sale under our New Woodland Investment Programme. A further three requests were for areas of our national forest and land that communities had identified to contribute to their objectives and benefit their communities. FLS also validated one request for lease to build a hydroelectric scheme.

In summary, since the scheme launched in January 2017 up until 31 March 2021, FLS had received a total of 22 requests, 1 is awaiting a decision and 20 have been approved, of which:

- 11 sales have completed, totalling 494 hectares
- 1 renewables lease has been completed, and is under construction
- 5 sites are under offer and in progress to conclude
- 2 are awaiting offers from the community
- 1 has been withdrawn by the community

A full list of asset transfer requests received for the National Forest Estate, and progress to date is shown in Annex 1.

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Since 31 March 2021, Forestry and Land Scotland has received 3 requests for ownership: 2 for sites notified for sale and 1 community-led request; approved 2 requests for ownership and one for a lease. 3 further transfers of ownership have completed.

### Empowering Communities

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) was formed on 1 April 2019, to manage Scotland's national forests and land. FLS published its new Corporate Plan for 2019-2022 in October 2019, following public consultation. This sets out the priorities for the new organisation and how FLS will help deliver across all eleven National Outcomes, including empowering communities.

FLS has committed in the Corporate Plan to produce a Community Strategy, to underpin its operational actions:

- Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land
- Continuing to support community empowerment by enabling communities to make use of the national forests and land to benefit their communities

FLS has continued to engage with communities across Scotland to provide advice on its Community Asset Transfer Scheme. FLS has a pipeline of around 30 projects in development, and works with the community bodies to discuss the best solution to achieve their aspirations and provide information about the land it manages. The Community Asset Transfer Manager and the National Community Advisor work with our Regional land management and Estates Development teams, to meet with communities, discuss proposals and options for use or transfer of land, and signpost to relevant support for example from the [Scottish Land Fund](#) and [Community Ownership Support Service](#).

The Community Strategy will look at how we work with communities and the contribution of our national forests and land to the key objectives of:

- Supporting a sustainable rural economy
- Looking after Scotland's National Forests and Land
- Scotland's National Forests and Land for People

### Engaging communities in decisions relating to land

People can find out more about our national forests and land from the map based [Register of Land](#). A range of spatial data with richer functionality is available from the [OpenData](#) website. Further guidance and case studies on community projects and activities on the national forests and land are also available on our [Communities web pages](#).

Forestry and Land Scotland engages communities in the decisions we make about how we manage our national forests and land through public consultations. Our land management plans set out how we intend to manage a specific area of forest over a period of ten years. The plans are published online and we engage communities and other stakeholders to gather a range of views. After public consultation and approval, land management plans are put into action by our local teams.

We currently have 23 formal consultations with communities and stakeholders on plans which are up for renewal, and others at various stages in the process of review and informal consultation. FLS has 360 active land management plans, covering most of Scotland's national forest and land, which are available [online](#) or by contacting your [Regional office](#).

### Engaging communities in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

Our national forests and land are used by many groups for a huge range of activities. Many activities can be freely carried out in our woodlands. Groups can also get permissions for activities which require more formal arrangements, such as sporting events, habitat management, or path maintenance to improve access to a woodland.

We also work with communities to carry out projects and longer term activities through agreements and leases. These range from woodland management agreements, to leases for renewables projects or community buildings. We also work with communities of interest including environmental NGOs, sports clubs, history and arts groups, and in partnership with communities and other bodies to support a programme of activities.

A summary of current formal FLS engagement and agreements for community activity on the national forests and land is:

- Partnerships / agreements / leases: 94
- Actively engaged / empowered / submitting asset transfer requests: 122

Our staff work closely with communities locally to put in place the right agreement to deliver the community's objectives and manage our national forests and land responsibly and sustainably.

### Community Asset Transfer Scheme

The [Community Asset Transfer Scheme \(CATS\)](#) enables communities to take greater control of the land through ownership or lease. Over the last year, we have completed the sale of 2 further sites to communities, supported by grants from the Scottish Land Fund. As at publication on 30 June 2021, 14 transfers of ownership and 1 lease had been completed.

Although the last year has been a very challenging one for communities, many have still been working hard to put together projects to benefit their communities, including:

- Completion of the lease for Raasay Development Trust's community hydro scheme on Raasay, to address fuel poverty on Raasay and provide a small income to pursue projects within Raasay's 5 year Development Plan. The lease has been agreed and Raasay Development Trust successfully raised £650,000 through community shares for the construction, which is now underway.



*Pipework for Raasay Community Renewables hydro scheme arriving at Inverarish  
(Photo courtesy of Ross Gillies, Raasay Community Renewables)*

- The Crannog Centre proposals to relocate to a new site at Dalerb, Loch Tay to secure the long-term future of the Scottish Crannog Centre, including a main building built to modern museum standards, multiple crannogs and other facilities to be developed through a masterplan consultation with the community.

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- Carsphairn Community Woodland purchased 48 hectares of woodland at Muirdrochwood to create a rural economic hub to help address social issues of depopulation, an ageing population and a lack of outdoor facilities in the area, along with increasing the diversity of the forest.
- Most recently in May 2021, Inverawe Community Woodland took ownership of 6 hectares of much valued local woodland and the community will now enhance the woodland amenity through non-native species clearance, opening up pedestrian access, and encouraging native wildlife.

And FLS continues to maintain a pipeline of over 30 projects in development, many supported by the Scottish Land Fund’s Stage 1 funding. Since 1 April 2021, FLS has received 3 new asset transfer requests for a community hub and café at Inchree, woodland crofts at Lower Ardochy, Invergarry and a community-owned centre for holistic health and sustainable living at Littleburn Road, Munloch.

### Community Updates

It has now been more than 4 years since CATS was launched by FLS, and nearly 3 years since the FLS completed the transfer of the first site into community ownership. Significant progress has been made, with the communities delivering projects that are making a major difference to their communities.

#### **Ardura Community Forest – Mull and Iona Community Trust**

Since taking ownership of the site in September 2019, [Ardura Community Forest](#) has been running outdoor activities as part of the Ardura Community Well-Being project, funded by The National Community Lottery Fund such as Forest Bathing and Woodland Birdsong events.

MICT has also set up Ardura Acorns, a toddler play scheme run by the Mull and Iona Ranger Service, with weekly events at various locations including Ardura Forest.



*Sign at Ardura Community Forest (Photo courtesy of MICT)*

### Carron Valley Community Woodland

#### – Valley Renewables Group

[Valley Renewables Group](#) (VRG) took ownership of the woodland in October 2018, and the official launch in May 2019 was attended by 30 local residents, followed up by tree planting days over the summer. VRG, with the support of the Community Council and Foundation Scotland, has now approved a second 3 year budget to continue development and management of the community woodland through to summer 2024.



*Directors of Valley Renewables Group host a site visit for the CATS Evaluation Panel at Carron Valley Community Woodland*

In their first year, VRG appointed a woodland manager, and along with community volunteers established a detailed management plan, community base cabin, cleared windblown trees for woodfuel, create a large new pond and replaced young Sitka spruce with over 5,500 broadleaved trees.

Since then, the community has begun to create new footpaths, with seats at good viewpoints. In normal circumstances the [community woodland group](#) would run monthly volunteer workdays, and hold an Annual Woodland Open Day and BBQ (see the Carron Valley Community [Woodland supplement March 2021](#)).

Members of the CATS Evaluation Panel visited the site in October 2019, to hear from community representatives how the community woodland was providing a focus for activity and bringing people from a dispersed community together.

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### Fairy Pools Car Park, Glen Brittle, Skye

#### - Minginish Community Hall Association (MCHA)

[MCHA](#) is working in partnership with Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland ([OATS](#)) and started work on the new car park immediately following the transfer in July 2018. By December 2018, they had built 120 new car parking spaces including parking for minibuses and motorbikes. Work started on the new toilet block in December 2019, and although delayed by COVID19, it was opened in Spring 2021 (see updates from [Fairy Pools News | Facebook](#)).

MCHA also held a Plant a Tree Day in 2019 as part of the Woodland Trust's National Plant A Tree Day – volunteers planted 420 saplings at the car park to improve biodiversity and amenity.



*MCHA poster for Plant a Tree Day and volunteers at the Fairy Pools Car park (Photos courtesy of Adrian Trendall)*

MCHA is now investing the rental income from the car park into the community, for example supporting the purchase of a new community minibus and setting up the [Fairy Pools Grant Fund](#). MCHA and OATS produced a video in May 2019 on the work in progress for HIE's Strengthening Communities conference [Our Communities - Minginish Community Hall Association - YouTube](#).



### **Glenan Community Woodland, Portavadie**

#### **– Friends of Glenan Wood**

Friend of Glenan Wood ([FoGW](#)) took ownership at the end of 2019, and by January had a Forest Ranger in post and held their first community event in the woodland on 29 February 2020. Further events and volunteering activities were then put on hold due to COVID19, however the Forest Ranger has continued to work on the management plan, improving paths and access, helped arrest invasive species through ringbarking conifers and rhododendron control, and is developing new plans for the woodland such as regeneration 'exclosures', a community orchard, biochar production and camera stalking tours.



*Sign at Glenan Wood (Photo courtesy of Rhyddian Knight, Friends of Glenan Wood)*

### **Dronley Community Woodland, Auchterhouse**

Dronley Community Woodland (DCW) took ownership of Dronley Wood in March 2019. By the end of 2019, they had appointed a part-time woodland manager, the Forest School had run 2 blocks of 6 sessions with primary school pupils and DCW had started supplying timber to Tayside Forestry and other customers for local wood fuel and saw logs.

*(cont)*



*The new car park at Dronley Community Woodland (Photo courtesy of Garry Stewart, Dronley Community Woodland)*

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Although some activities had to be put on hold due to COVID19 restrictions, the community completed the new LEADER funded all ability paths in March 2021 with shelter, interpretation material and benches and purchased tools for volunteer work parties. (A short video about the project by Higher Ground Lifestyle is available on [YouTube](#)). Volunteers have helped prepare round wood for fencing, information boards and shelters and cleared a vast area of gorse and broom in preparation for planting. The car park has been extended to more than twice its size and partly resurfaced and fenced. Visitor numbers have greatly increased with people of all ages and abilities.

A tree nursery has been formed, with many donations of young trees and a supply of about 7,000 broadleaved trees from Carbon Footprint Ltd. The emphasis is on having a Continuous Cover Woodland and encouraging the introduction and regeneration of broadleaved trees.

Other projects include Carradale Community Trust's new community composting facility at Seneval Wood, which opened in August 2020; Eshiels Community Woodland which has held a number of community and arts projects, and is supplying local woodfuel; and Leadburn Community Woodland where restoration work has been underway and extension of paths into the new area, with an estimated five-fold increase in visitor numbers over the last year.

### CATS Evaluation Panel

With 5 of the 7 Panel members continuing for second term, FLS launched a recruitment for 2 new Panel members, which received an overwhelming response. The 2 new members appointed to the Panel are Professor Bill Slee and Courtney-Hyde Peyton (further information about the CATS Evaluation Panel is available [here](#)). The normal CATS Evaluation Panel site visits had to be carried out online in 2020, which has allowed Panel members to continue to engage with communities, providing constructive feedback to help improve and strengthen community proposals and continue to provide independent and impartial advice to Forestry and Land Scotland. One of our new Panel members has carried out the first site visit of 2021 to meet Glengarry Community Woodland to discuss their proposal for woodland crofts at [Lower Ardochy](#).

### Looking Ahead

The Community Strategy has been delayed over the last year due to other pressures, but it is now making progress to set out the many ways in which communities are involved in our decision making and the opportunities to make use of our national forests and land.

We will also:

- continue to review and improve our CATS guidance;
- improve the information available on existing community projects and how communities can make better use of national forests and land; and
- continue to support for our staff in their day to day work with communities.

# Community Empowerment

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### ANNEX 1: Forestry and Land Scotland: Asset Transfer Requests

Table 1: Requests validated 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
<a href="#">The Scottish Crannog Centre</a> , Dalerb, Loch Tay	The Crannog Centre	7-Apr-20	4	Ownership	New museum and visitor centre	<b>Approved</b> 16-Jun-20	Under offer
<a href="#">Insh Woodland and Grazings</a> Insh, Newtonmore,	Inch Community Holdings	25-Aug-20	6.3	Ownership	Community woodland and grazings	<b>Approved</b> 05-Nov-20	Under offer
<a href="#">Abhainn Greadhain Hydro Scheme</a> , Glenachulish	Lochaber Environmental Group	23-Sep-20	28*	Lease	Hydroelectric scheme	<b>Approved</b> 01-Mar-21	Awaiting offer
<a href="#">Ardlarach Quarry</a> Tain	Tain Rifle & Pistol Club	24-Nov-20	5.3	Ownership	Target and outdoor shooting range	<b>Approved</b> 24-Mar-21	Under offer
<a href="#">Broch Field</a> Strathyre	Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Community Trust	12-Mar-21	1.9	Ownership	Community recreation area	Awaiting decision	-

\*initial lease area for construction

## Annex 2: Previous Requests

	21 January 2017 to 31 March 2019
	Progress since 31 March 2021

Table 2: Requests validated 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
<a href="#">Clunes Buildings and Woodland</a> Clunes, Highland	Arkaig Community Forest	3-Sep-19	6	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 06-Jan-20	Under offer
<a href="#">Corsee Wood</a> Banchory, Aberdeenshire	Deeside Bike Collective	3-Sep-19	13	Ownership	Mountain bike trails	<b>Approved</b> 02-Mar-20	Under offer
<a href="#">Coilhullan Wood</a> Callander, Stirling	Callander Community Development Trust	23-Oct-19	83	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 21-Apr-20	Withdrawn
<a href="#">Inverarish hydroelectric scheme</a> Isle of Raasay, Highland	Raasay Development Trust	17-Dec-19	18	Lease	Hydroelectric scheme	<b>Approved</b> 29-May-20	<b>Completed</b> 7-Jan-21
<a href="#">Inverawe Woodland</a> Inverawe, Argyll & Bute	Inverawe Community Woodland	19-Mar-20	6	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 08-Jun-20	<b>Completed</b> 7-Jun-21

Table 3: Requests validated 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

<a href="#">Ardura</a> Craignure, Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	03-Apr-18	201	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 21-Dec-18	<b>Completed</b> 13-Sep-19
<a href="#">Seneval</a> Carradale, South Kintyre	Carradale Community Trust	22-Oct-18	1.9	Ownership	Community services	<b>Approved</b> 07-Feb-19	<b>Completed</b> 16-Sep-19
<a href="#">Glenan Wood</a> Portavadie, Cowal	Friends of Glenan Wood	02-Nov-18	144	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 10-May-19	<b>Completed</b> 20-Dec-19
<a href="#">The Gantry</a> Craignure, Isle of Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	15-Nov-18	0.35	Ownership	Community services	<b>Approved</b> 7-Feb-19	<b>Completed</b> 5-Feb-21
<a href="#">Muidrochwood</a> Carsphairn, Galloway	Carsphairn Community Woodland	7-Nov-18	324	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 03-May-19	<b>Completed</b> 31-Mar-21

						<b>Revised</b> 07-Jan-20	
<a href="#"><u>Corrow Gravel Pit</u></a> Lochgoilhead, Cowal	Lochgoil Watersports Cub	21-Nov-18	2.15	Ownership	Recreation	<b>Approved</b> 15-Feb-19	<b>Completed</b> 30-Oct-19

Table 4: Requests validated 21 January 2017 to 31 March 2018

<a href="#"><u>Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes</u></a> Ettrick, Scottish Borders	Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company	26-Jun-17	173	Ownership	Community woodland	Refused 03-Nov-17	Refused following Review by Scottish Ministers
<a href="#"><u>The Fairy Pools Car Park</u></a> Minginish, Isle of Skye	Minginish Community Hall Association	16-Aug-17	12.3	Ownership	Parking facilities	Approved 03-Nov-17	<b>Completed</b> 06-Jul-18
<a href="#"><u>Carron Valley</u></a> Carron Bridge, Stirling	Valley Renewables Group	20-Dec-17	21.3	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 28-Feb-18	<b>Completed</b> 12-Oct-18
<a href="#"><u>Leadburn Wood</u></a> Leadburn, Scottish Borders	Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland	26-Feb-18	9.4	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 28-Mar-19
<a href="#"><u>Dronley Wood</u></a> Auchterhouse, Angus	Dronley Community Woodland	19-Mar-18	50.7	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 28-Mar-19
<a href="#"><u>Eshiels Wood</u></a> Peebles, Scottish Borders	Peebles Community Trust	22-Mar-18	6.9	Ownership	Community woodland	<b>Approved</b> 04-Jun-18	<b>Completed</b> 15-Jan-19