



## Vice Chair's welcome

I am perhaps not alone in being amazed at how quickly time is passing this year. It seems only a moment ago that I was climbing one of the Quinag peaks when I was turned back by a sudden (Easter) snowstorm. A few days later I was sitting on the beach at Sandwood Bay enjoying the sunshine.

Like the weather, the year so far has been both interesting and challenging. The Trust is making good progress on the land that we manage, with planting of native tree species at Glenridding Common, on Skye and at Schiehallion and Glenlude. This work goes hand in hand with the effective management of deer so that we give nature every opportunity to repair itself.

We recently also completed the restoration of 35ha of peatland on Skye and are now exploring the feasibility of similar peatland work at Quinag, Sandwood Bay and Schiehallion.

Much of our work takes place in partnership with a range of organisations and communities, with the express aim of enabling everyone to thrive in and alongside wild places.

Earlier this year, we launched our *Just Transition and Wild Places* booklet, which outlines a vision for the role of wild places in a socially



and environmentally just transition to net zero in Scotland.

At a more local level, and with input from the community, we are exploring how to develop our newly acquired site at Kilmarie on Skye to best meet the Trust's charitable objectives. The site, which is adjacent to our land at Strathaird,

includes a redundant fish hatchery, a residential property and a lochan.

In June, I was delighted when more than 100 people joined us online for our 39th AGM, during which I spoke about the Trust's new Strategic Plan. One key component of the plan is the creation of three Regional Delivery Teams that will enable us to better identify potential partnerships throughout the UK.

The Regional Delivery Managers all spoke at the AGM, providing insights into their plans for the months ahead. Although still at an early stage, we hope to share details of exciting new opportunities in Yorkshire, the Midlands and Wales later in the year.

I would like to end by wishing all Members a good summer and thanking you once more for your continued support.

**Jane Smallman**

### Introducing our Trustees

Following our AGM in June, we are pleased to announce the results of the Trustee elections. There were six valid nominations for five vacancies, with Mark Aitken, Richard Eastmond, John Finney, Jim Sloane and Sheila Wren elected. Welcome and thank you all. We would also like to thank the Trustees Chris Loynes and Dave Gibson who are demitting office – and to remember Philip Graves who died this year – for their services.

Tea towel prayer flags at the last Members' Gathering in Glenridding, 2019



PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

# Together at last

Members will once again be able to meet in person this year

The Trust is delighted to host its first Members' Gathering for three years, with the event taking place 28-29 October at Bradfield Village Hall, near Sheffield.

Pre-Covid, the Gathering was a key event in the calendar, bringing Members together to share information about Trust projects and activities. With the transition to our new five-year Strategic Plan, this year's Gathering will present an opportunity for Members to ask questions and contribute ideas for priority projects.

The event will begin with a reception on the Friday evening, with David Balharry, Trust Chief Executive, the keynote speaker. Saturday will feature discussion groups and a chance to explore the local area, followed by evening entertainment and a buffet dinner.

"It's an exciting time to be part of the Trust," commented Tim Hoogwerf, the Trust's Regional Delivery Manager South. "Giving Members the chance to contribute to our new strategy will be immensely valuable."

Booking for the Gathering will be available at [johnmuirtrust.org/gathering2022](http://johnmuirtrust.org/gathering2022) or by calling the Trust's main office on 01796 470080 from 1 September.

## Peatland Appeal – a huge thank you

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Peatland Appeal which, to date, has raised more than £42,000. In April, we partnered with the Big Give Green Match Fund campaign, which got the appeal off to a great start by unlocking an extra £10,000 in match funding.

Your donations will support wider advocacy work to protect

peatlands as well as hands-on efforts to restore peatland on land in our care.

"Donations enable our work, but they are also a vote of confidence," said Rosie Simpson, the Trust's Senior Policy Officer. "Thank you for trusting us to deliver on behalf of wild places."

To donate, visit [johnmuirtrust.org/peatlands](http://johnmuirtrust.org/peatlands)

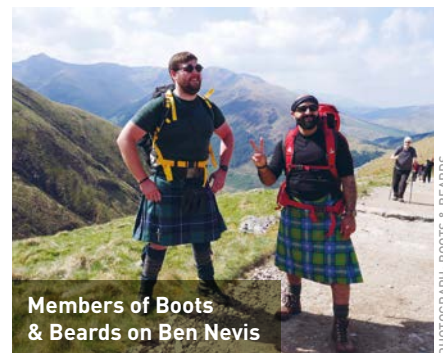


## A place for National Parks

The Trust has welcomed an announcement by the Scottish Government that it will designate at least one new National Park by 2026, and also commends recent consultation which invited the public to comment on criteria for deciding potential locations.

It is almost 20 years since Scotland's first National Parks were established in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and the Cairngorms. Both are now home to some of Scotland's most outstanding scenery, are internationally important areas for nature and receive millions of visitors every year.

The Trust now looks forward to engaging constructively with the Scottish Government to support changes needed in existing National Parks to help tackle climate change, improve biodiversity, manage growing visitor pressures and help strengthen local economies.



Members of Boots & Beards on Ben Nevis

PHOTOGRAPH: BOOTS & BEARDS

## Diversity matters

Last year we published *Wild Places For All*, a new equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy which outlined the steps being taken to ensure that everyone is able to access and benefit from wild places. To help us better understand the diversity of our membership, we invite Members to complete our EDI survey online. All responses are completely anonymous. To complete the survey, visit <https://bit.ly/3a2dCsz>



The decision has worrying implications for areas of wild land elsewhere

# Trust reflects on Sallachy decision

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BALHARRY

## Following the recent approval of a wind farm development on the Sallachy Estate, the Trust has much to consider

The Trust was dismayed when an application for a nine-turbine wind farm on the Sallachy Estate in the Northwest Highlands was approved in April – a decision that was highly significant for everyone with an interest in the future of wild places and how they are managed.

The proposals received strong support through the planning application process and was backed by local Community Councils which had signed a shared ownership Memorandum of Understanding with the developer in advance of the application being submitted. This means these communities stand to benefit financially once the wind farm is operational and electricity is being generated.

The Trust believes strongly in the importance of local communities having a say in how land is used in their area and would like to see an increase in community-owned renewable capacity. However, as a charity

constituted for the protection of wild places, it is our job to challenge changes in land use that are likely to impact the ecological function and identity of wild places.

Our three chief concerns about the proposals are as true today as when we first objected to the application in May 2021: the decision contravenes Scottish Planning Policy and supplementary guidance with respect to Wild Land Areas; the turbines will be sited in nationally important peatland; and while we do not yet know what this development will mean for other parts of the Reay-Cassley Wild Land Area, history suggests that more development proposals will follow.

The Trust has requested a meeting with the Highland Council to discuss the implications of this decision and the challenges of navigating the future expansion of onshore wind for the benefit of communities, nature and wild places.

## Renewed focus on deer

The Trust has long called for reform of deer management in Scotland – with recent activity from the Scottish Government suggesting a renewed urgency to begin implementing the recommendations of the Deer Working Group report nearly two years on. A cross departmental task force has been established to look at implementing reform and new legislation will be considered in 2024. The forthcoming Biodiversity Strategy is also likely to feature deer management as a priority. All in all, encouraging signs but, as yet, not much change on the ground.



## Starting conversations

The recent publication of our *Just Transition and Wild Places* booklet has generated considerable discussion amongst politicians in Scotland, with conversations around outdoor education, rural communities, carbon emissions and biodiversity.

In March, the booklet was distributed to all Members of the Scottish Parliament, plus key Ministers and Special Advisers. Since then, SNP, Green, Labour and Conservative members in Scottish representations have shown interest in our vision for the role of wild places in a socially and environmentally just transition to net zero.

Positive feedback was also received from the land reform and community sectors. We will now continue to extend our network of influence while raising awareness about the importance of wild places.

# Around the properties

Summer is always a busy period on land in the Trust's care. Here's a snapshot of some of the key activities either planned or underway at each site

## QUINAG

We have been busy on a wide range of projects, initiatives and public engagement – much of it deer-related. The Assynt Community Deer Larder is now in use by the local community for storing and butchering carcasses, while our Hill to Grill programme (see story on page six) and Women's Deer Stalking Group remain very popular.

Summer is the time when we monitor a variety of species, often with participation from Ullapool High School pupils through their involvement in the Junior Ranger pilot programme. We also continue to offer regular opportunities for volunteering, guided walks and educational school visits.

*Romany Garnett,  
Quinag Property Manager*

## GLENRIDDING COMMON

Together with our team of alpine plant growers, we continue to grow shrubs and plants from seed for planting out on the fell – with the recent planting of 150 downy willows taking the total planted to more than 2,000. We hope to broaden the genetic base of the shrubs by obtaining female stock from the nearest population in Dumfries and Galloway. Elsewhere, in partnership with Cumbria Wildlife Trust and United Utilities through the Thirlmere Resilience Programme, we planted 1,600 trees in a largely treeless environment in Wythburn Valley. It's part of a long-term plan to restore woodland cover to help slow water flow and reduce carbon loss through erosion.

*Pete Barron, Glenridding Common (Helvellyn) Property Manager*



## NEVIS

Work continues on a woodland scoping brief to help us better understand the potential for woodland expansion at Nevis as well as peatland restoration. The intention is also to create opportunities for volunteers to get involved.

And in partnership with the Nevis Landscape Partnership and Jahama Highland Estates we have appointed an Event Liaison Officer to co-ordinate the registrations and permissions for charity events on the main Ben Nevis path.

*Alison Austin, Nevis Property Manager*

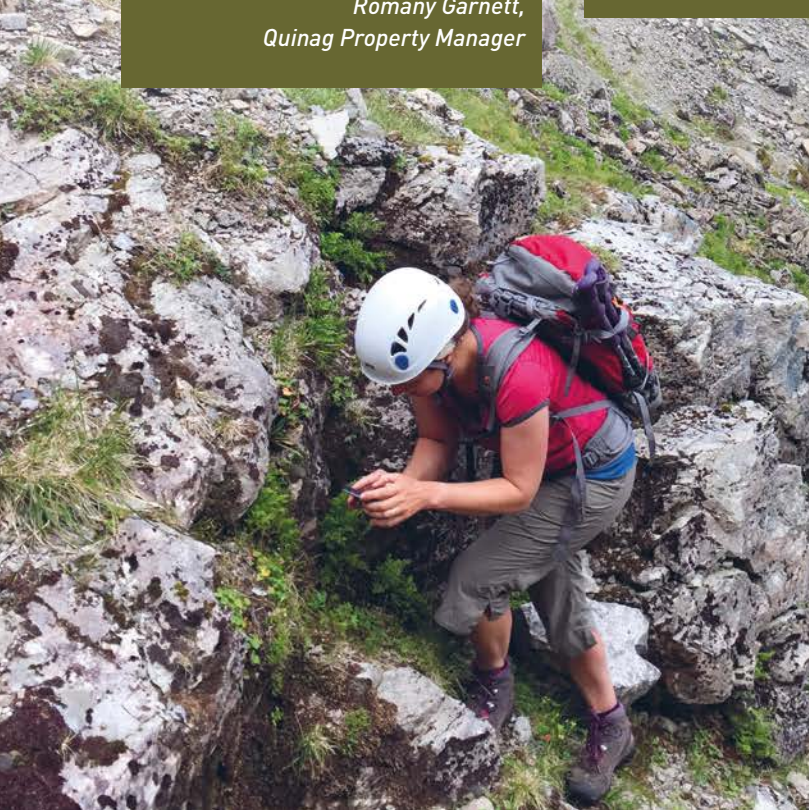
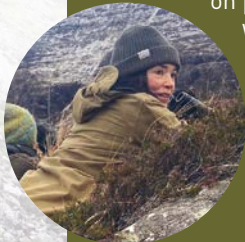


## EAST SCHIEHALLION

Here at Schiehallion, we are waiting for a key decision from Scottish Forestry about our plans for an ambitious mountain woodland project. We are also looking ahead to August when we will hold a celebration event for the 5th Anniversary of the Heart of Scotland Partnership and also to officially open the Foss Loop – an event much delayed by Covid.

Meanwhile, the trees in our regeneration area are doing well, and we are gathering data that shows how a total of 27ha has regenerated over the last four years. We were delighted to highlight this progress when the Trust recently hosted John Swinney, Scotland's Deputy First Minister and MSP for Perthshire North, on a visit to Schiehallion during which he learned more about work to restore upland habitats on the mountain.

*Dr Liz Auty, East Schiehallion Property Manager*





## LI & COIRE DHORRCAIL

In addition to our regular habitat monitoring work at this time of year, we are busy finalising contracts for two teams to deliver deer management across the land we manage on Knoydart and Skye. The objective is to reduce densities to allow for natural woodland regeneration and wider habitat recovery. In related work, we have commissioned the installation of moorings to improve ease of access by the Trust's boat and aid our deer management work.

*Richard Williams,  
Development Manager*



## GLENLUDE

From adversity comes opportunity. Having been served with a Statutory Plant Health Notice by Scottish Forestry in autumn 2021 after it was confirmed that much of our hybrid larch was infected with larch disease (*Phytophthora ramorum*), we had to take action.

More than 10ha of larch needed to be felled along with some areas of Sitka spruce that would have been left susceptible to wind throw. The felling was completed in December, although we held off on extraction until April. The work was finished by the end of May with the brash mounded in readiness for replanting with native broadleaved species – a tree planting project that has now been accelerated by several years.

Another exciting development is the planned construction of an all-access Gathering Shelter that will serve as an outdoor classroom, work area and prayer space. With planning approval granted in June, we hope to begin work on the structure very soon.

*Karen Purvis, Glenlud Property Manager*



## SKYE

Alongside the deer management plans outlined at Knoydart (see above), we have commissioned a woodland scoping exercise to investigate which parts of Strathaird have in the past, and could in the future, support woodland and advise on the best establishment techniques.

We are also shortly to appoint a consultant to undertake scoping and consultation work in respect of Strathaird and Kilmarie, looking at the best mix of uses for the site purchased last summer, and how this fits with the land already in our ownership and how collectively these will help deliver our strategic priorities and provide community benefit.

In other news, a team of local footpath contractors are now undertaking maintenance and repair work across the entirety of our 60km path network on Skye.



*John MacRae, Skye team*

## SANDWOOD

It has been an extremely busy period at Sandwood. Contract work on the Sandwood path was completed in May and the ruin of Sandwood House has been fenced off and 'no entry' signs put up; we have run three Hill to Grill sessions with Kinlochbervie High School, plus three seashore exploration events with pupils from a variety of local schools; and agreed a Junior Ranger scheme with Kinlochbervie High School for the autumn.

In other news, the Sandwood car park surface at Blairmore has been repaired and the first moorland birds survey completed. And finally, we have been working with a NatureScot peatlands project officer to look at possible peatland schemes at Sandwood.

*Don O'Driscoll, Sandwood Property Manager*



## Seasonal rangers are go

The Trust has recruited five seasonal rangers over the summer who will work to promote responsible access, support conservation work and engage with visitors and residents in the wild places we manage. The rangers will be based at Sandwood Bay, Nevis, Schiehallion, Skye and Glenridding Common. This recruitment has been made possible thanks to funding from NatureScot and the Lake District National Park Authority. If visiting one of our sites over the summer, why not say hello and fill in our visitor experience survey!



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS PLUDEPHATT

Local schoolchildren celebrate the completion of a major upgrade to the Sulven path

## Trust plays key role in CALLP

Following an action-packed five years, the Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape Partnership (CALLP) Scheme has now come to an end. During this time, more than 30 projects have been delivered by 14 partners across the 600km<sup>2</sup> project area – with the Trust involved in numerous projects on Quinag and in collaboration with local community organisations.

As well as project involvement, the Trust has played a key role in CALLP since its inception in 2010, helping to secure the £2.9m grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund plus a further £2m of associated match funding that made the scheme a reality.

Some of the highlights of the Trust's involvement include: a joint project with Assynt Field Club to gather extensive natural and cultural heritage records relating to Quinag; repair and upgrade work on three sections of path on Quinag; and management (together with the Assynt Foundation) of major upgrade work to the approach and summit paths on Sulven.

The Trust was also heavily involved in the construction of a new community deer larder at Glencanisp, again in partnership with the Assynt Foundation, plus development of the Hill to Grill programme – an educational initiative run together with Ullapool High School and Culag Community Woodland Trust (see article opposite).

“We have been fortunate to receive CALLP funding for a number of projects, none of which would have happened without the financial and practical support from this excellent scheme, which has created a positive and enduring legacy in the area,” commented Lewis MacAskill, Chair, Assynt Foundation.

Beyond CALLP, the future looks bright with work underway to develop the Regional Land Use Partnership Pilot which includes the CALLP area. This has developed out of the NorthWest2045 project, initiated by the Trust in 2021.

## Field notes: Hill to Grill

Romany Garnett provides a taste of one of the CALLP programmes now being taken forward by the Trust

It's late February on Quinag and a group of teenagers from Ullapool High School are crawling through heather, intent and focused. Dressed for a cold day on the hill, these young people are here to learn about deer management, how to read the landscape, ethical food choices and what is involved in the process of producing venison.

Binoculars are passed around in whispers as a group of stags raise their heads. We discuss how to use the natural curves and dips of the hillside to edge closer without being seen. We are camera stalking on the second day of our five-day Hill to Grill programme.

On the third day of this programme a carcass is taken to the nearby larder where it is skinned, and butchering methods are explained.

There is an alternative option of a foraging walk for those who prefer. Back at school for the last days of the programme, a cooking challenge is set – and teams must create a marketing campaign centred around the venison burger.

The Hill to Grill programme has been fine-tuned over the years by CALLP staff who were working for the Scottish Wildlife Trust. We now lead on the delivery of the programme at the school, with the Deputy Head describing it as “a true cross-curricular project which puts learning into a realistic context”.



Working with a deer carcass

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MUIR TRUST

## Recycle for wild places

We've teamed up with Recycling for Good Causes to include a recycling envelope with this issue of *Members' News*. Simply fill it with unwanted items of jewellery and currency (of any kind, current or not!) and put it in the post. Once your items are processed, we will receive the proceeds as a donation towards our work to protect and restore wild places. To learn more, visit [recyclingforgoodcauses.org](https://www.recyclingforgoodcauses.org)





The Scottish Junior Forester Award has proved hugely popular

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN RICHARDSON

# Woodland connections

With a significant amount of John Muir Award activity already linked with trees, woodlands and forests across Scotland, a new partnership with Scottish Forestry will enable us to better support and increase these links.

The partnership will also promote links with Scottish Forestry's recently launched Scottish Junior Forester Award, which focuses on woodland management and forestry careers. In line with Scotland's National Forestry

Strategy, it will provide more opportunities for children and young people to play and learn in woodland settings, particularly in urban areas.

"Some of our network of Award providers helped pilot the new Scottish Junior Forester Award, which works really well when run alongside the John Muir Award," explained Rebecca Logsdon, the Trust's Scotland Education Manager.

## A green website

Believe it or not, the internet is the world's largest coal-powered machine with global emissions on a par with the entire aviation industry. With remote work and resource-intensive cryptocurrency mining soaring in popularity, digital activity could account for 14 per cent of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2040.

A significant proportion of these emissions come from data centres, with thousands of computers storing and processing data, and power-hungry air-conditioning systems to keep them from overheating. Usually these are found in countries where there is a cheap source of energy – often coal.

Of course, some data centres are more polluting than others, depending on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, e-waste and footprints from business operations.

This is why, as part of our carbon credible strategy, the Trust used the Green Web Foundation's directory to find a hosting provider that has a tangible commitment to using green energy in its data centres. As a result, our website is now powered 100 per cent by renewable energy.

## Recognition for John Muir Award

A recent Education Scotland report has highlighted the learning benefits of wild places to communities and society – especially those who experience disadvantage.

To help them compile the *Successful Approaches to Learning Outdoors* report, HM Inspectors visited 35 settings and schools across Scotland at the end of 2021. The Trust supported one of the inspection visits to Rashielea Primary School in Renfrewshire by highlighting the school's commitment to young people's engagement in their own learning.

The John Muir Award featured in several of the report's case studies that demonstrated effective practice for high-quality outdoor learning. In particular, the report recognised the importance of the Award as an opportunity for young people to gain recognition for their achievements and for teachers to link community projects and partners in the planning and delivery of positive outdoor experiences.

In other news, the Trust has contributed to a national discussion on major structural reform and a vision for the future of Scottish education. Professor Kenneth Muir's resulting report, *Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision of Scottish Education*, emphasised the vital role of learning outdoors and in wild places.

The Trust participated in the consultation, highlighting the importance of outdoor learning as an entitlement for all learners and of embedding it within professional standards for teachers, youth workers and community learning.

Anne Clark is one of a team of local residents making a big difference on Glenridding Common



PHOTOGRAPH: BENJAMIN STATHAM

# Field Notes: Anne Clarke

Anne Clarke is one of 10 local 'growers' in the Lake District who propagates alpine willow varieties and various species of alpine flowers for planting out on Glenridding Common. In one of our recent Field Notes, Anne explains how and why she is helping with this work. "I love what I do for the John Muir Trust and how it makes me feel more connected to the beautiful landscape in which we live." For the full story, visit <https://bit.ly/3nrJ1t>

## Sustainable travel days

The Trust has implemented the new Climate Perks initiative, which enables staff to choose two extra days of annual leave per year if they elect to travel via low

or no-carbon transport. Read how Nikki Gordon, the Trust's Carbon Officer, used her travel days on a recent trip by train to Paris at <https://bit.ly/313zo1W>

## Get in touch

What have Trust Members and local groups been up to? Tell us your news and stories.

Email [ross.brannigan@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:ross.brannigan@johnmuirtrust.org)

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COVER BANNER IMAGE: VIEW ACROSS POLIN BAY, NEAR SANDWOOD BAY, SUTHERLAND. PHOTOGRAPH: ALEXANDER M WEIR

## Volunteering & events

### Glenridding Common volunteer days

Sign up for a weekend work party at Glenridding Common. Next dates: 23 and 24 July; 3 and 4 September. To book, email [isaac.johnston@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:isaac.johnston@johnmuirtrust.org)

### Glenlude volunteer days

Help enhance this special place in the Scottish Borders. Meet every Thursday. To book, email [karen.purvis@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:karen.purvis@johnmuirtrust.org)

### Nevis volunteer day

Join the team for a day of path maintenance at Steall Gorge on 23 July. To book, email [nathan.berrie@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:nathan.berrie@johnmuirtrust.org)

### Quinag walks programme

A series of summer walks at Quinag, Assynt. To book, email [romany.garnett@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:romany.garnett@johnmuirtrust.org)

### Members' Gathering

Join this year's Members' Gathering in the Peak District, 28-29 October. See page two for details.

For more on work parties and events around the UK, visit [johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/events](http://johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/events)



PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS PUDEPHATT

Volunteers seed collecting at Quinag

## Update your preferences

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