



## Abriachan Forest Trust Meetings

AFT Trustees usually meet on the third Friday of every month in either the village hall or at the forest classroom.

**The meetings are open, interested folk are welcome to attend so they can learn first hand what's happening in the forest and why.**

Current 2016/17 Trustees are

**Chair** Marco Baglioni, **VC** Sam Hesling, George Hawco, Lorna Lumsden MBE, Sue McDermid, Andrew McMillan, Darryl Thompson, Suzann Barr,

**Company Secretary** - Christine Matheson,

**Administrator/Bookkeeper** - Alan Milton,

**Forestry Consultant** - Dietrich Pannwitz

Every month detailed accounts are presented to the meeting by our book keeper.

If you wish to join AFT as a member please contact Alan Milton on 01463 861315.

Trustees and members can also become involved in more physical work during the week or on our community activity mornings which are usually held

on the 1st Saturday of the month; do check where and what tasks are planned so you come prepared to the correct location.

Contact Roni or Clelland on

01463 861236 or [abriachanforest@gmail.com](mailto:abriachanforest@gmail.com)

## Community news and updates

**The Reporter's decision** on the appeal against the Druim Ba wind farm is still awaited. The gargantuan efforts of Dr Caroline Stanton and Hilda Hesling in collating evidence again have been much appreciated, as was the input from Sam Hesling on behalf of the members of AFT.

**Community Broadband** – two providers Beaully Firth Broadband and Connected Loch Ness were identified as apparently willing and able to serve local households with fantastically faster broadband

Some individuals have already signed up, with good results for the more convenient and easy to reach line of sight options. Both providers have now been offered the opportunity to site a mast on Carn na Leitir to assist them in the process of serving as many members of the community as possible. It should be noted that Abriachan Forest Trust remain impartial and individual householders need to decide which is the best solution for their own particular location...

Poor Darryl is still dreaming of streaming!

<http://www.beaullyfirthbroadband.com/>

<http://connected.lochness.co.uk/>

## Produce Show 2017

9<sup>th</sup> September in the hall



Wild rasp recipes if your garden has been slugged or browsed by the local wildlife?

**Followed by a ceilidh at night**



**FIREWOOD** – most of the timber cleared this year has been forwarded and stacked for firewood by Andrew. The forest edges are still blowing over but last winter gave a bit of respite from full scale damage. Please don't forget to order your winter fuel, surely we won't have another kind winter?

Local delivery - 4 cube trailer £165

Outwith Abriachan – 4 cube trailer £215

Local – one cube £40 ; Outwith - £50

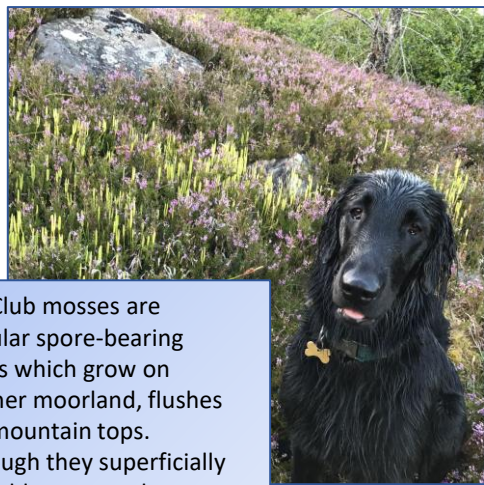
Order from [abriachanforest2@gmail.com](mailto:abriachanforest2@gmail.com)

Or call Alan 01463 861315



**Biodiversity** – one of the main aims of AFT is to improve the biodiversity of the local environment through sensitive forest management. This is an agenda item at each monthly meeting so a record of sightings of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, as well as higher and lower plants is maintained throughout the year.

Contributions towards this list are appreciated  
Send them to [abriachanforest@gmail.com](mailto:abriachanforest@gmail.com)



The Club mosses are vascular spore-bearing plants which grow on heather moorland, flushes and mountain tops. Although they superficially resemble mosses they are more closely related to ferns. They are evergreen and can be seen throughout the year.



Common, alpine and fir club mosses growing on the rocky slopes of the Leitir



The Club-moss family is an ancient family which appears in the Devonian period over 300 million years ago. Their ancestors were giant tree-like plants growing to 30 metres in height. They flourished around the world during the Carboniferous and were major contributors to the formation of coal beds. Club-mosses reproduce by spores.

Three species can be seen on Carn na Leitir

The Common Club Moss, Alpine Club Moss and Fir Club Moss.

Fir Club Moss - Garbhag an t-sleibh- the rough one of the hills was especially valued by the Highlanders and travellers would carry a sprig to protect them on their journey.

GARBHAG an t-sleibh air mo shiubhal,  
Chan eirich domh beud no pudhar;  
Cha mharbh garmaisg, cha dearg iubhar mi,  
**me**

Cha riab grianuisg no glaislig uidhir mi.

***The club-moss is on my person***

***No harm nor mishap can me befall;***

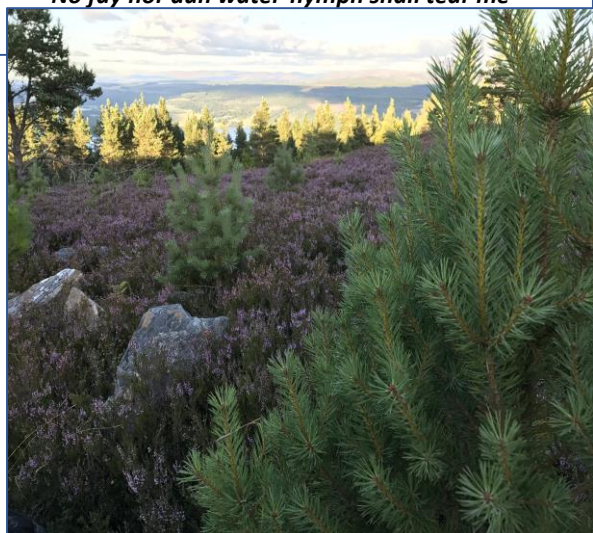
***No sprite shall slay me, no arrow shall wound***

***No fay nor dun water-nymph shall tear me***

#### **Carmina Gadelica**

Lightfoot, in Flora Scotica (1777) recorded that Fir Club Moss was used instead of Alum for fixing colours in dyeing on the Island of Raasay and some other places. It was also used medicinally. "Highlanders would take an infusion of it as an emetic or cathartic, but it operates violently and unless taken in a small dose brings on giddiness and convulsions."

The spores of club mosses, known as Lycopodium powder were used as early talcum powder for cleaning black felt hats, dopey dogs and for a range of skin complaints. Because the spores are highly flammable, when mixed with air they were, and still are, used as a custard bomb-style flash powder for special effects in the theatre and fireworks.



Scots pine regeneration at the 2007 fire site. Landfill Community Funding supported volunteers to improve habitats for black grouse and juniper here



## Outdoor Learning – 2016 / 17

The team have delivered a variety of outdoor learning opportunities throughout the past year. These have included the usual Thursday Rural Skills s3s from Charleston Academy. They all gained their John Muir Conserver Awards by taking part in estate maintenance, tree planting, weeding and collecting seeds. Their design and build skills resulted in a pair of Extremely robust gates for the byplay area, team work improved, Beth was brilliant with lots of measuring twice and cutting once!



The one-off school visits during the summer term covered many Experiences and Outcomes and even a few benchmarks. Cradlehall p2/3s learned about the River's Journey making a giant 3D map of their own journey along the Great Glen and then were amazed by the electrofishing Demonstration and survey of our small burn with Ness and Beaully Fisheries staff. Muirtown came searching for some lost Picts, Resolis spied the Gruffalo's child escaping through the trees followed by Beaully, Holm, Glenurquhart p7s transition day, Fearn came raiding Vikings, Duncan Forbes planted trees and made maps. Assorted nurseries enjoyed active learning using their favourite stories as the theme of their day in the woods. Munloch, Lochardil and the Local cluster of Tomnacross, Teanassie and Dochgarroch came for their very busy picnics.



Other secondary groups from Alness Academy and Inverness High School came team building with Aspire North.

Glenurquhart first years achieved their John Muir Discovery Awards and Jude and Anna worked hard every Friday afternoon and volunteer Saturdays for their Duke of Edinburgh Bronzes.



Extra curricular groups also came to play in the holidays and weekends. These included scouts, Rainbows, Boys Brigade, birthday parties and out of school clubs.





## Outdoor Early Learning :2016/17

Roots to Resilience: Early Days programme, supported by Big Lottery Children and Families Community Fund, ran from July through to December and was a resounding success - with the families themselves, the Abriachan staff and, notably, with the Care and Learning professionals who support the families. The groups who attended were from Merkinch (8 family groups), Hilton (9 family groups) and rural Glenurquhart (12 family groups) – initially on 8 separate weekdays (July-September) and for the extra fourth block (Oct-Dec)



all slurping lentil soup, cooked on campfire



all going on a bear hunt – swishy, swashy....



they all came together on some extremely busy Saturdays! In total 45 adults attended and 49 children. The positive feedback from the participants encouraged some of their family support workers/nursery staff to attend and pick up hints on play based outdoor learning for early years. They also learned some techniques in how to persuade parents to use the outdoor environment as the perfect place to be active with their children while still ensuring they are interested, engaged, stimulated and tired enough to sleep well.

Snoozing on the bus was a regular feature! Attendance rates were remarkable at 93%, the fine autumn weather helped in the run up to Christmas and all were sorry when they stopped. Holding the joint sessions on Saturdays enabled more fathers to attend from the rural group, some who came from over 45 miles away, and this in turn helped to encourage more participative play amongst some of the Merkinch and Hilton dads who had been the minority gender previously.

By the end of the sessions the Abriachan and Care and Learning staff identified real improvements in family relationships and abilities of parents to divert any challenging behaviour by making play/story/running about game suggestions. The Merkinch Nursery collaborated to buy each family a set of the books we used as "springboards" for activities. The Hilton group have begun to organise play sessions themselves and go out into their local woods to do so.. The rural Glenurquhart group are often seen in the forest on family days and group visits. Each of the groups have asked to run the programme again for new families.





## Volunteers in Abriachan Forest : 2016/17



We were extremely fortunate to receive funding from The Robertson Trust and SSE to provide staffing, some transport and materials for the volunteer programme offered in the forest. This has been developed by Roni and Clelland our volunteer co-ordinators and has been a great success in supporting some of the more vulnerable volunteers into employment, re-engaging with learning, finding part-time jobs and gaining enough confidence in their abilities to join other volunteering opportunities and begin training for new careers. These include a traineeship at Marine Harvest, a school crossing patroller, an energy consultant, a support worker for adults with additional needs, a marriage, some enrolling for college courses, and one joining the navy. Participants have joined via different routes – some have come from Branching Out groups, others as local volunteers who have some time to spare, a few have been referred from Signpost via social work or NHS support situations and some are the young people who have previously attended through Activity Agreements.

One important aspect of this programme has been to create a wood(craft) enterprise deploying the new skills, refreshing existing skills and interests. To date this has raised £3,500 from carpark donations received for wooden bunting, Swedish torches, logs, birdboxes, bollard birds and of course the conservation Christmas trees and squinty Santas.

Participants have worked towards SVQs in Volunteering and will soon begin Others in Enterprise, Problem Solving or Working as a Team. This is being supported by Roisin at High Life Highland's Adult Learning team.





## Wood working all hours of the day....and night

Clelland organises an enthusiastic green wood working club on the first Saturday of each month, after the volunteering morning and during the Gaelic Café. Hazel and himself persuaded the Ward 13 participative budgeting audience to fund the club with £1,200 for tools and skills development Workshops. A recent Saturday was spent making quaichs and kuksa under the tutelage of Wooden Tom



## Wood working even more hours of the day, through midgies and all night



AFT Funders and partners for 20016/17 were  
 The Robertson Trust,  
 SSE Sustainable Development Fund,  
 Entrust Landfill Community Fund,  
 Forestry Commission Scotland  
 Community Self Management Fund,  
 Highland Council,  
 NHS Highland,  
 Signpost, HTSI,  
 Highlife Highland  
 Women's Aid,  
 Moniac Mhor,  
 RBGKew MSB,  
 Charleston Academy  
 Glenurquhart HS  
 Dochgarroch,  
 Tomnacross,  
 Teanassie Cluster

<https://www.northscape.scot/>

Don't miss the Northscape hut, looking perfect beside the classroom at the moment.

Katharine Stewart, our first patron and supporter of enterprise Abriachan would be so proud and delighted with this development of tele-cottage living.



## Gaelic café and all things cake....



First Saturday of each month.....

Volunteer morning, Gaelic café funded by **Bord na Gaidhlig**

All are welcome to share soup and strupachs, sometimes we sing whilst waulking the cloth. A patient, native speaking tutor is on hand whatever level you are at, whether it is learning your colours with the kids, practicing pronunciation for the Mod or completing your dissertation with the experts on a 1:1 basis.

Call 01463 861278 for details



<https://pure.uhi.ac.uk/portal/files/1975901/Lymeposter.pdf>

Over the past year Sarah Morton (above right) has been volunteering with our Friday group and given us many handy hints about evaluating our work. Her research on how best to raise awareness of tick borne Lyme disease can be found at the link above. She has also created a tick trail for the forest which we have used with visiting groups



## Wee Adventures – not to be missed....

At the end of June this lovely little book was launched in Abriachan on a windy Saturday. It makes a great present for locals and visitors who want to explore the Moray Firth, Great Glen and Cairngorm area. We have a few copies at the classroom @£5.99  
<https://www.weeadventurescotland.co.uk/>

