

BUTE COMMUNITY FOREST SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Hello Everyone,

We hope you've all had a good summer. We've certainly been busy along at the Community Forest and despite some days where the midges were out in force, we've loved enjoying the longer days that have come with the summer sun. Here's a little update of what we've been up to.

FOREST PROJECTS

The Rhudan Huts

Good progress has been made on our two off-grid huts which we are still hoping to open in October. We will be having an official open day for these where people are welcome to come have a look and chat to us along in Moss Wood. Keep an eye on our social media or website for dates close to the time! We have also chosen to call them The Rhudan Huts after the named archaeological sites in the area.

Tree Felling

Our felling operations at Rhudodach will be finishing up in the coming weeks once the remaining timber is removed from the roadside.

Woodland Management Plan

Following our felling we are putting together a Woodland Management plan for this part of the Community Forest. We need this plan to agree what the Community Forest will look like in the future and to secure funding for replanting options. This is an exciting stage as we bring together all our ideas and include suggestions from the public. We're still at the early stages but will be sharing what we have so far with everyone as soon as it's ready!

The Quarry Site

We have started the process of purchasing the site to create a car park and 'Welcome Hub' through the Scottish Land Fund and we will keep you posted as soon as we have any updates.

Instagram

We are also delighted to say that we are now on Instagram! You can follow us to be kept up to date with what we see in the Forest! As well as this you can tag us in your own Community Forest adventures.

New Team Member

In other news, we are very happy to welcome our new part-time Project Officer, Shelley Gould. Shelley is an experienced town planner and project manager, who has more recently been working in communications for an environmental consultancy. She has lived here on Bute with her family for 4 years and has a keen interest in our local wildlife and nature conservation. Over the summer Shelley has been getting to know the Forest and all the ways it is used by our local community. She's been busy progressing our new community shelter and the proposed purchase of the Quarry site as well as planning our autumn open day and the launch of the off-grid huts! Shelley says: "There's loads happening so it's a great time to start working for the community forest and I'm looking forward to helping the team deliver our exciting projects and future events."

You can contact Shelley for any updates on our ongoing projects: shelley@buteforest.org and do say 'Hi' as she is often out at the forest during the week, helping with group visits and ranger walks.



COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND EVENTS



The Gunpowder Trail

As part of Achievement Bute's pop-up play days we travelled back to the early 1800's as we welcomed them out to the Forest for the gunpowder trail. There were activities for the children based around the charcoal burning that historically took place in Moss Wood. Everyone even got the chance to make their own charcoal pencils to take home afterwards. And it's difficult to have a fire without also toasting some marshmallows and what a great way to end the day!

Rhododendron Round-Up

Thanks to some keen members of the community we were able to hold our first volunteering event since the pandemic as we donned our wellies, armed ourselves with secateurs and saws and tackled some of the invasive rhododendrons that are dotted around the forest. This was great fun and a great opportunity to get stuck in with some good old hard work (followed by refreshments and snacks of course!)



Wildflower Wander

Earlier this summer we carried out our Wildflower Wander that was well attended over the weekend. This was led by Samuel as he showed us how to identify the wildflowers and trees that you can see in the Community Forest. We also learned some of the folklore behind these plants and how they got their names.



Branching out

This summer, Branching out, a charity helping adult mental health and wellbeing, continued their forest trips and had a great time doing activities ranging from basket making to making clay pots. We're looking forward to seeing this group again during their next lot of visits later in the year.

ButeFest

We were delighted to hold some family-friendly woodland craft activities at this year's ButeFest. We made pinecone bumblebees, rock 'pets' and even some festival tepees from some of our own Moss Wood branches to decorate the field! Our Buteforest Bingo was a great hit too! It was a great opportunity to talk to people about our amazing forest and encourage people to come and visit.



Port Bannatyne Gala

This summer you might have seen us at the Port Bannatyne Gala where we had a stall for the forest. We had a great time chatting to everyone about the forest activities and how they can get involved. We also had a sponsor a birdbox table where people could decorate a tag and fund a bird box for £5 which we put up in the forest. We're just putting the last 6 up so don't worry if you haven't received your email telling you the location yet it will be on its way shortly!

SCHOOL PROJECTS

Apple Tree Nursery

Although the schools may have been off over the summer, Apple Tree Nursery have started a 3-month block of visits out to the Forest with their different groups. Their babies and toddlers might only be up to our Forest Ranger Samuel's knees but that certainly hasn't stopped them exploring the woods and having a great time! We're delighted for this to continue right to the end of Autumn. Earlier in the summer Samuel led a guided walk for the Apple Tree children and their families up to the bunker viewpoint. We had a total of 30 people attend this and all enjoyed the rest and picnic when we got to the top!

St Andrews Primary

We have also met with St Andrews Primary and they've booked in for weekly Forest trips right up to December. We're very excited to have them out to the Forest and can't wait to work with them for some fun projects.

Rothesay Academy

In the coming weeks we will have the S1 class from Rothesay Academy journeying out to the forest to begin their John Muir Award. This project focuses on getting people to connect with, enjoy, and care for natural spaces. We will be sure to report back with what they get up to in our next newsletter.

We are also welcoming out our first volunteer from the school who is completing their Duke of Edinburgh award with us. This is a great way for older pupils to get involved with some more hands-on Forest activities.

Upcoming Events

We also have some upcoming dates for you to add to your calendar!

- 16th/17th Moth Trapping
- 22nd September Fungi Foray
- October TBC Rhudan Huts Open Day
- October TBC Bute Community Forest AGM

If you want to know more about any of the things mentioned in the newsletter or want to get more involved in any way then please do not hesitate to contact Samuel Lindsay at samuel@buteforest.org or via our Facebook page.

We hope to see you along at the forest,
The Bute Community Forest Team