

# Broughtonknowe Community Woodland - 2025 Review

2025 has been a very eventful year in the ongoing, now safely secured, life of our woodland. After all the stresses of fundraising we finally gained community ownership in March. We had a formal celebratory event and 'opening' on May Day at the Green Ash Chairs yurt in the old quarry above the car park.



Our attention has now had to turn to the day to day running of our wonderful asset - what a responsibility! An essential part of this commitment is the maintenance of our visitor experience. Prior to purchase Friends of Broughtonknowe had just completed a significant programme of infrastructure improvements - more paths, boardwalks, benches; two new ponds; installation of nest boxes and a wildlife watching hide. We also planted a lot of native wildflowers and shrubs to improve habitat diversity. All this requires ongoing attention if the woodland is to continue to provide the visitor experience our community expressed their desire to maintain / develop. To this end we are indebted to the generous donors of a ride on mower and the ongoing volunteer input of Ross Robison. Since March Ross has added a new bench at the 'Scrape' pond and installed a donated memorial bench looking onto the Southern Uplands. Both are well used! Presently we are looking to install a covered seating area in the 'Pine Gully' picnic area in the middle of the woodland. Karl Napier is a 'new recruit' to our maintenance volunteers, contributing his strimming and digging skills as well as his practical knowledge of landscape management.

Stan Wilson, who was brought up at Rachan and has a great attachment to the area and our project, donated a stunning organic sculpture he had carved from Portland stone. It is fittingly installed by the reeds at the edge of the main pond. Stan has since donated and installed two more of his sculptural works. Two figures in white Portland stone and black Kilkenny marble entitled 'One Nation' symbolise unity and our extended welcome to all who visit.

An iron facsimile of a helmeted head looks onto our adjacent Iron Age hill fort, the intention being to draw attention to our associated archeological past. We are not the only people to have appreciated this wonderful landscape.

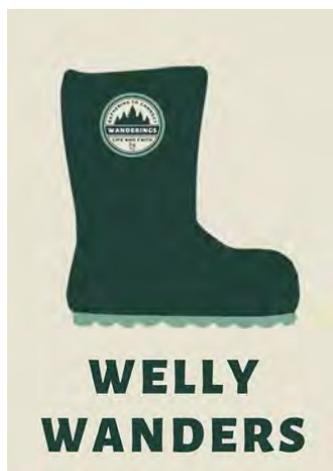


Ilka Roehe led another very informative 'spring woodland foraging' event in the Green Ash Chairs yurt. A guided exploratory walk was followed by hand moisturising cream production using some of our collected wild flowers, beeswax and sunflower oil. We all had samples to take away - thanks Ilka.

It is lovely to see groups of youngsters enjoying the woodland. The Biggar Scouts and Cubs continue to use the fire pit and environs for den making and other activities. The younger Biggar Tinto 'Squirrels' had a great visit 'pond dipping'. Nicola Campbell regularly brings the Biggar Kirk youth group. She has also developed a programme of faith based adult mindfulness walks. Nicola's latest venture is 'Welly Wanders' for parents and toddlers.

Wildlife worksheets are available free from the hide, as is a pocket 'zine' summarising our possible wildlife encounters through the different seasons of the year.

Recently our local councillor and Broughtonknowe Board member, Viv Thomson, organised an exciting challenge with Broughton Primary School to design us a logo. All the excellent entries are displayed on our website. We are looking forward to further developing the educational opportunities of the woodland.



Soon after the woodland purchase we were visited by a troop of jugglers! They were wanting somewhere special to practice and bond before performing at the Edinburgh 'Beltane' celebrations. They were keen to contribute to our ongoing biodiversity work. They collected long discarded plastic tubes from the north end of the woodland and redeployed them planting 50 plus donated hardwood tree saplings. A much appreciated task. Further community tree planting was undertaken along our 500m section of the Broughton Burn. A hundred Alder saplings were planted and a new path created to open up and develop a new riparian habitat. It makes a lovely start, or finish, to a longer walk through our other Broughtonknowe habitats.



We continue to monitor the wildlife present. It has been a great year for new insect sightings. In addition to our already established populations of butterflies, that includes Small Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillaries, we recorded for the first time Speckled Wood and a single sighting of a most unlikely Wall butterfly. A full species list is on our web site. Butterfly and Bumblebee records are submitted monthly to national databases. The additional ponds have boosted our dragonfly / damselfly records. A striking southern distribution species - spreading north, is the Broad-bodied Chaser. Bright blue males, yellow females were focused on the new 'Scrape' pond, emerging from impressive larvae and in turn laying eggs that will ensure their ongoing presence.

A new bird at the feeders, that has taken some time to get here, is the Nuthatch. We continue to add nest boxes and the feeders at the fire pit are constantly replenished. Thanks are due to Loraine Murray, 'Healthy Pets' - the Biggar pet shop, for regular donations of wild bird seed. This autumn Jackie Freeman has been volunteering her expertise to catalogue our impressive array of fungi.



Broad-bodied Chaser



Wall butterfly

A couple of mini-business projects are underway:

Broughtonknowe Bees are rather special, they are native Scottish black bees (as nearly genetically pure as you can get down here) so it is also a great conservation project. The bees have been provided by Jim Lindsay who is also providing the knowledge for managing them. No honey this year as they establish but we are looking forward to a hopefully productive spring / summer next year!



Our other enterprise is supplying bags of firewood logs to the community shop in Broughton. They are seasoned Ash logs and this helps us double up with the control of Ash die back in the woodland.

The management of the commercial timber in the woodland is still in the planning stages as we have been coming to terms with our insurance and health and safety obligations. The wind blown timber has been safely tidied by 'Treesurv' who we are hoping to develop a longer term relationship with us through a lease of a section of the large shed. The shed will require some modifications that will be funded by South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).

None of the above would have materialised without the ongoing, behind-the-scenes, input of our Chairman, Ian Brooke. Also working to make things happen are the other members of our present Board of Directors, Viv Thomson and Alastair Leaver (as well as me).

All matters pertaining to the woodland will be re-examined at our AGM in the New Year to which all interested are cordially invited. At that time we will be looking to recruit new Board members and we will be launching a new Broughtonknowe Community Woodland Membership package.

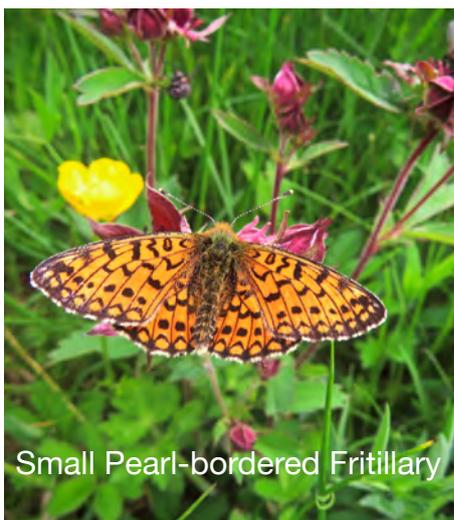
In the meantime you can keep up with ongoing woodland matters through our website:

[broughtonknowe-wood.co.uk](http://broughtonknowe-wood.co.uk)

Also, if not already part of the ever-growing group, join us on Facebook (presently just under 500 strong!): Friends of Broughtonknowe. John Hart



Nuthatch



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Long-tailed Tit

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