



Partner Newsletter

Issue 2
July 2024

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST





Welcome

A brief update to bring you the latest news from Wild Strathfillan!

It's been a busy few months for Wild Strathfillan, with two new projects commencing, **£1.4 million** of funding being awarded to the partnership (page 2), and three new project staff members now appointed! You can meet the new team on pages 3 and 4.

Now we have more capacity within the Wild Strathfillan team, we'll be sending an update newsletter to partners, stakeholders, and community members every two months – so look out for the next issue in September. We would welcome partner updates, so if you'd like to share anything in our next newsletter, please get in touch (page 5).

In the meantime, enjoy the summer, and don't forget to add the '**Save the Date**' to your diary for our partners' meet-up in September (page 5). As ever, thank you for supporting Wild Strathfillan.

With best wishes,

Ellie Mayhew
Project Development Manager – Nature Restoration

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Funding Successes for Wild Strathfillan!

Last year, with support from the Steering Group and project partners, Ellie Mayhew and Trust Director Sue Morris spent a lot of time writing funding applications... thankfully, it all paid off! We are delighted to share that the partnership has secured over £1.4 million of funding to support nature restoration and communities in the north of the National Park. Read on to find out more.

With thanks to National Lottery players...

We are delighted to share that Wild Strathfillan has been awarded funding of **£250,000** by the **National Heritage Lottery Fund** for a community-focused project across Tyndrum, Crianlarich and Killin, called The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan. Our new staff member Sharon (see page 3) will be leading on much of this work alongside partners including Strathfillan Community Development Trust, Killin and Ardeonaig Trust, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and the local primary schools. The project has three main themes: **connecting with nature, celebrating our people, and lifelong learning**. Project activities will focus on skills development, education, engaging with the natural world, and celebrating the area's rich cultural heritage.

To find out more about The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan, including how you can get involved, you can email our Education and Engagement Officer Sharon on Sharon@trustinthepark.org.

And Generous Support from NatureScot:

Wild Strathfillan has also received **£1.1 million** from **NatureScot** through their Nature Restoration Fund. This grant will help to kickstart nature recovery across the landscape, with projects spanning a huge range of habitats, which gave rise to the project's name – 'From Lochside to Mountain-top'. Ophelie, Natalie, Gail, and Ellie will be working with project partners to deliver a suite of **practical conservation projects**, from wetland and montane habitat restoration to trialling 'conservation grazing' with NoFence GPS cattle collars on Ben Lui SSSI. Delivery is already underway, and the team are excited to see the projects come to life.

If you have any questions about From Lochside to Mountain-top, contact Project Manager Gail Turney by emailing Gail@trustinthepark.org.

Meet the Team

Over the past month, we have welcomed three new team members to the Countryside Trust, who will be helping to deliver Wild Strathfillan projects together with **Natalie Cozzolino** from the National Park Authority, Project Development Manager **Ellie Mayhew**, and a range of project partners. Meet our new recruits below!



Ophélie Lasne – Monitoring and Ecology Officer

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07355 473567

My journey in conservation began with a passion for biodiversity that led me to pursue a Master's in Biodiversity Management and Conservation. Following my studies, I embarked on an adventure to Canberra, Australia, where I had the

privilege of working in some remarkable natural habitats, dedicated to safeguarding endangered wallabies. I also had the chance to work as a research assistant at the Australian National University, focusing on conservation projects. Since moving to Scotland, I worked as an Ecological Consultant before taking on my current position at the Trust.

In my role, I will be developing and implementing a monitoring programme to see whether we are successfully restoring nature in the landscape. You'll often find me out in the field conducting various surveys, so if you spot me, don't hesitate to come and say hello!



Sharon Cawston – Education and Engagement Officer

Sharon@trustinthepark.org
07354 201214

I am very excited to be joining the team as the Education and Engagement Officer for Wild Strathfillan. Prior to joining the Countryside Trust, I worked in secondary education for 13 years, both as a teacher of French and Spanish and as a Principal Teacher for Health and

Wellbeing. Teaching has always been a passion for me and in the last few years it became clear that I wanted to take my teaching skills out of the classroom and into the outdoors. With a view to making that happen, I left full-time teaching and began to work and volunteer with a variety of conservation charities, including RSPB and Cashel Forest Trust.

In this role with the Trust, I am delighted to be developing ways to connect people with their natural environment and to empower them to learn and develop their skills. I am also looking forward to getting to know the Strathfillan area better, as I love nothing more than finding new paths and hidden nooks and crannies to explore. How lucky we are to live in such a beautiful place and how exciting it is to think we can leave it even more beautiful than we found it.



Gail Turney – Wild Strathfillan Project Manager

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07354 201215

I'm joining the team as a project manager for Wild Strathfillan. I have a strong passion for habitat improvements for biodiversity and a fascination for wildlife, but a minor detour in life opened the door to where I am now. Starting my career as an engineer, I designed highways. But I was the one scrupulously steering my designs around existing trees to preserve them.

A keen member of my local conservation charity, I loved nothing more than spending my weekends with like-minded people, doing practical habitat management and spotting wildlife. Realising my heart belonged in the great outdoors, I turned my career to conservation, undertaking habitat management as a countryside ranger for RSPB, then, blending my former skills as a project manager, overseeing initiatives ranging from wetland restoration on Suffolk's Orford Ness and Havergate Island, to Europe-wide scientific research on the impacts of pesticides on bees. I'm looking forward to coordinating the pieces of the project to bring together the overarching improvements for landscapes, communities, skills, biodiversity and scientific knowledge.

Volunteer Snapshot

Huge thanks to volunteers who have given over **480** hours of their time to Wild Strathfillan so far since October last year – planting over **35,000** native tree seeds at Glenfalloch plant nursery, and planting over **1,000** trees! An enormous accomplishment – and we are only just getting started!



Upcoming Events

Save the Date! On **Wednesday 18th September**, we will be holding an in-person Wild Strathfillan partners' get-together. Further details to follow soon!

Volunteering Opportunities To be the first to hear about our upcoming volunteer events, email Sharon Cawston, our Education and Engagement Officer: Sharon@trustinthepark.org

Get in touch!

Any Questions?

If you'd like to find out more about becoming a project partner, or if you have any other questions about Wild Strathfillan, please contact Project Development Manager, Ellie Mayhew on Ellie@trustinthepark.org.

Contribute to our next Partner Newsletter

If you've got a local wildlife sighting, news story or opportunity you'd like to share with Wild Strathfillan partners, stakeholders and communities, get in touch! Contact Marie Harvey on Marie@trustinthepark.org – the next issue is due in September 2024, content submission deadline is Friday 30th August.

Follow Us

@TrustinthePark on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn for further project updates. **#WildStrathfillan**

