



Partner Newsletter

Issue 12
March 2026

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST





Image: Ecology Magic © Ophélie@Trustinthepark

Welcome

We're delighted to bring you a fresh round of updates from our team and partners as we move into another exciting phase of the year of collaboration, community activity and nature recovery across Strathfillan.

In this issue, you'll find a little bit of everything happening across the landscape including a farewell to our team member **Ophélie** who shares her **Reflections from the Field** and two years with Wild Strathfillan (pages 7 and 8).

We share the latest on **Landscape Connections** – a major new partnership initiative and uncover what it means for the Wild Strathfillan area on page 5. Plus, some get involved invites in our Notice Board on page 4.

We're also sharing an update from the Wild Strathfillan project as work continues to restore **Tyndrum Community Woodland** (page 6) and share more about the vision for **Killin's Community Garden** on page 9.

Things have been busy behind the scenes with our 'How We Work Together' framework – we invite you to take a quick peek at what's been happening (page 4). Finally, we're celebrating the highlights of our **The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan** report which you can find out more on page 11.

Thanks for reading, and don't forget you can also submit your own updates for our next issue – we'd love to hear from you (page 12).

With best wishes,
The Wild Strathfillan team

In this issue...

Notice Board!
Page 4

Landscape Connections
Page 5

Restoring Tyndrum Community Woodland
Page 6

Reflections from the Field
Page 7-8

Killin Community Garden Vision
Page 9

The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan
Page 11

Get in touch!
Page 12

Wild Strathfillan

Restoring nature in the National Park



Wild Strathfillan is a nature restoration initiative working across the north of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park to deliver **a resilient, dynamic and connected landscape where people and nature thrive together.**

The initiative is led by Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust with the support of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority and is underpinned by a diverse and committed partnership, bringing together land managers, communities, statutory bodies, educational institutions and businesses who share an interest in restoring nature across the landscape and supporting rural communities.

The initiative is currently delivering a series of ambitious activity programmes, grounded in the landscape's rich natural and cultural heritage. These are focused around three main themes:

- **Nature recovery**
- **Nature connectedness**
- **Sustainable livelihoods**

Our active projects are:

- **'The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan'**, funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and runs until December 2026
- **'From Lochside to Mountain-top'**, funded by NatureScot through their Nature Restoration Fund and runs until end March 2026.

To find out more about the initiative and the work we are collectively delivering, visit the [Wild Strathfillan webpage here](#).

#WildStrathfillan

This project is supported by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by [NatureScot](#) and, with thanks to National Lottery players, by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Notice Board

- **Wild Strathfillan 'How We Work Together' - Update**

Some of you joined us in Crianlarich last year to look at our draft ideas for 'How We Work Together' – a framework to help everyone get involved in Wild Strathfillan in ways that suit them. Since then, we spent time over the autumn and winter collating everyone's feedback and comments, including from those who were unable to attend the event, so that everyone has had a chance to shape this shared framework.

We just wanted to share a wee update, as things have been a bit quiet lately! Over the last few months, the team have been busy finishing the last projects for our **'From Lochside to Mountain-top'** NatureScot NRF-funded project, which ends on 31st March this year. Once this is all wrapped up and reported, we'll be getting back to the framework and bringing everything together based on your feedback.

We're also taking some time to learn from other initiatives, to see what lessons we can bring into our own framework. We're also delighted to welcome a Master of Research student, Leo, from Glasgow School of Art, who's working with Wild Strathfillan on his project this year. Leo's project will explore creative ways for local people to be involved in vision-setting and decision-making about nature restoration. Leo's work will help us make sure that local community members have a place and a voice within our shared framework. Thank you for your patience on this – we're nearly there!

- **Paleoecology for Nature Restoration – Seeking Land Mangers**

Dr Matthew Adeleye, a researcher from the University of Cambridge, is looking for land managers who are interested in allowing palaeoecological fieldwork on their landholdings to better understand historical vegetation and landscape change. The work involves a short, one-day visit to carry out a vegetation survey and collect small peat or organic sediment cores that will be taken back to Cambridge for analysis. The findings can offer valuable insights to inform future restoration efforts.

If you'd like to learn more or explore potential involvement, please send an e-mail to ma2073@cam.ac.uk.

We're also excited to hear the results from the paleoecology research that University of Stirling ecology student Kirsty Brown is currently undertaking with peat core samples taken from Strathfillan last autumn.

- **Upcoming Habitat Impact Assessment (HIA) Training - 6th/20th May 2026**

- Following results from last year's questionnaire on herbivore management, Wild Strathfillan is supporting an HIA training session at **Auchlyne Estate** on the 6th of May. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/WHIAL-AuchlyneEstate>
- Another session at **Glen Finglas** on 20th May may be more convenient for some participants. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/WHIAL-GlenFinglas>

Full list of HIA training opportunities: <https://tinyurl.com/WHIALi>



Images: (L to R) Loch Lomond westside looking north (credit Turkey Red), Ardentinn walking in native woodland, Glenfalloch Ancient Caledonian woodland 2019 (credit: LLTNPA),

Landscape Connections

Welcome funding boost for wildlife and for people.

You may have already heard the exciting news about **Loch Lomond & the Trossachs Landscape Connections**, a new landscape scale initiative to restore the National Park's native woodland habitat, while creating lasting benefits for local communities.

With £670,000 from [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) to develop the plans, the project could unlock up to £10 million for an eight-year programme to restore and connect woodland across the area more than twice the size of Glasgow, including temperate rainforest, ancient Caledonia pinewoods and upland woodland.

The initiative aims to connect a unique mix of landscapes, including The Great Trossachs Forest, The Loch Lomond Rainforest and **Wild Strathfillan** all of which are global unique habitats that support rare wildlife and provide benefits such as clean air, clean water and flood protection.

Led by the [Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park](#) alongside the Countryside Trust and [RSPB Scotland](#), the project will be shaped with a diverse range of local communities, land managers and partners from the outset. Alongside long-term systemic nature recovery, it will support jobs, training, sustainable businesses and improved deer and venison management, showing how restoring nature can also strengthen rural economies.

What does that mean for Wild Strathfillan?

Building on the success of other recent funded projects, Landscape Connections is a new funded programme which will help to deliver the objectives of the Wild Strathfillan initiative. The programme will bring together the three existing landscapes of **the Great Trossachs Forest, Wild Strathfillan**, and **Loch Lomond Rainforest**. Work on the ground will focus on the heart of the area where these three landscapes intersect. We are calling this the '**woodland restoration zone**', where temperate rainforest, ancient pinewoods, upland woodlands, and other important woodland components such as open glades, form a 'mosaic' of woodland habitats.

Alongside Landscape Connections, we will also be continuing to work with communities and land managers to develop and deliver other Wild Strathfillan projects, with all work focused on helping to realise the long-term vision for the Wild Strathfillan landscape.

Submit an Expression of Interest One of the work programme focuses on restoring the woodland mosaic across the project area across three phases during delivery phase:

- Phase 1 (2028–2032): Restore key sites
- Phase 2 (2030–2034): Connect sites
- Phase 3 (2032–2036): Expand the mosaic

If you're a land manager ready to take part in Phase 1, please submit an Expression of Interest form by Thursday 30 April [here](#). If you'd like to discuss Phases 2 or 3, email futurenature@lochlomond-trossachs.org. More information here on their website <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/landscape-connections-expressions-of-interest-now-open/>

Restoring Tyndrum Community Woodland

A Milestone for Wild Strathfillan

As part of the Wild Strathfillan project, the Trust has been supporting the Strathfillan Community Development Trust (SCDT) to restore Tyndrum Community Woodland -an important woodland just south of Tyndrum, crossed by both the West Highland Way and the local bike path. Once a commercial conifer plantation, the woodland still contains around seven hectares of non-native conifer blocks.

Over time, windblown seed from the remaining non-native Sitka spruce trees have spread, leading to a growth of saplings throughout the area. Sitka spruce saplings can quickly out-compete native species, creating dense, dark stands that reduce biodiversity and prevent the natural woodland from regenerating. Volunteers and SCDT staff have worked hard to remove these young saplings, but it was always clear that addressing the source - the mature seed-producing trees - would be essential for long-term restoration.

The first step was to commission a consultant to develop a plan and apply for the felling permission. An additional challenge quickly revealed itself: the woodland lacked the forestry infrastructure required for harvesting. Before any felling could begin, a new stacking site and a turning bay had to be designed, approved, and built.

Thanks to the hard work of SCDT, all planning and environmental consents were eventually secured, and construction of the infrastructure was completed early this year. Felling began at the end of February, marking a major milestone! With the start of the breeding bird season, some sections will be felled later in the autumn to avoid disturbing wildlife, but the progress so far is an encouraging step forward.

“...Felling began at the end of February, marking a major milestone!”

Once the non-native trees have been fully removed, the cleared areas will be replanted with a rich mix of native species, helping to create a more diverse and resilient woodland. Alongside this work, repairs to the surrounding deer fence have been ongoing to protect future planting from being nibbled on by herbivores. An updated management plan will also help guide the future care of this important community asset.

If you're visiting the woodland, you will surely notice the felled areas. Rest assured - this work is a vital part of restoring the site to a diverse native habitat!

A big thank-you to the Nature Restoration Fund and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority - their support has made all this work possible.





Images: (Left to right) Wood sorrel, Ophélie in the field, camera trap © Ophélie@Trustinthepark

Two Years in Strathfillan

Reflections from the Field by Ophélie Lasne

As Ophélie moves on to an exciting new role beyond Wild Strathfillan, we wish her every success - and feel especially grateful to share her thoughtful reflections from the field before she left.

It's hard to believe it's been two years since I began my role as Ecology and Monitoring Officer for Wild Strathfillan. Back then, I wrote about the thrill of the first six months, when I was learning and discovering the area. Now, as I prepare to leave, I will always remember the remarkable scenery. From moss-covered woodlands and rushing rivers to windswept montane slopes, the area has been full of surprises, challenges, and quiet moments of wonder, with so much more still waiting to be explored.

A big part of my role has been gathering ecological data to create a baseline against which future restoration work can be measured. I established monitoring plots across the project area and spent countless hours in the field conducting detailed vegetation surveys, deploying camera traps and Audiomoths to record birds, bats, and mammals, trapping moths, and capturing fixed-point photography to track habitat change over time

"These efforts have produced a wealth of information about local wildlife. Audiomoths alone recorded over 150,000 bird calls representing 83 species..."



Image: Burnished Brass moth.
© Ophélie@Trustinthepark

These efforts have produced a wealth of information about local wildlife. Audiomoths alone recorded over 150,000 bird calls representing 83 species, while moth traps captured more than 500 individuals representing over 90 species. I also collected seeds from montane and tall herb species, many of which are now starting to grow in our brand-new specialist plant nursery, contributing to the next generation of plants across the area.

Alongside this, I've had the joy of mentoring more than eight students on research projects and work placements. From bats to raptors, butterfly transects to pollen studies, their curiosity and hard work added depth to our ecological baseline while reminding me why inspiring the next generation is one of the most rewarding parts of this job.

I've also been involved in a wide and diverse range of projects, each presenting its own challenges and rewards. These include riparian woodland trials influenced by beaver activity, montane scrub and wetland restoration, native woodland creation, invasive species surveys, and supporting heritage projects. Balancing fieldwork, monitoring, and collaboration with partners and the community has made this role endlessly varied and deeply fulfilling.

"...inspiring the next generation is one of the most rewarding parts of this job."

I'm grateful for the connections I've made along the way. Working with partners, students, and local community members has made this experience all the more valuable. It has been a privilege to explore, record, and protect wildlife and habitats across the area, and I leave knowing that the efforts we've made together will continue to benefit this incredible place for years to come.



Image: Moth Trapping,
© Ophélie@TrustinthePark



Image: Ophélie (left) and student Ellie in
the field © Ophélie@TrustinthePark



Image: Wood anemone
© Ophélie@TrustinthePark



Image: Community learning event,
Ecology Magic with Ophélie

Wild Strathfillan: Ecology Magic with Ophélie

What a great turnout in Crianlarich earlier in February for our spotlight on ecology with our very own Ophélie. Young and not-so-young had a chance to try out their ecology skills with tasks related to birdsong, moth ID and camera trap images to name a few. The evening was rounded up with an interview with Ophélie about her time working on the Wild Strathfillan project. We had fantastic feedback from all who attended - plus some brilliant ideas for future events.



Images: before photographs of the garden site credit @ Eilidh Graham

Community Garden Vision

Creating a new sensory and community garden in Killin

"The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan", our programme primarily funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, also supported by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, is supporting projects that enable engagement with nature. Killin and Ardeonaig Development Trust (KAT) has been working with Killin Sports and Recreation Hub (KSRH) on one of these projects – the creation of a new Community and Sensory Garden in Killin.

Last autumn, a great site was identified. The site sits between the Killin Sports Pavilion, Bowling Green and Tennis Courts and the Main Street in Killin. For the last couple of months, we've been working with a garden designer, Eilidh, who is a recent SRUC graduate and lives in the National Park, to create a plan for the garden. Eilidh has engaged with KAT, KSRH, Killin Youth Group and local community members to get their input via questionnaire and a focus group.

Eilidh has used this feedback to create a masterplan and planting plan for the site. There will be two areas of the accessible garden – a space with flowers and plants to engage all your senses, and an area with community growing spaces. With the plans drawn up, KAT and KSRH will be cracking on with work on site over the spring and summer – we can't wait to see how it turns out!



Images: Perspective drawings of planned community growing space (left) and sensory garden (right), credit @ Eilidh Graham

This new garden is also being supported with funding from Stirling Council's Community Growing and Parks Wellbeing Fund, FEL Scotland, KSRH, Killin Highland Games, Killin Community Council and Active Stirling.



Image: Volunteer away day tour of SRUC from John Holland @Trustinthepark

More Wild Strathfillan Highlights

'The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan' in 2025

This month, we were delighted to publish our report sharing an update on the work Wild Strathfillan delivered in 2025 through our National Lottery Heritage Fund funded programme. **'The People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan'** supports community connections in and with nature, with Killin and Ardeonaig Development Trust and Strathfillan Community Development Trust as key partners.

A few highlights from 2025 included:

- Engaging with 143 school pupils
- Delivering 9 community learning opportunities
- Working alongside 6 University students to learn more about the area
- Recording 18 local oral histories
- Installing 2 interpretation panels at Loch Lubhair SSSI



We've already seen the momentum continue into the beginning of this year, and we'll continue to share exciting updates over the coming months.

Read the full report here: trustinthepark.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/The-People-and-Nature-of-Wild-Strathfillan-2025-Report-March-2026.pdf



Images: (Clockwise from top) Coring for peat, interpretation panel design Loch Lubhair, Lichen workshop, community learning INNS training, primary schools life-long learning, community planting, primary schools life-long learning, credit @Trustinthepark.

Get in touch!

If you'd like to get involved, volunteer with us or find out more about Wild Strathfillan, please contact us below:

Contributions to our next bimonthly Partner Newsletter

If you've got a local wildlife sighting, news story or opportunity you'd like to share with Wild Strathfillan partners, get in touch – the next issue is due on 31 May 2026.

Email: info@trustinthepark.org

To find out more about volunteering please email Sharon Cawston, Education and Engagement Officer:

Email: Sharon@trustinthepark.org



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

Unsubscribe If you wish to unsubscribe from receiving this newsletter at any time please email: info@trustinthepark.org.



LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST

