



Partner Newsletter

Issue 10
November 2025

LOCH LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST





Image: Wild Strathfillan Annual Event © Sarah@Trustinthepark

Welcome

Thanks for joining us for our 10th newsletter edition, featuring updates from our team and partners.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for the **Wild Strathfillan Annual Event** on the 12th of November - what an inspiring day! From lively updates and student-led insights to hands-on workshops and even a rain-soaked site visit, the event showcased the power of collaboration and creativity in shaping Strathfillan's future.

Couldn't make it? Don't worry - we've captured some highlights for you (page 4), along with exciting updates on **local provenance trees now available** (also on page 4).

We take a peek into **bat research with Stirling Uni students** (page 6), and our **lifelong learning opportunities** designed to connect people and nature (page 8). Over on page 5 we join the National Park Authority's **Nature & Land Use team** and their visit to the Colin Burt to help create Leaky Dams. Finally, we meet new farmers Diane and her family who have begun creating a **native wood** transformed from their land to support wildlife with help from Wild Strathfillan (page 7).

Thanks for reading, and don't forget you can submit your own updates for our next issue – we'd love to hear from you (page 9).

With best wishes,
The Wild Strathfillan team

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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 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 **'From Lochside to Mountain-top'**, funded by NatureScot through their Nature Restoration Fund, both of which run to 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.



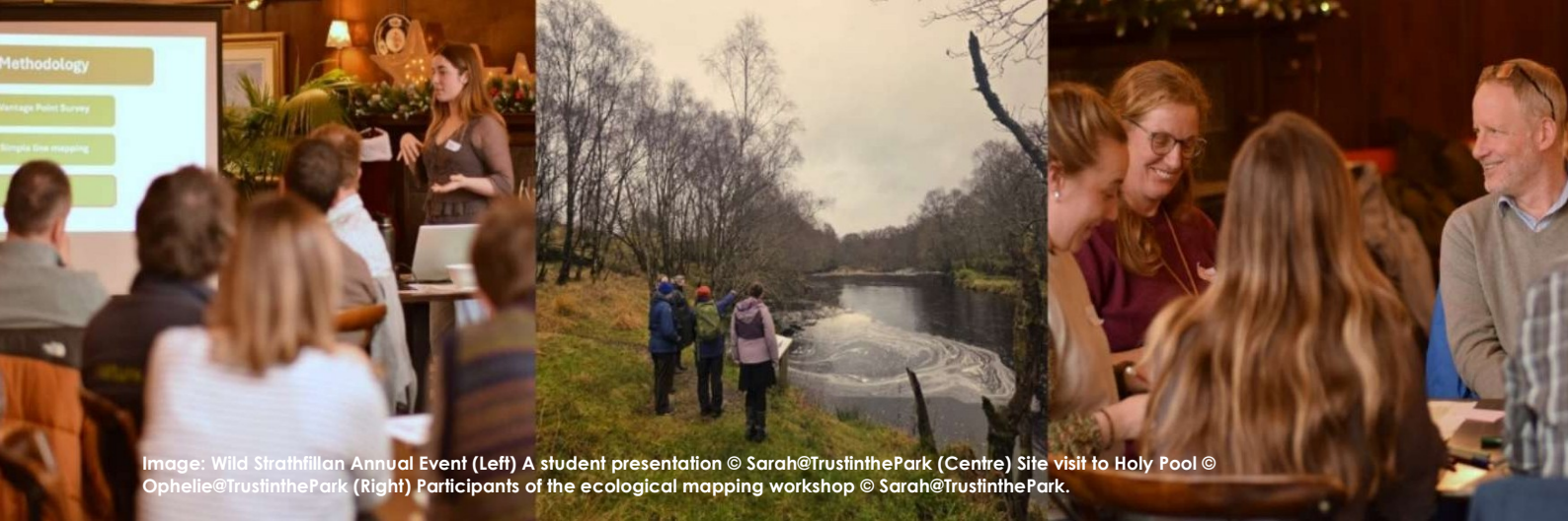


Image: Wild Strathfillan Annual Event (Left) A student presentation © Sarah@TrustinthePark (Centre) Site visit to Holy Pool © Ophelie@TrustinthePark (Right) Participants of the ecological mapping workshop © Sarah@TrustinthePark.

Notice Board

• Wild Strathfillan Annual Event

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Wild Strathfillan Annual Event on the 12th November. For those who couldn't be there, we hope you'll be part of the next one!

The morning opened with lively **updates from the Countryside Trust team**. Sarah and Sophia set the scene with a short introduction into Wild Strathfillan, followed by Ellie's overview of how we'll continue working together as a growing partnership. Ophelie then brought Wild Strathfillan's landscape to life through findings from her ecological surveys, while Sharon inspired the room with stories from her educational activities - spanning primary pupils to university students and local residents.

Our **student speakers** added real spark to the session: Abbi shared her plans for raptor monitoring, Gillian reflected on her heritage placement with Strathfillan Community Development Trust (SCDT), and Kirsty explained what peat cores and pollen samples can reveal about the area's history.

Workshops later in the morning gave everyone a chance to dive deeper. The ecological mapping session gathered valuable biodiversity observations; the heritage workshop, led by Paul Saunders, sparked conversations about tourism, farming and evolving community identity; and the visions for the future workshop encouraged creative thinking about Strathfillan 5 and 100 years from now, touching on jobs, skills, housing and landscape change. After lunch, a determined group headed out - rain and all - for **site visits** to Tyndrum Community Woodland with Euan from SCDT or St Fillan's Holy Pool with Sharon.

If you have any feedback, please don't hesitate to get in contact. Your input helps shape what comes next!

• Local Provenance Trees Available!

Native trees sourced locally are now available from Glenfalloch Tree Nursery. These trees are ideal for supporting biodiversity and restoring natural habitats. For more information or to place an order, please contact info@glenfalloch.org.



Images: Left & Right, Leaky Dam creation, Centre: Colin Burt Reserve © N&LU team (NPA)

Colin Burt Reserve

In September, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority's Nature & Land Use (N&LU) team visited the [Colin Burt Reserve](#) on the southern banks of the River Dochart. This site was purchased in 2005 in memory of the late Colin Burt, a keen naturalist and conservationist, and through the dedication and perseverance of enthusiastic volunteers, the site is being transformed into a diverse nature reserve.

The N&LU team spent the day discussing hydrology, riparian invasive non-native species, ecology, and planning with partners, as well as getting active through the creation of leaky dams – structures designed to slow down water flow in streams and rivers, mimicking natural processes to manage flood risks and enhance ecological health.

Inspired by **World Rivers Day**, 28 September, the team took a moment during the activity of the day to reflect on what makes rivers special to them, and why they should be cherished, protected, and restored:

“They’re alive with magical wildlife moments - dippers dipping, salmon sleeking, beavers building, pond skaters gliding, and mayflies dancing.”

“Rivers bring together nature, adventure and curiosity.”

“They invite play and exploration, from canoeing and swimming to skimming stones, and guddling for natures treasures.”

“They stir the senses with their ever-changing energy, gurgling rhythms, and shifting reflections.”

“We cherish, protect, and restore rivers because they are the lifelines of our landscapes – connecting communities of people and nature.”

Through Wild Strathfillan the Colin Burt Reserve has received funding to deliver further wetland habitat restoration improvements including pond creation and scrapes – these are shallow pools attracting wildlife such as invertebrates, reptiles, and amphibians. The delivery of these habitat structures are currently in planning and we hope to break ground early next year!



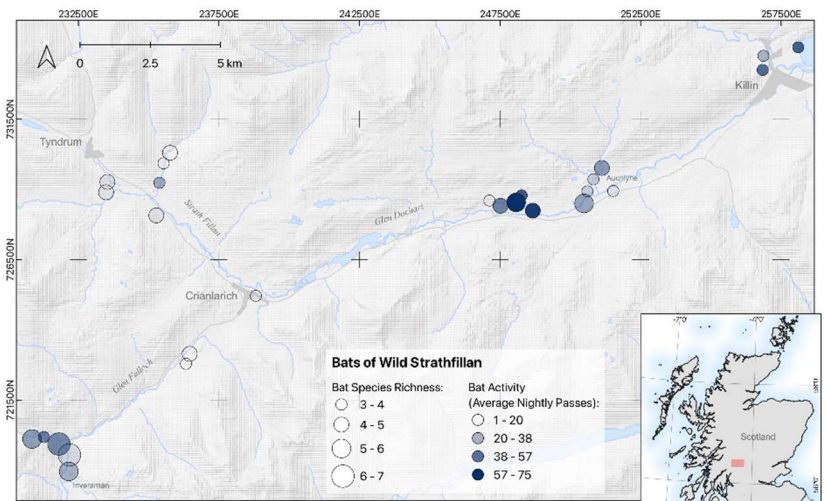
Images: Joey and Viv © Ophelie@Trustinthepark

Bats of Strathfillan

Spooky-season Science with Stirling Uni Students!

Just in time for Halloween, University of Stirling graduate students Joey Baker and Vivienne MacMillan were busy recording bats across the Strathfillan landscape. As the final project for their MSc Environmental Management degree, they used passive acoustic monitoring to listen in on bat calls over several weeks. Small waterproof recorders were deployed in isolated woodlands, quietly logging who was flying by and when.

Why bats? Bats are brilliant indicators of healthy woodlands. Joey and Viv found that different species prefer different woodland features. The tiny pipistrelles – our most common bats – favoured broadleaf woodlands with some low understorey for easy hunting. Other species preferred thicker, mature trees or larger patches of woodland. In other words, there is no singular ‘perfect’ woodland for bats, but rather a mix of structures and well-connected native woodlands helps the whole community.



Locations of 27 sites within the Wild Strathfillan project area, surveyed for bats using passive acoustic monitoring over 3 weeks (1,976 total recording hours) in summer 2025. Circle size represents species richness (number of species recorded per site), while circle colour indicates bat activity (average passes per night).

Their recordings provide baseline information for Wild Strathfillan's restoration work. As native woodland is expanded and existing woodlands are improved, bat activity can be tracked over time to see what works best. Wild Strathfillan is proud to encourage and support student and graduate researchers like Joey and Viv, whose efforts inform our work with nature and people.



Image: A tree in the ground
©Diane Mailer

Woodland Creation at Auchreoch House Farm

Diane and her family are new farmers at Auchreoch House Farm, between Crianlarich and Tyndrum. Improving the quality of grazing, farming alongside nature, and doing their 'bit' for the environment were priorities for them from the beginning. Diane tells us a bit about their journey with Wild Strathfillan, from a first tentative conversation to trees in the ground.

As of 7 November 2025, planting is officially underway on our **two woodlands, totalling 2.12 hectares**. We're planting a new mixed woodland and felling a mature Norway Spruce plantation and restocking it with native trees.

The process has been quite long and complicated, and I don't think it's something we would have undertaken on our own. We joined Wild Strathfillan after a first conversation in May 2023 about a single woodland. A woodland expert was then hired to apply for our felling license and produce our woodland design. Following his advice, we also decided to plant a second woodland. Access to this kind of expertise was invaluable and helped improve our knowledge and confidence. Since then, the Wild Strathfillan team has supported us in engaging with various contractors and sourcing the trees, leading to a deer fence being installed and mounding for tree planting being completed.

We're excited about the benefits we hope to see:



Increased biodiversity due to the creation of more nesting sites and food sources for birds and pollinators.



Creation of wildlife corridors, potentially connecting with other native planting on neighbouring land.



Improved water quality – the streams that run through the new woodlands run into the River Fillan Special Area of Conservation, and the tree roots should help stabilise soils to prevent run off. Our own farmhouse water supply will benefit from improved filtration too!



Healthier and happier Shetland sheep, as the trees will provide shelter and could also help dry out boggy areas, reducing the risk of liver fluke and lameness.



We've **learnt a lot** through the process, which is particularly relevant for our son Logan who hopes to work in the conversation sector and has developed his skills in tree ID, drone photography, digital mapping and tree planting.

100 trees planted....2397 to go!

Lifelong Learning in Wild Strathfillan

Discover, Learn & Grow

One of the three key strands of the **Heritage Lottery Funded “People and Nature of Wild Strathfillan”** is **Lifelong Learning**.

Our goal is to create opportunities for people of all ages to deepen their understanding of both the **natural and cultural heritage** of this remarkable area - and to **build the skills** that will **help communities and nature thrive** together in the future.

Alongside our work with local **schools, colleges, and universities** with learners from primary school to Masters degrees, we've also been exploring how to bring new learning opportunities **into the community**.

What's been happening? We have collaborated with our local partners and others to run a series of events. From **bat walks, lichen hunting** and **seed propagation** to **creative workshops**, we have organised a wide range of activities designed to inform, develop skills, inspire curiosity and enhance connections to the land and each other.

There has been something for everyone. Including film nights, talks and guest speakers, guided walks and hands-on workshops.

What's next? We've got even more **workshops and courses** planned for the new year - so keep an eye out for upcoming opportunities to get involved!

But we also want to hear **from you**. If you live in or around **Strathfillan or Killin**, we'd love to know:

- What topics would you like to learn more about?
- What skills would you like to develop or share?



And if you're a **local land manager or employer**, your input is equally valuable - let us know what skills you think would most benefit the community and local environment.

To share your ideas or find out more, please contact our **Education and Engagement Officer, Sharon**, at:
Sharon@trustinthepark.org.



Image: Workshop at Glenfalloch nursery
© Sharon@Trustinthepark

“Let's keep learning, growing, and connecting – together!”

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 January 2026.

Email: info@trustinthepark.org

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

Email: Sharon@trustinthepark.org



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