



Portmoak Community Woodland Group

Review of the year, October 2020 - September 2021

The time of Covid

We kept going by Zoom and by bumping into each other. Then in June we finally met together again in Chris's Place. And in July. Then, da da-da da da-da dahhh: in the pub! And now we're back to Zoom.

Christmas Tree Day 2020

Most people on our list wanted to get their tree from us. But, but, but... Covid in our villages and Scottish Government rules didn't allow events to happen so we decided that this year we wouldn't be taking Christmas trees from the Moss. Instead we decorated a Christmas Tree down there. For most of us in the Group, that was our only tree and we were pleased to be able to share it with the community.

Burns event

Public event cancelled but at least the group all got together for a Burns Supper, which included haggis pizzas in some households.

The Great Portmoak Birdwatch: 3-11 April 2021

We invited everyone to spend a week looking out for birds and telling us what you saw. Great response! 74 species were reported by 18 people in a total of 453 sightings. There were some huge flocks of geese, over a thousand strong, as well as many solitary individuals. Some of the sightings were of quite unusual species, like yellowhammers and linnets, while others are familiar to us from our back gardens and bird feeders. Blackbirds, blue tits, great tits, chaffinches and robins seem to be everywhere.

Dawn Chorus

Stu and Stuart persuaded some people to get up at a time that most people didn't even know existed to listen to some birds that they couldn't even see. They also did a bird watch walk.

Community Woodlands Association: Summer 2021

This is an organisation that thinks a lot like us. We had an article in their summer newsletter, written by Louise.

Community Newsletter: all year

Louise kept our contribution up throughout the year. Even when there wasn't any actual news.

Green Prescribing

Scheme being developed by doctors to reduce antidepressant use for folk with minor depression, or feeling low and lacking confidence after isolation of lockdown. Idea is to encourage folk out of their homes to engage in local community activities. Michael coordinates this and has invited them to several of our events. First one was an excellent walk around Kilmagad Wood, led by Marje.



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Kinross-shire Climate Café

Has just started up as an informal monthly get together to discuss climate change issues. We gave a presentation about the Moss and did a follow-up tour.

Birch popping and pulling

Ongoing effort through out the year and showing tremendous improvement. A large area covered. A lot of individual efforts (especially Mike, Lesley and Sheena) plus some organised days and a mass event to come. Well done to everyone.

Himbal bashing

Another great success due to individual and team efforts. Greatly reduced intrusion by Himalayan balsam this year - we're getting the benefits from our efforts in previous years.

Chris's Place

Ongoing maintenance by Dave C. is keeping the grass in good nick and it's being used by many play groups, just like we wanted.

Squirrels

Charlotte became the squirrel czar, helped by Louise.

Bog-tastic and Tree-tastic

Bog-tastic is well used and definitely liked by visiting children. Some even come specifically because of Bog-tastic. New leaflet dispenser needs constant topping up. Applause for Marje. The booklet "Tree-tastic" focusing on Kilmagad Wood and the Community Orchard was researched, designed and printed. More applause for Marje.

Orchard signs

These have become the new Viewpoint indicator - mentioned every month and something will always happen next month. Honest.

Gate into the Moss from Kilmagadwood field

Installed after much perseverance from Dave B.

Doggy doo-dooos

A lot more of it about, especially on Mike's knees. Trying to use posters by kids for awareness raising.

Web-site

New design almost ready to go live. Thanks to Louise for coercing her nephew.



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Main improvements carried out by Woodland Trust Scotland

- New bench on the peat dome: nice piece of furniture and well used.
- Deer fencing around the orchard area removed. What an improvement, especially when coming down the hill. The deer like it too - they can get out of the orchard now and eat other trees for a change.
- Birch spraying resumed and has knocked it back a bit. (Any orchids that come up beside the path are diligently strimmed by the contractors 😞).
- The steps on the Kilmagadwood access from the road have been replaced.
- The rickety bridge on the Moss has been repaired.
- The unauthorised and rickety shelters in the Moss have been removed.
- Right now the thinning of trees on the NW corner is underway and is making things look much different and better. Reprofiling to follow. Good effort by Tanji and the team to explain to the public what's going on.

Summary

Well, in a year when people couldn't do much, we kept things moving:

- Continued communication with the community about what we're doing on their Moss and in their woodlands.
- Organising virtual and live events about our local nature and environment.
- Engagement with appropriate groups and community initiatives.
- Doing work to make things better.
- Working with the Woodland Trust to keep everything on track. And the WT have carried out some excellent projects.