



Community Asset Transfer Scheme

**Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
3rd Annual Report**

1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

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Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 3rd Annual Report

Forestry and Land Scotland's Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) was launched in January 2017. CATS sets out how we'll deliver the asset transfer rights for communities covered in Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for our national forests and land.

This third annual report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. During that period, Forestry and Land Scotland has:

- **validated four requests for ownership** of sites on our national forests and land.
- **validated one request for lease** of a site
- issued decision notices **to approve five requests**
- **completed four transfers of land to communities**

One request validated during the last year was for land notified for sale under our New Woodland Investment Programme. A further three requests were for areas of our national forest and land that communities had identified to contribute to their objectives and benefit their communities. FLS also validated one request for lease of land to build a hydroelectric scheme.

In summary, since the scheme launched in January 2017 up until 31 March 2020, a total of 17 requests have been received, 13 have been approved and 9 transfers have completed.

Following a review of an FLS decision to refuse one request for ownership in 2017/18, under Section 87 of the Act, Scottish Ministers issued the decision on 31 October 2019 to refuse the request.

A full list of asset transfer requests received for the National Forest Estate, and progress to date is shown in Annex 1.

Since 31 March 2020, Forestry and Land Scotland has received 1 request for ownership, and approved 2 requests for ownership and one for a lease.

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Empowering Communities

Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) was formed on 1 April 2019, to manage Scotland's national forests and land. FLS published its new Corporate Plan for 2019-2022 in October 2019, following public consultation. This sets out the priorities for the new organisation and how FLS will help deliver across all eleven National Outcomes, including empowering communities.

FLS has committed in the Corporate Plan to produce a Community Strategy, to underpin its operational actions:

- Continuing to engage communities in decisions relating to the management of the national forests and land
- Continuing to support community empowerment by enabling communities to make use of the national forests and land to benefit their communities

FLS has continued to engage with communities across Scotland to provide advice on its Community Asset Transfer Scheme. FLS has a pipeline of around 30 projects in development, and works with the community bodies to discuss the best solution to achieve their aspirations and provide information about the land it manages. The Community Asset Transfer Manager and the National Community Advisor regularly coordinate meetings, along with Regional land management and Estates Development colleagues, to talk through community proposals, options for use or transfer of land, and signpost to relevant support for example from the Scottish Land Fund and Community Ownership Support Service.

The Community Strategy will look at how we work with communities and the contribution of our national forests and land to the key objectives of:

- Supporting a sustainable rural economy
- Looking after Scotland's National Forests and Land
- Scotland's National Forests and Land for People

Engaging communities in decisions relating to land

People can find out more about our national forests and land from the map based [Register of Land](#). A range of spatial data with richer functionality, is available from the [OpenData](#) website. Further guidance and case studies on community projects and activities on national forests and land are also available on our [Communities web pages](#).

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Forestry and Land Scotland engages communities in the decisions we make about how we manage our national forests and land through public consultations. Our land management plans set out how we intend to manage a specific area of forest over a period of ten years. The plans are published online and we engage communities and other stakeholders to gather a range of views. After public consultation and approval, land management plans are put into action by our local teams.

We currently have 55 consultations, and 153 active land management plans, which are available [online](#) or by contacting your [Regional office](#).

Engaging communities in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands

Our national forests and land are used by many groups for a huge range of activities. Many activities can be freely carried out in our woodlands. Groups can also get permissions for activities which require more formal arrangements, such as sporting events, habitat management, or path maintenance to improve access to a woodland.

We also work with communities to carry out projects and longer term activities through agreements and leases. These range from woodland management agreements, to leases for renewables projects or community buildings. We also work with communities of interest including environmental NGOs, sports clubs, history and arts groups, and in partnership with communities and other bodies to support a programme of activities.

A summary of current activity of communities getting involved on the national forest estate:

- Partnerships / agreements / leases: 92
- Actively engaged / empowered / submitting asset transfer requests: 116

Our staff work closely with communities locally to put in place the right agreement to deliver the community's objectives and manage our national forests and land responsibly and sustainably.

Community Asset Transfer Scheme

The [Community Asset Transfer Scheme \(CATS\)](#) enables communities to take greater control of the land through ownership or lease. Over the last year, we have completed the sales of 5 sites to communities, 4 supported by grants from the Scottish Land Fund. A further 6 requests have now been approved. On Skye, the Minginish Community Hall Association has

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completed Phase 1 of the transformation of the Fairy Pools Cark Park since taking ownership in June 2018. In November 2018, the Valley Renewables Group launched the Carron Valley Community Woodland and are working on their plans for new paths, wildlife ponds and woodfuel supply, with local community involvement through volunteer days and community events.

Our [CATS Evaluation Panel](#) has continued to provide independent and impartial advice to Forestry and Land Scotland. CATS Evaluation Panel members visited 7 sites over the last year to meet communities to discuss their requests and inform the evaluation process, as well as giving constructive feedback to the groups to help improve and strengthen their proposals.

We also have maintained a pipeline of between 30 and 40 projects in development over the last year, many supported by the Scottish Land Fund's Stage 1 funding. The Community Asset Transfer Manager and our Regional staff have continued to attend meetings with community groups across the country to advise on the CATS process and provide information on the woodlands to help develop requests.

Looking Ahead

Over the coming year, we will develop a Community Strategy, which will set out the many ways in which communities are involved in our decision making and the opportunities to make use of our national forests and land.

We will also:


- continue to review and improve our CATS guidance;
- improve the information available on existing community projects and how communities can make better use of national forests and land; and
- continue to support for our staff in their day to day work with communities.

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ANNEX 1: Forestry and Land Scotland: Asset Transfer Requests

Requests validated 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

 Progress since 31 March 2020

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Clunes Buildings and Woodland Clunes, Highland	Arkaig Community Forest	3-Sep-19	6	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 06-Jan-20	Awaiting offer
Corsee Wood Banchory, Aberdeenshire	Deeside Bike Collective	3-Sep-19	13	Ownership	Mountain bike trails	Approved 02-Mar-20	Awaiting offer
Coilhullan Wood Callander, Stirling	Callander Community Development Trust	23-Oct-19	83	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 21-Apr-20	Awaiting offer
Inverarish hydroelectric scheme Isle of Raasay, Highland	Raasay Development Trust	17-Dec-19	18	Lease	Hydroelectric scheme	Approved 29-May-20	Awaiting offer
Inverawe Woodland Inverawe, Argyll & Bute	Inverawe Community Woodland	19-Mar-20	6	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 08-Jun-20	Awaiting offer

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Requests validated 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

21 January 2017 to 31 March 2019

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Ardura Craignure, Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	03-Apr-18	201	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 21-Dec-18	Completed 13-Sep-19
Seneval Carradale, South Kintyre	Carradale Community Trust	22-Oct-18	1.9	Ownership	Community services	Approved 07-Feb-19	Completed 16-Sep-19
Glenan Wood Portavadie, Cowal	Friends of Glenan Wood	02-Nov-18	144	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 10-May-19	Completed 20-Dec-19
The Gantry Craignure, Isle of Mull	Mull and Iona Community Trust	15-Nov-18	0.35	Ownership	Community services	Approved 7-Feb-19	Extension
Muidrochwood Carsphairn, Galloway	Carsphairn Community Woodland	7-Nov-18	324	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 03-May-19 Revised 07-Jan-20	Awaiting offer
Corrow Gravel Pit Lochgoilhead, Cowal	Lochgoil Watersports Cub	21-Nov-18	2.15	Ownership	Recreation	Approved 15-Feb-19	Completed 30-Oct-19

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Requests validated 21 January 2017 to 31 March 2018

21 January 2017 to 31 March 2019

Property Address	Community Transfer Body	Validation date	Size (ha)	Type – purchase or lease	Proposed use	Outcome	Status
Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes Ettrick, Scottish Borders	Ettrick & Yarrow Community Development Company	26-Jun-17	173	Ownership	Community woodland	Refused 03-Nov-17	Refused following Review by Scottish Ministers
The Fairy Pools Car Park Minginish, Isle of Skye	Minginish Community Hall Association	16-Aug-17	12.3	Ownership	Parking facilities	Approved 03-Nov-17	Completed 06-Jul-18
Carron Valley Carron Bridge, Stirling	Valley Renewables Group	20-Dec-17	21.3	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 28-Feb-18	Completed 12-Oct-18
Leadburn Wood Leadburn, Scottish Borders	Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland	26-Feb-18	9.4	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 28-Mar-19
Dronley Wood Auchterhouse, Angus	Dronley Community Woodland	19-Mar-18	50.7	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 28-Mar-19
Eshiels Wood Peebles, Scottish Borders	Peebles Community Trust	22-Mar-18	6.9	Ownership	Community woodland	Approved 04-Jun-18	Completed 15-Jan-19