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Happenings at Glenlude

2023: a year to reflect and plan for the next 10 years

Glenlude Manager Karen Purvis shares a summary of some of the many highlights and happenings of the past 12 months at Glenlude.

Volunteer work parties

Re-starting in March, after a break over the colder months, we only managed a small number of Thursday work parties this year. Regardless, 22 of our core volunteers gave over 50 days conservation work keeping up with essential tasks and further tree planting. We continue to remove shelters from now established broadleaf trees and our work to plant native trees in what were formerly larch plantations.

SRUC, volunteers returned once again and carried out a breeding bird survey in May with the Oatridge College Countryside Stewards (ORCS).

After my leave of absence during the summer months, our Engagement Manager Hannah Shaw helped organise a special work party to welcome back our regular Glenlude conservation volunteers. We were delighted with the turnout for this event with 16 volunteers (including three from John Muir Trust Corporate Members **Absolute Escapes**) gathering at the hut along with Trust staff. Tree planting, weeding, grass cutting, ditch clearing and pruning were just some of the activities we carried out on a gloriously sunny day.

As our final work party of 2023 took place on Thursday 14 December. Volunteers continued

planting trees and undertook various tidying jobs around the hut and in the tree nursery, packing things away for the colder months and getting prepared for future work parties

A festive lunch in the hut followed by a fun quiz by the Trust's Thirlmere Resilience Project Officer Isaac Johnston, finished the volunteering year off with a smile.

During 2023, 36 volunteers have given us over 90 days of conservation work. We'll be back in March 2024 with the intention of planting more trees and sowing seeds for the next generation of seedlings.



Tree planting volunteers & staff

Other visiting groups

In June 11 high school students and staff from **Waldorf School Vancouver**, Canada accompanied by Philip Munroe of the **South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project**, spent 2 days working at Glenlude building dry stone tables at our wild campsite, learning about our work and helping with tree maintenance as part of a weeklong visit to the Borders.

- [Read more in Field Notes: Summer visitors to the Borders](#)



Karen joins our partners and guests from the Waldorf School Vancouver in sunny Glenlude

A group from **Artemis Investment Management** also visited Glenlude in June. The Artemis Charitable Foundation sponsored the Artemis Pentland Peaks Challenge; an endurance walk across Edinburgh's Pentland Hills. This year's event participants raised money for the John Muir Trust and Mary's Meals.

Accompanied by Trust staff, the group came to Glenlude where they toured the site and learned of the work that we do before helping out with some practical woodland tasks.

- [Read more in Field Notes: Time well spent at Glenlude](#)

Other news

Glenlude Gathering Shelter

Site work started on our Gathering Shelter. The site has been cleared of timber, mapped out, the foundations dug & reinforcing steel installed. We engaged with a contractor to take care of the first 'pour' of concrete and with help from volunteers if the weather allows hope to have the second stage finished in the spring. Once completed we will start on the structural build.

Located within our tree nursery enclosure this versatile, multi-purpose outdoor space will enable us to engage with a more diverse range of groups, abilities and faiths. And also to upskill our volunteers so that we can make the best possible use of our own home grown timber for cladding and roofing shingles.

Rewilding Britain funding

We were delighted to be awarded funds from the Rewilding Innovation Fund to support our Growing Glenlude project. This will fund a woodland scoping study that will help inform our updated forest plan. Once this forest plan is in place, we will begin planning for the next ten years of restoration, engagement and inclusive volunteering. We have engaged with an environmental consultancy to carry out this study starting in January 2024, with the report expected at the end of July.

- [Read more in Rewilding Britain Funding-Growing Glenlude](#)

Woodland project update

Following the felling of all 10 hectares of larch in 2021, we have continued to replant these areas with a lovely mix of native broadleaved trees and shrubs creating a mosaic of habitats across the site.

Numerous groups including our regular volunteers are helping with this, mainly

concentrating on the areas (5ha) closest to the hut where access is relatively easy. We contracted out the remaining areas towards the south side of the property to a local forestry company, they have just finished planting 5,500 native broadleaved trees & shrubs across three compartments. To minimise our use of plastics, these trees have been planted in bio-degradable tree tubes.

We remain committed to working with Phoenix Futures, the Jamie's Wood team and other charities, local schools and colleges and are very much looking forward to welcoming them back in 2024.



Our native woodlands are becoming well established

Working with partners

In September, we visited Trees for Life's new visitor centre and tree nursery at Dundreggan on the shores of Loch Ness and Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Gosling Sike plant nursery near Penrith. Staff from both centres were very generous with their knowledge and time and, as well as making new acquaintances, we have been able to feed some of the learnings into our plans for our own tree nursery at Glenlude.



Gosling Sike plant nursery & visitor centre

[Gosling Sike | Cumbria Wildlife Trust](#)

Next steps...

2024 promises to be an exciting time for Glenlude. On completion of the Woodland Scoping Study, we will be working on our revised forest plan which will inform the next 10 years of the project. Our Gathering Shelter remains a key focus and alongside this we will be re-vamping the tree nursery – improving our irrigation system to make it more water efficient and fit for purpose; upgrading and creating all access paths from the hut to the Gathering Shelter and nursery areas and building raised beds with shading to further protect young trees during hot summers.

We intend to restart our Thursday work parties in March and look forward to reconnecting with our partners and volunteers on site again further extending the woodlands that we've been working on over the past 11 years. The Growing Glenlude project will enable us to welcome a more diverse range of groups and individuals, work that we are keen to build on in coming years.

Glenlude is a beautiful, calming location for local schools and community organisations to develop skills and experience the wellbeing benefits of connecting with wild nature as part of a thriving ecosystem. Keep an eye on our website for opportunities.

Finally, an enormous thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past year, keeping the show on the road and moving forward.

We look forward to welcoming you back on site in 2024.

- Find out more about [Glenlude online](#).