

Rooted in the community

Annual Review 2016

The
Borders



t r U S t



Chairman's Report

Rosalind Grant-Robertson, *Chairman*

2016 was a milestone in the life of the Trust in that we reached our 20th Anniversary. Throughout these first 20 years, Borders Forest Trust has been involved in community woodlands, education about and promotion of native habitats and woodland culture, and ecological restoration. Our land holdings have grown from Carrifran Wildwood to include Corehead and The Devil's Beeftub, and Talla & Gameshope. This area we now refer to as **The Wild Heart of Southern Scotland**.

In March 2016, the Trust's work in ecological restoration was praised at an event held at the Scottish Parliament to celebrate our 20th Anniversary. It was hosted appropriately by Jim Hume MSP, who served as a Trustee when Borders Forest Trust was in its infancy. Importantly, the evening was an opportunity to thank our many supporters and partners through these years, and included contributions from then Minister for the Environment Aileen McLeod, and the CEO of Woodland Trust, Beccy Speight.



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Top: Willow catkins at Carrifran. Above: Bare hills Talla & Gameshope.

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Early in 2016, planting started on Talla & Gameshope in true BFT fashion, with staff and volunteers (some of whom were new to the task!) braving a wintry day to plant the first few hundred trees around the bothy. Later in the year, high-level planting was started, also by volunteers. The Trust has built a faithful and now quite expert body of volunteers, reflecting its community roots, and is grateful for all the work they do. The purchase of the estate in 2013 included a soft loan, and repayments over the last 3 years have reduced this by over half to under £200,000. Repayment is still a major priority for the Trust and a focus for fundraising for the next 2 years.

There is increasing evidence of the Trust's wider influence, thanks to important research and articles based on our work at Carrifran published by members John Savory and Stuart Adair, and also thanks to the wide and assiduous networking done by our CEO, Jane Rosegrant. Our landholdings attract many visiting groups and organisations, with whom we can share approaches and experience. The Trust is therefore now playing a significant part in the bigger picture, despite our relatively small size.

I would like to thank Steve Sloan for his work as Chairman up until the 2016 AGM and indeed all the trustees, who give their time and support to the Trust. The Board also is fortunate in its CEO and staff team, whose output matches considerably larger organisations with more stable funding. Looking back over 20 years of achievements, the results speak for themselves. 2016 has set the bar for the next 20 years.

Above: Gameshope burn. Below: Beccy Speight, CEO of the Woodland Trust, receiving flowers from a young BFT supporter at our 20th Anniversary.



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Borders Forest Trust in 2016

Celebrating our 20th Anniversary was a great opportunity to look back at what has been achieved and reach out to old friends. As part of celebrating this work we had two short films produced. One is about the Carrifran Wildwood, and especially the incredible volunteer work that has gone into that special site. The second is about our work with young people at Corehead Farm and the Devil's Beeftub. Both can be viewed on our website (www.bordersforesttrust.org) on the page for *The Wild Heart* within the Places drop down menu.

As well as a celebration year, 2016 was also about looking forward to what the next 20 years may bring. Restoration work at Talla & Gameshope has just begun and will be a major focus for the next decade at least. Continuing to enrich and care for the Carrifran Wildwood and Corehead and the Devil's Beeftub is vital as well. Developing new ways of supporting volunteers and education work on our own sites and across the Scottish Borders will encourage the development of a regional Woodland Culture. Partnership working with other landowners will allow us to impact more widely on local ecology than could be achieved if we limited work to our owned sites.

Finally, going forward we can see that more and more individuals, communities and organisations are coming to believe that it is vital to restore healthy native habitats. Since we already have concrete achievements that can be visited on the ground, our work is becoming ever more important in demonstrating the potential of ecological restoration. At the Carrifran Wildwood, where the high quality of ecological restoration work is becoming well known, 2016 saw seven groups of university students come for study days on the site, 10 community or professional groups visit for learning tours and volunteer speakers went out to 8 different audiences to spread the word. We hope this demonstration role will continue to grow into the future as the need for ecological restoration continues to be better and more widely accepted.



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Above: Male Orange-tip butterfly on bluebell at Carrifran.
Right: Junior Rangers in the orchard at Corehead.



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Key Achievements

The Wild Heart of Southern Scotland

This heading encompasses the habitat restoration work at Carrifran Wildwood, Corehead and the Devil's Beeftub and Talla & Gameshope, and the education, volunteering and community activities that take place at these sites.

Volunteers have always been at the heart of the work we achieve on the ground and this was no different in 2016 with over 500 volunteer person days devoted to these sites. Over the year our sites benefitted from volunteers who planted trees, removed tree tubes, maintained paths, removed redundant fencing, checked and repaired vital boundary fences, carried out biological surveys, led groups on site tours and surveyed tree growth. Some volunteers come weekly, others joined in 'one-off' events while others came to our High

Camps, staying overnight on site to make the most of the daylight hours available!

Staff also have a vital role to play on these sites, enabling volunteer work, managing contractors, leading education activities, carrying out practical tasks and applying for the funding that keeps it all happening.

Educational work on our sites ranged from programmes including nursery age children through to university visits and professional groups. Primary and secondary schools have sent classes for subject specific work, or year groups have joined to fulfil a John Muir Award. Opportunities to gain rural skills such as tree pruning, scything and charcoal making were also on offer. Our Junior Rangers at Corehead meet monthly to carry out practical tasks and learn about the land.



© John Thomas



© Matthew Whitney

Top left: Volunteer mending fences at Talla & Gameshope.
Above: Ali Murfitt, BFT Community and Education Officer, planting at Talla & Gameshope.

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Key Achievements

Partnership projects

Partnership projects are one way of increasing impact and working more efficiently. We are firm believers that working only on our sites would limit our impact and mean less is achieved. Therefore a portion of our time is spent working in partnership with other landowners who want to improve the health and native habitats of their own land, and other agencies who have important goals that overlap with our work.

For example, in 2016, we:

- planted 17,000 trees in partnership with other landowners
- collected 18 species of tree seed, totalling over 700,000 individual seeds, as part of the Millennium Seed Bank project with Kew Gardens
- ran two Branching Out Courses, a therapeutic programme of woodland activities for mental health service users, run in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland and NHS Borders.



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Increased partnership working is planned for 2017, watch this space!



© Graham Riddell Photography



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Woodland Culture

Our Woodland Culture work centres around volunteer and education opportunities that mainly take place outside of our own properties. During 2016 this included working with 8 primary schools in the Scottish Borders by designing bespoke environmental education packs for each school and working on environmental improvements in their grounds or neighbouring woodlands. We offered 27 weekly volunteer sessions in local woodlands, improving the health of the woodlands and teaching skills in tool use, pruning, path work and tree planting and we continued to support local community woodland groups, including advising on the possible set up of three new groups. Finally, we ran the 10th Annual Scottish Conker Championships at the Tweed Valley Forest Festival, always a popular event!

Top: Lady's-smock flowering in the Wildwood. Centre: Lichens and mosses in the Wildwood. Left: Celebrating planting a conker tree at the 10th Annual Scottish Conker Championships.

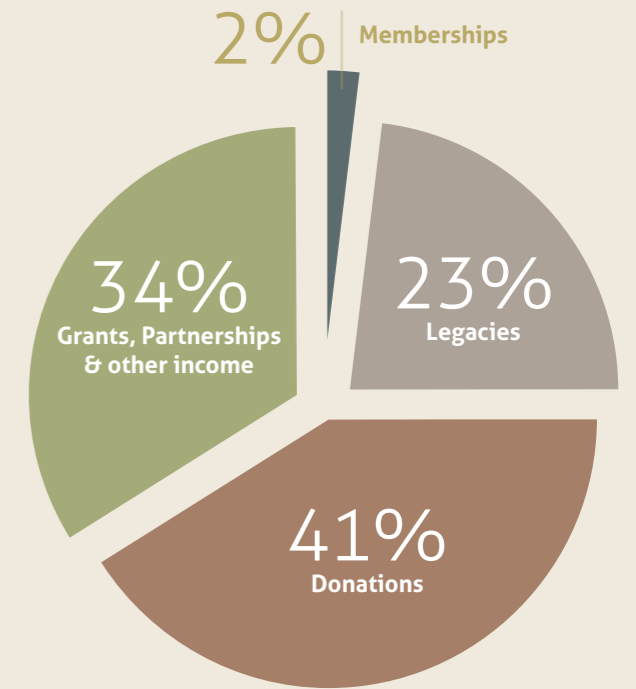
Financial Summary

Balance Sheet

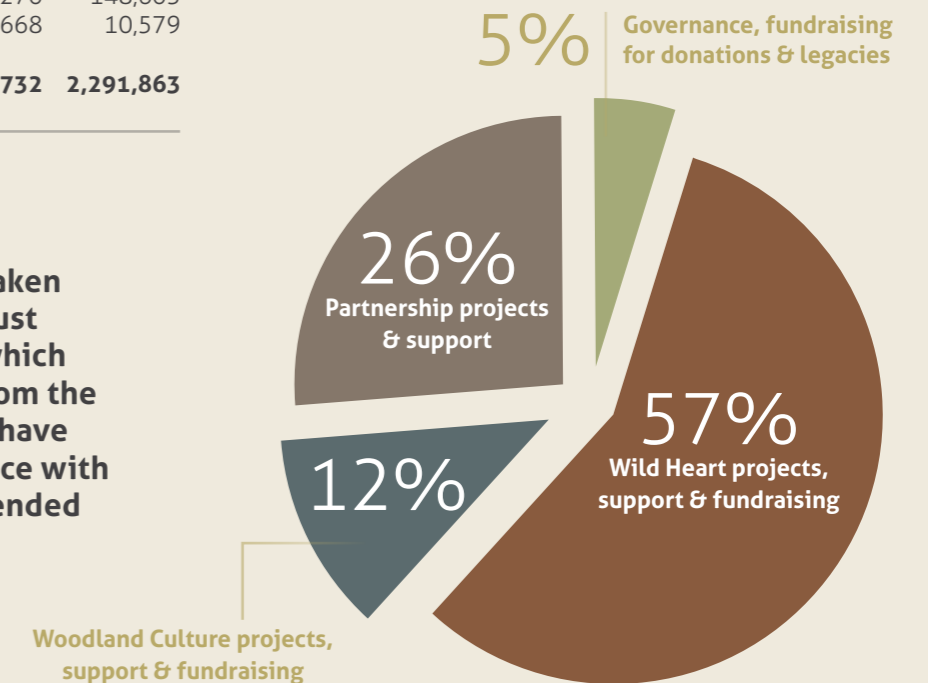
	2016 (£)	2015 (£)
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets (including land holdings)	1,946,256	1,947,762
Investments	308,545	288,101
Total	2,254,801	2,235,863
Current Assets		
Stock	25,901	24,450
Debtors	54,338	134,890
Cash at Bank	336,873	297,087
Total	417,121	456,427
Creditors		
Amount due within one year	(58,690)	(81,427)
Net Current Assets	358,431	375,000
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	2,613,232	2,610,863
Amount due after more than one year (mainly toward land purchase)	(160,500)	(319,000)
Net Assets	2,452,732	2,291,863
Charity Funds		
Restricted Funds	2,227,794	2,132,679
Unrestricted Funds	212,270	148,605
Endowment Funds	12,668	10,579
Total	2,452,732	2,291,863

The financial summary is taken from the Borders Forest Trust 2016 Accounts, copies of which are available on request from the BFT office. These accounts have been produced in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting by charities.

Where was the money raised



Where the money was spent



Woodland Culture projects, support & fundraising

Our vision for the south of Scotland is a place where a rich network of native woodlands and wild places flourish, cared for by local communities. We work to conserve, restore and manage native woodlands and other natural habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife. We support community woodlands, habitat restoration, education and arts projects and are involved in the sustainable use of hardwood timber. Our vision can only be realised with the participation and support of people in the south of Scotland.

Staff 2016

Lynn Cassells, Site Officer (*resigned March 2016*)
 Anna Craigen, Community and Education Officer (*appointed August 2015*)
 Alasdair Fagan, Woodland Habitats Site Officer (*appointed April 2015*)
 Tim Frost, Woodland Site Manager (*resigned January 2016*)
 Nick Hesford, Site Officer (*appointed June 2016*)
 Nicola Hunt, Project Manager (*appointed April 2001*)
 Alison Murfitt, Corehead Community and Education Officer (*appointed April 2014*)
 Jane Rosegrant, Director (*appointed June 2012*)
 Sandra Smith-Maxwell, Finance Officer (*appointed January 2006*)

Trustees 2016

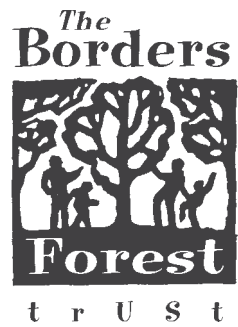
Philip Ashmole (*appointed 22/07/15 – First term*)
 Hugh Chalmers (*appointed 16/07/14 – First term*)
 Sarah Eno (*appointed 22/07/15 – First term*)
 Rosalind Grant-Robertson (*appointed 16/07/14 – First term*)
 Jim Knight (*appointed 03/08/16 – First term*)
 David Long (*appointed 03/08/16 – Second term*)
 Donald McPhillimy (*appointed 7/08/13 – Second term, Retired 03/08/16*)
 Brenda Robertson (*appointed 16/07/14 – Second term*)
 Steve Sloan (*appointed 22/07/15 – Second term, Retired 03/08/16*)
 John Thomas (*appointed 16/07/14 – First term*)
 Martin Tilstone (*appointed 22/07/15 – Second term, Retired 03/08/16*)
 Hans Walzl (*appointed 03/08/16 – Second term*)
 Stephanie Young (*appointed 7/08/13 – Second term, Retired 03/08/16*)

Patron

Rory Bremner

Thanks

Our sincere thanks go to all of our members, supporters, funders and partner organisations who make our work possible.



Funders

Borders Forest Trust gratefully acknowledges support from:

Spurgin Charitable Trust



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