

Impact Report 2024/25



**Future Woodlands
Scotland**

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Scotland**

**Restoring trees
from city spaces
to wild places**



Message from the Chair

Scotland has a big part to play in tackling the nature and climate crises. With some of the UK's most remarkable landscapes, our country is in a unique position to show how restoring woodlands can make a real difference — for people and wildlife here at home, across the UK and further afield.

Yet, despite Scotland's beauty, decades of human intervention have left the Scottish landscape depleted. That's why the work of Future Woodlands Scotland has never been more urgent or more vital. Our vision is of a Scotland where trees and woodlands are thriving for wildlife, communities and climate. Restoring them means thinking long-term, from nurturing the youngest saplings in local nurseries to safeguarding ancient forests.

As an organisation of practical experts and active trustees, we are protecting, creating and restoring woodlands across Scotland, bringing our vision to life. Our strength lies in our shared passion, deep knowledge and determination. We are not only imagining a Scotland with more healthy, sustainable, and diverse woodlands — we are making it happen.

I'm incredibly proud to stand alongside and support such a committed team.

David

David McCall



Message from the CEO

2024/25 was a busy year for the team at Future Woodlands Scotland. As our team grew in size we embarked on some major projects, from developing landscape scale woodland restoration in the Highlands to opening our Urban Forestry Challenge Fund to applicants and seeing those projects delivered on the ground.

Launching, and delivering, our new skills programme, Future Skills, was a particular highlight for me as woodland restoration skills are urgently needed to meet our goals. We continue to offer funding to those carrying out vital research on our native woodlands and have supported a diverse and wide-ranging programme.

In the past year, we've also focused on building new relationships, forging partnerships with organisations and businesses that share our vision. Together we have a much better chance of achieving our priorities, set out below.

Thank you to all those who have supported us in the past year.

Shireen Chambers MBE



Trees are vital for life

Trees sustain thousands of species, store carbon, stabilise soil, mitigate climate change, support rural communities and provide materials for shelter and clothing. Despite the essential services they provide, Scotland's trees face serious challenges.

Only

18%

of Scotland is covered
by trees, well below the
European average of 39%

Native woodlands
make up just

4%

of the land, with over half
in a degraded state

Our urban green spaces are

limited

with some of the lowest
urban tree canopy cover
in Europe

Significant losses have occurred, and remaining woodlands are threatened by disease, overgrazing and climate change.

Future Woodlands Scotland is working to protect, create and restore Scotland's woodlands. Our priorities are to:



Restore Scotland's ancient 'ghost' woodlands before they are lost forever.



Promote forestry practices that restore ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and strengthen the long-term health and resilience of woodlands.



Create greener, healthier environments, with a focus on low-income communities disproportionately affected by climate change.



Develop a diverse and skilled workforce, to ensure sustainable and resilient woodlands, via training across multiple disciplines.



Advance knowledge by supporting research that deepens understanding of native woodlands and their impact on communities, climate and biodiversity.

2024/25 in numbers

(1 April 2024–31 March 2025)



Woodland restoration
underway across

860

hectares at 16 sites



2,970

urban trees were planted
across major cities



12 urban projects
awarded over

£600,000

in funding



238

people took part in tree
planting volunteering
events



130

people participated
in skills development
activities



192

people engaged in urban
forestry awareness-raising
activities



Four research grants were
awarded, contributing

£32,000

towards a total of £81,366
in research funding

Creating greener, healthier urban environments

Planting more trees in our towns and cities brings wide-reaching social, economic and environmental benefits. Trees help clean the air we breathe, reduce flooding, support wildlife and improve our wellbeing.

The **Urban Forestry Programme** is a ten-year initiative working to increase tree cover and green spaces across Scotland's urban areas. Initiated with support from bp, and now being carried forward by the company's offshore wind joint venture JERA Nex bp, the programme focuses on communities with low tree equity, areas with limited tree cover that also face greater environmental, economic, and health-related challenges.

During 2024/25, 12 urban projects received funding. Grantees included local authorities, schools, community groups and charities committed to enhancing urban nature and supporting their communities.

Spotlight on: Nut and Fruit Project

TreeLink Stirling received funding to plant and care for trees in areas of Stirling with low canopy cover and low tree equity. As part of this initiative, 200 trees were planted in residents' gardens by TreeLink volunteers. Local residents also received guidance and support on how to care for their trees, ensuring they thrive and provide fruit and nuts for years to come.

“ I live on a new-build estate with a lot of lawns. I think encouraging wildlife into our gardens is a really important thing to do, especially because areas like housing estates can serve as such important wildlife corridors. I love how, in summer, the garden comes alive with birds and bees.”

Zoe, participant

“ I love fruit trees. My children are growing up. I want them to grow up with the trees – that's very meaningful for them. I always like fruit and I want the joy of growing the tree and picking the fruit from the tree.”

Yiyi, participant

Image: Fruit and Nut Project participants

Restoring Scotland's ancient 'ghost' woodlands

Ghost woodlands are some of Scotland's most threatened types of ancient woodland. These once-thriving sites have been reduced to fragments, with less than 20% of their original tree canopy remaining.

At Future Woodlands Scotland, restoring these fragmented ancient woodlands is a major priority. We're leading a national programme to identify, support and restore these lost habitats, working closely with landowners and farmers across Scotland.

During 2024/25, we continued to support land managers in the restoration of **860 hectares** of woodland across **16 sites** in Scotland – bringing life back to some of our most precious but fragile natural landscapes.

“The Allt Ghiubhais restoration enclosure aims to expand native woodland within the Loch Leven Site of Special Scientific Interest through promotion and protection of natural regeneration. Around 47 hectares have been deer-fenced to exclude browsing, enabling native broadleaf species to regenerate and enhance the genetic diversity of designated features.”

Hazel Boyd, Forest Manager

Spotlight on: Mapping Scotland's ghost woodlands

One of our biggest achievements this year was the development of a powerful new mapping tool to help identify over **10,000 hectares** of ghost woodlands.

Developed using aerial data and the Ancient Woodland Inventory, the tool pinpoints priority areas for restoration and supports our wider efforts to revive these irreplaceable habitats. Now available on our website, it will guide landowners, conservationists and policymakers in targeting restoration where it's needed most.



“Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat. Our mapping tool highlights many of the ancient woodlands most at risk of being lost and urgently needing restoration.”

Kieran Leigh-Moy, Future Woodlands Manager

Developing a **diverse** and **skilled** workforce



To protect, restore and expand Scotland's woodlands, we urgently need more skilled people on the ground. Currently, the workforce is insufficient to meet government tree-planting targets.

In 2024/25, we launched the Future Skills Programme to address this gap, supported with funding from bp. The programme equips participants with both technical and business skills and supports young professionals, women, local communities and small forestry businesses. During this period, 200 people engaged with the programme. This included 30 women (an under-represented group) and 72 aspiring Future Foresters who learnt new forestry skills through our collaboration with Lantra Scotland.



Spotlight on: Nano Nursery Project

In 2024, Future Woodlands Scotland delivered a workshop aimed at supporting small-scale tree producers across Scotland. The primary goal was to convene key representatives from the small tree nursery sector to:

-  Identify challenges surrounding the availability of native tree seedlings critical to meeting Scotland's woodland creation targets.
-  Collaboratively define solutions to improve the supply of healthy, native young trees.

A major outcome of the workshop was the proposal to establish a small tree nursery network. This network aims to foster collaboration among producers, promote best practice, and facilitate training. The initiative represents a step towards strengthening the capacity and resilience of the native tree nursery sector in Scotland.

Image: Nano nursery workshop participants

Advancing knowledge for native woodland recovery

Native woodlands are vital for biodiversity and climate resilience, yet important knowledge gaps remain. We still need stronger evidence on how these woodlands store carbon over time, how woodland condition influences biodiversity and how restoring native ecosystems benefits both communities and climate targets.

Through our Research and Innovation grants, we are working to close these knowledge gaps. This year, we partnered with fellow woodland charities and the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes to co-develop a shared vision for future woodland research. This will guide our wider Knowledge Exchange Programme to help close the gap between woodland research and practice, fostering new ideas and evidence that can support progress on the ground.

Images: Chaga mushroom (left), Marco Tenconi, Co-op member, Rhyze Mushrooms Co-op (right)

Spotlight on: Rhyze Mushroom Co-op

One of the organisations we funded this year is Rhyze, a workers' co-operative based in Edinburgh. Their project explores the ecological and economic potential of sustainable Chaga mushroom cultivation, laying the groundwork for regeneration practices that benefit both land and livelihoods. Historically foraged, Chaga cultivation through the inoculation of living birch trees has been developing in North America, Scandinavia, the Baltics, and Asia, but there are currently no systematic examples in the UK. This research examines the case for Chaga cultivation in Scotland, assessing potential ecological and economic benefits, as well as known risks and possible mitigation measures.

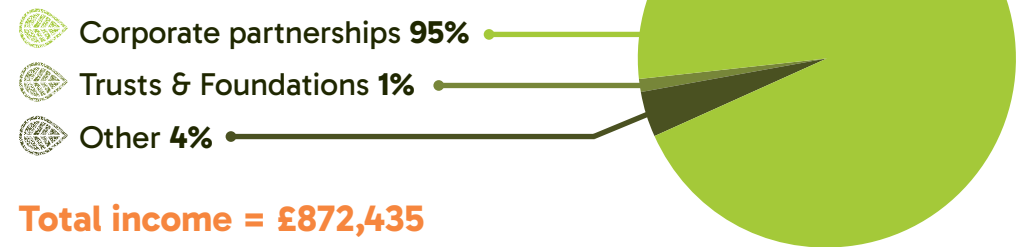




Finance summary

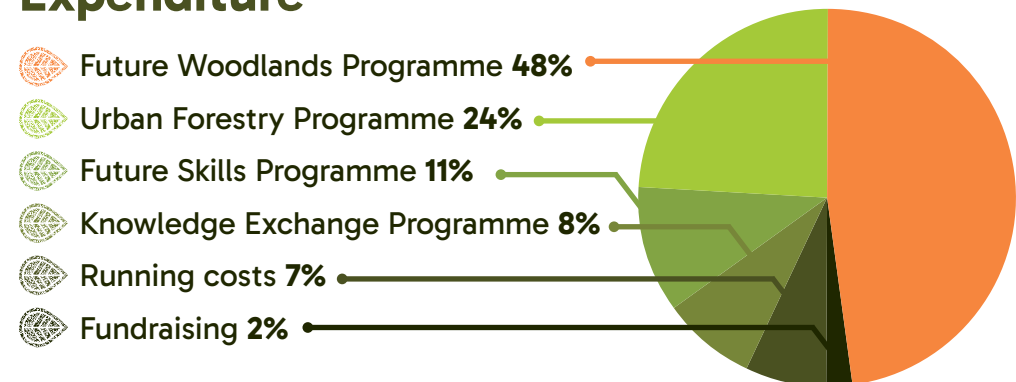
1 April 2024–31 March 2025

Income*



Total income = £872,435

Expenditure*



Total expenditure = £607,144

*The difference in income and expenditure is due to the multi-year nature of our programmes of work with funds committed to future phases of this work.

Thank you

Our work is made possible thanks to the generous support of the following organisations.



Baillie Gifford

answerconnect

“ We have been proudly working with Future Woodlands Scotland since 2022. Trees are vital to the health of our planet — they clean our air, support biodiversity and help combat the climate crisis. Together, we're committed to restoring forests and building a more sustainable future.”

Michael Payne, Founder, AnswerConnect

Businesses can play a leading role in protecting, creating and restoring Scotland's woodlands

If you want to see a Scotland where trees and native woodlands are thriving for our wildlife, communities and climate — please contact Future Woodlands Scotland.

A partnership with Future Woodlands Scotland can engage your staff, inspire your customers and help you meet your ESG and CSR goals.

Let's create a powerful partnership today.

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Future Woodlands Scotland



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