



BCT UPDATE

Birse Community Trust

ISSUE 7 Reporting on JANUARY – JUNE 2002

The Finest Woodlands

DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS NEWSLETTER, BCT won one of the top awards in a prestigious national competition to find Scotland's Finest Woodlands.

BCT's management of Finzean Community Woods was the overall winner of the Small Woods Award, covering woodlands in Scotland up to 150 hectares (370 acres) in size. The other two categories were Large Woodlands (over 150 hectares) and Farm Woodlands.

The competition was organised by the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society with the Forestry Commission and several other national organisations and BCT was presented with its award at the Royal Highland Show in June in a ceremony involving Scotland's Rural Affairs Minister, Ross Finnie.

The Community Woods are the 15 hectares of woodlands around Finzean village. A key feature is the 2 kilometre path through the Woods that provides a circular walk which is much used by local residents. The original work to establish the Community Woods was instigated by Angus Farquharson and undertaken by Finzean Estate with Finzean Community Association. However, since 1999, the Woods have been managed on behalf of the community by BCT under a long lease from the Estate.

In the last three years, BCT has carried out extensive work to improve the Community Woods, as well as regular grass cutting and other routine maintenance. Each year BCT organises a special community walk around the Woods to determine their management for the coming year and one recent result of these consultations has been the creation of a pond.

Winning the Award is a tribute to all those involved locally in managing the Woods. For BCT, which aims to achieve high standards with all its projects, it is a very positive endorsement of its management to win one of these coveted forestry awards.

The photograph below shows BCT being presented with its Scotland's Finest Woodlands Award. Left to right: Ian Hector of BCT, Ross Finnie, Minister of Rural Affairs, Pam Taylor of BCT and Andrew Salvesen of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society.



Photo by Ken Taylor

Photographs below: (left) Part of the path through Finzean Community Woods, looking west towards the Forest of Birse; (right) The new pond created by BCT in the Community Woods in Spring 2002.



Photo by Irvine Ross

A powerful storm at the end of January devastated part of the native pinewoods managed by BCT in the Forest of Birse. BCT had to clear 100 tons of wind-blown timber from what had been a fine stand of self-sown pine at the Finlets (photo above) and was only just able to cover the costs of this operation because of low timber prices.

BCT

BCT is a local community business "to promote the common good of the inhabitants of Birse parish and deliver wider public benefits".

Everyone on the Electoral Registers for the parish is a member of BCT and responsible for electing the Trustees who run BCT on behalf of the community. The Trust is a limited company, Scottish charity (SC28220) and government approved Local Rural Partnership.

The Trust has been going 3 1/2 years and has taken on a wide range of projects on behalf of the local community. BCT's role in developing and implementing projects as a community business complements the roles of the local Community Associations and Community Councils that cover the parish. BCT is guided by the issues identified by them and works in full partnership with them on its projects.

