



BCT UPDATE

Birse Community Trust

ISSUE 21

Spring 2010

The Third Forest

After a remarkable turn of events, BCT is now due to become the owner of Balfour Wood in May.

The purchase of Balfour will at last complete, with Slewdrum Forest and the Commonly Pinewoods, the pattern of three local community forests with one in each of the parish's three communities of Finzean, Birse and Ballogie.

There was overwhelming community backing for the purchase of Balfour Wood in the postal ballot in 2008. However, BCT's application to the Big Lottery for the bulk of the funding to buy the Wood was rejected in February 2009 and again in December 2009. It therefore looked like BCT was not going to be able to buy Balfour Wood before the agreement to purchase it from Forestry Commission Scotland at a very favourable price ran out at the end of March.

Then, with only a few days to go, BCT was delighted to receive a substantial anonymous donation towards the purchase price. This enabled BCT's Trustees to confirm with Forestry Commission Scotland just in time that BCT was buying the Wood. The remarkable donation and a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage still leaves BCT £25,000 short of the purchase price. However, the opportunity is too important for the community to miss and BCT is now fund raising to try to close the funding gap without the need to borrow the final amount. BCT's Trustees will be very grateful for all donations towards that aim.

The purchase of Balfour Wood will be an historic achievement for the community that will bring major local benefits in the years ahead (*see Chairman's Comment on page 4*).



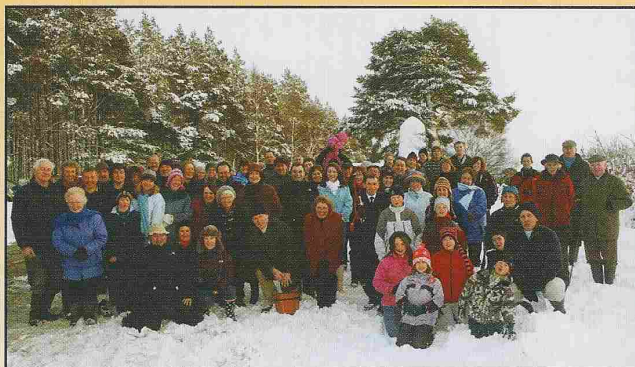
A view south-west from Balnacraig to Kinminity Farm, Balfour Wood and the summit of Carnferg, with the start of Balfour Wood marked by the pale larches running across the photo.

BCT

Birse Community Trust exists "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 five local Trustees who run BCT on behalf of the community. BCT undertakes a wide range of local projects. BCT's core partners are Birse parish's three Community Associations and two Community Councils.

BCT is a company limited by guarantee (SC188799) and a Scottish charity (SC28220) with its registered office at J&H Mitchells, WS, 51 Atholl Road, Pitlochry PH16 5BU.



Local residents at Corsedardar on 1st January 2010 to re-affirm the Millennium Resolution: 'Let there be respect for the earth, peace for its people, love in our lives, delight in the good, forgiveness for past wrongs and from now on a new start'.

For the Common Good

On 1st January 2010, around 70 local residents braved the elements to gather at the Birse Millennium Stone on Corsedardar to mark the tenth anniversary of the 1st January 2000, when nearly 300 local residents were present to dedicate the Millennium Stone as "an enduring symbol of the community's gratitude for and remembrance of the past and of its hopes and dreams for the future" and to pledge our local commitment to the Millennium Resolution

This year's event to re-affirm that commitment followed a similar pattern, with an address by the parish minister, the Reverend Jack Holt, the use of water drawn from the three rivers that define the parish's three communities to anoint the Stone and the special pipe tune 'The Gathering at the Corsedardar Stone' played by Dr. Jack Taylor.