

Local authorities in Scotland: a catalyst for community engagement in urban forests



Anna Lawrence
Alexander van der Jagt
Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Amy Stewart

Local authorities in Scotland (and England): a catalyst for community engagement in urban forests?



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Alexander van der Jagt
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Amy Stewart



“Local and regional authorities own approximately 20 million hectares of forest in Europe (municipal forests)”

“FECOF deeply regrets the fact that the European Commission doesn’t refer to the role of local and regional authorities, in implementing the Strategy”

Of 22 case studies in England

- 77% of community woodlands are not owned by the community
- of which 39% have management agreements

- 50% owned by Local Authority
- of which 18% have management agreements

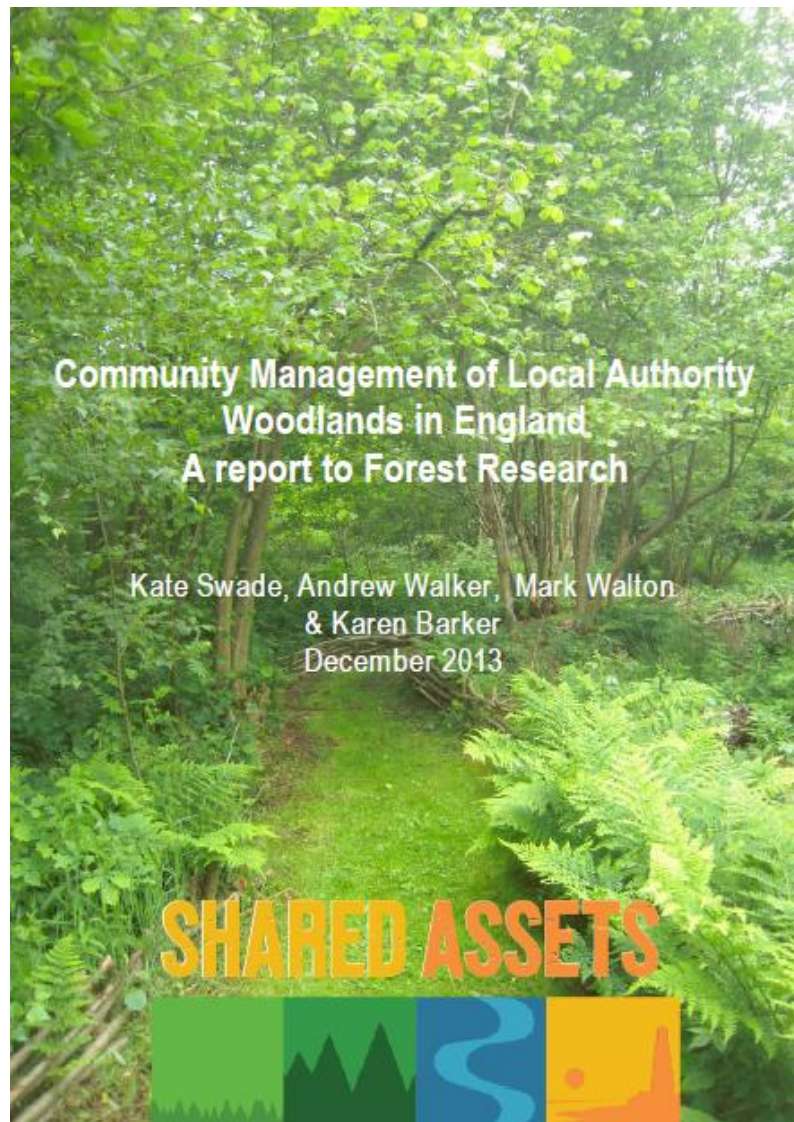
Tidey and Pollard, 2009

Wales –a more systematic survey:


- 73% of community woodlands are not owned by the community
- Where land not owned by group, the land is owned by:
 - Local authorities (67%)
 - Private owners (15%)
 - Welsh Assembly Government (10%).

Wavehill, 2010






- Survey to all 326 LAs, 49% response
- Very varied status of information about LA woodland
- 45% have no strategy
- 156 community groups identified
 - 56% 'consultative'
 - 15% 'empowered'
- Very little 'social enterprise'
- Seen as liabilities not assets; reactive risk management prevails
- But enthusiasm and commitment to make better use


 Forest Research

Trees and Woods in Scottish Towns: the role of Local Authorities

A scoping study




Alexander van der Jagt and Anna Lawrence
February 2014

 Forest Research

An Evaluation of the WIAT Challenge Fund

Changing use patterns, the value of recreation and health benefits, and lessons learned



Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Vadim Saraev
Andy Peace
Tom Connolly
Amy Stewart
Jordan Chetcuti
David Edwards

The Research Agency of the Forestry Commission

 Forestry Commission



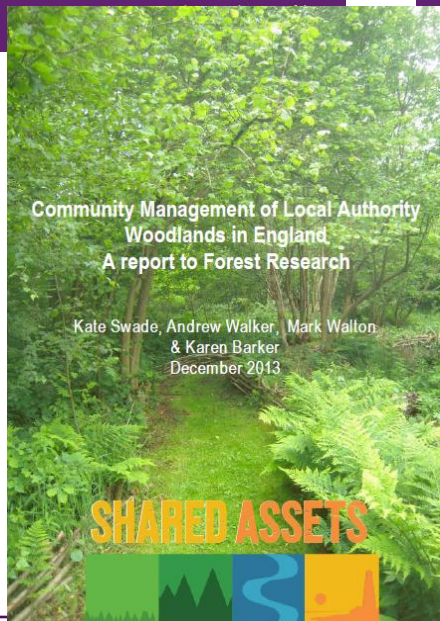
Research Note

A framework for sharing experiences of community woodland groups

Anna Lawrence and Bianca Ambrose-Oji August 2013

Community woodland groups are growing, and there are now over 650 groups in England, Scotland and Wales. The rise is the result of both social pressure and changes in policy. Groups are keen to learn from each other's experiences, and policy researchers seek evidence of the effectiveness of past and current policy. While some experiences have been documented, many others have not, and evidence is available in a variety of forms that are difficult to compare. There is therefore a need for a consistent approach to describing the dimensions of a community woodland model that supports the documentation of case studies. This will provide the basis for a robust and comparable body of evidence, to enable comparisons between case studies, and between different points in time within a single case study. This rigorous approach to description will also help with evaluation and impact assessment of different approaches to community-delivered forestry. For some uses, such as national counts of community woodland groups, it will be important to carefully define a 'community woodland group'; for others it is more important to leave the definition open, so that the method can document case studies of interest to a wide range of users. With the publication of this method, we invite fellow researchers and practitioners to join us in producing a robust shared evidence base.

FCRN016



Community Management of Local Authority Woodlands in England

A report to Forest Research

Kate Swade, Andrew Walker, Mark Walton & Karen Barker
December 2013

SHARED ASSETS

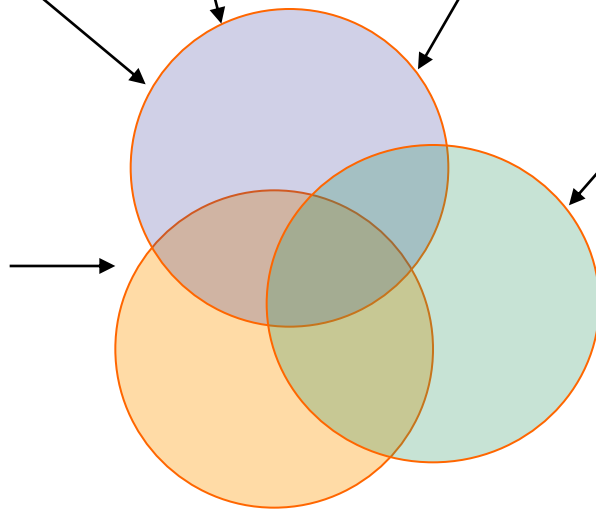
Urban Forestry & Urban Greening

Urban forest governance: Towards a framework for comparing approaches

Anna Lawrence^{1,2,3}, Erik De Vroey¹, Mark Johnson¹, Cecil C. Kung'uani¹ van den Bosch¹, Giuscaia Zanoni¹

ABSTRACT

Urban forest governance is a complex and multi-scale phenomenon. The aim of this paper is to explore the governance of urban forests in different contexts, and to develop a framework for comparing approaches to urban forest governance. The paper firstly reviews literature and practice around governance, then using a conceptual framework to explore governance in different contexts. It then identifies the key elements of governance in different contexts, and discusses the implications for policy and practice. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications for policy and practice, and a call for action to improve urban forest governance.



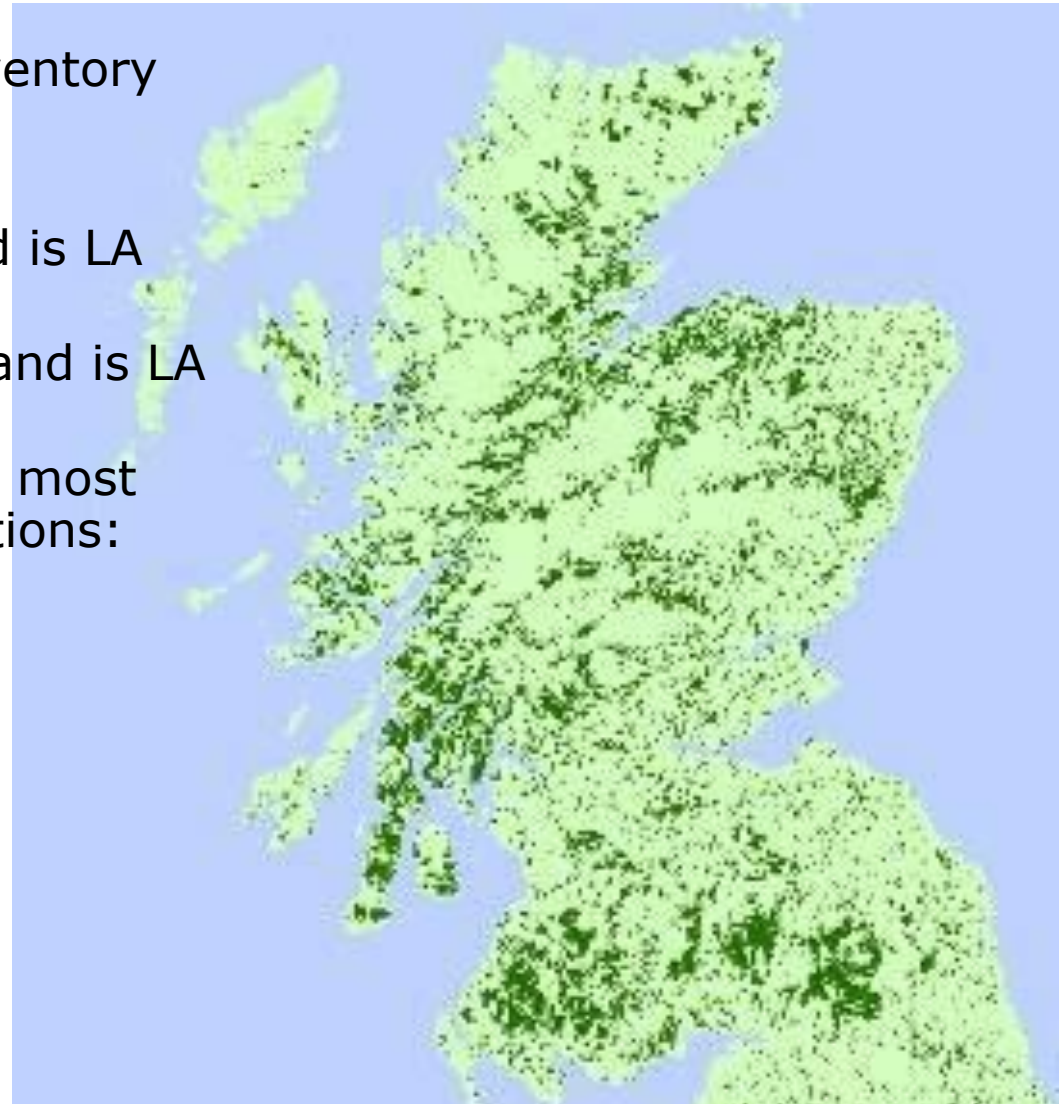
The situation across the UK
[a literature review!]:

- Political modernisation
 - Increasing centralisation
 - Economic takes precedence over environmental
- Government expected to be more participatory
- Contradictions and complexity
- Lack of guidance
- Further budget squeezes



According to the National Inventory of Woods and Trees:

- 6% of all forest in England is LA owned
- 0.9% of all forest in Scotland is LA owned
- But great variations – and most urban have higher proportions:
 - Lothian 4.2
 - Fife 4.1
 - Central 3.8
 - Strathclyde 1.6
- And possibly more:
 - Scottish Borders: 0% ???



- what are the governance structures and processes that provide scope for community engagement?
- how does local government's status as landowner contribute to the potential for involving communities in sustainable urban forest management?
- which delivery mechanisms work in the urban context, and how do they contribute to outcomes?



	Inform	Consult	Involve			Partnership (Collaborate)	Empower (Control)	
			Taking part (e.g. events)	Helping plan	Helping manage		Lease	Ownership
Forest management plan	↔							
Health improvement activities e.g. health walks			↔					
Learning activities e.g. Forest School			↔					
Volunteering			↔					
Community woodland			↔					
Community-based business						↔		

Adapted from Forestry Commission Scotland website.

Informing and consulting

- Not the norm, more in cities
- Concerns about representativeness
- Stimulated by project funding

Involvement in data collection

- Very little citizen science
- Very little data

Involvement in care and maintenance

- Friends Groups
- Tree Warden networks

Collaborative management

- Very little co-management
- Low community capacity in most deprived areas

Leasing and owning

- Few, all initiated by community groups
- Good experience where happening



- *it was a response to the lack of maintenance and management of the park by the local authority, them saying "enough is enough", which was good because it then put that item firmly on the front of the agenda*
- *The local nature reserve (LNR) committee, which is an official [Argyll and Bute] council committee, ... decided that the wood would benefit from an independent charitable organisation that would enable a wider and more active involvement of the local community. ... Friends of Duchess Wood executive committee are volunteers from Helensburgh.*



Urban Roots logo with a butterfly icon. Text: 'Urban Roots Community led environmental projects on the southside of Glasgow'. Includes 'Posts' and 'Comments' links and a search box.



Pages

- Projects
Beekeeping at Urban Roots
Community Gardening
Community Woodland
Malls Mire Wildlife Podcast
Cycling with Urban Roots
Great Grub
Market Garden and Community Allotments
Events and workshops
Fast events and workshops
Blossom Festival
Young People and Schools
Into the Woods
Into the Woods 2013
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South East Environmental Network

Recent Posts
Urban Roots

Urban Roots



Urban Roots is a community led organisation working across the Southside of Glasgow. We are committed to working with local people on projects that improve the environment and health of the area through a range of activities including community gardening, conservation and biodiversity, courses, workshops and schools projects. Our work aims to inspire people and communities to connect with nature, and take practical action that makes a positive difference to their own lives, their communities and the planet.

History

Urban Roots evolved out of the Toryglen Gardening Club which was founded in 2004 by 3 local people who had a shared desire to improve the area. They held bulb planting days and gardeners picnics, established a Children's Orchard in the grounds of a local school and held a plant sale. They secured funding through the Fairshare Trust in 2007 to employ a development officer, which has helped to grow the projects and get more local people on board. Toryglen Gardening Club became Urban Roots in December 2008.

Our Ethos

Urban Roots believes that our earth's climate and ecosystems are under strain from the impact of human activity. We believe that by working collectively we can find solutions for a sustainable future.

Transforming

Our volunteer teams take on lots of different projects such as transforming derelict or unused green spaces into thriving, blossoming community gardens where herbs and vegetables, fruit and flowers can be grown. This makes the area look more attractive, helps to create more used, social and safe places and brings people together.



We have ongoing projects in Community Gardening, Conservation & Biodiversity and Climate Change Education. Threaded throughout these projects are health, youth and arts themes.

Calendar for April 2014. Grid showing days of the week (M, T, W, T, F, S, S) and dates (1-30). Includes a navigation link for March.

Meta

- Log in
Entries RSS
Comments RSS
WordPress.org

The Field

Duddingston Village, Edinburgh  



[Home](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Funders](#)

[Annual Report](#)

Who are we?

The Field Group established a Committee at the first AGM in January 2013

Nick Marshall (Chair), Jo Tait (Minutes, Communications and Membership), Jimmy Corcoran (Treasurer), Freda O'Byrne (Partnerships and Bids), Christine Murdoch, Richard Inglis and Shani Sedgewick.

The Field Group is also made up of its formal members (usually from within Duddingston Village Conservation Society area) and friends who enjoy working in and walking through the Field.

Please use the contact form, below, if you would like to find out more or be added to our mailing list (use comment box to tell us how we can best connect with you.

Contact form - we aim to respond within a few days.

Name *

First

Last

- Statutory requirements take priority

Essentially at the moment the council's budget for trees and woodlands is completely dominated by operational necessity...

- 1. disease control...*
- 2. the duty of care*

- Risk is the main reason for tree data collection
- Risk management competes with community engagement



Mandate from national
(Scottish) Government shifts
this balance

Local Authorities take their cues from government to a greater or lesser extent really. You're always looking for a mandate to do what you're doing because you have to be able to justify what you're doing.

Individuals matter

if we did our purely statutory functions then, I'm not saying those groups wouldn't exist but they wouldn't have got on the ground what they have on the ground ... the council really has next to no input into it other than what comes through me.

- *There's a question around democracy here, about land that is held for the common purpose, if you like, for the general good of the people, and it's administered by people who can be voted in and voted out. And whether it's right for that to be transferred to a self appointed group of people?*
- *We're doing that [woodland engagement] through a partner, so there's a different means of connecting with the public It doesn't carry the baggage that the council does.*



- Data challenges:
 - Compare 0.9% forests LA owned according to NIWT
 - The City Woodland Initiative identified over 1600 ha of urban woodland in Glasgow, of which approximately 64% is LA owned.
- But LA seen as essential stakeholder because it is a landowner
 - *We're not used to working with them but without them any scheme in the urban environment will fail.*

"I probably wouldn't have spent any time on the woodland because to be honest it wasn't a woodland I knew we had until they (the community group) talked to us about it!"



Glasgow City Council and Central Scotland Green Network recently commissioned a pilot tree survey in four areas of the city.

Previously estimated number of street trees = 6000

Extrapolation from this study implies actual no. = 71 000

Better idea of woodland coverage than of street tree numbers.

Of 1600 ha, only managing 400 ha of woodland.



- Transfer tenure
 - To the Forestry Commission (FES)
 - To community groups
- Grants
 - WIAT and others – Challenge Funds to improve woodland access and quality
 - Mostly taken up by the LAs not community groups
 - Lead to increased *use* not empowerment
- Friends groups
 - Often linked to funding
 - Sustainability?
- Tree Warden scheme



- Local authority woodland is a 'hidden' resource
- Management is risk driven
- Relevant LA functions:
 - Democracy
 - Planners
 - Land managers
- Engagement:
 - Using
 - Joining in
 - NOT much collaboration or production
- What helps?
 - Knowing the resource
 - Legitimising and raising awareness within the LA (e.g. through grants)
 - Sharing experiences among groups
 - Leasing as 'good landlords'



- All the LA staff who agreed to be interviewed
- Forestry Commission Scotland for funding:
 - Trees and Woods in Scottish Towns
 - WIAT Challenge Fund evaluation
- Forestry Commission GB for funding:
 - A Framework for Sharing Experience of Community Woodland Groups
- Shared Assets for researching:
 - Community Management of Local Authority Woodlands in England
- For photos:
 - Bob Frost, Alexander van der Jagt, Amy Stewart, Forestry Commission

