Penney’s Community Woodland

Chairperson’s Report April 2020

The past year has been a busy one with a focus on raising community awareness and involvement and recognition that most trees are reaching sufficient maturity that they no longer need support.

Substantial storm damage was sustained in May 2019 with over 100 trees affected, many flattened to the ground. Emergency work was swiftly undertaken by all available and only a few trees were lost. The Free a Tree campaign was launched and carried out over several work parties. Criteria were set by which trees could be identified as ready to be released from stakes and plastic guards. Over time some need re-staked with heavier stobs and rubber ties. Other members of the community were invited to help and we now have new volunteers on our database. Within the committee, zoning has been adopted which tasks people to monitor their area, carry out work needed and seek help as required. It does not mean sole responsibility, we all act where we see need and luckily we also have ‘floating’ helpers. Freeing and supporting trees is our ongoing responsibility.

With the departure of Rory it was recognised that the time has come for Penney’s Wood to aspire to independence with its own mower and shed. Meanwhile we are grateful for the ongoing support from Rory’s successors Alan and Helen Cassidy and the shared use of their mower. We are pleased to welcome them to our committee. To raise funds Penney’s Wood volunteers set up and dismantled two Farmer’s Markets in Kinross, hard work but satisfying, the Christmas one in truly foul weather. We also applied successfully to the Community Benefit Fund and were awarded £800 towards a mower.

In May 2019 Penney’s Community Woodland participated in the Fossoway Gathering with a stall publicising our work, selling home baking and offering children the opportunity to make bughouses. On a miserable day weatherwise little money was raised but subsequently we were pleased to welcome Philip Brewster to our Group.

As a follow on to the bughouses P4 pupils from Fossoway Primary constructed 3 bug hotels in the woodland on a crisp November morning. We are delighted that both Nursey and Primary pupils enjoy regular outdoor learning sessions at Penney’s Wood.

With a lot of work and discussion, the Constitution and name of the group was thoroughly overhauled from its previous incarnation as Fossoway Access and Amenity Group and it now reflects who we are and what we do. The changes have been accepted by the Charities Commission.

It is with regret that Duncan and Penny Pritchard retired from our group and we thank them for their friendly support and for Duncan’s photos. Helen Cassidy is happy to post photos and Willie Thomson has agreed to take on the mowing rota in addition to strimming.

Looking forward, attention is firmly fixed on acquiring sufficient funds to buy a mower and shed. More Farmers’ Markets are booked and more funds applied for. Trees, established and very young will receive ongoing attention.

Next on the horizon must be looking to secure our boundaries where fencing no longer exists and enhancing the ditch crossing on the main path.