**Penney’s Community Woodland Chairperson’s Report 2023**

This report covers the period from May 2022 to 23rd April 2023.

Penney’s Community Woodland is generally thriving, well cared for and much used and appreciated by locals and visitors alike. Last Autumn the fruit bearing trees, crab apple and hazel bore heavy crops. Although some trees show evidence of dieback or damage by deer grazing, and the undergrowth is over-abundant in places, there are also new plant species appearing with a resultant increase in moths and butterflies.

With the aid of funding from the Kinross Fund the Woodland group was pleased to purchase a heavy-duty electric strimmer and fast charger. As a result, a small team keep the areas around the entrance, noticeboard and benches well presented. A successful trial strimming of congested undergrowth last year means that more overgrown areas will be identified and strimmed this year to help the youngest trees survive in the most congested parts. Management of the trees continues to include removal of guards and stakes, trimming crossing branches and removal of dead trees. Blackthorn is managed by a combination of spraying and using tree poppers.

A work party of volunteers used soil to re-level excessively bumpy paths in the Autumn. Last year’s trial participation in No-Mow May will not be repeated as it made life difficult for everybody using the woodland or attempting to mow the paths In June. The paths are a tiny percentage of our natural habitat and it is interesting to note the small plant species growing in the shorter grass at the path edges. A rota of mowers ensures that paths are well kept.

Committee members and volunteers continue to work hard. Funds were raised by erecting and dismantling stalls for 2 Kinross Markets, the noticeboard was beautifully refurbished and restored to working order, and a team of volunteers have agreed to tackle replacing a length of broken fencing by a pathway used by locals and schoolchildren. No contractors were willing to take on the fencing contract so only the most accessible part will be renewed. The storage hut is well organised , with Health and Safety protocols in place to be adhered to when equipment is used.

Knowledge and use of Penney’s Community Woodland continues to grow and we are now regular participants at the Fossoway Gathering where the combination of colourful advertising posters and the sale of baking and plants ensures a positive connection with the public. Recruitment of new volunteers is a bonus, as is extra income.

Liaison with Fossoway Primary continues under the new Head Teacher and it is expected that both school and nursery children will continue to enjoy the outdoor learning environment of Penney’s Wood.

Penney’s Community Woodland hosted its biggest social event to date with a hugely successful Platinum Jubilee Tea Party held in June 2022 for the residents and friends of Back Crook and beyond, organised by a team of local ladies. The setting was deemed perfect and repeat get-togethers were requested.

Future plans:

* Continued removal of tree guards/posts
* Continued management of blackthorn
* Replanting blackthorn area with suitable tree species when the area is suitably clear
* Development of a 5 year and possibly 10 year plan