



The Centre For Business Relationships,  
Accountability, Sustainability and Society

Forestry for People: An Investigation of  
Forestry for People Benefits in Two Case  
Study Regions

Executive Summary



Dr Alex Franklin  
Dr Rhys Evans



## About the BRASS Centre

The ESRC Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) was the first ESRC Centre in Wales. It was established in 2001 with a £3.1 million grant, and has very recently received its second phase funding of £4.8 million which will take it up to 2011. The Centre is a joint venture between the University's Schools of Business, City & Regional Planning and Law. It brings together the three Schools' existing research expertise on issues of sustainability, business ethics, company law, corporate reporting and business communication.

The Centre started work in October 2001 under the leadership of Professor Ken Peattie of the Business School, Professor Terry Marsden of the Department of City and Regional Planning and Professor Bob Lee of the Law School. The Centre exists to understand and promote the vital issues of sustainability, accountability and social responsibility, through research into key business relationships.

### Published by

The Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability & Society  
(BRASS)  
Cardiff University  
55 Park Place  
Cardiff CF10 3AT  
United Kingdom  
<http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk>

© BRASS Centre 2008



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction to the Research**

This research represents the case study component of the wider 'Forestry for People Scotland' research project. It was commissioned by Forest Research's Social & Economic Research Group (SERG), on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland. The wider project is undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the economic and social value of 'Forestry for People' (F4P) in Scotland. The overall aim is to quantify and describe the diverse social and economic benefits of forestry for the people of Scotland.

As a component of the wider project, this research element is designed to provide detailed, context-specific assessments of benefits under the Forestry for People Social Benefit themes of: Culture, Health, Education, Recreation, Amenity, Livelihoods, and Community Capacity. This has been achieved by using a Case Study methodology to draw on stakeholders' experiences of involvement in 'Forestry for People' activities. In particular, through the presentation of stakeholder testimonies, accounts and stories, the case study research findings add a level of insight, detail and depth, that is not possible through national-level research activities alone (CJC Consulting 2006).

### **Research Strategy**

In an effort to capture some of the diversity of the use of Scottish forests to develop social benefit, two contrasting case study sites were selected. One is located in the most urban part of Scotland – Glasgow; the other in the rural Highlands of Scotland, centred on Loch Ness. The overall aim of the original research brief was to 'examine and describe the nature and extent of 'Forestry for People' benefits accruing to residents in the two case study areas, and to analyse the relationship between benefit types'. This was achieved by undertaking two principal phases of research. The first phase produced a detailed spatially-explicit profile of each case study area. The data from this first phase then enabled the targeted execution of a second research phase. This involved a more in-depth analysis of 'Forestry for People' benefits with selected groups and individuals, using primarily qualitative social scientific research methods.

The research was guided by two main Research Questions :

- 1) What are the benefits of woodland related activities and use?
  - a) Explore typologies of activities/ uses.
  - b) Find description or evidence.
  - c) Demonstrate who benefits and how.
  - d) Explore partnerships and map institutional and community relationships.

- 2) How and to what extent do woodland related activities and use contribute to community (and personal) development?
- a) Explore the relationships between benefit types and actors / places.
  - b) Explore the 'outcomes' of activities and uses (community and personal development).

The questions were used to guide the investigation of the Social Benefits themes developed by the wider Forestry for People project (see above). From the outset it was recognized that the schema of themes breaks a continuous social phenomenon into discreet categories in order to ease the task of conducting research. Not only are the themes interrelated but exploring those inter-relationships was one of the important focuses of the study.

### **Research Findings**

Each Case Study area was treated individually in the profile phase and the fieldwork phase. In the main report, findings for each area are summarized before common themes are explored. This Summary follows a similar scheme.

#### ***Loch Ness Profile Summary***

The Loch Ness Case Study area is located along the shores of the loch and consists of three sub-areas: the North Shore, the South Shore and the Fort Augustus area. Each differs from the other in terms of patterns of land ownership, settlement, forest cover and activity, and levels of community development activity. Together they form a complete picture typical of many rural places in Scotland.

The Loch Ness Case Study is an area which has suffered the decline of the traditional rural economy based upon agriculture and forestry. The extensive nature of land use and the low population density means, however, that no part of the area registers as 'deprived' to the degree that can be found in urban centres in Scotland. Nevertheless, the area experienced sufficient economic decline to qualify for European structural and other development funds in the last two decades. It is an area which enjoys a higher proportion of forest cover than most parts of Scotland. These forests, combined with the Loch, rivers, and the mountains down which they run, are an asset which the communities in the area have gained a great amount of experience in using for community and economic development. The challenges the communities face include a lack of resources for local identity (poor services, few 'public' spaces, distance and isolation), population decline and the historic legacy of disenfranchisement due to the Highland Clearances. The opportunities they have lie in the nature of the woodland assets which cloak the hillsides around the Loch, and the close-knit character of the communities located there. The area's location, relatively close to, but distinct from Inverness, offers challenges and opportunities in terms of the centralization of services in the Highland capital, and the potential for urban-rural alliances around forested land uses. Support for the development of both

communities and assets has been present in the form of Highlands and Islands Enterprises, bringing with it European funds supporting new models of community-led rural development. The Fieldwork phase of this research focuses upon how communities and people use those assets, both community and otherwise-owned to create improved livelihoods, health, education, recreation and community capacity.

### ***Loch Ness Fieldwork Summary***

Woodlands and forests are obvious features of the Loch Ness landscape. They are also key assets in the development of both local society and the local economy. They have provided the asset around which local communities have engaged in development. That development has delivered much needed and highly valued social benefits to these, and wider communities. In particular, individuals and communities in the Loch Ness area are generating and enjoying the following social benefits from their interaction with forests.

#### Health

Health benefits involve three fundamental aspects of forests – the attractiveness of the forest space; access to and within it which attracts and retains participants who use it for physical activity; and the intrinsic impact of those same attractive qualities on participants' mental health. A further aspect reported by respondents across health needs is the value of the social interaction they enjoy when taking part in forest-based programmes. Thus, health benefits of forests are derived from activities within them, according to the needs of those accessing them.

Key findings include:

- In the general population, there are improved opportunities for outdoor recreation and physical health in partnership initiatives such as the Great Glen Way. These initiatives play an important role in promoting healthy physical activity.
- A number of active walking groups have been started in the area to counter poor physical health (StepitUp Highland).
- There are several programmes providing access to woodlands for sufferers of mental health challenges (Maggies, Birchwood Highland). Access and exposure to woodlands is seen as helping those suffering depression, bereavement and anxiety.
- Outdoor forest learning spaces in the area are being used to improve children's physical fitness (Active Schools).
- Partnership with communities can provide support to develop facilities and material assets, to address health challenges (i.e. building an all-access path at Abriachan Community Woodland).

#### Education

The association between forests and teaching and learning is strong in this Case Study area. Like other social benefits, education has both intrinsic importance

and is also a core component in the delivery of other benefits, including community capacity and livelihoods.

Key findings include:

- Increasing use is being made of forest spaces for learning, by the formal education sector. Evidence for this is found in the numerous groups who work with communities to bring these benefits to young people, including the Forest Education Initiative, Highland Environment Network, local schools and pre-schools, Active Schools and a local Eco-schools group.
- The new 'Curriculum for Excellence' (2007-2008) for Scotland is expected to increase the value of forest learning spaces and mainstream this type of activity across the formal education sector. This will bring benefits to young people in terms of health, learning and also, a more general connection with the natural world.
- Traditional ranger services are now providing many non-formal learning opportunities in the area. They support John Muir awards to youngsters, rehabilitative training in manual skills to youth at risk of offending, and deliver imaginative forest-based events for the very young (such as dress-up events and learning based on local tradition and stories).
- Public sector partners are increasingly working together to arrange access to outdoor education in the area. This is particularly notable in Highland Council and Forest Enterprise Scotland staff.

#### Recreation and Amenity

- There is high growth of mountain biking, with bike trails developed in Community Woodlands (Corrymony, AFT), the Great Glen Way Partnership (on the GGW plus the forests connecting the Way with the Loch), and on other Forestry Commission Land. These facilities deliver high quality biking experiences and are an asset both for local people and those attracted from further afield.
- Forest managers and recreation providers attested to the importance of the visual landscape (highly forested, high relief, the presence of the loch and rivers) to attract outsiders and to foster local pride.

#### Culture

- High levels of cultural activity are found in the forests and woodlands of the area, across a range of cultural practices.
- Local music festivals like Rock Ness attract a large youth interest from across the country.
- Woodlands are the sites for several successful 'sculpture trails', whilst 'poetry events' have also been well attended.
- A number of programmes allow young people to enjoy making art in forest spaces and out of forest materials.
- Recent Interpretation initiatives offer an opportunity to integrate art, local heritage and culture, further into perceptions of local woodlands.

- Forests provide an accessible platform for local rural residents to integrate art and culture into their own lives.

### Livelihoods

All categories of social benefits from Forestry for People intertwine with others in the schema used by this research. But none are perhaps as derived from the delivery of other social benefits as livelihoods. Each different theme contributes towards the economic and social development of the area. The following is a guide to significant findings.

### *Tourism*

- Growth is strongly influenced by the new outdoor recreation sector and the high amenity value of the area.
- Tourism operators report that many clients highly value the forested landscape.
- The Great Glen Way Partnership reported that the forests the rivers run through, are partly responsible for the strong success of paddling events such as the Wet West paddling festival, and a growing number of other such events.
- Demand is growing for certificated 'leaders' to train and guide new outdoor activities.
- A Loch Ness Partnership has recently been convened as a Destination Management Organisation to develop the local tourist economy. The forests and woodlands around Loch Ness are regarded by this organisation as an important asset for development.
- Partnerships such as the Great Glen Way Partnership deliver recreation opportunities which can support local providers of accommodation, transport and guided activities.

### *Community Capacity*

- There is a growing 'third sector' of employment opportunities in managing community development projects.
- Partnership working in community forest endeavors links actors across a wide range of networks, strengthening the sector and providing new job categories and roles.
- The delivery of education and health services is employing more people and giving further opportunity to those already in the field.
- There is a growing economy of business support for community development projects in the area, both as positions within established agencies and in the private consultant sector.

### *Environmental and Forest Management*

- There is a small but growing sector of professional consultation services for the integrated management of private and community woodlands in the area. They are active both in terms of environmental management and direct silviculture management.

#### *Direct use of forest and forest products for livelihoods*

- There is a small but growing sector of artisanal production of goods from forest products, including hardwood supply
- Some artisanal producers specialize in mobile processing technology to process material locally.
- Highland Birchwood and other organisations are developing networks of producers of wood and wood products for marketing purposes.
- There is a growing sector of architects specializing in the community development market, designing Community Halls and other forest buildings and using local forest materials in their designs to promote sustainability.

#### *Culture*

- The area has a history of solo artists with local studios who sell to a wider national or international market. New communication innovations have increased the opportunities for doing this.
- The growth of national music events in the area is partly driven by the high amenity value of the wooded spaces surrounding the Loch. These events bring income into the local economy and provide opportunities for the local businesses supplying infrastructure.

In a diverse rural economy, the diversity of activities which involve forests contributes towards local economic development. Both the delivery of benefits in community forest spaces and the capacity to develop them, provide a strong base of social relations. This contributes directly to successful local economic development.

#### Community Capacity

- There is a strong legacy of community development based upon forest assets in the area.
- Acquiring a community woodland builds 'bonding capital' within communities and 'bridging capital' to networks outside of it. This improved social capital then can be used to accomplish further development outcomes.
- Communities are attempting to develop new models which are less dependent upon external funding and more dependent upon revenues generated by activities. In particular, those which deliver the unique social benefits of forest-based activities.
- Expertise on and support for, community-based forest developments, is also growing within the public sector. Some community development officers exhibit similar understandings of the benefits of working with communities in partnership and are beginning to achieve similar levels of social entrepreneurship, as their counterparts in the community forestry sector.

#### **Conclusion**

Woodlands and forests are key assets in the development of both local society and the local economy, in rural space. Whether developing community assets or

local businesses, forests lie at the heart of development in the Loch Ness region. The specific structures of public funding means that the residents have become adept at partnership working, whether for the creation of community resources or individual livelihoods. The entrepreneurial spirit developed by early forest-based community development projects appears to have been capitalized on by a wider community. Forests have provided the asset around which local communities have engaged in development and that development has delivered highly needed and highly valued social benefits to those, and wider communities. Through this process the forests have become resources for the delivery of improved tourism, recreation, culture, education and health. As part of sustainable rural development, forests and woodlands play a key role as individual and collective assets from which people build their lives and identities.

### ***The Glasgow Case Study Area***

The Glasgow/Clyde Case Study area incorporates three different localities, all of which are located within the City of Glasgow Local Authority. Two of the selected case study localities are residential communities. One is Drumchapel, which is situated to the northwest of the city centre; the other is Castlemilk, which is to the south east of the city centre. The third locality, Pollock Park, is a green space situated just south of the City centre.

Drumchapel and Castlemilk are both Housing Estate communities located at opposite poles on the peripheries of the City of Glasgow. Both estates have suffered large vacancy rates, inter-generational social exclusion, and have become repositories for those suffering from disability and unemployment. Lacking local identity resources beyond those associated with poverty, the areas entered a downward spiral which has only been addressed in the last two decades. The third Case Study area, Pollock Park, is an important resource to these communities, supplementing their own woodland assets with programmes across a range of social benefit categories.

### ***Glasgow Profile Summary***

Both Drumchapel and Castlemilk are communities suffering from multiple deprivations – poor health, low employment, poor educational achievement, and low quality or degraded built environments. To an extent, both are making a recovery from the extremes of this process through a range of interventions aimed at countering the multiple deprivations present. Early attempts at regeneration were poorly thought out, or were compromised by monolithic approaches to one deprivation or another. Now attempts at regenerating these communities are happening simultaneously on a number of fronts, one of which is interventions into the built environment. The presence and regeneration of woodland areas in the two communities is an attempt to bring higher amenity values to the areas, as well as to provide a ‘natural’ asset which aids in countering other axes of deprivation. The investment in woodlands, therefore,

addresses not only the environmental justice component of their deprivation, but also provides a useful asset for the regeneration of livelihoods, of health, of education, and of recreation. Key findings include:

#### Castlemilk and Drumchapel

- Both case study communities are ranked within the worst 15% for deprivation on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This is true for the health, education, income and education, skills and training dimensions of deprivation.
- Both communities have similar forms of housing and other aspects of their built environment.
- Both communities have two woodland areas located within them. One of each of these is a community-run woodland (Drummy Woods and Castlemilk Park) and the other, is a City of Glasgow run Park with increasing community involvement.
- Drumchapel has an early Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) project for the development of community-managed woodlands and conducted baseline public opinion research on community attitudes to forests.
- Castlemilk is the site of one of the first Social Inclusion Partnerships in Glasgow and has a history of partnership working to build regeneration.

#### The City of Glasgow

- The presence of the term 'Vital Glasgow' at the heart of the City's attempts to regenerate itself 'integrates the physical environment with the way in which people use the City's public spaces and amenities'. This means that local woodlands and other green spaces are seen as important assets in countering deprivation. This policy offers many opportunities to develop community usage and management of local woodlands.
- Glasgow has prioritized a number of specific initiatives to counter ill health across the City and has created Community Health and Care Partnerships (CHCP).
- A recent study by the Centre for Human Population Health and the South East Glasgow CHCP focused upon the use of 'social referrals' by GPs to prescribe woodland walks for suitable patients, indicating that such referrals offered positive health outcomes in a number of patient situations.
- The City of Glasgow has developed a strong mainstream focus on partnership working to deliver multiple social benefits from the city's assets. This focus supports both the creation of community capacity and community use of forest spaces in the City.
- Programmes to intervene in multiple deprivation include an environmental justice component. Within this, concerns about the quality of the local environment provide support for community green and open spaces.
- The importance of sport to the City and its hosting of the upcoming Commonwealth Games provides opportunities to develop green space in Glasgow's communities

### ***Glasgow Fieldwork Summary***

Through the three research sites of Drumchapel, Pollock Park, and Castlemilk, we gained access to a broad range of woodland actors, from professionals who earn their living managing the delivery of social benefits, through to the actual citizens who enjoy those benefits. The choice of the two peripheral housing estates allowed us to look closely at the role of forests and woodlands in urban regeneration. Particularly, at the ways in which deprived communities can use forests and woodlands as a way of improving the quality of their local environment, as spaces in which they assert their presence, and as assets in which they can foster and invest local pride. The use of forests as a means of addressing poor health (both mental and physical), as entry points back into normal society, and as special spaces of teaching and learning, feature strongly in the range of benefits being derived from Glasgow's forest spaces. Further, Glasgow's use of partnership working in regeneration provides useful examples of successful attempts to lever 'additionality' from a community asset, bringing new partners into the network and offering multiple avenues to increase community capacity. Key findings include:

#### Health

- In the Glasgow Case Study area, the use of forests for health-based activities is one of the fastest-growing sub-sectors of forest-related activities.
- Increasing numbers of walking groups are being organised by a variety of actors, from Paths to Health, through to the local authority.
- Walkers receive positive benefits from physical health and vigour, mental health and happiness, to their sociability and social inclusion.
- Group activities in woodlands are of particular value to those suffering some types of anxiety disorder.
- Community Health and Care Partnerships are delivering funding support for increased use of woodland spaces for health activities.

#### Education

- There is a strong movement to provide forest spaces for learning in Glasgow in both the formal and informal education sectors.
- The Glasgow Forest Education Initiative brings a wide variety of educators and forest managers together. It also hosts Forest Teacher training, spreading educational benefits across the local education system.
- Pollock Park contains a purpose-built Forest Classroom and it and other spaces within the Park, are regularly used to deliver teaching and learning.
- Special Needs classes take place in Pollock Park. Both teachers and pupils report many benefits from these classes, plus great enthusiasm for them. Wooded spaces have specific value for learners with challenging behaviours giving them room to relax and teaching them responsibility.
- The woodland spaces of Glasgow host numerous informal learning opportunities ranging from the local Archaeological Society to children's nature clubs.

- The Children's Orchard is an important initiative which is directed towards involving children in the planting, tending and harvesting of fruit trees. It promotes the value of trees and forests more generally to a key population of young children. By involving children in planting and harvesting the Children's Orchard provides opportunities for urban children to connect with the natural world.

### Recreation

- In Glasgow, the forest spaces where social benefits such as health or education are delivered are also spaces of recreation, formal and casual. In this sense, recreational values underpin the delivery of other benefits.
- The growth of cycle paths, including a new one scheduled for Cathkin Braes park next to Castlemilk, offer local youths legitimate ways in to active outdoor recreation.

### Amenity

- Communities report that the amenity value of their community woodlands is much higher once evidence of community management is present. Residents indicate that the amenity value of community forest spaces is less dependent upon species mix or the age of trees, than on the evidence of cleaned up paths, signage and other general environmental improvements.
- Walkers report that it is less the type of forest environment which delivers benefits to them, than it is the activities they engage in within the forest.
- In both communities safety and security were considered the most important aspects of a community woodland, with the lack of evidence of them serving as a considerable barrier to access.

### Culture

- Woodland areas in the two communities studied are venues for popular community events, including music, art and festival celebrations.
- In Pollock Park the woodland spaces host religious events, visual and performance arts. The Park is also a popular space for the teaching of language.
- Mature trees and are strongly connected to Glasgow's rich heritage and mark significant moments in residents' lives.

### Livelihoods

- Woodland spaces and activities are important sources of learning about life skills. This in turn, can support the transition from long term unemployment to gainful employment, providing a platform for building self-confidence, sociability and time keeping.
- Volunteering programmes such as Greenwork Mates or the GalGael Trust deliver new skills, new confidence, and opportunities for re-integration with mainstream society, to those who are socially excluded.
- There is a growing level of employment in the management or provision of community projects with a focus on forests. This is strengthened by the

growth of professional partnerships which deliver programmes in woodland spaces.

- The growth of community partnerships is delivering control of local woodland environments to local communities even when the asset is owned by the city.
- There is an entrepreneurial attitude amongst community development officers whether in the public or community sector. Increasingly experienced in partnership working, activists and managers are using new partnership opportunities to leverage new sources of funding and support for community-woodland development.
- The development of social capital around forest-based projects is developing both bonding capital within the local community of volunteers, managers and participants, and bridging capital between local communities and city and nation-wide networks of enabling organisations.

Communities in the Glasgow area have built an impressive record of community capacity development over the last decade. The acquisition and management of community woodlands and other forest spaces has been a significant contributor to this. The area's forest spaces are assets to the community, underpinning the development of new opportunities and new possibilities in terms of livelihoods, recreation, health services and education. The development of community capacity around woodland spaces has itself become an asset to the community, creating a virtuous circle of community asset development.

## **Discussion**

Each case study area offers unique insights into the social benefits of forest-based activity from the context of their widely differing situations. They feature unique characteristics across a range of social and economic indicators, including high and low population densities, obvious and hidden deprivation, high and low proportions of forested land cover, and different histories and trajectories of development. Despite these and other differences, this research suggests that people in both communities increasingly put a high value on their forest spaces, seeing them as important assets in responding to the challenges of developing their own communities and delivering improvements in their lives.

Overall, the most significant phenomenon to emerge from the evidence was the almost universal enthusiasm expressed by respondents for the value of forests and woodlands in their lives. This was expressed both as a general affection for the actual forest spaces themselves, and as specific affection for the activities in which they are engaging in forests. Comments such as: *"There's something about being out in the woods that just helps you to chill out when you're stressed"* reflect not only specific mental health benefits of forest-based activities, but also the way general affection for forest spaces is expressed.

This enthusiasm was manifest in the zeal expressed by most respondents in terms of promoting further development of forest uses which deliver the social benefits they enjoy. Participants in forest-based programmes readily shared, through passionate accounts, the high value they placed on the benefits they gained. Those engaged in the management of forest-based programmes and assets were just as passionate in their advocacy of forests, as were forest rangers, development officers and others in the public sector. Many of the actors displayed a keen sense of social entrepreneurship in the ways they supported the development of forests for social benefits. This entrepreneurship can be witnessed in the growth of new partnerships and new projects, bringing new opportunities to link together forests and communities.

Across both Case Studies we saw respondents volunteering, learning new skills, enjoying new opportunities to socialize, improving their health and changing their livelihoods in response to the opportunities presented by forest-based developments in their communities. In both places we were able to observe first-hand how accessing social benefits from woodland spaces has brought new value to communities and prompted a revaluation of their forest spaces. In many different ways respondents told us that:

- Forests and woodlands are special spaces for learning, both formal and informal.
- Forests and woodlands are spaces of new healthful activity.
- Forests and woodlands are spaces of recreation, both traditional and innovative.
- Forests and woodlands are spaces which support the expression of culture.
- Forests and woodlands are spaces of high amenity value, particularly in terms of community pride and identity.
- Forests and woodlands are important contributors to a variety of livelihoods, including a growing sector managing the delivery of social benefits.
- Forests and woodlands host activities that provide valuable routes back to employment and social inclusion.
- Forests and woodlands are valuable assets for building community capacity and social capital.

The social benefits delivered by forest-based activities accrue both to individuals and to communities. Through involvement in forest-based activities individuals can improve their health, their prospects for paid employment, their social skills, and enjoy better connections with the natural world and with the communities around them. Communities can enjoy improved connection to place, local pride, increased capacity to effect change in their local environment, as well collectively enjoying better health, prosperity and vitality.

## **Conclusions**

Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of forest-based schemes is that they are equally important across the range of communities in Scotland. They are assets

which can host the delivery of a multiplicity of social benefits which address the multitude of needs which are faced by these communities. In both rural and urban locations this research found that although the drivers of need may differ across both situations, there is a universal demand for the special educational opportunities, the opportunities for healthful activity, recreation, cultural expression, livelihoods and community capacity building, all of which can be associated with the community development of forests and woodlands.

As an asset, forest and woodland spaces support the development of a complex range of social benefits and this complexity is a part of what makes the interaction of community and forest spaces so productive in terms of addressing a wide range of needs across a wide range of situations. In Glasgow, for example, poverty and social exclusion drive the need for spaces of inclusion and self-esteem. In the Highlands, the historic legacy of the Clearances and the changing fortunes of the rural economy also drive a need for spaces of ownership and positive identity. Forest-based activities have the potential to address both of these situations and many others.

In both of the Case Study areas we witnessed how interactions between communities and woodland spaces were changing the way local people saw the value of their woodlands. The growth of new sectors of interest – health, education – and the additional partnership funds they bring with them represent new ways of valuing forest spaces. The growing emphasis on partnership working in community development, whether for urban regeneration or rural development, has again brought new value to woodland spaces. All of this new value brings new virtue to forests, changing public perceptions of them along the way. Already, the Scottish public is getting more involved in woodlands – more projects are being developed, more initiatives are starting and more partnerships are being built which focus upon forests and woodlands in one way or another.

This research suggests that those who get involved find their enthusiasm for forests and woodland spaces grows rapidly – indeed, the strength of that enthusiasm can be seen across the breadth of evidence that was examined. With increasing activity and increasing enthusiasm on the part of all those involved, it would seem inevitable that there is a shift in how the Scottish public values forests and woodlands. The investment of new value in these spaces can give them greater positive virtue in the public eye, rendering them new virtuous forests.