

Gifford Community Woodland

Protecting Speedy & Fawn Woods for the benefit of the local community

Winter Update: January 2026

We are an Award-Winning Woodland!

We're thrilled to announce that we've been crowned **Best Large Community Woodland** at the *Scotland's Finest Woods Awards*. Plus we received the prestigious **Tim Stead Trophy**, awarded to the best wood in the whole country!

These awards recognise projects that deliver benefits across social, economic, and environmental strands, and judges look for the involvement of people with their environment. That's exactly what makes our wood special: caring for the woods, improving accessibility, encouraging learning, and creating a space for everyone to share and enjoy. It's a reflection of how widely the woods are used and appreciated by so many in our community.



This achievement belongs to so many of you; volunteers who maintain paths and plant trees, those who support Forest School and biodiversity work, and everyone who supports, visits and values this space. **We were even mentioned in the Scottish Parliament** on 12th December in recognition of these efforts. (Photo is of Nev and Catherine proudly collecting our awards at a Reception in the Scottish Parliament!)

**Watch
our new
Film!**



**[CLICK
HERE](#)**

We've created a short film that captures the beauty of the woods and the work your support makes possible. Simply scan the QR code or visit www.bit.ly/gifford2025 to watch it now. (Or see our social channels.) And many thanks to Richard Taylor for creating this amazing film.

Meet our new Trustees...

Andy Warner, our new Treasurer:

"I have lived in East Lothian for nearly 30 years. I am a regular visitor to the woodlands and an active participant in the Gifford community. My children attended Yester Primary School and I am a former coach of the Gifford Mini Goblins. I am a Chartered Accountant and have been the Finance Director at a law firm in Edinburgh for the last 6 years. I am also currently a trustee at the Rock Trust, a charity that works with young people between the ages of 16- 25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and I was previously Deputy Chair at Arts & Business Scotland for 6 years."



Will Davies, a new Trustee:

"I've lived in Gifford with my young family for over four years now, and we all love it here, with the sense of community exemplified by the Community Woods and other organisations such as the Gifford Mini Goblins, of which I am delighted to be a coach. I work in Leith as a product designer, specialising in medical and pharmaceutical devices; but my real passion is time in the outdoors, and I head for the hills on bike, skis or foot whenever time and conditions allow. Needless to say, that's all too infrequently, but the Woods consistently deliver that bite-sized hit of nature with every visit, which is why I wanted to play a part."



AN IMPORTANT PLEA: Protecting Our Woodland from Dog Mess & Garden Waste

We need to ask for your help in keeping Gifford Woods healthy and safe. Please do not leave any dog mess ANYWHERE in the woods – even in remote areas well away from paths – it should still be cleared by dog owners. Our volunteers often dig and plant trees in these more remote areas, and sadly, one person recently became unwell after being spattered by dog mess while digging. It does not ‘fertilise’ the soil; it poses a real health risk!



Similarly, please do not bring or deposit garden waste or plants into the woods. Even small amounts can disrupt the ecosystem, alter soil composition, and introduce invasive species we've worked hard to control. Every action matters in protecting this special place for wildlife and community. Thank you for doing your part.



A Remarkable Legacy for Gifford Woods

For many years, our Friends' contributions and fundraising activities have been the lifeblood of Gifford Community Woods. They enable us to insure the woods, maintain paths, run Forest School sessions, and carry out vital biodiversity work. Quite simply, without this ongoing support, we couldn't do what we do.

Now we have some wonderful news to share: we have received a very generous legacy of £50,000 from the late **Mr Peter Powell**. Peter rented a cottage at Lennoxlove, previously owned an antique shop in Edinburgh, and was one of the first people in Scotland to enter a civil partnership. If anyone reading this knew Peter or understands his connection to the woods, we'd love to hear from you.

For now, rest assured this legacy **won't lead to any drastic changes**. It will for now be invested as an essential reserve, giving us security for unforeseen costs such as storm damage and helping us plan for future capital needs. It strengthens our ability to **keep the woods safe, accessible, and thriving for everyone**. In the meantime, the interest earned will help **continue Forest School sessions** and contribute towards other essential costs, alongside the vital support we receive from Friends and other fundraising efforts. This generous gift **does not replace the need for ongoing support**, we still rely on Friends' contributions and donations to keep the woodland cared for and loved.

If we consider using part of this legacy for new activities, our Trustees will of course consult fully with the community before making any significant decisions. For now however, this is about building resilience and ensuring the woodland remains a place for everyone to enjoy.

Peter's kindness reminds us how powerful legacies can be for organisations like ours. If you're considering leaving a gift in your will (whether to Gifford Community Woodland or another local cause) it can make a lasting impact. However, please don't forget that the way you can help today is by regular giving as a Friend...so if you aren't already, **we'd love you to sign-up** if you can. (Full details are on the back page.)

So finally, **thank you Peter, for your incredible generosity**. Your gift really will help us protect and nurture these woods for generations to come.

Not Yet a Friend?

If you've not yet joined & feel you could contribute even a small amount on a monthly or annual basis - you can join by scanning the QR code, or contact us & we'll get you a paper form to complete.

(Already a Friend but want to alter your donation, let us know.)

[**CLICK**](#)
[**HERE**](#)

Calendar of Events:

Event Title	When	Details
Volunteer Day - Wood Fuel	Saturday, 24 Jan, 9am	Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Wood Fuel	Saturday, 7 Feb, 9am	Please email to let us know you're coming.
Open Woods Meeting	Tuesday 10 Feb, 19:30	Informal meeting in Gifford Bowling Club. All welcome, & Bar Open!
Volunteer Day - Rhododendron Control	Saturday, 28 Feb, 9am	Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Path Maintenance	Saturday, 14 Mar, 9am	Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Path Maintenance	Saturday, 28 Mar, 9am	Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Tree Weeding & Maint. with LCV	Saturday, 26 Apr, 9am	Lunch provided. Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Tree Weeding & Maint. with LCV	Saturday, 10 May, 9am	Lunch provided. Please email to let us know you're coming.
Volunteer Day - Tree Weeding & Maint. with LCV	Saturday, 24 May, 9am	Lunch provided. Please email to let us know you're coming.
Open Woods Meeting	Wednesday 27 May, 19:30	Informal meeting in Gifford Bowling Club. All welcome, & Bar Open!

If you have any further feedback, please get in touch using details below.



www.giffordcommunitywoodland.com



gifford.woodsEH41@gmail.com



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Gifford Community Land Company Ltd.

Registered Office: Blythehill, Tweeddale Avenue,

Gifford, East Lothian, EH41 4QN

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