

Woodland Photo Competition!



Whether you're a keen photographer or just like snapping pictures on your phone, we'd love to see the woodland through your eyes.

Capture anything that makes the woods special to you - wildlife, your dog having fun, family walks, flowers, fungi, woodland views, changing seasons, or hidden details along the path...

Send your photos to: **Gifford.WoodsEH41@gmail.com** by **31st July** and you could win a Forest Therapy session, a local gift card or a bird feeder and nature book. So grab your camera and start exploring!

Woodland Watch in June...

bumblebees butterflies

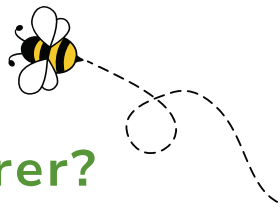
sticklebacks 'dryad's saddle'

fledglings tadpoles bats

'chicken of the woods'



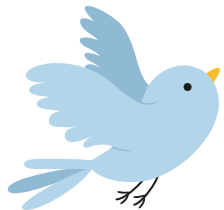
Kid's Corner



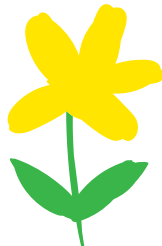
Can you become a Woodland Explorer?

Next time you visit the woods, see if you can spot:

- A leaf bigger than your hand
- A bird singing in the trees
- A tiny creature hiding under a log
- A colourful wildflower
- A tree with interesting bark
- A feather on the ground
- Signs that animals have been busy



You could even take a photo to enter our competition!



Gifford Community Woodland

Summer Newsletter 2026



Woodland Highlights

We have a wildflower meadow! This is the MG3c grassland community (see photo) which was identified in the National Vegetation Classification Survey that was completed last Summer. The survey recommended the area was cut to preserve it. We are excited to see it flourish over the next few years.

A massive thank you to Gerry Condon and Down to Earth Gardening for all of their help.

Unfortunately, recent tree safety work has identified poor health in a number of our mature oak trees, with some needing to be felled. Advice from Forest Research suggests the likely cause is Chronic Oak Decline, a long-term condition linked to a combination of environmental stresses, including drought, historic nutrient exposure, and overcrowding within the woodland canopy. Smaller, less vigorous trees have been most affected where stands were never thinned, allowing disease to take hold. We have approval from the council for ongoing safety works over the next two years, and Forest Research is continuing to analyse samples from affected oak trees, as well as samples from beech and sycamore trees suffering from other diseases. The situation also supports recommendations already identified in our Woodland Management Plan (WMP), which aims to improve woodland resilience and age diversity through gradual thinning and natural regeneration. Our new WMP will be available to view in the coming weeks.

This April we planted approximately 1000 acorns which were collected from trees within the woodland last year and stratified. We had hoped there would be enough food around for the squirrels, so that they didn't feel inclined to dig them all up again! Sadly the squirrels didn't share our vision...

Just a reminder that fires are not permitted in the woodland. The fire pit at the Welfare Camp is for organised forest school and volunteer use only, where responsible fire safety precautions are put in place and a strong 'leave no trace' ethos is promoted. Please help us look after the woods and keep the area safe for everyone.



Meet Our New Trustee, Adam Mahoney

Hello, it's lovely to have been accepted as a Trustee of the Community Woods particularly as its such an important part of the village. We made the escape from Edinburgh 4 years ago when we had twins so its been a bit of a whirlwind however watching all of the kids enjoy the countryside highlights how important it is for everyone. I have always enjoyed being outdoors and being in nature for its restorative effect. Like a lot of people I'm glued to my laptop or in an office way more than is healthy for anyone. Having a resource like the woods is one we need to value and nurture as it has enormous benefits for both our physical and mental health and ultimately, we are an inseparable part of the ecology in which we live.



The trustees have done a fantastic job establishing and managing the woodland. In the next few years we will probably see the impact of climate change and the arrival of invasive species such as the yellow legged Asian Hornet. As a beekeeper that is a worry, but we should also be concerned for all of our native pollinators and their role in helping our biodiversity and flora, funga and fauna.

Hopefully, I can play a small part in helping to look after our woodland and I am sure that in return our woodland will look after us. You can find out more about the yellow legged Asian Hornet and where to report sightings here:

www.nationalbeeunit.com/diseases-and-pests/asian-hornet

Protect our Woodland Together

By becoming a Friend of Gifford Community Woodland you'll be supporting conservation work, wildlife projects, community events, and educational activities that keep the woodland thriving and accessible for everyone to enjoy. Friends can also get involved through volunteering, seasonal activities, and sharing ideas for the future of the woodland. Whether you visit for peaceful walks, family adventures, or simply to enjoy nature, your support makes a real difference.



Go to giffordcommunitywoodland.com/become-a-friend or scan the QR code to find out more.

Thank you!

Interested in Helping?

A huge thank you to all our volunteers for their hard work over the past few months. From tree weeding and woodland maintenance to path clearing and wood fuel days, your time, energy and commitment have made a real difference.

We'd like to give a special thank you to Paul Hurd for his hard work with the acorn planting.



If you've ever thought about volunteering but weren't sure you had the time or the right skills, please do consider getting involved! There are lots of ways to help, both outdoors and behind the scenes, and every contribution, big or small, is valuable. Whether you can spare a few hours helping in the woods, supporting fundraising efforts, social media content or blogs - we would love to hear from you.

We are particularly looking for experienced scythers to help maintain the wildflower meadow so if you have those skills and would like to help out please do get in touch!

Online presentation by Botanist Ben Averis

At our Open Woods Meeting in February, Botanist Ben Averis gave an interesting presentation on his findings of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey that was conducted in the woodland last Summer as part of our Ecosystem Management Project funded by Inspiring Scotland.

The NVC Survey is an invaluable tool, providing a detailed understanding of the woodland's habitats, plant communities, and overall ecological health. It helps identify areas that are thriving, highlights habitats that may need protection, and guides future management to better support wildlife and biodiversity.

The NVC Survey and our Woodland Management Plan strengthen future funding applications and will help ensure the woodland is cared for sustainably for generations to come.

You can watch the highlights of Ben's presentation here:

<https://youtu.be/MpVfywBstl0> or scan the QR code.

