



CULAG COMMUNITY WOODLAND TRUST **Urras Coille Choimhearsnachd Chulaig**

Chairperson's report 2016

Another year of growth in the woods – and at Little Assynt Estate there are areas that the new trees have come away such that they really look wooded. It is an ever increasing delight to walk in them at all times of the year. Just as Culag Woods is welcoming in all weathers, so some of the walks at Little Assynt are becoming sheltering. There have been damaging gales and we continue to be troubled by damaging deer, but the trees are winning overall – with help from friends (Jimmy, Mel, Charlie and Julian have tidied up after the gales and Don O'Driscoll has kept the deer numbers down inside the fence at Little Assynt – efforts much appreciated). Deer have been on the agenda often this year: firstly, what to do about the herd now resident in Culag Woods (and the ticks they carry) – a problem not yet resolved; secondly, our legal obligation to cull at Little Assynt – we've signed an agreement and meeting our targets does not seem to be a problem (literally!).

While the cull is sorted, CALL (Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape) is not. A lot of time and energy has had to be put in to a revised version of our Big Lottery bid as the match funding has proven very hard to secure (with government grants very much reduced and EU funds slow to come on stream). We've already benefited by salaries being paid to those preparing the bid, but the start date for the actual projects has been pushed back, leaving a gap and uncertainty about when jobs might begin and which jobs are going ahead. Hopefully we'll be back on track in September.

Other than that, things keep ticking over. We remain solvent though poor (thanks to Ian for watching every penny). We have been modestly successful in fundraising at various events (Summer Ceilidh, Games Day, Christmas Fair, Craft Fair catering, Easter Egg Hunt, White Shore BBQ & Camp) and the sponsorship of benches and shelters has gone well. Of course we'd love to have an income stream but its source has eluded us so far (though Culag Woods is now an official, paid-for film location!).

What keeps CCWT going is all the volunteer help we get (and Fiona who organises well beyond the call of duty). There are the regulars - to those named above we must add Ken Fairchild for replacing the twigloo and giving our Troll a home, Ken Maclennan and his friend who have given the Woodmiser the TLC it much needed, and all those who turned up for Woody Group (seeing to paths, ditches, and other maintenance jobs). Group help has come from JMT volunteers, Ullapool High School, George Watson's College, and Rabbie's Tours – good work!

Finally, our thanks - to the Directors and Office Bearers for keeping us going, often with a laugh; our Members for all their support; and everyone who has enjoyed these places, cared about them and shared their delight. In fact, let's get this AGM over with and go to the woods!

Anna Mackay