

“Adapting advice
and woodland
manager services
during Covid-19
lockdown(s)”

Forext

29th January







2
apprenticeships
completed

29,410ha
of woodland
represented

31
projects
across the UK

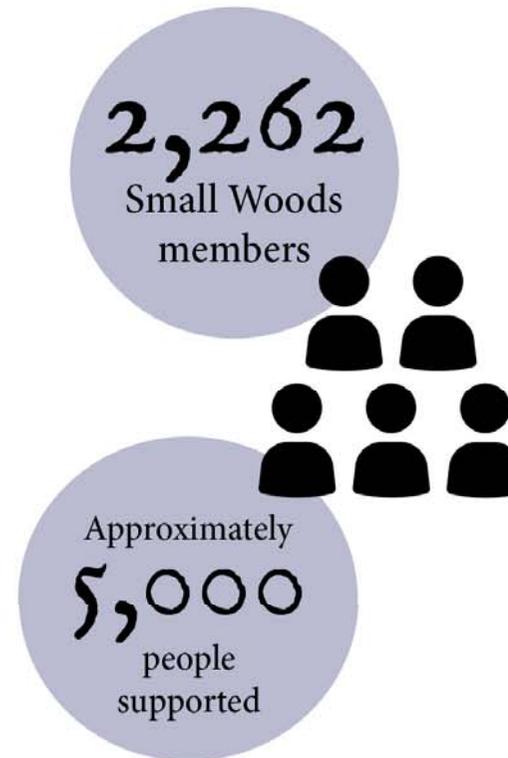
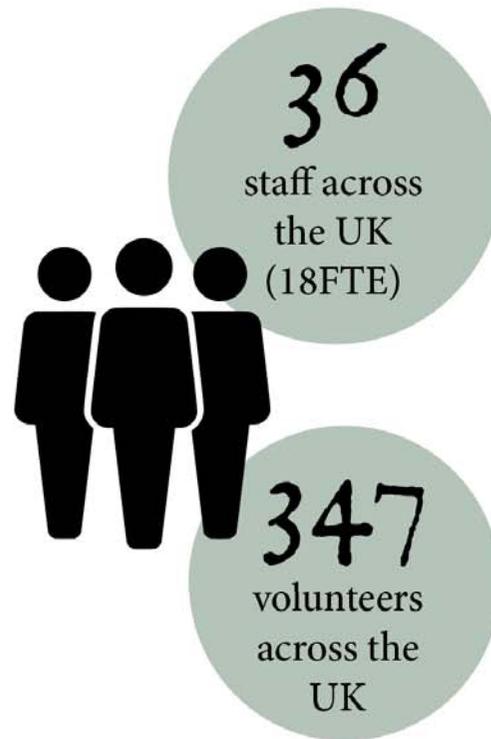
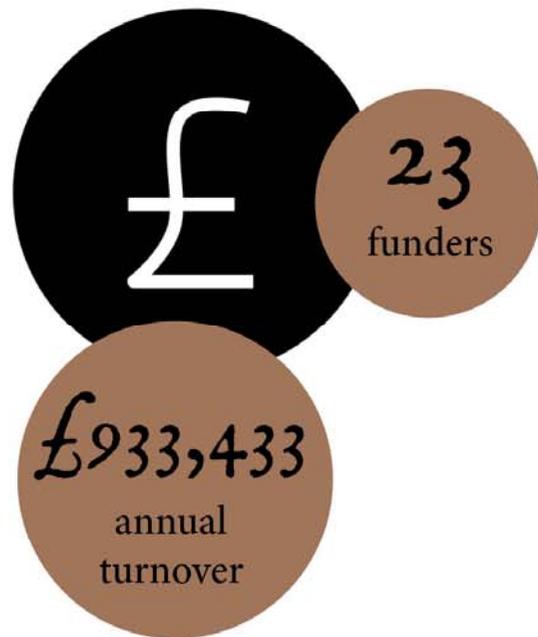
84
training
courses

600ha
small woodlands
directly managed
by Small Woods

with
410
trained in woodland
skills and traditional
crafts



Small Woods



SWA, woodland management and small woodland businesses in Covid



Covid has provided SWA with twin challenges, reducing our income, whilst at the same time leading to an increased demand for our services. We have seen:

- **Woodland owners and managers increased demand for SWA advice services** - These services will become more important as we move into the recovery phase, as small woodland businesses are looking for the confidence that they are going to be able to function in the “new normal”.
- **SWA Health and Wellbeing services have been in great demand during the Covid measures** – It is likely that the next period will see a further increase in the need for such services and we need to be readying ourselves for this.

What changed & what stayed the same



Training

- Lockdown = no training
- Autumn 2020 programme ✓
- Spring/Summer 2021?
- Moving online – challenges and rewards

Woodland Manager events

- All online
- Increased uptake – 650 attendees
- Broader range of topics

Advisory work

- “Comfort” letters
- Online clinics
- New members area on website

Outreach

- #Naturefix campaign via social media channels
- Newsletter from 8 to 24 times pa
- New website



To whom it may concern,

COVID-19 AND THE WOODLAND SUPPLY CHAIN

The purpose of this letter is to explain that "essential work", as defined by government guidance, is being carried out by woodland managers, foresters and the related supply chain, which should continue, **even in the event of a local lockdown**. Government has specifically clarified that:

"Those involved in the supply chain of wood for key goods (including, but not limited to pallets, heating, packaging, tissue paper, timber harvesting, sawmills) should be considered key workers."

The intention of this definition is to ensure that the "the supply chain of wood for key goods" remains in operation as it is producing goods and services the government regards are essential at this time. That includes the wood fuel supply chain, on which many will still depend for their heating next winter. Without work now, these supplies will then run out. The advice on essential workers applies to all operators, regardless of size, it is not simply focused on larger operators.

UK Government has provided further guidance: **"with the exception of some non-essential shops and public venues, we are not asking any other businesses to close – indeed it is important for business to carry on."**

Where workers can work from home they should. Most woodland and small-scale forestry supply chain work simply cannot be done from home – including those growing young trees in nurseries; planting new forests and woods; tending and managing woods, including pest and disease control; harvesting & delivering essential woodfuel. It is therefore important that these workers are able to travel to work and to undertake their activities without harassment or obstruction.

Woodland owners, forestry, wood processing, woodfuel supplier and nurseries are all committed to working safely and responsibly in accordance with government guidelines for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Those working in the sector are already accustomed to operating to high levels of control through existing Health and Safety protocols, which largely already enforce social distancing for safety reasons.

Ian Baker
Chief Executive Officer
Small Woods Association
January 2021

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

Further information: office@smallwoods.org.uk & <http://smallwoods.org.uk/covid-19/>

Bringing woodlands to life

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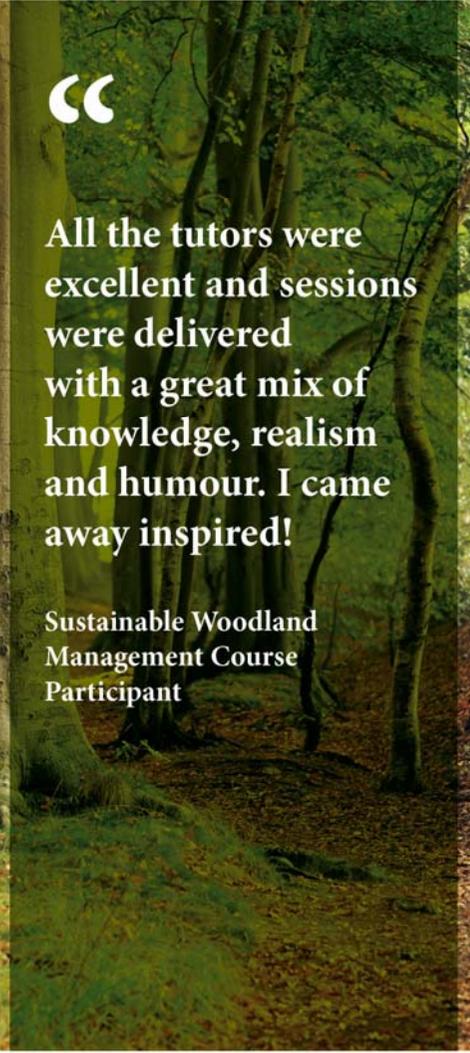




“

I have been reading the newsletters keenly, and really appreciate the access to information and the wider community our membership brings. Thank you to all.

Small Woods Member



“

All the tutors were excellent and sessions were delivered with a great mix of knowledge, realism and humour. I came away inspired!

Sustainable Woodland Management Course Participant



“

My mental wellbeing improved a lot. I look forward to the weekly group and it helped beat loneliness. It encourages me to do new activities outside.

Actif Woods Wales Participant
Carmarthenshire

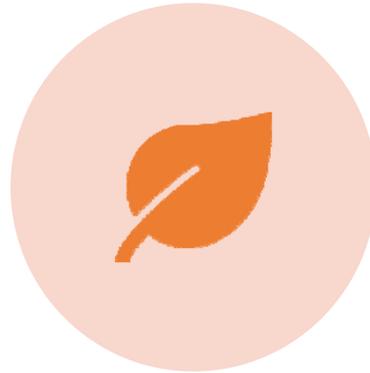


Small Woods

New & Developing For Members



ONLINE EVENTS



CARBON



BIODIVERSITY PLANS

Launching now and Coming Soon



- Woodland Biodiversity Improvement
- Demonstration Woods & Events
- Training places
- Green Infrastructure
 - Woodland hubs
- Green Recovery
- Lost Woods
- School Orchards
- Woodland creation

Looking ahead



A small woodlands “to do list”



Small woodlands context and looking beyond Covid – ensuring the sector is well understood by those who represent it in government. Providing woodland managers and owners need advice and guidance to get them back into the woods, ensuring management and production cycles do not miss a year.

Small Woodlands in ELMS – we are running a “Test and Trials” project to investigate how small woodland support might be improved. Critically, we believe the entry level should not be restricted to farmers and should be a means of support for all managed woodlands that deliver ecosystem services.

Small Woodlands in the Green Recovery – we are very clear that the sector has much to offer a Green Recovery. Our small woodlands represent an underutilised resource in every constituency of the UK. Targeted support will assist the realisation of these objectives.

The need for a recovery plan for our sector - the Covid survival schemes, such as business/self-employed grants, furlough and loans have been inaccessible or unattractive to significant portions of our sector. We believe there is a place for a **woodland renaissance programme**, perhaps funded from the new Nature For Climate fund, which could be focused on smaller woodlands and their human needs and benefits.

The strategic needs of Small Woodlands – A wide range of issues will need to be addressed, including ELMS support, skills development, management standards, marketing and planning frameworks. In particular, woodland management should be given a higher profile in the strategy, with 50% of our woodlands unmanaged, we don’t believe it would be to general benefit if large scale planting simply led to the unmanaged woodlands of tomorrow.

Green Recovery



Policy – Make ELMS work for Sm Woodlands, promote, woodland Restoration, particularly Coppice restoration. Provide more supportive policy and regulatory frameworks, with clear guidance for those implementing regulation at the local level, e.g., planning to enable structures necessary for woodland use and management.

Planting – Increase resilience of existing woodlands, through strengthening of hedgerows, field corners, watercourses, re-connect fragmented landscapes, focusing on relatively unproductive agricultural spaces; Nursery capacity – for UK-sourced planting stock is limited & we need to grow this at a rate that supports demand; New small woodlands - that meeting all our goals, connecting habitat networks & improving ecosystem services.

Participation – People desperately want to re-connect with their environments.

Sustainable Livelihoods – we believe that there is huge scope for the sort of sustainable livelihoods that many people are now seeking, working with woodlands, and enabling people to support themselves and their families.

Skills – Need and demand proven. Our highly popular apprenticeship scheme is always massively over-subscribed; skills development needs investment and consistency, supported by a network of demonstration woodlands.

Wood culture – re-connect people to woodlands, their use, crafts & traditions, improving and restoring woodlands, developing supply chains and infrastructure and promoting regulatory frameworks to support wise & effective use.

The Green Recovery Flagships: Succession, New Native Nurseries, Demonstration woodlands, Apprentices, Green Prescribing, New woodland livelihoods.