

# The economic and social impacts of community management of native woodlands in Scotland

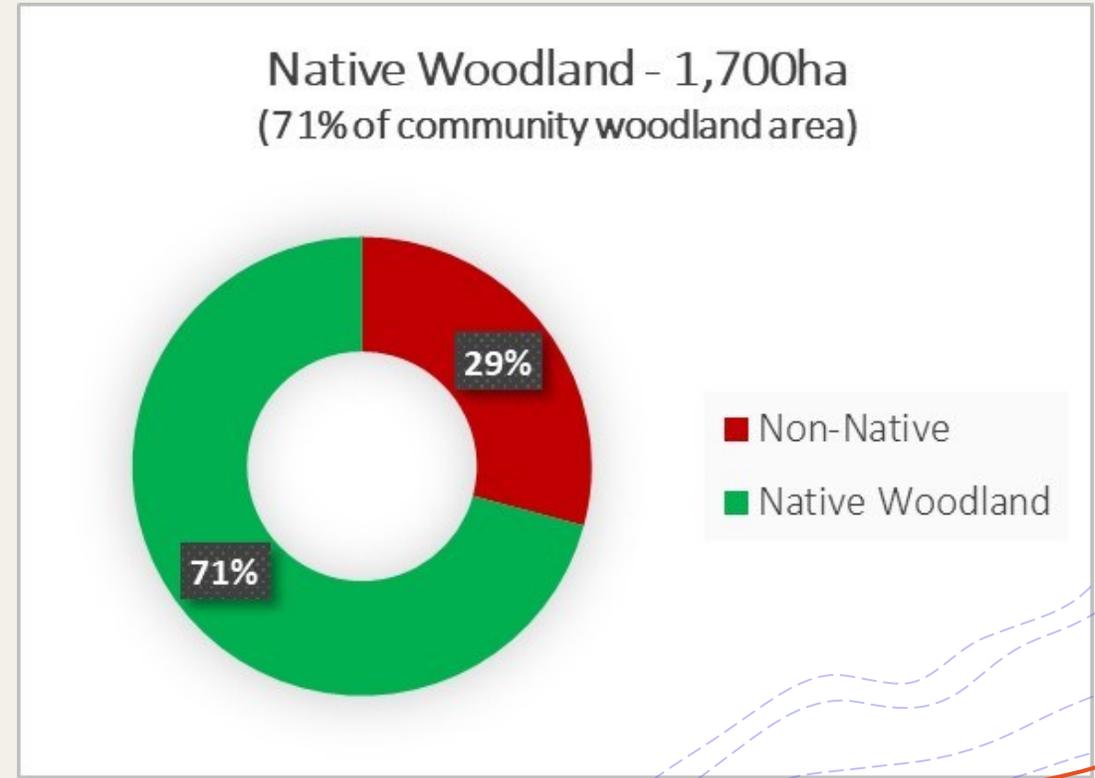
Willie McGhee

Community Woodland Association

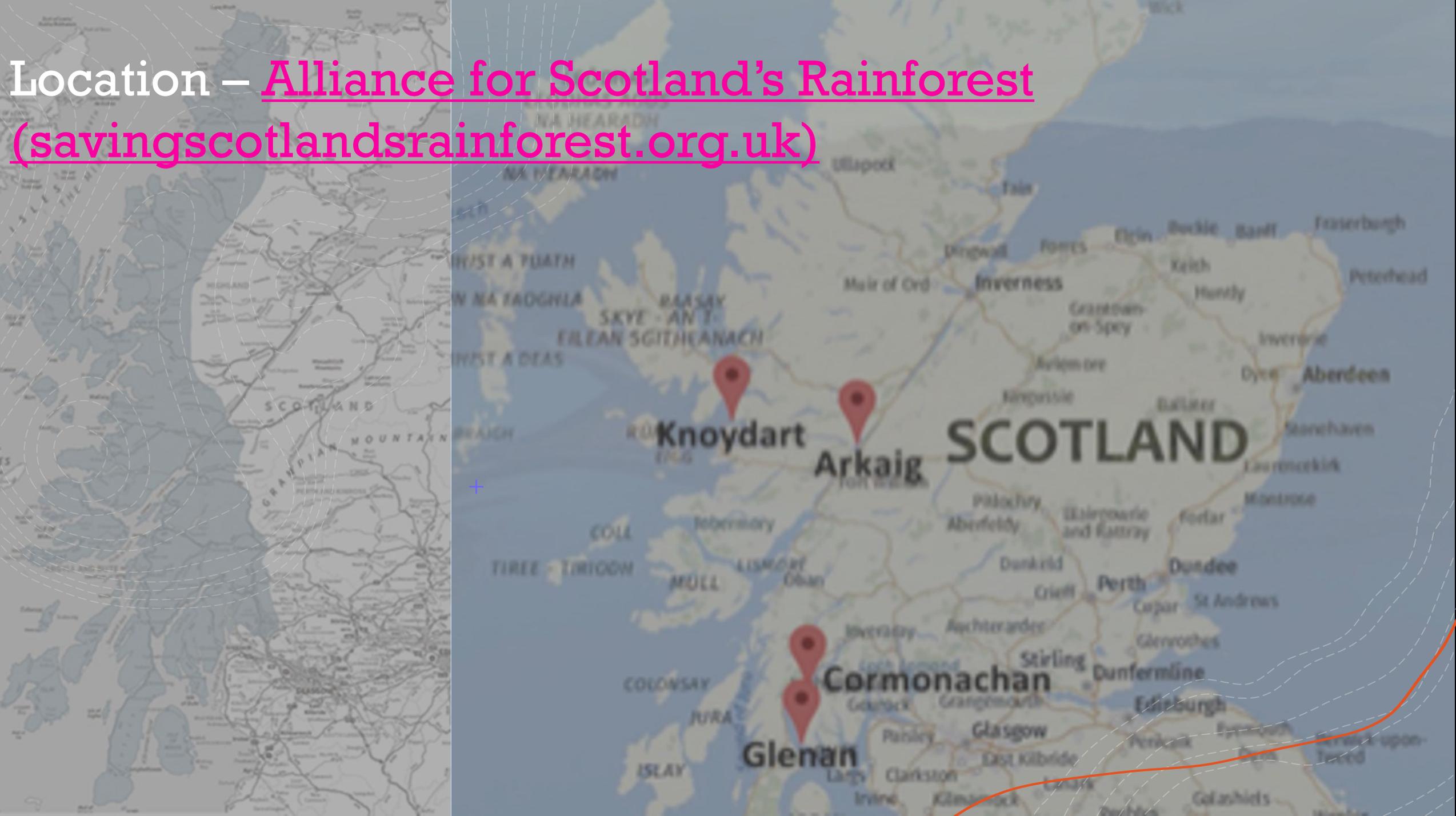
[Native Woods project — Community Woodlands Association \(communitywoods.org\)](#)



Native woodlands - The four woodland groups are drawn from remote rural communities, total population of 1270. The woodlands are located along the west coast of Scotland and contain elements of Atlantic temperate rainforest.



Location – Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest  
(savingscotlandrainforest.org.uk)



# Arkaig

## Arkaig Community Forest

Loch Arkaig Pine Forest is 1045ha of previously neglected rain forest in Lochaber. It was purchased by the community (pop. 60) from Forest and Land Scotland in 2016. It is now co-managed by the community and Woodland Trust Scotland. Forest restoration is a key objective.

## economic activity -

firewood, timber, community venison project,  
tree nursery, forest school, eco-tourism

[About | Arkaig Community Forest](#)



# Cormonachan – education, volunteering, outreach, arts and rural skills training

## Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd

Cormonachan Woodlands in Argyll and Bute has had community involvement in woodland management since 1998. In 2021 the community (pop. 400) under Cormonachan Community Woodlands Ltd, signed a formal lease agreement with Forest and Land Scotland (FLS). The 63.9ha wood is being restored by volunteers for access and conservation. Their local partners Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre hosts over 1,000 school children every year. [Cormonachan Woodlands – Cormonachan Woodlands Atlantic Oak Woods, Loch Goil, Argyll \(cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk\)](https://cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk)



# Glenan - foraging, volunteering, clearance of invasive exotics

## Friends of Glenan Wood

Glenan Wood, 148ha, includes ancient oak woodland. It was purchased by the community (pop. 700) in 2019 from Forest and Land Scotland (FLS). Friends of Glenan Wood are working to restore their wood and support local people. [Coming Soon](#)  
[glenanwood.org.uk](http://glenanwood.org.uk) [Glenan - Woodland Trust](#)



**Knoydart** — firewood sales, timber processing, wooden craft production, venison sales, native woodland creation and contracting

### **Knoydart Forest Trust**

Knoydart Foundation led a community buyout (pop. 110) of a private estate in 1999 including 1,095ha of woodland. Knoydart Forest Trust was set up in 1999 to manage the woodland on behalf of Knoydart Foundation. The focus is on jobs, adding value to timber and creating native woods.

[Knoydart Forest Trust - About Knoydart Forest Trust](#)



# Employment

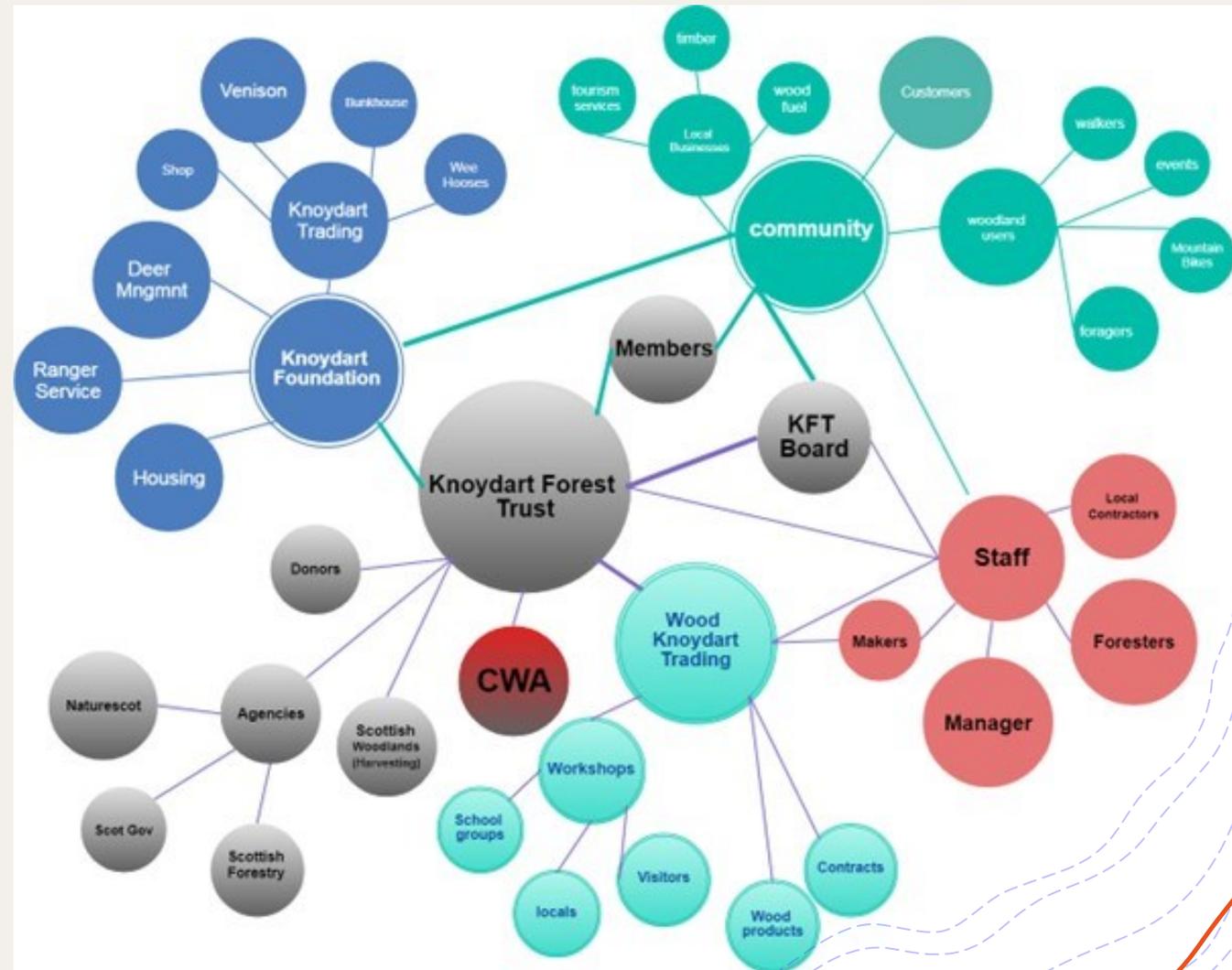
+ Jobs between 2019-2021, Full Time  
Equivalents (FTEs). Total 24.7FTEs



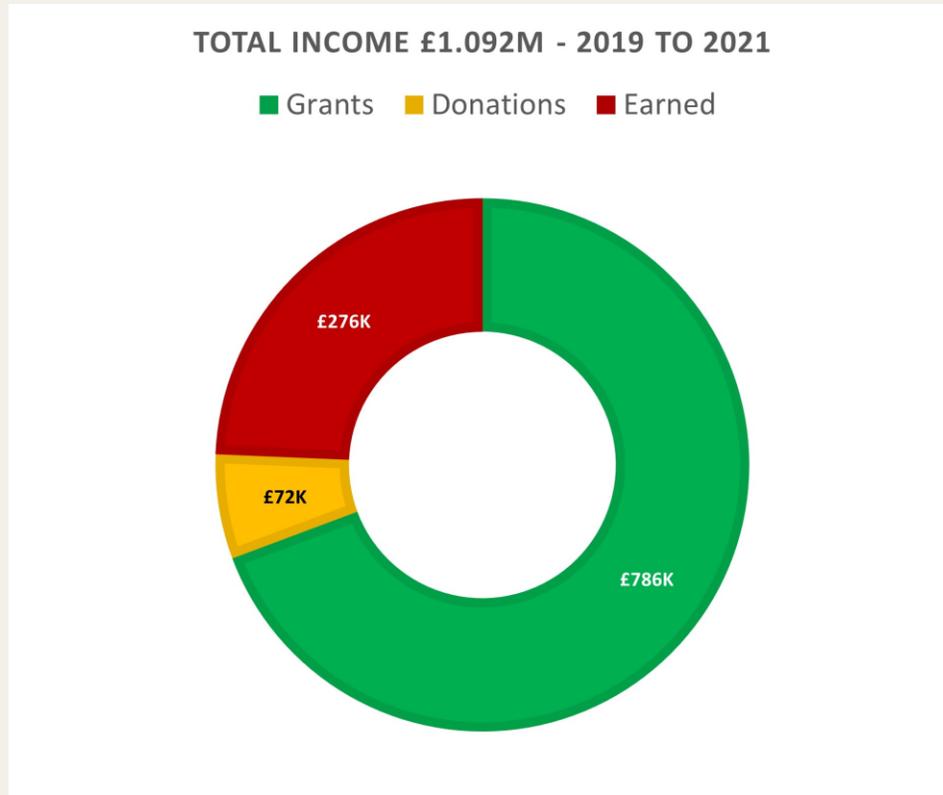
<b>Job type</b>	<b>Direct FTE</b>	<b>Indirect FTE</b>
<b>Forester</b>	3	2.5
<b>Deer stalker / ghillie</b>	0	1
<b>Fencing</b>	0	1
<b>Project management / admin</b>	1.7	1
<b>Tree nursery management</b>	1	0.3
<b>Ranger</b>	0.2	1
<b>Outdoor education</b>	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>18.8</b>

# Social connectedness

- + Tourism – estimated 75,000 visitors to the 4 woodlands
- + Knoydart a destination - community bunk house
- + Arkaig - ospreys and forest school
- + Glenan adjacent to Portavadie – 30,000 visitors per annum
- + Cormonachan – theatre in the woods
- + Bikepacking, walking, cycling



# Total income for all four groups from 2019-2021, rounded to nearest £1,000



**Estimated  
hours**

**Arkaig**

**Cormonachan**

**Glenan**

**Knoydart**

**Total  
hours**

**£ equivalent**

**Total £**

**Volunteers**

3,180

8,328

1,350

294

13,862

@ £15/hr

£197,280

**Board**

500

300

200

420

1,420

@ £20/hr

£28,400



# Volunteering, education, training

# Communities and economy

- + 4 groups in the study manage a combined area of some **2,323 hectares (ha)** and have, over the last three years, a combined income of approximately £1 million. Land under management and 24.7 FTEs equate to approximately **1 FTE for every 94 hectares managed.**
- + And from the CWA member survey, we learned that some 52% of responding groups had no staff, 12% had 4 staff (per organisation) and 6% had 3 staff (per organisation). Outliers include one group reporting 13 staff with another of 9 staff (plus 2/3 seasonal staff). Some groups indicated a mix of employees and self-employed (contracted) staff.
- + And from the CWA members survey we calculated an average CWA managed area of land to be some 249 hectares in extent, giving us an extrapolated total of **39,840 ha under CWA member management.**
- + CWA membership roll includes 160 groups and from membership returns we know that 51 of these groups are small, 68 are medium sized and 41 are large. Applying the staffing averages from the membership returns we can extrapolate a CWA group membership employment figure, giving a total of 257 posts. **1 CWA group member of staff for every 155ha of woodland managed.**
- + **Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)** in 2022 report a staff complement of 900, managing 6,400 square kilometres of our forests, meaning that FLS have **1 staff post for every 711 ha under their management.**

Thank you – please visit Members —  
Community Woodlands Association  
(communitywoods.org) and become a  
member or donate

Thanks to Diane Campbell and Diane Oliver who carried out the research  
and prepared the report.

