



Scottish  
Forestry  
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## A business case study summary: Dovetail Scotland

# Woodland creation within Central Scotland Green Network

Dovetail Scotland is a family run hardwood sawmill and bespoke furniture making business with a strong commitment to environmental principles. Situated at Darach Mor, outside Fintry, owner Steve McLean purchased the 40 acre (16 hectares) site in September 2008, which included an existing four hectares ancient oak woodland, that was classified as dying with no natural regeneration taking place. In 2016 a new ten hectares productive broadleaf plantation was designed and planted by Eamonn Wall & Co utilising funding available under the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) Forestry Grant Scheme.



“Getting the details of a scheme right in the first place is easier and less costly than making retrospective amendments.”

## Motives for woodland creation

To expand the existing native oak woodland onto the hill grassland and undertake enrichment planting of the existing woodland in order to provide these benefits:

- produce high quality commercial hardwoods
- provide firewood and other forest by-products
- enhance the landscape
- provide additional aesthetic and amenity values

## Project funding

An application was submitted for funding under the SRDP Forestry Grant Scheme in November 2015, using the Productive Broadleaves Model and was approved in February 2016.

- **Year 1 initial planting: £52,535** (planting, fencing and protection costs and the CSGN Fringe area uplift (£750 per ha)).
- **Maintenance grant (5 years): £27,205** (9.16ha x £594/year for 5 years)
- **Total FGS (capital and maintenance): £79,740**

## Delivery of the scheme

In order to facilitate the planting scheme, the McLean family undertook tree line clearance themselves in advance of the new fencing being erected. They have also taken on the maintenance of the scheme with support from forestry agent Eamonn Wall & Co for claims submissions and for carrying out annual inspections to ensure their stocking density requirements are met at the end of the scheme.

### Funding opportunities

Landowners in the Core CSGN area could receive grants of up to £8,710 per hectare towards the costs of new woodland planting, including an additional CSGN (Core) contribution of up to £2,500 per hectare (landowners in the Fringe area receive an uplift of £750 per hectare).

## Benefits of woodland creation at Darach Mor

The McLeans consider that the new woodland planting has added value and sustainability to the land, maximising the productivity of former rough grazing land. They have also already witnessed an improvement in their existing ancient woodland as a result of the deer fencing associated with the new planting.

Natural regeneration, previously suppressed by grazing sheep, is starting to return. This helps to bring existing woodlands back into productive use, adding to the on-site sustainable supply of raw timber materials in years to come. With the re-invigoration and regeneration of the existing ancient woodland and the planting of new productive broadleaves at Darach Mor, the McLeans can now be confident that they have replaced – and will continue to restock – all timber use in their products.

With self-catering log cabin accommodation planned to further diversify the business, the woodlands will provide an amenity asset for visitors, who will help to generate a small income for the maintenance of the landholding in the longer term.

Steve McLean has set up a new Limited Woodland Company for the woodlands which allows VAT to be claimed back, that has made a significant difference.

## Lessons learned

If Mr McLean were to look to this exercise again he notes that he would have taken more time to not only look to achieve woodland creation but also to focus on maximising the amenity value of the woodlands.

**TOP TIP:** Ensure the agent involved in the initial grant application sees the planting scheme through to the end of the establishment phase. They will have full familiarity with the site as well as a mind to the original aims and objectives of the woodland.

Read more of this case study and find out more about the woodland creation grants at [forestry.gov.scot/supporting-regulations](https://forestry.gov.scot/supporting-regulations) or call Scottish Forestry Central Scotland Conservancy office **0300 067 6006**.



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