

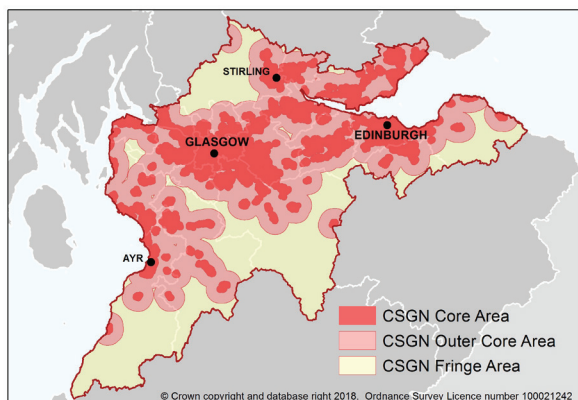


## A business case study: Dovetail Scotland

# 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.

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



## Woodland creation within Central Scotland Green Network – Dovetail Scotland

### 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

### Planting scheme details

The new woodland boundary is stock and deer fenced and rabbit proofed. The deer fencing was extended to include the adjacent existing ancient woodland area using additional money provided by the McLean's. Single furrow ploughing was used to create raised ground for planting, with a series of 3 m wide grass tracks formed to allow access through the new woodland for tending and recreation.

Productive broadleaves (oak, beech, sycamore, birch, sweet chestnut, lime, Norway maple and cherry) were planted in an intimate mixture at an average spacing of 1.86 m. Native broadleaves (alder, willow, downy birch and crab apple with woody shrubs such as hazel and guelder rose included in the mix) were planted at 3 m spacing in two designated areas. The trees are protected by 200 mm plastic vole guards with a small area outwith the deer fence utilising 1.2 m tree guards.

Preparing for new fencing.



### 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** (9.16 ha 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.

In addition to the standard planting, the family have purchased quad bikes and a utility trailer to help with management of both their existing and new woodlands.

### Maintenance requirements

Maintenance requirements over the first five years involves replacement of any failed trees (beating up), weed control, fence upkeep, formative pruning, deer control and monitoring of hare/rabbit/vole populations.

Formative pruning and grey squirrel control will be undertaken as required. After approximately ten years, some thinning may be required to remove poorly formed, defective, diseased or damaged trees, ensuring that further growth is concentrated on trees of better form. Thinning will then continue every few years. Firewood production is a suitable use for first thinnings of hardwoods.

## Woodland creation within Central Scotland Green Network – Dovetail Scotland

### 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.

### Additional information

Land planted under the FGS remains eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme and the income from forestry is tax free. Between October 2015 and 1 August 2017, 168 projects worth £14.1m were approved within the CSGN area.

The scheme is open to applications all year round, providing flexibility to help farmers avoid busier spells such as harvest, calving or lambing periods. It is possible to apply for fencing and planting works to be completed in separate financial years, helping to assist with cashflow.

Woodland Creation option	Target Area Initial Planting Payments + CSGN Contribution								
	Core Area (£2 500/ha)			Outer Core Area (£1 500/ha)			Fringe Area (£750/ha)		
	Initial planting payment (£/ha)	Annual maintenance (£/ha/year for 5 years)	Total payment (£/ha)	Initial planting payment (£/ha)	Annual maintenance (£/ha/year for 5 years)	Total payment (£/ha)	Initial planting payment (£/ha)	Annual maintenance (£/ha/year for 5 years)	Total payment (£/ha)
Conifer	4 660	234	5 830	3 660	234	4 830	2 910	234	4 080
Diverse conifer	4 930	378	6 820	3 930	378	5 820	3 180	378	5 070
Broadleaves	5 740	594	8 710	4 740	594	7 710	3 990	594	6 960
Native upland birch	4 570	144	5 290	3 570	144	4 290	2 820	144	3 540
Native broadleaves	4 570	306	6 100	3 570	306	5 100	2 820	306	4 350
Small/farm woodland	5 200	450	7 450	4 200	450	6 450	3 450	450	5 700

For more information about the CSGN Contribution, visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotlandgrants) or call Forestry Commission Scotland Central Scotland Conservancy Office 0300 067 6006.

