



West Stormont Woodland Group

Appendix P2: Imagine Looking Back

Imagine looking back after twenty or so years of fantastic progress through community ownership of Taymount and Five Mile Woods. Woodland management focussed on nature recovery and climate action have led to mixed broadleaf and conifer woodlands teeming in wildlife, enriching the habitat, doubling the species populations, bringing in new flora and fauna into the site, redressing some of the decades of ecological decline suffered in our area as across the whole world since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* warned us of the risks in 1962. A well cared for path network with conveniently positioned seats and picnic benches, enabling everyone to enjoy the different parts of the wood, on foot, wheels or hooves. Forest food is abundant in all seasons for us to pick for ourselves or enjoy in the Taymount Hub café. Apples, berries, nuts, roots, shoots and leaves, washed down with delicious and refreshing Living Forest Birchwater. Our community and diverse forest enterprises have thrived, meaning we have relied less and less on felling timber for income. Our Camp 53 café, shop, exhibition space and meeting room have created a thriving hub of activity and green enterprise, creating local jobs, supporting other local businesses, benefiting everyone in the community and attracting people from miles around. Our forest school areas and Loggers' Shieling have been a huge hit with local schools and a range of activity groups and clubs for regular outdoor activities for all ages.

Year-Round Activities programmes have helped us to enjoy the woods for different purposes – fun, health and wellbeing, arts, crafts and cultural activities, learning, tending the Food Forest, building paths, habitat features or forest buildings. Just coming to chill, enjoying time with the trees, birdsong and breeze. Our MiDAS community transport initiative has worked wonders in helping so many more people get to events in the woods. Even people who are unable to come out to the woods have enjoyed the virtual woodland experiences we have shared with them on-line.

WSWG has inspired, encouraged and worked closely with neighbouring landowners meaning new paths have provided links between woods and settlements throughout the area, and wider environmental action has enriched the habitat networks at landscape scale. Our area is recovering amazingly well after years of decline. And we are all feeling so much better for it, local residents and landowners alike. We know so many more people and so much more about our local environment. We have taken action for People and Planet. Our springs are not silent.

Imagine looking back and finding it didn't happen.

With your help, we're not going to let that happen.