
Rounall Wood: Habitat restoration community feedback

Golden Hedgehogs

Part of the Dalbeattie Community Initiative family

Golden Hedgehogs: About us

Golden Hedgehogs are part of the family of volunteering initiatives supported by **Dalbeattie Community Initiative***. The golden hedgehog symbol is linked to the Herries ancestors of the Maxwell of Munches family, which progressed to the Dalbeattie coat of arms, and the heritage trail of golden sculptures throughout the town. We are a historic hedgehog town.

Hedgehogs are iconic and popular, **voted Britain's favourite mammal** several times. However they have undergone a long **historic decline especially in rural locations** where populations remain low. Numbers have **declined by 75%** in the last two decades in the countryside and **hedgehogs are now classed as vulnerable to extinction**.

We look to help hedgehogs with your support, in engaging and fun ways, throughout each year. This includes a longer term plan to restore existing habitats, create new ones and link up wildlife areas. Also key is providing information to encourage nature conservation and especially hedgehogs in your gardens, which can be a safe haven, especially if connected across neighbourhoods, creating hedgehog highways.

Making small changes which make a big difference for hedgehog survival. From small steps to big results, **our community can be the reason hedgehogs flourish**.



*Scottish Charity number SC03373

Rounall Wood: Summary

The two month consultation* demonstrated strong community support for the restoration proposals.

The overwhelming majority of responses were positive about improving the woodland for wildlife, biodiversity and for future generations, with very few concerns overall.

The consultation is notable because respondents were not simply supporting environmental improvements, but also expressing a strong emotional attachment to Rounall Wood as a valued community asset, place of remembrance, recreation space and local heritage site.

This is a good basis to move forward and explain what is planned next with your community input and approval.



*60+ community responses

Rounall Wood: Feedback

DG5 postcode accounted for the vast majority of respondents with small numbers from neighbouring postcode areas. So feedback was primarily from people with a genuine connection to the woodland.

The woodland is valued **primarily as a place for walking:** regular walks, quiet recreation, well being and connection with nature.

A community asset: many comments describe the wood as special, peaceful, important to local identity and part of people's lives for decades.

Community involvement: a significant number see value in helping improve the woodland, learning about wildlife and being involved in practical conservation.



Rounall Wood: Feedback



When respondents were asked which activities would add most value, clear priorities emerged.

The top priority was the quarry pond restoration as the most supported intervention: important for wildlife habitat, a visible restoration project and something currently in decline.

The second priority was woodland management and habitat restoration. With strong support for reducing sycamore and beech, increasing native species diversity, habitat improvement and long-term stewardship.

Support for wildlife corridors was seen as important too though some respondents sought reassurance regarding impacts.

And citizen science was supported particularly because it engages the younger generation, families, increases awareness and helps monitor wildlife and the wood. There is keen support for people becoming involved in the woodland's future.

The consultation suggests the community wants a better woodland rather than a different woodland. Preferring restoration, enhancement and management rather than major change.



Rounall Wood: Feedback

The main feedback from the community consultation was that all the proposals are widely supported. Also requested was a careful implementation of the proposals to protect the woodland asset:

1. Don't over-manage the woodland

Restoration is welcomed with sensitive management. Not excessive tree removal or large-scale disturbance. Concern was expressed about the loss of mature trees and unnecessary felling. A phased restoration with minimal disturbance and wildlife-first decision making was favourable.

2. Long-term maintenance

Respondents were clearly thinking beyond the initial project about how the pond and the woodland restoration would be maintained. Would there be enough volunteers to sustain the improved diverse habitat and informed woodland management in years to come.

3. Woodland ownership

Several community members stressed the importance on maintaining public ownership, the common good status and ensuring access to benefit our community. Golden Hedgehog volunteers are only encouraging and facilitating change to benefit wildlife, and have no aspirations to own the wood, nor change its status as a community asset.

4. Ongoing community engagement

Based on responses, you would like to have updates, transparency and continued consultation about your wood. And remain involved in decisions about any proposed changes and its future.

Rounall Wood: Conclusions

From all of the responses submitted online, the discussions we had on the consultation day and the feedback forms completed, we feel confident about community support going forwards. People in the burgh will benefit as the woodland will be restored for future generations and improved wildlife habitats will encourage more wildlife to our town and surrounding areas. In summary:

The community strongly supports restoring Rounall Wood for nature and wildlife, provided the work is undertaken sensitively, retains its character, protects community ownership, and keeps local people involved throughout the process.



Rounall Wood: Next steps

Here are the next steps from September 2026 (subject to funding support):

1. **Urban Woodland Management Plan*** outlining the woodland's character, habitat, current species and condition, public access / core paths, statutory and non-statutory designations, cultural features, biodiversity features, water bodies, threats (e.g. tree health, climate change, invasive/noxious species), community vision**, management objectives and strategy, stakeholder engagement, constraints and opportunities, proposals for thinning/felling, planting/restocking, access improvements, work programme, maintenance, monitoring and review. This will set out a plan for how Rounall Wood can be **restored with appropriate, professional stewardship over the next five years.**
2. **'Future Woodland'** (once an area of scrub is cleared) with climate resilient tree species, planted by the community's younger generation, as they will be making decisions about the wood and the environment in the future. Including citizen science camera stand to record changes and interpretation signage
3. **New benches** (including picnic bench for quarry pond) and removal of dilapidated furniture
4. **Restore the commemorative garden** once the tree canopy is opened up, including interpretation signage, to inform of the historical significance of the woodland
5. **Establish 'Friends of Rounall Wood'** as a community-led champion for the woodland, safeguarding our community asset, promoting public appreciation of the environment and practical habitat management

*Forestry Grant Scheme funding enabling improvement grants in subsequent years

**vision based on consultation feedback

Rounall Wood: Support

We have ongoing partnerships and specialist support from:

- Dalbeattie Community Initiative
- D&G Woodlands
- South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC)
- Dalbeattie Common Good Fund Sub-Committee
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Dumfries & Galloway Council Environment Team
- Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership
- Solway Forests Red Squirrel Network
- Dr Stephanie Johnstone (conservation botanist)

There were 35 members of the community who provided their contact email details to be kept informed / happy to volunteer to help with the woodland restoration.

If you'd like to be kept informed and or offer help, now that you have seen the high level plan, then **please provide your name and email address to :**

goldenhedgehog.dci@gmail.com

This will be the best way to learn what is happening in the wood going forwards. Thank you.