

# Letham Woodland Group (LWG)

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The Letham woodland group was set up in 2008 in order to start the process of developing a community woodland.

Community woodland is a growing movement with over 160 groups in the UK, it provides a fantastic opportunity for local people to have a say over land development. In the case of our woods they are just over 40 years since they were clear felled and replanted. Community ownership will allow the local community to decide the shape of their landscape rather than a private individual, providing us with many amenities in perpetuity that could easily be lost through some external economic decision.

The group held a series of meetings to discuss what local interested residents wanted from the woodland and we produced a strategy to develop our ideas.

We raised money from Awards for All to enable a number of early activities to take place.

- A commercial valuation of the east woods- current value £15k
- A management plan – to provide a survey of what is currently present, what requires maintenance and future possible developments
- Public consultation- an opportunity for the whole of the community to have their say and be informed of the progress of the group
- Training- a series of training workshops like, coppicing & chainsaw use

We see the woods as having several uses at the present:

- Providing a quiet place to walk and enjoy nature – used by many local folk for dog walking and even horse use
- Home to the Secret Garden nursery- successful ground breaking approach to early days education
- Firepit social area for locals of all ages to enjoy the woods all year round any time of day – the development of shelters in this area ought to encourage more use

In the future:

- Demonstration of woodland skills and products- through the provision of ‘training space’ by means of the shelters regular activity will be possible
- coppiced fuelwood for locals- firewood is growing in demand, our area has large amounts of standing timber yet no firewood business operating, this will encourage a new look at how we will plan to heat our homes in the coming years
- Develop an example of how woodland can be managed to produce regular income for local woodland owners- much of the local woods are left untouched from year to year, shooting being one of their few uses. This group hopes to demonstrate what a valuable resource is sitting underused and with a little effort can begin to be economically useful