

**Forest Open Day**  
**2pm - 4pm**  
**Sunday 26th Sept**

*A productive, working forest*

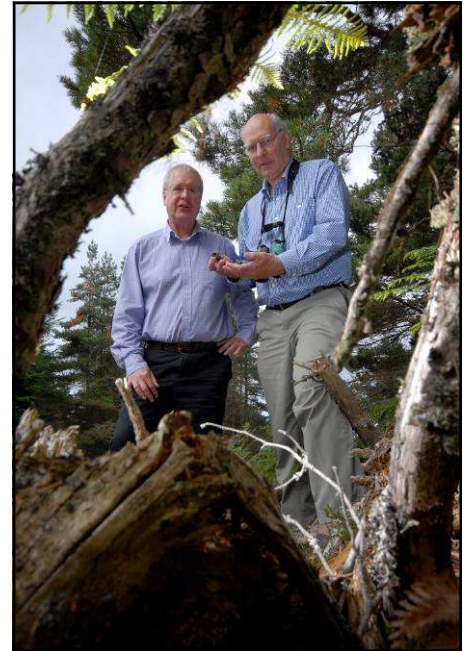
*providing measurable social, economic and environmental benefits  
for local residents and visitors alike*



## **Newsletter – September 2010**

### **Forest Champions**

Earlier in the summer we were delighted to announce that conservationist Sir John Lister-Kaye and land reform campaigner and historian Professor James Hunter were both putting their full support behind Aigas Community Forest and had agreed to act as Forest Champions. You can read the full text of their statements of support on our website [www.aigasforest.org.uk](http://www.aigasforest.org.uk). Many communities are seeking to buy forests through the National Forest Land Scheme at the moment so we need to raise our profile and demonstrate our credibility. Sir John and Professor Hunter are playing their part in this process but perhaps the most important champion of all is you. In previous newsletters we have highlighted that Aigas Community Forest has been established as a membership organisation. This is the norm for community companies and is the legal structure by which members of the community engage with the company's aims. But it's also a little more than that. Being a member is a public statement of your support for the Community Forest. It shows potential funders and public bodies how important the whole enterprise is to the glen; it demon-



James Hunter and Sir John Lister-Kaye

*'I firmly believe that imaginative community ownership would permit creative management of the forest for the best interests of nature conservation, environmental education and local recreation, as well as continued production of some commercial timber and other carefully controlled activities. In my professional opinion as a conservationist, this shift in emphasis and freeing up of opportunity is badly needed. I am in no doubt that the local community possesses the skills and commitment to undertake the management of this forest.'*

*Sir John Lister-Kaye, Forest Champion*

strates that our ambitions and goals are shared by many and not just few. Last year over 200 people voted in favour of the community purchase and we want to translate that support into company membership. Joining the organisation is free and we are making it as easy as possible for you. Membership forms will be posted to all those on the electoral roll and you can go to our new website [www.aigasforest.org.uk](http://www.aigasforest.org.uk) and join on-line. Join Us! Be a Forest Champion.

### **Forest Open Day**

Last year our Forest Open Day was very well received. We are once again inviting you to take the opportunity to see the Forest. We will be showing you the best way to get in and about on foot or by bike and offering a guided walk from 2.30pm led by the Aigas Field Centre head ranger. Come along to the picnic area lay-by close to Crask of Aigas from 2pm - 4pm on Sunday 26th September.

## Changes to the National Forest Land Scheme

When we started out on this process last year the only option available to us was purchase of some or all of the forest. We want to make this enterprise pay for itself and hopefully produce a surplus for reinvesting elsewhere in the glen and our feasibility study said the best way to do that is to buy the whole forest. This is and will remain our key aim, but recently there have been changes announced to the National Forest Land Scheme. Coming at a time when communities all over Scotland are finding it hard to raise the funds necessary for purchase the option to lease the forest for up to 100 years has great potential. The Forestry Commission have not come forward with a rental value - or even a policy for calculating an annual rent - but in the process of updating our business plan we are giving full consideration to this potential opportunity.



## Website

Please pay a visit to our revamped website [www.aigasforest.org.uk](http://www.aigasforest.org.uk). Fully funded by LEADER and The Highland Council, the website offers a wealth of information about our activities and aims; has a map and aerial photograph of the forest; allows you to download minutes of our meetings; and lets you join and give donations securely on-line. We'll keep it up to date with news and events as and when they occur.



*'Over the last twenty or so years, many communities have taken ownership of local land and other assets. The results have everywhere been positive. The people involved in the Aigas Community Forest initiative are anxious to have exactly this sort of responsibility. I am certain they are more than capable of exercising it. That is why they have my backing - and why, I trust, they will get all the other backing they both need and deserve.'*

*Professor James Hunter, Forest Champion*

## Golf Tournament

On Sunday 12th September 9 teams took to Aigas Golf Course for a 9-hole Texas Scramble. With team fees, sponsorship and a raffle around £1,000 was raised. Congratulations to the winning team, CSC Crop Protection Ltd, and our thanks to all who took part and to the sponsors - Aigas Holiday Cottages, Neil Ross Tractors, Frank Nicol Farm and Graden Machinery, Ffordes Photographic, The Old North Inn, Comet, Aigas Field Centre, Dingbro, The Clansman Hotel, Glen Ord Distillery, The Priory Hotel and Harry Gow Bakers.

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