



## Case Study 4

# Enhancing and Protecting Native Woodland in Cumbernauld



**A well earned rest for the Carillion staff on a volunteer day with Eddie Degan, the Reserves Project Officer for Cumbernauld Greenspaces.**

### The Challenge

The key habitat within Cumbernauld Glen is lowland mixed broadleaved woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat in the North Lanarkshire Biodiversity Action Plan. An important element of the woodland management is to control the spread of invasive non-native species e.g. rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed and other non-natives such as beech, sitka spruce and sycamore.

Invasive non-natives are plants and animals which have been introduced outwith their natural historical range or present distribution. They cause considerable damage to the environment, economy, health and our day to day lives. They can out compete native species and can cause considerable damage to manmade structures. Many invasive non-natives plants have seeds which are easily spread by either disturbance, wind and natural watercourses, while other species spread through root systems. This can make the spread of invasive plants particularly difficult to control and the challenge is to remove them in a co-ordinated way.

Limiting the spread of new invasive species is also a challenge in accessible urban woodlands. Disturbance and damage by antisocial behaviour makes natural habits venerable to invasive species. Improving access routes that encourage people to use well designed routes can slow the spread of invasive plants. While building local pride and encouraging responsible use of the woodlands can reduce the impact of invasive non natives.

### Invasive non-native species facts

- Damage costs and estimated in Scotland £250 million per year. Total cost to UK ~£1.7 BILLION!
- Contributed to 40% of animal extinctions in the past 400 years
- It is an offense to transport some invasive non-native plant species and their seeds
- Invasive species in Cumbernauld include, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, rhododendron, snowberry, salmonberry, grey squirrel, and mink.

## The Solution

Children from Abronhill Primary School identified an area of their local Wildlife Reserve that needed to be improved. The Scottish Wildlife Trust worked with volunteers from Carillion to take action to improve the health of the woodland and remove invasive non-natives.

A path used by children was upgraded so that they can explore the woodlands and play safely. Forest school activities were run to raise the awareness of the natural habitats surrounding the school.



Children from Abronhill Primary School called for action to improve the woodland they use as an outdoor classroom.

## The Benefits

For a relatively small project this work has had a big impact. It has improved the health of the woodland and highlighted the importance of invasive non-native control with local people.

Removal of invasive non-native species is allowing natural regeneration to occur, creating a robust and healthy woodland. The varying age structure of the woodland now creates more homes for wildlife. Better paths and formal access routes are reducing disturbance and slowing the spread of invasive species.

Upgrading the path network reinforces connectivity through a local beauty spot allowing for both people and wildlife to move freely and safely from one greenspace to another. Local school children are now able to enjoy the woodland and learn in a stimulating environment. This has built relationships between the Scottish Wildlife Trust and the local community.

“The children from Abronhill Primary School have led by example and shown how small actions can make a difference”

Duncan Clark,  
Cumbernauld Greenspace Manager

“It is a great demonstration for the children of what can be done when civic bodies work together for the benefit of the community”

Jamie Hepburn, MSP

Through this work volunteers from Carillion learned new skills, have a greater sense of pride in their environment which they will hopefully take into their every day jobs in the construction industry.

Removal of non-native species allows native species such as bluebells to flourish

Woodlands become healthier through natural regeneration of native tree species

Local children use woodland area for outdoor lessons and Forest Schools

Disturbance in the woodland is reduced



Cumbernauld Living Landscape aims to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. Without them, neither wildlife nor people can flourish.

### To find out more contact

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The Cumbernauld Living Landscape is supported by many community organisations and partnership led by:

