

NEWS RELEASE

8 DECEMBER 2014

Phoenix sculpture unveiled at National Tree Dressing 2014 event at Bluebell Woods

A 12-foot phoenix sculpture has been unveiled to kick off the celebrations at the National Tree Dressing 2014 event at Bluebell Woods, Johnstone.

The National Tree Dressing 2014 event was run in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, Commonwealth Woods, Phoenix Futures and Paths for All.

Renfrewshire South MSP, Hugh Henry, Adele Duncan, Director of Operations UK of Phoenix Futures launched the celebrations.

The cross-cultural event celebrated the environmental and cultural importance of trees, as well as Scotland's national tree, the Scots Pine. Events like these are run as part of the Commission's engagement strategy, which aims to encourage a range of diverse groups and equality groups from different sections of society to enjoy and benefit from access to their local woodlands and forests. There were eleven six-foot banners on display at Bluebell Woods designed by ten diverse community groups and schools, including Auchenlodment Primary School, Dixon Care Elderly, Flexi-care, High Life and other local groups, which depict their cultural group and what the woodlands mean to them.

Forestry Commission Scotland commissioned the 12-foot chainsaw carved phoenix sculpture to celebrate its three year partnership with Phoenix Futures and their drug and alcohol rehabilitation programme, 'Recovery Through Nature', where volunteers redevelop Bluebell Woods for the benefit of local people.

Hugh Henry said: "The Bluebell Woods are a huge asset to the local community, young and old. Over the years, pupils and staff at Auchenlodment Primary School have used the woods to learn and also to help improve the environment. Woods like this are important to Scotland's urban life and they are part of the fabric of Scotland. This remarkable sculpture is a fitting tribute to the work of the volunteers who have worked hard to redevelop the Bluebell Woods. My thanks go to Forestry Commission Scotland and Phoenix Futures for making this happen."

Romena Huq, Central Scotland Conservancy, Forestry Commission Scotland:

"We want more people of all ages and backgrounds to visit Scotland's forests and woodlands. Our aim is to show that woodlands offer something for everyone. It's great to bring together a diverse range of people from different backgrounds to experience the benefits of being involved in nature."

John Deeney, Service Navigator, Phoenix Futures, Said:

“It’s fantastic the Commission is recognising the work of our volunteers by commissioning the chainsaw phoenix sculpture. We work really closely with the Commission and the partnership benefits both organisations, as well as our volunteers. We’ve found that our ‘Recovery through Nature’ conservation work is proven to improve retention in drug and alcohol treatment by 57%. What’s more by encouraging good citizenship we positively impact society as a whole.”

Rosslyn Mills, Commonwealth Woods and Paths For All Walking Development Officer, said:

“We hope to increase the number of people who choose to walk for a healthier, happier Scotland, where increased physical activity improves quality of life and wellbeing for all. It’s great to see the impact of Bluebell Woods and the National Tree Dressing event on bringing people and communities together and encouraging them to get active and involved in their local woodland.”

For more information on Bluebell Woods, please visit;
<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/bluebell-woods>

Notes to Editors

Issued by Golley Slater on behalf of Forestry Commission Scotland.

1. Forestry Commission Scotland is part of the Scottish Government’s Environment & Forestry Directorate www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland.
2. For news, events and recreation information log on to:
www.facebook.com/enjoyscotlandsforests or <https://twitter.com/FCScotlandNews>
3. Tha FCS pàirt de Bhuidheann-Stiùiridh Àrainneachd is Coilltearachd aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba; a’ riaghladh nan 660,000 heactairean ann an Oighreachd na Coille Nàiseanta, a’ dìon, a’ cumail smachd air, agus a’ leudachadh choilltean gus buannachdan a choileanadh dha coimhearsnachdan, dhan eaconamaidh agus ag obair an aghaidh atharrachadh sa ghnàth-shìde. www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland
4. Media enquiries to Susan Ferrier: sferrier@golleyslater.co.uk / 0131 220 8787