

# Coppice Network Report

Looking at the Potential for a Network for  
Coppicers in Scotland

For Reforesting Scotland



and

Forestry Commission  
Scotland



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# Background

At the Coppice Conference (19/20<sup>th</sup> April 2013) Crannog Centre at Loch Tay, it became apparent that those interested in coppice management in Scotland met each other to further this significant form of woodland management and to involve communities with it. It was suggested that Scotland might take the lead on behalf of those present at the conference.



The majority of those present at the conference were from community groups, voluntary groups, charities or local authorities. Reforesting Scotland is a well established environmental charity. The promotion of coppicing in Scotland will:

- promote physical activity- it is an ideal activity for volunteers using hand tools
- promote the health benefits of a woodland lifestyle
- increase the involvement of volunteers in woodlands- some of the groups represented such as South West Community Woodlands and Lochore Meadows Country Park, already have a great deal of experience in this area which they are willing to share
- lead to the possible development of volunteer coppicing groups in situations outwith community woodlands
- provide skills appropriate to the management of certain kinds of community woodlands

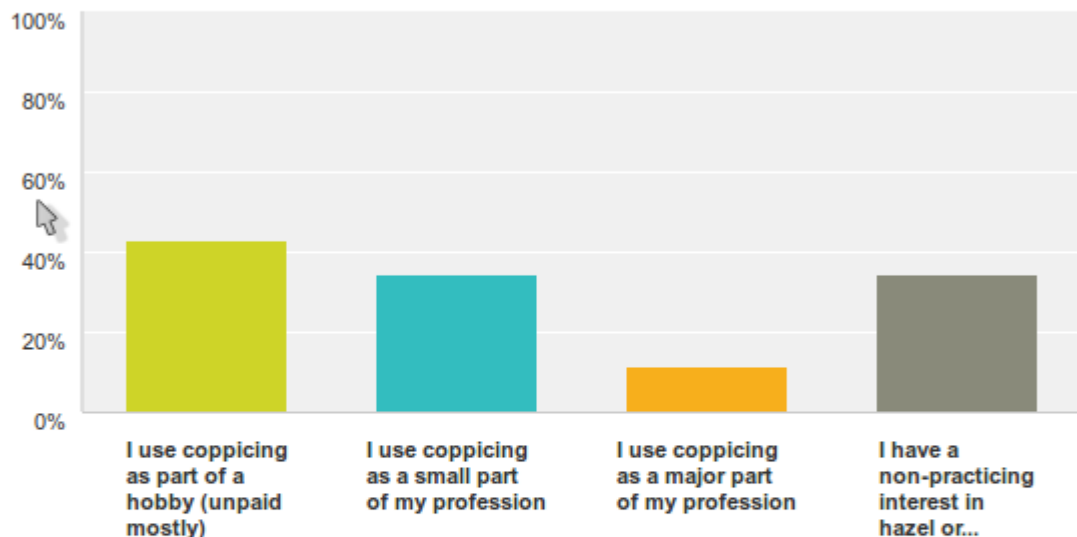
**Supporting Organisations** The groups represented at the Coppice Conference which support this application, include:

Brotus Crafts, Fife	Reforesting Scotland
Coppice Association North-West	SW Community Woodlands
Croft 7	Scottish Crannog Centre
Fife Council Ranger Service	Scottish Wild Harvest Association
Forest Policy Group	Scottish Working Woods
Helmsdale Charcoal	Tayside Biodiversity Officer

# Results

## Do you use coppicing for hobby or professionally (tick all that apply)?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
I use coppicing as part of a hobby (unpaid mostly)	42.86% 15
I use coppicing as a small part of my profession	34.29% 12
I use coppicing as a major part of my profession	11.43% 4
I have a non-practicing interest in hazel or coppicing	34.29% 12

Total Respondents: 35

[Comments \(14\)](#)

### Some of the 14 comments:

~ I want to learn to coppice and then develop that practice in the community woodland I volunteer in

~ Coppice is being reinstated in our community woodland and is carried out on a voluntary basis

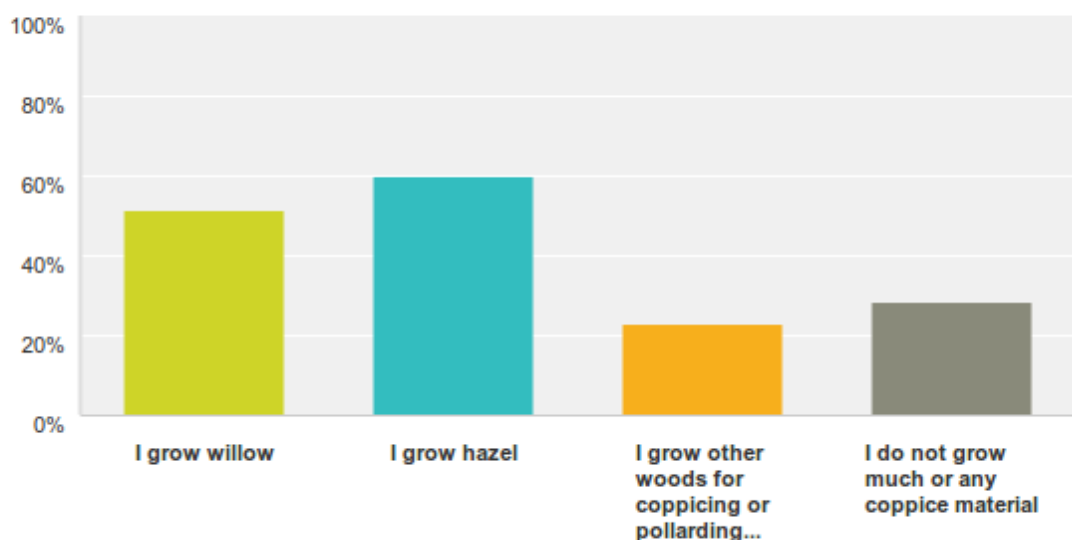
~ I am a coppice and greenwood instructor

~ I do tiny bits of coppicing and pollarding for interest and material for my use. Also involved with Atlantic Hazel Action Group

- ~ I use coppice for wood fuel & horticultural usage
- ~ Firewood + straight timber for outdoor construction
- ~ I advise and train people in coppicing
- ~ We are planning to plant hazel coppice in the near future.
- ~ Have yet to get practical hands on involvement in coppicing, although I do work professionally with wood.
- ~ I have a professional interest in hazel woodlands, and in willow cultivation and work with community groups in both hazel woodland conservation and management and also use of cultivated willow.

## I grow coppice materials

Answered: 35 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
I grow willow	51.43% 18
I grow hazel	60% 21
I grow other woods for coppicing or pollarding harvest	22.86% 8
I do not grow much or any coppice material	28.57% 10

Total Respondents: 35

[Comments \(11\)](#)

## Some of the 11 comments

~ We grow hazel in our community woodland. We are considering other woods.

~The community woodland is traditionally hazel coppice

~ All on a small scale.

~ on the west coast we are advised not to clearfell coppice, but selectively remove stems, to protect bryophyte assemblages

~ Aiming to plant coppice of hazel, willow and other materials in the forthcoming year

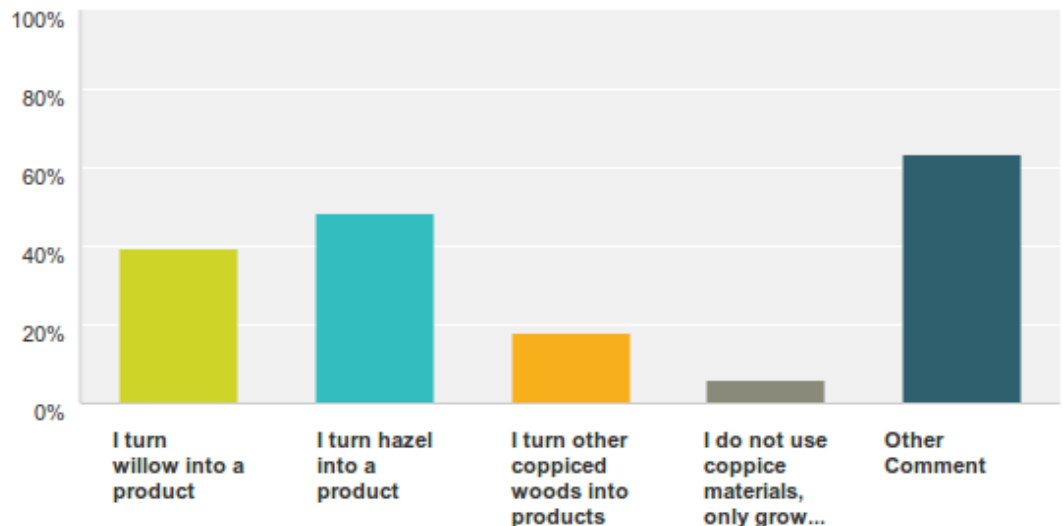
~ We are planning to plant a small amount of hazel coppice in the near future.

~ We are starting to look at different options for the NTS managed woods here, which could include coppicing.

~ I often use Ash as pole wood

### I use coppice materials

Answered: 33 Skipped: 3

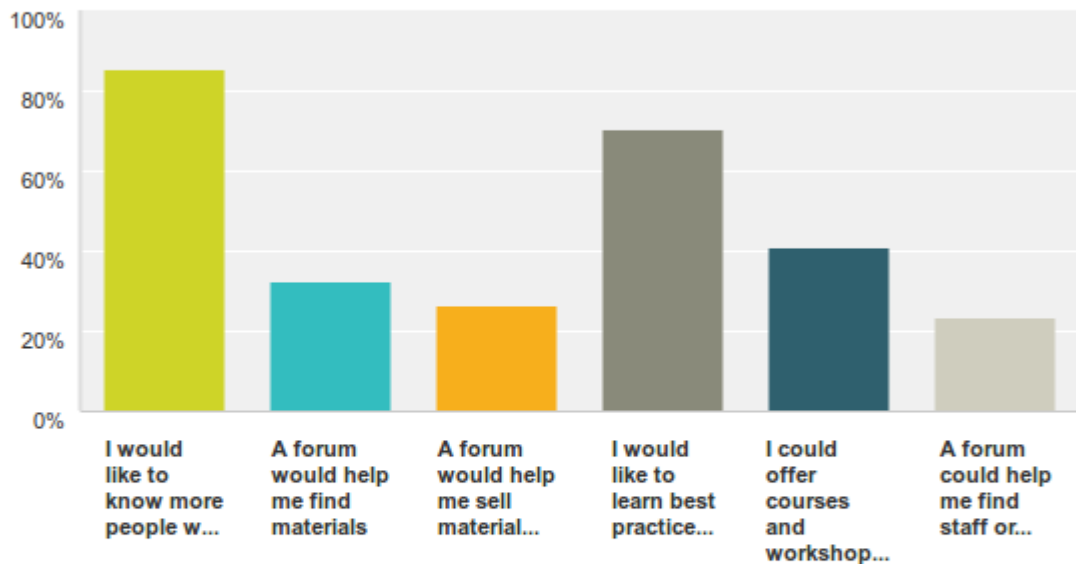


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
I turn willow into a product	39.39%	13
I turn hazel into a product	48.48%	16
I turn other coppiced woods into products	18.18%	6
I do not use coppice materials, only grow them	6.06%	2
Other Comment	63.64%	21
Total Respondents: 33		



**What benefits can you see for a forum.  
Please tick any that apply and add  
additional at the end.**

Answered: 34 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
I would like to know more people who are coppicing	85.29% 29
A forum would help me find materials	32.35% 11
A forum would help me sell materials or service	26.47% 9
I would like to learn best practice or improve my skills	70.59% 24
I could offer courses and workshops through a forum	41.18% 14
A forum could help me find staff or volunteers for my coppicing and related work	23.53% 8

**Some comments**

~ Many voices are better than one, with increasing interest in coppice and coppice products its better to have points of contact for good practice. For example when reinstating old coppice sites it is important that surveys are carried out to ensure that priority species are not lost be the reinstatement. Also important that creation of new coppice is managed i.e. appropriate species for appropriate sites/soil type etc. So raising awareness, providing information, support, advice etc. is critical and a forum can be an appropriate means to act as an arena for this.

~ [a forum] Can offer ideas on best practice (to minimise potential negative impacts on biodiversity notably lichens

- ~ A well run forum could help AHAG to get its message across, ensuring that coppicing is done with due respect for our temperate rainforests.
- ~ A forum would help to promote coppicing as a form of woodland management.
- ~ It would give a better idea of the potential need to grow more coppicing materials, for possible inclusion of this activity in woodland management.
- ~ I have an ongoing interest in the conservation, management and possible use of hazel in Scotland for craft use. I believe that there is also a local food use for hazel, both from the wild and as a new hazel woodland planted resource also the development of a Hazel woodland trail using sites allowing managed public access on footpath networks.

## Conclusions

- The coppice conference at Loch Tay in 2013 was the first time that coppicers in Scotland had been invited to come together to exchange ideas. It was organised by the Scottish Crannog Centre and proved to be a highly enjoyable and instructive two days. Some information on the conference is here:  
<http://www.crannog.co.uk/docs/research/research.html>
- The survey was designed using Survey Monkey methodology and sent out to all of the attendees at the conference. One of the questions in the survey asked for the names of anyone else who is interested in coppicing who didn't come to the conference. This elicited several more names. It is likely that almost all of the people actively involved with coppicing in Scotland took part in the survey.
- 4 people use coppicing as a major part of their profession and a further 12 use it as a minor part. This could be growing and harvesting coppice, using coppice products such as willow withies and hazel rods or providing management advice and training.
- The remaining 19 people use coppicing as a hobby, mostly unpaid, or are just interested in the practice and would like to encourage it. The lack of a coppice network is probably preventing the sector from expanding.

- 25 people grow willow, hazel or other species for coppicing. Of these, 21 grow hazel, 18 grow willow and 8 grow other species. Most, obviously, grow more than one species. This is a significant number. Community woodlands are mentioned several times as having potential for coppice working.
- 31 people make products out of coppice materials. Of these 50% turn hazel into a product, 40% willow and 20% other species.
- 34 people responded to the final question about the benefits of a forum or network. All the responses were positive.
  - 85% would like to know more people who are coppicing
  - 71% would like to learn best practice or improve their skills
  - 41% could offer courses and workshops through a forum
  - 32% would find it easier to source coppice materials
  - 26% would find it easier to sell their products or services
  - 24% would find it easier to find staff or volunteers
- There were many positive detailed comments about the benefits of a forum
- 32 people wished to be kept informed of developments and left their Email addresses

## Recommendations

1. Set up a Coppicers' Network, initially under the auspices of Reforesting Scotland, but with a view to becoming independent in the future
2. Refer to the network as an RS project on the RS website
3. Set up an RS Coppicers' Network Facebook page and invite all the respondents to join
4. Write an article on the Coppicers' Network in the RS Journal and Radical Rowan
5. Organise a coppicing workshop at the RS Gathering in October 2014
6. Discuss the development of the network with the Scottish Crannog Centre

7. Identify champions for the network
8. Put out a call for ideas about the kind of event coppicers would most like to come to
9. Apply for funds and organise that event

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