

Report of Denholm Dean Committee to Feuars' AGM on 8th October 2025

1. Planting and maintenance.

In November of 2024, 800 saplings – oak, birch, aspen, hawthorn and hazel- were planted in Zones 2,3 and 4 by Primary school children, Borders Forest Trust and our own band of volunteers.

Since then, volunteer activities have focused on weeding around the new plants, building dead-wood hedges to utilise some of the brash and create a home for wild life, cutting down dead and fallen trees to create safe spaces for Forest School use. In the long dry spell in spring and early summer, we filled buckets from the Dean burn and poured water down the tree tubes. As a result, the number of planting failures has been very low.

As the main path through the Dean is a core path Scottish Borders Council arranged for their Community Payback team to build 2 wo new sets of steps to replace the ones destroyed by the felling machines. In both cases the work was not completed and we had to buy gravel and ask our volunteers to fill in the steps.

In the last few months volunteer efforts have been directed to clearing brash in Zone 1 ready for planting this November. Zone 1 has been a much more challenging area to clear with hopefully all the efforts rewarded when the planting plan is carried out.

In October we strengthened several handrails beside the steep banks.

In total we spent almost £3,500 on planting and maintenance .

We are very lucky to have a dedicated and versatile group of volunteers and are grateful to all of them for their hard work over the last year.

2. Funding

In September last year we launched an appeal to generate funds to pay for the trees to be planted. Villagers and relatives were invited to sponsor a tree for £10. This successful appeal raised over £3,700 including gift aid of £560.

At that time Rotary International had offered funding to Borders Forest Trust to plant trees in the Borders. After BFT recommended the funds be allocated to us, we received approx. £3,000 towards the planting costs, and an attractive new sign in the Dean illustrating seasonal flowers. .

Over the year funding of approx.£4,000 was provided by Foundation Scotland through Denholm and District Community Council to meet the cost of new signs on Denholm Green and at the Dean Entrance as well as paying our share of replacing the old Honeyburn fence and some maintenance costs.

In May this year we received the long overdue proceeds from felling the previous year- £3,200 added to £770 from brash sawmill income in November.

3. Governance

During the year we held 10 Committee meetings which were well attended. Lynn Ferguson attended in her capacity as Chair of the Feuars and provided welcome support to our plans. Formal Terms of Reference were agreed between the Dean Committee and DF & HC in May.

4 Ten-year Plan.

In 2025 the 10-year management plan drawn up by BFT for Michael Braithwaite came up for review. The Denholm Dean Committee has been working on a new plan and will be holding an event on 21st November to be called “Denholm Dean – Past, Present, and Future” – as part of the community consultation about the plan.

A copy of the plan and a summary will be posted on the Denholm website by the end of October.