

West Coast OWL Group AGM 2026

Chairs Report

I am delighted to report that West Coast OWL Group has managed to maintain a small core organising group of five folk as well as several other active local members. We have a mailing list of around 40 folk who we regularly update on OWL events. And, if folk are on our mailing list we basically consider them a member.

With this continued support over the last year we have been able to offer two West Coast OWL run Networking Events, and we participated as a stallholder and offering workshop facilitation at another organisation's community event.

Our local group officially covers the vast area of Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross and we also have a member from the Western Isles.

It was our intention at the start of last year to offer some sort of event supporting our Network and other outdoor and woodland learning opportunities in each of these three main regions. In the end we managed to cover Applecross, Ullapool, and Lochalsh.

In July last year we participated at 'Rurach Sa Choille' 'Rummage in the Woods' at Applecross Community Woodland Discovery Day. We had an OWL resources stall, and one of our members facilitated a Nature Mandala Workshop. It was a stunning summer day with well attended activities and networking. The organisers were delighted with West Coast OWLS contribution to the day.

In September we organised an Autumn Equinox Network Celebration, hosted by Em Magenta on her inspiring off grid forest garden homestead at West Edge, Leckmelm Wood. We had 12 participants for the day enjoying Forest garden Foraging, wood fired pizza making and Forest Bathing, along with plenty of networking and chill out chat time around the fire.

In March this year we had a follow up event with our Spring Equinox Network celebration on The Plock at Kyle of Lochalsh. Fire and Pine themed the afternoon offered Fire Stories from deep time to the present, Norwegian top down firelighting and all manner of firelighting techniques and materials for folk to have a go with, plus kelly kettle lighting and confidence building, firelighter making and toasty firesnacks to sample. It was another successful event with 10 folk enjoying this special spring gathering in a secluded woodland edge by the beach.

Over the year at the Balmacara old campsite woodland in Lochalsh we have also informally hosted 7 small gatherings with the 'Kelly Kettle Friends' Group. This tiny group of 3-9 folk is an outdoor social wellbeing group for Adults that has met regularly since participating in a Branching Out program in 2023.

We continue to keep our mailing membership informed of National and Highland OWL events and other local offerings that come to our attention. As a small committee with a wide geographical reach we have to be realistic about what we can manage to offer but I feel we have fulfilled most of our intentions this year and hopefully in the coming year we will extend an event closer to our way out west members and Skye.

We are always open to more of our members getting involved with ideas for activities and boots on the ground across the region.

For now my thanks to the core organising group Fee Mackenzie, Lucy Salter, Judith Bullivant, and Katie Grant for helping pull these network events together and to facilitate them, and also to Kate Biss for running the Nature Mandala workshop for us at Applecross. Thank you.