

Magilligan Tree Nursery

Justice for Native Woodlands

Supplying trees from locally sourced seed, hand grown by Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and inmates within HMP Magilligan





Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

Aisling Gribbin

Magilligan Tree Nursery Co-ordinator



CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS
HERITAGE TRUST



Who are CCGHT?

- The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust was established in May 2002 as a partnership body with the responsibility of promoting and enhancing the unique qualities of the Causeway Coast and Glens area.
- Protecting and enhancing the unique heritage of the Causeway Coast and Glens area, including (but not limited to) the Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Binevenagh AONB), Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Causeway Coast AONB), Antrim Coast and Glens Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Antrim AONB) and the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site (Giant's Causeway WHS).#
- Delivering the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme – Where I started as Natural Heritage Officer in December 2020.





CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS HERITAGE TRUST

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

- Covers the 3 areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which are Binevenagh, Antrim Coast and Glens and the Causeway Coast.
- The Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust is a charity devoted to protecting and enhancing the unique heritage of the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme

- £3.5 Heritage lottery funded project spanning 5 years from September 2020
- 3 themes of Natural Heritage, Outdoor Recreation and Defence Heritage/Historic Environment

Magilligan Tree Nursery

- Additional funding applied for in March 2022 and granted August 2022 – 1 year
- Dormant Account funding of £94,000 secured September 2023 to see through the next 18 months

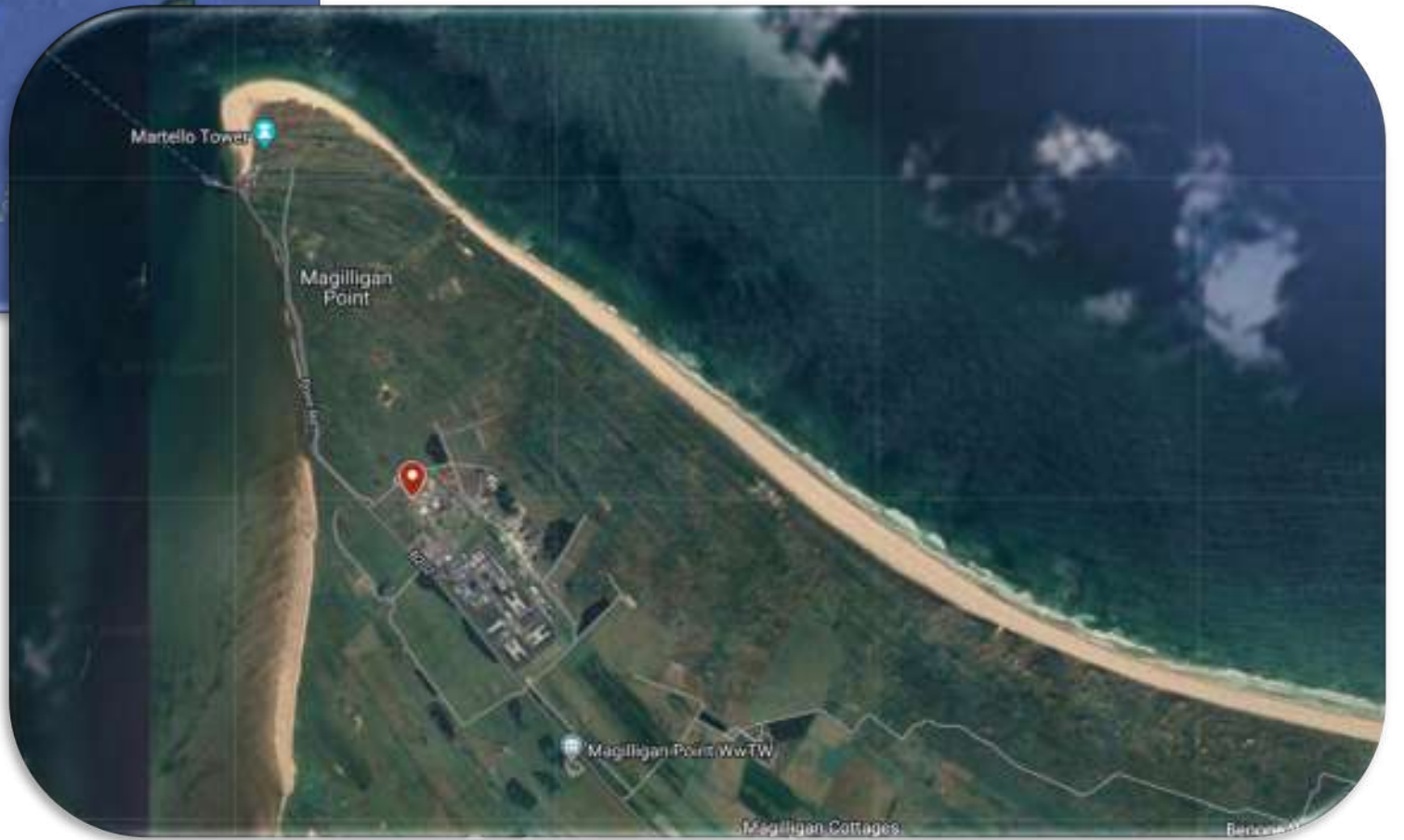


Delivered by
**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND**



Justice for Native Woodlands

HMP Magilligan native tree nursery





Background info



- Applied in March 2022 to the DAERA Environmental Challenge Competition 2022-2023
- Awarded the full amount at 85% - £54,990 match funded to bring total to £63,753 – Notified in August 2022.
- Initial meeting with prison in early August 2022 – very keen for project for restorative justice.
- Full time in the role from November 2022
- Very much learning on the job!
- Long term plan to make the tree nursery part of a trading subsidiary of the Heritage Trust
- Primary initial customer – Woodland Trust, Local councils, National Trust in winter 2023/4



Learning from others

- The Conservation Volunteers Tree Nursery
- Alba Trees – Cell grown
- Trees for Life – Dundreggan, Inverness
- Akre Trees – Kirkcaldy, Fife
- None So Hardy - Wicklow



Winter/Spring 2023

- Polytunnel complete with irrigation, benches and propagation cells (32,000 cells)
- 27 outdoor beds 30m long by 3m wide
- Construction of rodent proof frames for 2023 oak acorns
- Registered with DAERA plant health so can issue plant passports.
- Focus on collecting and growing species native to Ireland and UK
- Very much fumbling through and learning!





Summer - Winter 2023

- First full season of seed collections with local volunteers, The Conservation Volunteers and inmate work parties.
- Delivery of training workshops
- Became UK Irish Sourced and Grown (UKISG) – Woodland Trust Accreditation in September 2023
- First season of tree sales to key customers – Councils, Woodland Trust, other charities and community groups.
- Willow cuttings
- Development of our own logo and brand identity
- Paperwork, plant passports and loads of manure!

Community involvement

- Key community are the prison inmates
- Local volunteers
- Seed harvest workshops
- Issues around recruiting and maintaining a volunteer network
- Volunteer management requires staff time not currently available





Where are we now Autumn 2024?

- New staff member Erin January 2024
- 22,500 whips bought in and growing on for sale winter 2024/5
- Seed sowing – Both our own and bought in seed, now transplanting/moving stock back into polytunnel for winter
- Three strands to income – local seed collections, seed purchase from Forestart, and purchase of sapling to grow on for 1 season
- Weeding, feeding, and keeping seedlings alive!
- Volunteer recruitment and seed collections – teaming up with The Conservation Volunteers Tree Nursery
- Taken on a second site – Glasshouse space near Castlerock for 48,000 cell grown trees. Currently setting up the site for as much automation as possible through £4000 funding from the council Go Succeed program

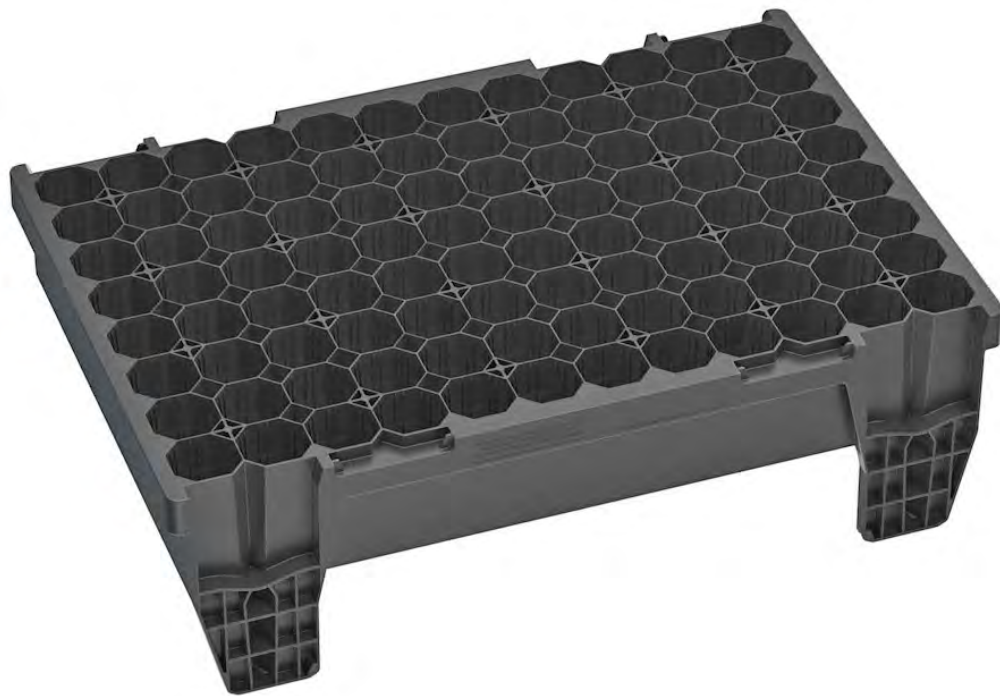
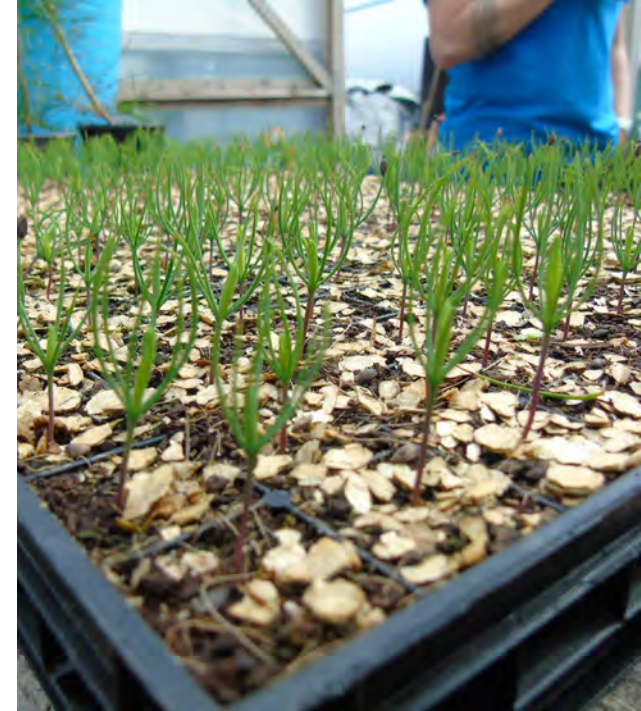
What have we learned about our site?

Positives

- Significant ground space with no rent
- Access to low-cost labour
- Access to machinery and men who can operate it
- Wood workshop on site
- Outside work parties
- Closed site
- Excellent support from the prison service and Department of Justice

Challenges

- Proximity to coast, sandy soil, wind and over exposure to light
- Lack of organic matter
- Mice
- Transient work force
- Apathy and disinterest
- Inmate management
- The need for multiple income strands – Own seed collections, seed purchase, sapling purchase, workshops, consultancy.



Glasshouse growing – Moving forward with automation

- Approx 650m²
- Automatic irrigation using a hunter panel, and feeding using a dosatron unit to be installed October 2024
- State of the art rodent protection
- Use of stackable trays from Proptek
- Experimenting with scots pine initially – Sowing at prison site and use of stackable trays to move trees to glasshouse site



What does the future hold?

- Increasing annual tree output to get more native trees into the landscape
- Purchase of cold store
- Building on existing seed collection sites across Northern Ireland as well as volunteer recruitment and training
- Refining tree dispatch to customers
- Overcoming the challenges of the sites soil and weather conditions
- Completion of establishing a trading subsidiary and weekly payment of inmate workers
- Expanding on/developing other income streams – training workshops, tree planting/woodland design consultancy and marram grass growth
- Continually learning (by making many mistakes!) and improving tree nursery operations





Thank you

- For more information
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