

Update on Cummersdale Woodland Creation, from Raise: Cumbria Community Forest and Cumberland Council – April 2024

Following feedback from our in-person and online consultation, we are writing to provide an update and summarise what we learnt from you, the community in and around Cummersdale.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your considered and engaged responses to our proposed woodland creation at the site in Cummersdale which is detailed below on the map.

Overall, we received a highly positive response to our proposals. There were many creative ideas for additional and/or future development for the site once the woodland has been established, including a wish for future understory wildflowers as planted in the existing Cummersdale Copse by pupils from Cummersdale Primary School and volunteers from Cummersdale Parish Council.

A key piece of feedback received was a request for **improved access** to and through the site, including pathways and gateways which are suitable for prams, buggies, wheelchairs, and children's bikes and scooters. We have integrated this feedback into our plans for the site – which means that tree planting will take place next planting season, between November 2024 to March 2025. This gives sufficient time for appropriate planning and preparation to allow pathway infrastructure to be included within the overall Trees for Climate grant award for woodland creation.

Several other themes emerged from your feedback, which we have summarised below:

- **Volunteering:** there was an appetite for volunteering opportunities for tree planting at the site, and possibly longer-term maintenance. It was suggested that the Spinners Arms and the Primary School could get involved too. We will circulate opportunities for volunteering when it comes to planting time at Cummersdale – keep an eye on Raise: Cumbria Community Forest facebook page and website – www.raisecumbria.co.uk and Cumberland Council's social media. If you are keen to get volunteering outdoors now, you can sign up to join Cumberland Council's regular volunteering group – more information, scheduled dates application form are available at: <https://www.carlisle.gov.uk/residents/leisure/community-and-volunteering>
- **Plants and animals:** there was plentiful local knowledge of different animal species spotted around the site and its immediate surroundings. There was a call for connectivity with other sites such as the Crematorium which has a population of both deer and red squirrel. A wet scrape towards the base of the hill next to the Riverside

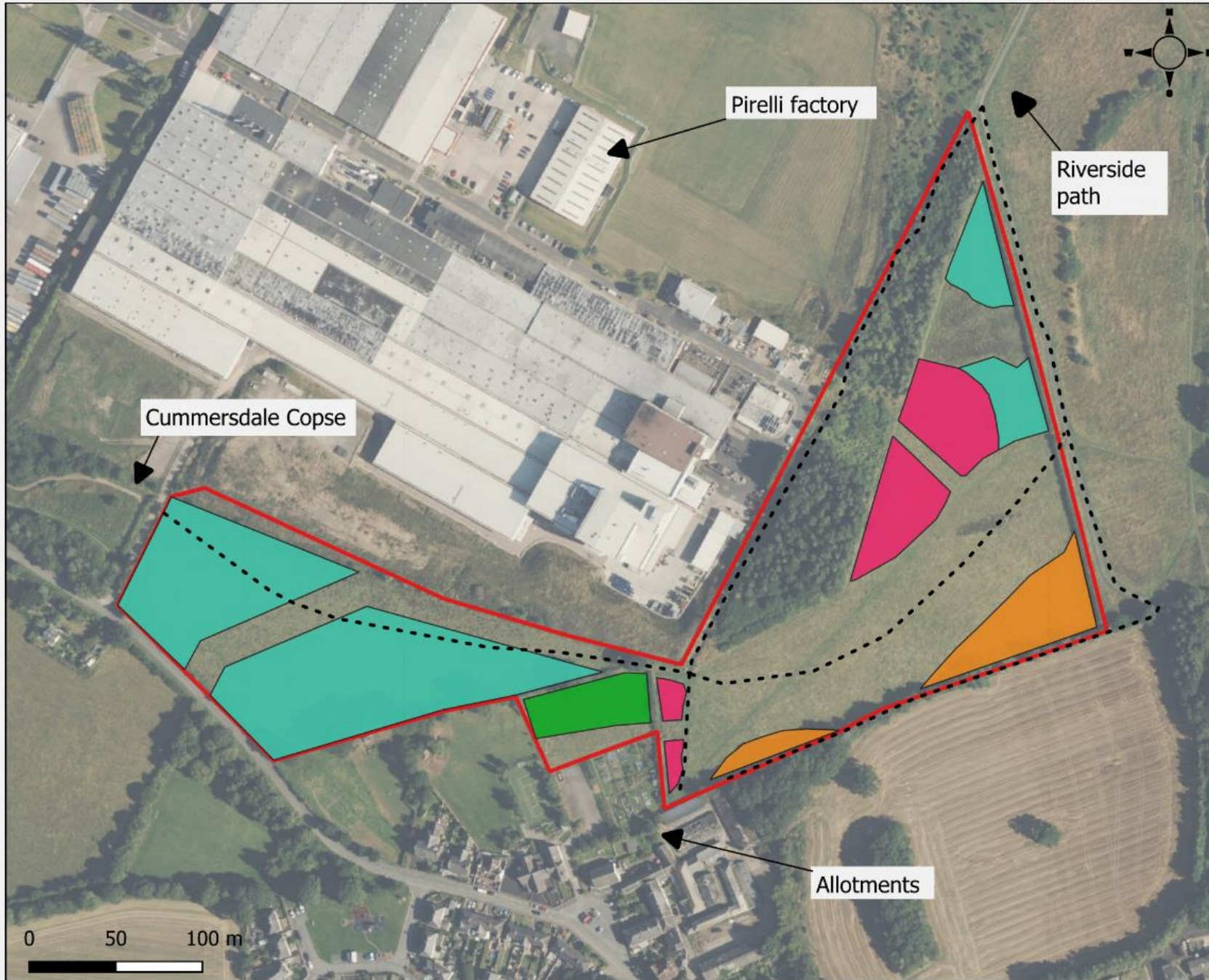
Path was suggested, to complement the wet woodland mix and support existing toad and frog populations. Species rich grassland for pollinators where trees are not being planted was also requested. These suggestions will be considered for their suitability within the Trees for Climate funding, and Cumberland Council will look to make further enhancements to the site for the benefit of wildlife, as and when budgets and funding allow.

- **Food forest:** we learned that there are existing crab apple and damson trees on the Primary School grounds, and there was a request for plum species in the proposed food forest. Signage was suggested to explain what a food forest is and to let the public know the fruits are available for use by anyone. There is also an opportunity for the community to create edible gardens as part of Cumberland Council's Food Cumberland strategy, which could form part of the proposed food forest area. If you are interested in helping to make this happen, please get in touch with Emma Mackie, Food Cumberland Development officer, at: emma.mackie@cumberland.gov.uk
- **Concerns:** increased access to the site may cause: increased dog fouling issues; pressure on restricted parking within Cummersdale; encourage the use of motorcross bikes along the riverside paths. Remedies were suggested, such as dog poo bins, signage to direct people to suitable parking spots, and suitable gates to ensure any bikes are dismounted to pass through. Cumberland Council hear your suggestions regarding suitable signage and cycle gates, and currently carry out health and safety surveys of sites three times per year which includes litter picking. If dog fouling is bad, Cumberland Council's enforcement team can be notified to patrol the area.

All in all, your feedback has helped to improve our proposal and ensure that the efforts we make are serving the wants and needs of the community, so thank you again. We appreciate that the delay in planting may feel disappointing to some, but ensuring we get the outcome right and achieve a site which works for local residents is paramount. We are committed to working with communities to meet their needs, increase their access to green spaces and create lasting and meaningful positive change to the environment and people's wellbeing, and the feedback you have provided will help us to achieve this.

If you have any further questions or comments, you can get in touch at info@raisecumbria.co.uk or phone 01228 470 444 to speak to someone from the team at Raise: Cumbria Community Forest.

Cummersdale : Woodland Creation



Legend

Cummersdale Woodland

- Food Forest
- Scrub
- Wet Wood
- Wood

Site Name: Cummersdale
Site ID: CCCF_043
Grid Reference: NY391534
Gross Planting Area: 3.58ha

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