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## Lothlorien Therapeutic Community Newsletter

Winter 2025 Edition



Warmest Wishes from Lothlorien

As winter settles in, we want to send warm wishes to all our friends, supporters, and former community members. Your encouragement and connection means a great deal to us. We hope this season brings you rest, steadiness, and a sense of belonging, wherever you may be.

## Highlights From Our Garden Coordinator



### What we've accomplished together since summer

As autumn settles in, the Lothlorien community has been thriving with activity, care, and connection. Since the summer, residents and volunteers have worked together to nurture the land, support one another, and continue the traditions that make this place so special.

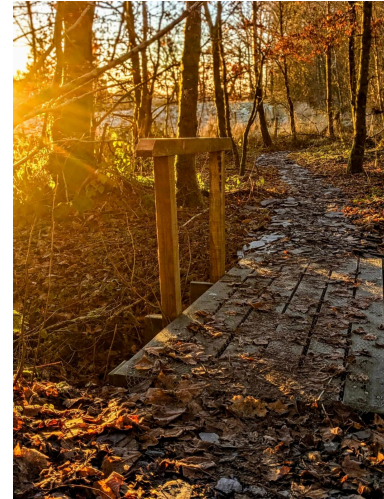


### Growing, Harvesting, and Preparing for Winter

The garden has been abundant this season. We lifted potatoes and Jerusalem artichokes, bottled homemade apple cider vinegar, and collected windfall apples for juicing, crumbles and pies. Garlic and broad beans are now in the ground, and the polytunnels have been tidied, planted up, and running repairs made.

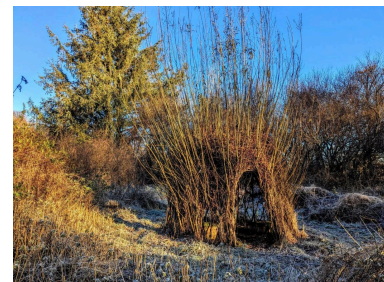
Old pallets have been repurposed into potato-drying racks, and the potting shed has undergone a transformative clean-out, making it a productive space once again.

Apple season has been a real highlight, with two apple-pressing days and expert guidance from a former coordinator who helped identify our orchard varieties.



### Woodland Work, Paths, and Winter Fuel

A major effort this autumn has gone into woodland management and fuel preparation. Together, we have cut, split, and stacked around four cubic metres of firewood, even braving the wet days to keep the stores full. A new woodland path is also taking shape, creating safer and more enjoyable access to the meadow.





### **Creativity, Community, and Visitors**

Seasonal crafts have begun with willow harvested for wreath-making and weaving. Apple and Hornbeam branch offcuts have been made into small rustic boards for future signs around the land. Our converted freezer wormery has been revived with a coat of paint and renovation of the inner parts and is now in use

We've had meaningful visits too- from former founders and friends of Lothlorien, Buittle Tea Garden advisors, and from teachers offering Tara Rokpa Therapy. The community also gathered at Samye Ling to honour Akong Rinpoche's legacy.



### **Shared Moments in Nature**

From peaceful meditative walks, to the frozen pond, to community garden strolls revealing late-season abundance, this autumn has brought many small but special moments. And with sightings of red squirrels in the woods, the land continues to show how well it's responding to our care.



### **Looking Forward**

This season has been full of hard work, creativity, and connection. The community's efforts since summer have strengthened the land and the shared life at the heart of Lothlorien- setting us up well for the winter ahead.



## **Habitat Mapping Workshop**

Over the past season we've been afforded the exciting opportunity funded by the DG Climate Hub, and working with the nature recovery officer at the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere to begin mapping the 17 acres of land we care for at Lothlorien. Through a series of inclusive workshops, residents, volunteers, staff and local community members have been coming together to explore, record and better understand the habitats that surround us. This baseline mapping will help us build a clearer picture of the nature already here in 2025 and guide future work to support biodiversity, woodland health and climate resilience on our land.

As we continue, these contributions will be gathered into an interactive map created by artist and map enthusiast Kate Campbell.



Special thanks in addition to Antoine Lemaire of GSA biosphere, Abi Mordin of Propagate, Sarah Thomas from the DG Climate Hub and Kerry Morrison of the Crichton Carbon Centre & Upper Urr Valley Environment Trust for all your contributions.

Links to learn more about this fabulous team

- [DG Climate Hub](#)
- [Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#)
- [Environmental charity | Carbon Centre | Dumfries](#)
- [Upper Urr Valley Environment Trust](#)

## Non-Violent Communication

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) offers a straightforward way to communicate with more understanding and less conflict. It focuses on observing what's happening, expressing our feelings and needs, and making clear requests. It's a helpful tool in community settings, supporting kinder conversations and stronger relationships.



One of our lovely volunteers has undergone NVC training, and she led us through an afternoon of education and practical exercises- using puppets and all!

Here at Lothlorien, these tools help stay true to our values of collective responsibility and mutual support in our everyday conversations.

Thank you, Claire!



### Visit From Edie and Brion

A highlight in October was a visit from Edie Irwin and Brion Sweeney, who spent the day sharing their expertise in Tara Rokpa Therapy. The community enjoyed thoughtful discussions and engaging art therapy sessions. Thank you to Edie and Brion for taking the time to be with us.

To learn more about Edie and Brion, follow the links below:

- [Edie Irwin](#)



### Akong Memorial Day

We visited Samye Ling for Akong Memorial Day, joining others in remembering Akong Rinpoche and the values that continue to guide our community. It was a gentle and reflective day, offering space for connection, gratitude and a sense of shared purpose. Many of us returned feeling grounded and inspired by the

- [Brion Sweeney](#)

atmosphere of kindness and service that Akong Rinpoche embodied.

## The Compost Loo with a View

We are happy to be making good use of our compost loo. For outdoor workshops and for gardeners in need with muddy wellies. Thanks to the Community Led Local Development grant for funding the project and to Bruce for building it and to everyone who saves a loo flush by using this more nature friendly way of recycling an otherwise wasted material!



## Welcoming Day Visitors

We are continuing with our pilot project to support day visitors from our local D&G area with mental health needs. Offering gardening activities, social connection and home cooked communal lunches in our welcoming therapeutic community. If you or someone you know would be interested in finding out more about day visitor opportunities please email [lesley@lothlorien.tc](mailto:lesley@lothlorien.tc) for a referral form.



## The Therapeutic Joys of Wild Swimming

with: Andy

I consider myself more of an “open water swimmer” than a “wild swimmer” as I don’t really swim anywhere that wild! I mainly swim in the sea back home in Bournemouth. Whilst volunteering at Lothlorien I’ve been swimming with a group at Crossmichael Marina on Loch Ken.

I got into cold water swimming during the Pandemic. With pools everywhere closed, a few friends and I decided to carry on meeting for sea swims once a week. We wanted to see how far through the year we could carry on swimming. It became a bit of a challenge, and we gained a huge sense of achievement when we managed to continue right through the Winter and into the following Spring.

Before a cold water swim, I rarely want to do it, and I invariably question my life choices repeatedly whilst stripping off on the beach or on the side of the loch in the wind and the rain.

But I know that I’ll feel better for it afterwards. The initial cold water shock is a challenge but once I’m through it, I feel great. After a swim, I gain a real buzz from overcoming an adversity, along with a sense of calm for the rest of the day.


Cold water swimming does have inherent risks with it. I would advise someone new to it to start in the Summer or Autumn when the water is warmer, and to go gently. It’s always better to swim with other people. Tow floats are a great idea, to be seen from the shore and as a buoyancy device should you get into any trouble.


Cold water tolerance is something that takes a while to build. It’s also important to bear in mind that there are many factors that influence your tolerance of cold water on a particular day, such as what you’ve eaten or how much you’ve slept, so always listen to your body, and don’t push your limits. But most importantly just do it, you never regret a swim!



## Christmas Bench Appeal

We posted on our Facebook page about our Christmas bench appeal, and we’re delighted to share that it’s already off to a wonderful start. Your donations are helping us create peaceful places to sit, rest and connect with nature around Lothlorien. If you’d still like to contribute, further donations are very welcome. To learn more, please contact Michael at:

 Email: [michael@lothlorien.tc](mailto:michael@lothlorien.tc)

 Tel: 01644 440602

## Volunteer with us

Do you have a day a month, or a day a week to help us out? Think you've got something to give to a therapeutic community built on compassion and mutual support? We're looking for friendly folk to join our community's daily routine of gardening, outdoor work, cooking, and eating together. If you'd like to know more please get in touch with Lesley [✉ lesley@lothlorien.tc](mailto:lesley@lothlorien.tc)



## New Nature Connection Workshops for 2026



[Book Tickets](#)

**Saturday 21st March 2026  
10am-1pm**

### Permaculture 'Design A Herb Bed' Workshop

This session will introduce you to the design principles and practices of permaculture—a holistic approach to designing regenerative systems that harmonise with nature. This workshop will explore permaculture zones and sectors. Together, we will design an area of the land for growing herbs, discussing where to locate it, and which plants to put where. Then create and plant up a herb bed.

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### New Employment Opportunities at Lothlorien

Exciting news... we have some upcoming vacancies at Lothlorien. Full details are on our website and social media. See link below...

[Job Application](#)

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## A Few of our Favourite Photos



# Wishing you all brightness and joy in 2026

[Visit our Website](#)

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Lothlorien Therapeutic Community  
(Rokpa Trust)  
Corsock  
Castle Douglas  
DG7 3DR

[www.lothlorien.tc](http://www.lothlorien.tc)

Lothlorien is a member of the Association of  
Therapeutic Communities.  
Rokpa Trust is a registered charity (no.  
1059293)

Opening Hours  
Monday- Friday 9-5pm

01644 - 440602  
Email address: [lucy@lothlorien.tc](mailto:lucy@lothlorien.tc)

[A positive approach to mental health](#)

Lothlorien and Roan Lodge received  
'Excellent' grades from the Care  
Inspectorate.



Lothlorien Therapeutic Community | Corsock Castle Douglas | Dumfriesshire, DG7 3DR GB

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