

**Minutes of Board Meeting for
North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd
Meeting held on Monday 9th February 2015**

Present: Colin Morrison, Ian Hepburn, Iain Thomson and Neil Munro.

Also Present: Chris Liddell (Development Manager) and Belinda Hale (Administrator and Company Secretary).

1. CM **welcomed** everyone to the Meeting.

2. There were **apologies** from John Morrison, John Addy and Andy Mayo.

3. The **Minutes** of the Board Meeting held on 5th January 2015 were **signed** by CM as a true record of the proceedings.

4. **Matters Arising.** CL has met with some boundary neighbours and it has been agreed that if possible a replacement fence, along the original line, will be put up in early April. **Action IT** to carry out the work using deer stobs and stock fencing. **Action CL** to liaise with the neighbours.

The brash has still not been cleared in the Forest School area despite CL talking to Tilhill about it.

The design for the new drying floor is still awaited. **Action IAH** to chase Ronnie Neil.

It is hoped that the repairs to Kildavie Bridge will be carried out before Easter.

5. **Two items** were **declared** that were not on the **Agenda**: i. Timber on crofts, ii. Community Forester.

6. The **Finance Report** had been circulated by AM prior to the Meeting. Confirmation has been received from Tilhill that all our debts have been paid off. We will now get a payment each month for the net value of the timber sold. Although this will be available for short term use on projects, in the longer term it must be ring fenced for the replant.

7. The **Development Manager's Report** had been circulated by CL prior to the Meeting. Due to an unexpected deterioration in the haul road near Kengharair, Tilhill arranged for James MacPhail to carry out some emergency repairs.

A quote has been received for clearing the trees from a boundary fence line. They will just be laid flat and not snedded. **Action CL** to accept quote and arrange as soon as possible.

CL has met with John Little to discuss the updating of the Long Term Forest Design Plan. It is necessary to mark the changes in the retention areas for the new SRDP grants. CL is also working on the new registration for the grants and requires information about the Directors. **Action BH** to circulate a request for all the details. At some point a decision will need to be made about the trees in Glen Bellart. If there is sufficient grant available to return the area to blanket bog it could be worth felling the trees for firewood.

Only one tender has been received for the ground works for the new woodchip building. **Action CL** to tell Jim MacPhail that it has been accepted and that work can commence as soon as pre application approval has been received.

There have been some issues recently with chip quality and communication with the contractor. **Action CL** to discuss with the contractor.

IAH and CL have had a discussion with the Sedgewicks and it has been agreed that as long as one shed is completely emptied in time for lambing we can continue to rent the rest for as long as needed. Work will commence to install our own fuel dispensing system at West Ardhu as soon as pre application has been approved. There has been some breaking up of their access track due to the heavy timber lorries. It has been agreed that Robin and AQ will carry out the repairs and we will pay the cost of a vibrating roller. AQ will also help to tidy up the quarry.

The quote for the Micro Hydro access ground works has been confirmed, **Action CL** to ask contractors to proceed as soon as possible. The finished access will be levelled but not tarmacked. An agreement about the fish ladder is also required as soon as possible.

Planning permission has been granted on two plots at Kengharair, conditional to on-site sewage treatment approved by SEPA. **Action CL** to get quotes from two or more local estate agents so decisions can be made about who will carry out the sale and the site survey.

The soil depth survey for the Woodland Burial ground was good, but requires a slight shift south to take advantage of the best areas. It will be necessary to retain as much soil as possible when destumping.

8. Woodfuel and Shed. Transport is still an issue. There have been problems with the tractor, and MBS delayed a chip delivery by over a week. A vehicle suitable for firewood is still being sought. It would also be advisable to source a tractor locally that can be used in an emergency or to specify a rigid vehicle that can deliver bagged chip into above ground silos. Even with the woodchip start-up costs the fuel business broke even up to the end of the financial year (July 2014) and should show a profit this year. It was agreed that more should be made of the quality of our firewood and our BSL registration. **Action IAH** to write an article for the Newsletter.

9. Housing. A response is awaited from the West Highlands Housing Association re funding proposals and areas of responsibility. **Action CM** to chase.

10. Woodland Burials. **Action CL** to visit site and move marker posts to new area as per the survey, and move forward with access road. A pre planning enquiry is also required for the shelter and toilets and SEPA should be informed and sent a copy of the survey, also quotes for stock fencing.

11. The date for the AGM was provisionally set as Tuesday **14th April** at 7.30pm in Dervaig Village Hall. This is subject to the receipt of the Annual Accounts more than 21 days prior to this. **Action BH** to check Village Hall availability and book. It was noted that 4 Directors are due to step down at this AGM, all are on their first rotation and can stand for re-election.

12. Name of Company. It was agreed that an EGM should be held after the AGM on 14th April to ask the Members to vote on the resolution that the name of the Company be changed to North West Mull Community Company Ltd. **Action CL** to contact OSCR for advance approval of the change.

13. Correspondence. An email has been received from a local resident expressing concern about the larch at Langamull as some of it appears unstable and could fall across the road. It was agreed that it should be a summer volunteer project to hand fell the trees. A volunteer with an advanced chainsaw ticket for hanging trees will be needed for some of the clearance work. **Action CL** to contact the resident and tell him the plan.

14. Any Other Competent Business. i. Timber on Crofts. Some of the Forest Crofts have quite substantial amounts of fuel wood on them which has been left for the crofters' use. One crofter requires help in moving the timber out of his way and it was agreed that the Company might assist on a case by case basis. **Action CL** to ask AQ to take the timber trailer to the croft concerned and remove the logs.
ii. Community Forester. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) are looking at the possibility of putting all their small, hard to reach woodlands on Mull into community ownership. They would be willing to provide funding for a Community Forester to work Mull wide on the woodlands concerned and be managed locally. It was agreed that, for our Company, the management requirements of the scheme might outweigh any benefits. An informal discussion could be had with the new community woodlands project at Tiroran if an opportunity arises.

15. The next Meeting will be held on Monday **9th March 2015** at 7.30pm in Dervaig Church Hall. The one after will be held on 13th April.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Development Report February 2015

1. **Timber Haul Road** – Repairs have been carried out by Jim MacPhail after damage was worse than expected this winter after a request from Iain Moody. The area improved is south of Kengharair.
2. **Timber Harvesting Langamull** – The final measure of available fuel wood in Langamull South is complete the out turn overall for Langamull is as follows
37,404 tonnes (50.2%) were logs,
31,786 tonnes (42.7%) were pulp, and
5,295 tonnes (7.1%) were fuel/chip.
74,485 tonnes in total

The above is basically in line with initial predictions.

3. **Timber Harvesting West Ardh** – harvesting commenced mid-July and is progressing well – Output to date is 7624 tonnes, 76% log, 18% pulp and 6% fuel/chip. Log percentage will drop as we process roadside stocks which are predominantly pulp and chip.
4. **Boundary Fenceline** – Jamie Mackenzie from UPM Tilhill and Michael Todd have walked the site. Michael will cut the trees one tree length from the fenceline, leaving any timber that falls on the neighbour's side, and clearing 2m along the existing fence line for re-fencing. He has put a quote in and will be finished by the end of March.
5. **Other boundary Fenceline** – Our neighbour wants the original fence restored by April. There was brash left on the site after felling; a work party in advance would save time for the fencer.
6. **SRDP/Re-plant** – John Little and Steve Miller have informed us that the Forest Design plan will need to be updated to reflect the changes to the original felling and retention plans. They are working on a proposal for the next board meeting including possible assistance managing our SRDP grants.
7. **Island Woodfuels**
 - a. Only one quote for groundworks has been received, from James MacPhail. A contractor had intended to submit a quote but missed the date and didn't leave any contact details. Another contractor declined to tender
 - b. Latest batch of chipping was incomplete because Richard came 3 days before he was asked to. The cost will be split with bakery. Because he was early I was unable to talk to him about communication.
 - c. Chip quality is being investigated. To help our assurance procedures we have ordered a humimeter and quotes have been requested for lab tests and sieves.
 - d. The tractor had a problem with its front axle strut which Harry McDowell was able to fix but Alan couldn't use the tractor for almost a working week. He has been woodmizing instead.
8. **Forest Crofts** – John Little will include a proposal for an information talk as part of his proposal for SRDP above. A crofter has indicated that he wishes to erect a house on his croft as an improvement. This means the company could be liable to pay for the increased value of the croft should he relinquish the croft.
9. **Micro Generation – Hydro West Ardh** - Awaiting an update from Ronnie Neil regarding the planning requirements. A neighbour is getting impatient at the lack of progress on the access to his plot. Angus Black confirmed quote to clear ground level with road.
10. **Housing Plots for sale** – Planning permission in principle for the two plots in West Ardh has been granted as long as standard conditions are met. The planning officer stipulated that sewerage treatment be provided on each plot and this will require SEPA Consent at Full Planning or Building Warrant Stage. Still awaiting feedback from WOSAS for the Langamull plots.
11. **Woodland Burials**

The soil survey has returned and is broadly supportive of our plans. The area needs to be shifted 25m to the south and west to make best use of available soil. All soil needs to be kept on site during de-stumping and road building.
12. **Rural Housing Scotland - Our Island Home** – We continue to wait to hear a funding proposal from West Highland Housing Association and ABC. Arc Architects have started limited cooperation with Bruce and Neil towards developing a new masterplan.

North West Mull Community Woodland Company Limited
Finance Report to 31st Jan 2015

Current Balance

Petty : £45.45

Bank : Clydesdale: £14,101.48 Triodos: £11,175.35 Total: £25,322.28

Significant movements since last report (Nov and Dec)

Debits

1. PAYE Quarterly payment £3,304.64
2. Charges for a servitude (recoverable) £900.00
3. Bucket moisture tester £1,771.80

Credits

1. Crofting fencing study repayment £187.20

Upcoming Significant Movements

(excluding regular cost/credits)

1. Debit – Planning for Woodsheds £2,280
2. Debit – Woodland Burials soil depth surveys £1,500

Haul Route

In the coming months, there will be one further bill related to Servitude final payment to be paid to FCS (£15,000).

Trading Company

Current Balance: £9,688.47

Significant Movements:

Sales credits : £7,043.69

VAT repayment : £793.87

Operational debits : £2,537.42

Charity Management Fees debit: £3,264.00

Andy Mayo