

**Minutes of Board Meeting for
North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd
Meeting held at Dervaig Church Hall on
Monday 25th March 2013**

Present: Colin Morrison, Andy Mayo and Neil Munro.

Also Present: Ian Hepburn (Development Manager) and Belinda Hale (Administrator and Company Secretary).

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

2. There were **apologies** from John Morrison, Iain Thomson and John Addy.

3. **Election of Officers.** Colin Morrison was re-elected as **Chairman**: proposed by Neil Munro and seconded by Andy Mayo. The office of **Treasurer** was filled by Andy Mayo: proposed by Colin Morrison and seconded by Neil Munro. It was agreed that the office of Vice Chairman should remain open until the next Board Meeting. Belinda Hale agreed to continue as Company Secretary.

4. The **Minutes** of the Board Meeting held on Monday 18th February were **signed** by CM as a true record of the proceedings.

5. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes that were not covered by the Agenda.

6. Four **items** were **declared** that did not appear on the Agenda: i Caravan storage, ii wind blow, iii AGM Minutes, iv policy for vexatious communications.

7. JM had previously circulated his final **Finance Report**. Cash flow remains tight but secure for the next few months.

8. IAH had previously circulated his **Development Manager's Report**. The public relations visit from UPM Tilhill and BSW had gone well with great interest being shown in the whole project. They would particularly like to get involved with younger peoples activities. It was suggested that the Directors visit the sawmill. **Action BH** to put on next Agenda.

It has been established that the Crofting Commission have no rules about advertising vacant crofts so the Company can decide the best way to do this. **Action IAH** to circulate the current selection procedure before the next Board Meeting. **Action BH** to put on the next Agenda.

Argyll and Bute Council have requested some amendments to the Micro Hydro planning application drawings but no major delay is expected. SEPA have raised a query about the application for a CAR license to draw water from the burn and some form of mitigation may be necessary. IAH is liaising with Mott MacDonald and SEPA to sort this out.

A new meeting is being arranged about Kildavie for all the interested parties in the hope that a properly structured group can be set up. It was agreed that good quality advice should be sought about the long term potential of the site and whether any further excavation is necessary. **Action IAH.**

A local farmer has asked if his livestock would be covered by our insurance if they fall into a cattle grid along the haul road. **Action IAH** to check with NFU and contact the farmer with the answer.

9. **Forest Croft Allocation.** Two potential crofters had not resolved who would have Croft One and who Croft Two so both were happy for the Board to 'toss a coin'. CM did this and the crofts have now been allocated.

10. **Micro Hydro** had already been discussed.

11. **Housing.** JM's meeting with architect Ronnie Neil had taken place and RN gave an estimate of c£1100 per plot for drawings, outline planning permission and advertising with a potential sale price per plot of £45,000. This could be used toward the Micro Hydro project in conjunction with the debenture scheme and possible further capital sale of part of the PDA plot.

12. Woodland Burials have not progressed this month.

13. Sea Eagles. As discussed after the AGM, a young pair of eagles has built a nest near Kildavie. The most recent update from Dave Sexton indicates that the female may be sitting. It has been suggested that local people, under the guidance of one of the rangers, set up an informal watch. Dave Sexton is keen to maximise the benefits to the community with the possibility of organised trips to a viewing point. The Directors are happy for IAH and BH to respond to the situation as it develops without waiting for another Board Meeting. As the eagle nest is curtailing access to Kildavie for the time being, Dave Sexton is happy to consider providing some help with bracken control etc later in the year.

14. Staff Contracts. To enable IAH to reduce his working time to 3 days per week it was suggested that BH work an additional half day. As NWMCWC Ltd is not yet in a position to offer permanent contracts it was suggested that new letters offering monthly employment be drawn up on the same terms, pro rata, as before. This was agreed by the Directors and employees.

15. Fundraising. A May suggested that focussing on firewood and bulk fuel wood sales could be a good source of income. It was agreed that hiring, buying or sharing (possibly with other community woodlands) a bulk splitter would enable volunteers to concentrate on selling and delivering firewood rather than processing it. **Action BH** to put this on the next Agenda.

16. Correspondence. There have been several more emails from a local resident concerning Minutes, Accounts etc. **Action CM** to respond.

Moira Owers has asked permission to organise Forest Dog Walks in West Ardhru as part of her Dog Training business. These will include agility and search and find activities for the dogs which will remain on long leads. Moira actively promotes responsible dog ownership and would also like to put up posters about this. It was agreed that the walks are fine as long as we have prior notification of the dates. Posters will be limited to the entrance to West Ardhru to prevent urbanisation of the woodlands. **Action IAH** to contact Moira.

17. Any other competent business. i Caravan storage. A request has been made by an Island resident to park 2 caravans on our land for a short time while he moves house. It was agreed that they could be put in the quarry on the East side of West Ardhru for a maximum of 3 months in exchange for a gift aided donation. The caravans are left at the owner's own risk. **Action IAH** to get a written undertaking from the owner about this.

ii. There has been some wind blow in West Ardhru along the dog walking path. It was agreed to wait for JM's return and ask him to organise the safe removal of the trees.

iii. AGM Minutes. It was agreed that the AGM Minutes will not be published on our website in draft form.

iv Policy for Vexatious Communications. It was agreed that it would be prudent to adopt a formal policy to deal with vexatious communications. A policy was drafted and adopted with immediate effect.

It was suggested that skype be set up on the Company lap top so that Directors who are off Island for a Board Meeting have the option to participate.

The next Board Meeting will be held on Monday 22nd April 2013 at 7.30pm in Dervaig Church Hall. The Meeting after that will be on Monday 20th may.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Development Managers Report February 2013

1. **Timber Haul Road** – the road is holding up well given that over 30000 tonnes have been hauled across it but some further repair is now necessary.
2. **Fishnish Fixed Pier** –
 - a. Work on site commenced, Piling well under way and completion still anticipated late June early July
 - b. 2nd Pier user group meeting scheduled for Week Commencing 6th May.
3. **Timber Harvesting** –
 - a. Harvesting is continuing in Langamull with current breakout and production rate lower than before, this is due to the variation in timber quality in the higher areas, no issues as such and the quality is expected to pick up again as the harvesting moves towards the B8073.
 - b. A small change to the LTFDP is needed to allow harvesting of the Sitka immediately north of the B8073 and west of the haul route, previously listed as continuous cover conifer but now replaced by the shelter belt larch along the Langamull track on the open ground.
 - c. Visit by BSW and UPM Tilhill – 3 Board members of UPM Tilhill and 2 of BSW visited this week for a briefing on our activities and discussion about the ongoing project. I spent about 1 hour updating them and discussing future sales etc. The feedback was very positive with both BSW and Tilhill expressing wish to assist with some of our “social” projects with specific reference to involving the younger members of the area we were also offered a visit to Kilmally to see the new K2 saw mill line which will be in full swing by midsummer and to hold a board meeting there if we wished. It was interesting to note that the K2 line will accept smaller diameter logs than the current line which could well mean that the volume of product going to the mill could be increased with that being sent for pulp being reduced. Later an additional line is to be installed that will deal with what are currently regarded as oversize logs which at the moment have to be transported to mills in the central belt.
4. **Timber Sales** –Sam and Rob Sedgwick (Crannich) have placed an order for 3 loads of roadline Sitka which will be delivered w/c 25th March. A trial load of roadline timber has also been delivered to the Biscuit Factory.
5. **Forest Crofts** - An invitation to commence registration has been sent to the remaining 6 crofters. Belinda is progressing the registration of 5 of the 6. Discussion with the Crofting Commission confirms that it is up to us where we advertise the vacancy – Board input required as to where and when.
6. **Access Feasibility Study** – Priority given to re-instating Kildavie path and creating additional access via the Haul Route hammerhead. Members of the Archaeology Group are pushing for completion or at least the re-instatement. All work on hold see item 10 Kildavie.
7. **HIE/FCS 5 year Review meeting**– Agreed with HIE that in principle they would assist with ongoing development of the company in particular the Micro Hydro and Woodland burials – IAH and Andy Mayo will progress this. No progress this month
8. **Medium Term Income**
 - a. Woodland Burials – The final clearance of and management of the retention in 915 is now virtually complete. Site walked and preliminary location agreed but a survey to establish soil depth and condition is required preliminary costing for site surveys have been received.
9. **Micro Generation – Hydro West Ardhu**
 - a. The connection offer has been received :-
 - i. None contestable items only £3,617.00 Paid w/c 14th
 - ii. Connection available May 2014 but with export restriction to 50Kw subject to any reclaimed capacity becoming available or major upgrade to the Taynuilt – Inveraray link. A major wind farm planned for Argyll has been canned, this may free up some capacity for us.
 - b. CAR licence - SEPA is subject of some discussion and we have submitted further information and proposed mitigation measures that may result in the planned levels of off take being maintained.
 - c. Further drawings have been requested by A&BC and these should be with them by the end of w/c 25th March.
 - d. Compilation of a planning application for the new entrance to the West Ardhu – B8073 track at the B8073 is under way. Cost approx £700
 - e. Draw down of all the above costs from the CARES loan has been received.
10. **Letters from a local resident**

Despite our ongoing letters, the resident complained to Argyll and Bute Environmental Health department in February about the transport operation, to date we have had no contact from the Environmental Health Officer.
11. **Kildavie** Archaeology all activity on hold pending the White Tails decision as to whether or not to lay. Back in November Colin and I met with NMAIG to agree a way to move forward with Kildavie as a properly funded and structured project and we accepted NMAIG as a subcommittee of the Company on the basis that it would adopt a formal structure, produce a project plan and work with us to obtain funding, all this to ensure that we could be seen to be promoting and protecting Kildavie.

Some progress has been made by NMAIG since November and a Project Plan and Signage proposals have been completed. I have agreed to meet several of the group in April to agree an overall project plan for the site. In my view we should formally take on responsibility for Kildavie and establish the required sub group, but invite local residents with an interest to take an active part in the project.

North West Mull Community Woodland Company Limited

Finance Report to 15th March 2013

General

Petty cash stands at £6.17.

Cash available is £9,412.75. This balance is after payment of salaries and all other invoices due this week.

Significant movements during the past month were

- 1) A credit from HMRC of £623.38 for Gift Aid Tax rebate for gifts up to 31/01/13.
- 2) A credit of £590.54 from HMRC for VAT repayment.
- 3) A credit of £781.32 from HMRC for VAT repayment.
- 4) A credit under the Cares loan scheme of £4,959.80 for works on the Mini Hydro Project.
- 5) A credit of £182.00 from Highland game for Venison sales.
- 6) A debit of £1,840.00 covering part payment of Clements fee for accounts preparation and audit works.

Haul Route

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

Fundraising

The Directors must continue to focus on future/innovative fundraising activities and / or grant opportunities to help meet upcoming costs.

Upcoming Costs and Receipts

Further significant costs will be incurred in the coming months re the Haul Route (Servitude as noted above), Mini Hydro, Forest Crofts and Paths and Access projects. Some details noted below:

- Mini Hydro - Planning re the access at West Ardhu - approx £700
 - Access works at West Ardhu - second quote awaited.
 - legal fees associated with the project.

There should be a small receipt in due time re chip and firewood proceeds of sale of the roadline timber.

Short Term Future Financial Position

Cash remains secure for the next several months.

Trading Company Balance

Balance stands at £1,358 with further revenue from firewood sales of approximately £156 due for paying in.

J.N.Morrison - Treasurer