

## **North West Mull Community Woodland Company Limited**

Minutes of

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7.30pm in Dervaig Village Hall

1. Present: John Addy, Tom Addy, Chris Baker, David Banks, Basil Barton, Hugh Boa, Lorna Boa, Michelle Cowe, Adam Dawson, Isabel Denovan, R. Denovan, Catriona Duncan, Ann Evans, Tricia Evans, Brenda Galbraith, Lesley Hastie, Joan Hepburn, Ian Hepburn, Jamie Laurie, Avril Lowe, Ian Lowe, Catherine Mayo, Colin Morrison, Janet Morrison, John Morrison, Donald Munro, Gregor Munro, Dr Bill Patterson, Suzanne Patterson, Howard Pitman, Anthony Proud, Matthew Reade, Tom Reade, Nick Turnbull, Caroline Wood (35)
2. Apologies: Stevie Benson, Carolyne Charrington, Andrew Evans, Anne Eastwood, Martin Eastwood, Richard Fairbairns, Neil Hutton, Ailsa Morgan, Colin Morgan, Alastair Morrison, Andrew Mortley, Francis Proud, Simon Proud, Aly Taylor, Aileen Thomson, Iain Thomson, Julie Thompson, Margrite Van de Pol (18)
3. Welcome: CM opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.
4. Minutes of AGM 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008: Approval of previous minutes. Proposed by Janet Morrison, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Proud
5. **Chairman's Report: Review 2009**

The purpose of this report is to review the activities of the Company since the last AGM. I would like to thank the board of directors for their ongoing enthusiasm, commitment and determination to keep the Woodland Company moving forwards. Two Board members have moved on to pastures new this year – Julie Paton, previously our secretary and Rob Strachan. They were both instrumental in the inauguration and development of this company and our appreciation of their input should be minuted.

Without the work of Michelle, our administrator, the company would grind to a halt. Ian, who joined us as Development manager in September, is competently driving forward our various projects – it is only a pity we couldn't have had him in post a year or more earlier! Thanks are due to David Winfield, David Wathen, Torloisk Estate and John Caskie for their generosity with regards to the road project. Grant Holroyd, Jake Willis and Jens Haufe ran an excellent thinning course for us. Jamie McIntyre, John Toal and Duncan MacPhee have all given advice on our Woodland Crofts proposals. Moxon architects have, in a very tight time frame, delivered proposals for a feasible housing project. John Little has worked hard to provide us with our draft forest design plan. Alan Parker chaired the WESCO subcommittee which has continued to investigate the possibility of supplying Woodfuel heat customers. Thanks to Al Morrison and Esther Nailen who organised the 70s and 80s discos this year. Nick Mainprize, Keith Miller, Andy Leitch, Helen Watt & all Forestry Commission. John Addy for work on the road project. Georgia O'Neill for keeping the web site up to date. Pete Pinnington for donation of Web space, email accounts and his tracked dumper. Julie Thomson who designed our logo.

**Timber Haul Route:** We finally have the go ahead on the road project. £ 726K has been approved from the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Scheme which will fund roads outside our woodlands including the upgrading of around 3km of the C46 Glen road. Argyll and Bute as a public organisation would not have been able to access this cash other than in partnership with us. In other words this is extra cash for Mull roads that we have been instrumental in attaining. The rest of the internal road costs will be funded from our own

timber sales and significant in kind contributions from the landowners across whose land the road passes. It is hoped that work on the road will start in September and be completed next year.

**Housing:** Last month we submitted an application to the Rural Homes For Rent Scheme. This was the culmination of a pretty busy few months of work by ourselves and Moxon Architects. If our application is approved (we should hear by June) we hope to build 5 houses for rent and sell 5 house sites under the Rural Home ownership grant scheme. At least another 5 will be made available on the open market helping to fund the infrastructure for the project. There is still a lot of work to do on this ambitious project and the overall cost could yet scupper it.

**Long Term Forest Design Plan:** A "Scoping Meeting" was held last year which kicked off the process of developing a Long Term Forest Plan for Langamull and West Ardhu. Based on this and other input from the Board John Little of Tilhill has developed a draft plan which many of you have already seen at the consultation open day at the end of January. If anyone has further feedback please let us know as soon as possible. This document has to be in place to allow us to manage the woodlands. There is scope for amending it as necessary in the future.

**Woodland Crofts:** The woodland crofts project is still in the planning stage. We hope to create a number of crofts in Langamull. I have to be honest – when we first considered developing crofts I naively thought it would be a straightforward process. This has turned out to be far from the case. Considerations include:  
Allocations Policy

Legal requirements

Wider aims of NWMCCW

Crofter's requirements

Long Term Forest Design Plan

Forestry Commission input

Crofter's Commission input

I am still confident however that we will create woodland crofts.

**Schools and Tree Planting:** Last Year Forest schools began in earnest in West Ardhu. Ulva Ferry and Dervaig schools go into West Ardhu a day a week though I think there was a bit of a break avoiding the worst of the winter! There is a plan to build a shelter and tool store using our own timber. A Safe camp fire area will also be created.

Last week a tree planting event was held in the forest school area. This was funded by the Woodland Trust Tree For All scheme. Jan Dunlop of the ranger service and Adam Dawson, native woodland officer provided help and advice. Afterwards marshmallows were expertly cooked by the children over a small camp fire.

Due to the high ratio of adults to kids for some forest school activities Heather would be keen to recruit some volunteers to help. Anyone interested should get in touch...

**Paths and access:** In the longer term it is intended to develop a network of access paths. For now however we are working towards the creation of a cycle path in West Ardhu, opening up a track that will access the high ground above West Ardhu, a circular walk in Langamull and the possibility of a walkway across Glenbellart.

**Woodmizer:** Along with four private individuals the Woodland Co has purchased a woodmizer. This should bring a small income to the company and will also allow us to use our own timber for all manner of projects. For instance I hope we can use it to provide some of the timber for house building. It should also prove very useful in building tracks etc.

**Woodfuel supply:** Firewood supply continues on an ad hoc basis by volunteer effort bringing in some funds to the company. We hope to continue this and develop it further. To this end we have recently sent out questionnaires that should help us better understand the potential market. It is essential however to work alongside rather than in competition with local firewood suppliers and we will continue to do this. Crannich supply a significant tonnage of woodchip throughout the island and to Oban. They are keen to take timber from us and we are looking at ways of supplying poles to them. We don't yet have the means of doing this.

**Wesco:** We continue to consider whether to set up a Wood Energy Supply Co to supply larger developments on the island. The progressive care centre is very interested in using woodchip. If this goes ahead it could prove a springboard for other developments and discussions are ongoing.

**Thinning Course:** We organised a thinning course last month with funding from the Community Woodlands Association and Community Land Unit. This was attended by most directors, some local residents and others from various community woodlands across Scotland. We all found it very useful and are now better prepared to make decisions about thinning and small scale timber extraction.

**Lottery GCA/ HIE funding:** We finally secured funding from the lottery and HIE to employ a development officer and a part time administrator for 3 years. It will be essential to make best use of Ian's time over the next few years to bring to fruition the various projects in the pipeline and hopefully get the company into a position where it can continue sustainably.

**Fundraising:** Over the last year we have continued with fundraising. Christmas Trees sales made around £900. We had a 70s and an 80s disco raising over £1200. Our race night in December made over £600, Producer's market teas in the summer made £184 and activities at the Salen show made over £500.

**Recycle Bins:** The recycle bins are now in place at Dunan Neill on NWMCWC land. This has finally moved them away from the school and hopefully everyone agrees this is a more satisfactory spot for them. Thank you to Tony for his persistence.

**Dervaig Public Toilets:** We continue to run the Public Toilets in the village. John Morrison would almost certainly welcome any offers of help to ensure the toilets continue in operation.

**Hide:** The hide project has been put on hold due to concerns about privacy for nearby householders. It is still to be hoped that a site can be found that will be acceptable to residents as well as being a useful spot for a wildlife hide.

## **6. Finance Report: John Morrison, Treasurer**

### **Notes on the Directors Report & Financial Statements for the year ending 31/07/2008**

Good Evening

I am not intending to spend a long time going through the Directors Report & Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2008. There are copies of a brief version available here, plus several full sets and of course the full set of report & statements is on our website. Firstly financial aspects for the company for the last year were satisfactory but, in common with a lot of charities of our type, we are asset rich (the woodlands) but cash poor (we currently have limited income streams but we have routine costs to run the business and

develop our key objectives). Secondly we have been fortunate through hard work and opportunity to have been awarded grants over the year, these being: Balance of the Investing in Ideas grant for Business Plan Development, £10K Awards for All grant for Office kit, signage, rent etc., £1,600 from FCS/SNH towards costs of FDP development with some more to come. £1K from HIE towards set up and general costs. £958 from FCS for some small fence repairs. The big one which was success in gaining from BLF a Growing Community Assets award covering a 3 year period from March 2008 to fund our Dev Manager, Administrator and a significant portion of our overheads. We also partnered with others in a feasibility study into wood energy supply where HIE provided all costs of the study (£9,673) Whilst we do not wish to be reliant on grants for ever, they are an essential part of our resources in the early years of the company. Thirdly we continue to be reliant on local Fundraising and Donations as an essential part of our cash generation, and I thank all who contribute and assist in the various activities over the past year. Fundraising contributed £12,233 during the past year, an excellent result covering Raffles, Draws, 2 Rally cafes, the 70's Disco, Buyat commission and Producers Markets income. Donations totalled £3,653 unrestricted from general sources and proceeds from donations for Christmas Trees and firewood supply. We also have £777 restricted donations against future village Firework parties and provision of a bird hide. Costs during the year covered specific projects covered by grants and the ongoing costs such as Insurances and office maintenance, communication costs etc. We ended the year with an adequate bank balance (£7,550). The Balance sheet shows an increased figure from a year ago, this essentially coming from the purchase of our office equipment over the course of the year. Equipment has been and will be depreciated over the years but land and woodlands do not have any depreciation charge. Michelle Cowe and Ian Hepburn have been developing our financial records onto a computer based format and I thank them for that. Finally it is our intent to retain R.A. Clement Associates for preparation of our Annual Accounts, Financial advice and for audits if and when required and I would thus wish to propose that Clements be reappointed. Clements have sent the required copy of the Directors report & Financial Statements to Companies House and following this meeting I will be supplying a copy to OSCR plus the required Annual OSCR return. I am sure that I have said more than enough and would now ask if anyone has any questions which I will attempt to answer. Thank you. CM Thanked JM for his work over the past year and this evening's report. The reappointment of RA Clements was proposed by Dr Patterson & 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ian Hepburn.

- 7. Election of Directors:** as per the companies Memorandum & Articles of Association one third of the elected Directors must stand down annually in rotation. These directors are available for re election. The following are noted as Retiring Directors: Calum Duffy, Ann Evans, Matthew Reade, Aly Taylor

The re election took place as followed:

Matthew Reade proposed by Ian Lowe: 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joan Hepburn

Ann Evans proposed by Jan Morrison: 2<sup>nd</sup> by Adam Dawson

Calum Duffy proposed by Ann Evans: 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matthew Reade

Aly Taylor proposed by Matthew Reade: 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Addy

Adam Dawson also stood down and was available for co option again. Adam Dawson was proposed by Colin Morrison and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chris Baker.

- 8. Any other business:** Dr Patterson added that the Mull Historical Society has been working with NWMCWC in particular at Kildavie.

9. Close 8.15pm Thanks to all for coming. Refreshments were served.

Michelle Cowe

Administrator, NWMCWC

23 march 2009