



North West Mull Community Woodland Co Ltd

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Charity no: SC037336 Company no: 287343

Summer Newsletter 2011



Learning about Fire Safety

Forest School

Heather Waller, the Headteacher at Ulva Ferry School, has kindly contributed this article and pictures about recent activities in the West Ardhru woodlands.

Since Christmas the children from Ulva and Dervaig Primary Schools have been visiting West Ardhru Forest on Wednesdays to do some of their school work in the woods!

We had a science lesson and talked about how you need the 3 elements of fuel, heat and oxygen to make a successful fire. Then we learned how to make fire safely, and importantly how to put fires out safely! We managed to light most of our fires with 1 or 2 matches!! Each group made their own small pyramid fire, making sure air could circulate through the fuel, and then cooked marshmallows on it..... yum, yum. Some were more successful than others as we had chosen a fairly breezy day and the fuel was slightly damp and the heat not as hot as it could be!! We put our fires out by spreading the fuel and putting cold water on them to deprive the fire of heat.

Our next project was shelter building.....a technology lesson! We began to use simple tools such as secateurs and loppers to collect dead wood for our shelters. At first we made a mini shelter for a hedgehog, to try our different designs and see which designs were most successful. We learnt how to tie a clove hitch and do square lashing to join 2 pieces of wood and we used this to improve our shelters. Last week we visited the Crannog Centre on Loch Tay and noticed that Iron Age Man had used these same knots for building crannogs!!

If you are walking through the woods over the next few weeks, look out for our 'child' sized shelters!!

Small Ads

We are thinking about making some space in future Newsletters for items for sale. The idea is that the seller makes a donation to NWMWC of c5-10% for each item sold. Please contact Belinda on admin@nwmullwoodland.co.uk or call the Office on 01688 400600 if you would like to help us with fundraising by taking a Small Ad in the next or any future issue.

Community Forum

An inaugural Meeting open to all, will be held on Monday 27th June 2011 at 7.30pm in Dervaig Church Hall. Attendees will be invited to elect a Chairman and set their own Agenda. At least one Director will be present to enable the establishment of the Forum and answer questions about NWMWC. The Forum itself will be completely independent and run according to its attendees' wishes. The Directors are keen to facilitate and support a Forum where concerns can be expressed and questions answered. This will be in addition to the other ways the Board try to keep Members informed, such as the Community Open Day, progress boards at local markets, a detailed presentation at every AGM and of course, this Newsletter. This is the perfect opportunity to get more involved with NWMWC without the responsibility of becoming a Director, so please make every effort to attend.

100 Club

The second 100 Club Draw of 2011 was made on Friday 22nd April by Duncan Dewhurst. 1st Prize of £35.00 was won by Pam Brown, 2nd Prize £15.00 Andrew Womack, 3rd Prize £5.00 Barry Prater and 4th Prize £3.50 Julia Reade. The next Draw will be made in July.



A small shelter made by the Forest School

Access and Cycle Paths

A good deal of progress has been made towards providing marked walks and cycle paths in our Woodlands. Tenders for a full feasibility study for Access have been received and evaluated by the Board, and Consultants appointed with a remit to start immediately. In the meantime volunteers are working hard to prepare signage and rest places for the first stage of the path to be made fully accessible. The Car Park at West Ardhru will be extended and levelled and will have marked Disabled spaces. While work goes on walkers are welcome to use their own judgement and enjoy strolling as far as they like down the new road. Matthew Reade is making picnic tables and other seating, and all local businesses however big or small will be invited to sponsor a table, bench or resting place. More information about this will be given as soon as possible.

White-tailed Eagles

We were so nearly the first Community Woodland Company in the UK to have a white-tailed eagle nest in their forest! Two young adults approximately 4-5 years old were seen carrying twigs and generally displaying nesting behaviour in a secluded part of our woodlands. Working closely with NWMWCW, RSPB Mull Officer Dave Sexton, spent days patiently trying to work out where the 'nest' might materialise and whether the birds would lay this year. Eventually he decided that for this year at least they were just 'playing house', and we will have to wait to see whether they are successful in 2012 or have moved to a different territory. The RSPB have strong links with Forestry Commission Scotland, MICT, SNH and Strathclyde Police concerning the Mull Eagle Watch Project. NWMWCW will work with them as much as possible if the eagles succeed in nesting in our woodlands next year.



**The white-tailed eagles who nearly nested in our woodlands.
Thanks to Arthur Brown of Discover Mull for the photo.**

Haul Road: Official Opening

This ambitious but essential project is finally nearing completion. By the time this Newsletter is published the final surface will be being laid and gates, cattle grids and fences installed. We are hopeful that local MSP and Cabinet Minister, Mike Russell will agree to come and officially declare the road open sometime in August. Mike Russell has shown an interest in NWMWCW since his visit in the very early days of the community purchasing the woodlands, so it seems appropriate that he should be invited to return to help us celebrate achieving such a huge milestone. He will also be asked to witness the signing of the first agreements for Forest Crofts (see below). The date and timetable of events will be publicised locally as soon as we have confirmed all the details.

Forest Crofts

This Project was delayed by a long wait for the draft contracts, but once they have been approved by the Crofting Commission we will be ready to hand over the first three Forest Crofts. As this is such an important and pioneering Project Mike Russell will be invited to witness the signing of the agreements if he comes to officially open the Haul Road. NWMWCW are the first community woodland company in Scotland to create Forest Crofts. At a time when many areas are being decrofted it is a matter of great pride that NWMWCW has been able to make new plots available to local people. The rest of the Forest Crofts will be released when clear felling makes the relevant areas available.

Archaeology

The stalwart group of volunteers continues to survey, plot and excavate the abandoned settlement at Kildavie. With the help of enthusiastic professionals from the Adopt-a-Monument scheme, the monthly 'Weekends' are creating opportunities for learning new skills as work progresses. More structures have been found including what may be a corn kiln and possibly a mill. When the Haul Road is complete we can start on plans to improve access to the site, making it easier for visitors to find and enjoy. The children from Salen School explored the site at the end of May and are keen to visit regularly to see the progress of the excavations. Eventually it is hoped that Kildavie will provide an educational resource that can be used by any school in Scotland.

Congratulations!

One of our Directors, Catriona Duncan was married to Jamie Laurie on Saturday 11th June. The Wedding was held at Calgary followed by a Dance in the Dervaig Village Hall. We are sure that all our readers will join the Directors and Staff of NWMWCW in wishing them a long and happy life together.

Other Projects

We are still waiting for the final results of the feasibility study for the Micro Hydro Project, but hope to be in a position to put in a Planning Application in the next couple of weeks if the study is positive. The provision of affordable and other housing for the Community has always been a long term objective for NWMWCW and we are now in a position to start moving forward with this Project. It is likely that a single building plot will be sold to provide funds for the planning and initial stages of the main development.

Fundraising

We are planning a Woodland Gala Day later in the summer (date to be confirmed). There will be displays of woodland activities such as tree felling, Woodmizer, log splitting and wood carving. We hope to have live music and a barbeque, as well as a range of activities for people of all ages. These may include cycle trails or cross country runs, treasure hunt, games and stalls. This event should really put the Fun into Fundraising and the more people that join in the better it will be. Posters with full details will be put up locally nearer the time.



New Bridge on the Haul Road

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