

**Annual General Meeting of
North West Mull Community Woodland Company Limited
On Monday 11th June at 7.30pm in Dervaig Village Hall**

Present: John Morrison, Andy Mayo (AM), Helen Murray, Craig Murray (CRM), Belinda Hale (BH), Mike Hale, Jan Morrison, Colin Morrison (CM), Ian Hepburn (IH), Joan Hepburn, David Bankes, John Addy (JA), Lynne Addy, Bill Paterson (BP), Suzanne Paterson, Kate Burger, Basil Barton, Catherine Evans, Kevin Luscombe, Ian Lowe, Al Satchell, Rhuri Munro, F Anderson, Ann Evans, Hugh Boa, Andrew Chamings, Louise Chamings, Tracy Mayo (TM), Caroline Wood (CW), Peter Leach, Gregor Munro, Chris Baker (CB), J Lanteri Laura (JLL), Pippa Gatty, Kirsty Shilson, Mike Shilson, Steve Maker, Anand Prasad (AP), Leena Dande, David Clowes (DC), Katja Clowes, Matthew Reade

Apologies: John Austin, Jo Austin, Moray Finch, Iain Thomson (IT), Cath Mayo, Caroline Charrington, Ian Morrison, Pat Morrison, Phil Tiernan, Rae Tiernan, Avril Lowe, Tricia Evans, Nick Evans, Laura Percy, Simon Bartle

Colin Morrison (**CM**) welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out apologies. **CM:** – Al Satchel is filming this AGM for an Ulva documentary – is everyone happy? No objections raised

CM: Admin correction – from last year's minutes to do with election V co-option – John Addy (**JA**) and Iain Thompson (**IT**) should not have been able to be re-elected, they should have been co-opted. We have checked the legal position and lawyer has said if we are all happy with the situation then its fine. **CM** – do you all agree or does anyone want to put it to a vote? No objections raised, no vote required.

Secondly, we have received some applications for new directors – a couple were outside the deadline – are there any objections from members to us still accepting these? No objections

Minutes from 2017 AGM were displayed on the ohp – **CM** apologised that they were not on the website earlier, but have been there in draft form for a couple of weeks. Members were given time to read the minutes displayed – **CM** asked if anyone had any comments or issues – none raised. Asked for minutes to be proposed (Ian Hepburn (**IH**) and seconded – Belinda Hale (**BH**)

CM: Chairman's Report

This has been a particularly busy year for us, and we continue to take forward various projects. Also, shortly, after the AGM last year the possibility of the community purchase of the island of Ulva became an option and the Board took the view that it was important that we took it forward. A sub committee was formed including some of the Ulva residents and ownership will transfer to us on 21st June. We have a number of people wanting to join the board which is fantastic. If any other individuals are interested in a particular area of what we are doing or any of our projects, please get in touch.

Staff Changes:

Malcolm Ward left the post of Development Manager to run the Woodfuels business on a part-time basis, and Craig Murray became the new development manager. Leslie Hastie resigned from the admin role and was replaced by Helen Murray. Alan Quinn remains as an occasional employee supporting Malcolm and we recruited Debby Thorne as our seasonal Eagle Ranger.

MicroHydro:

Shortly after the AGM last year it seemed the Micro Hydro scheme was dead in the water for a number of reasons, so it was great that at the 11th hour a way forward was found, working in partnership with a company called Hydrover. Many thanks to Andy Mayo for his work to retrieve the project. The scheme is now up and running and has been generating at or above projections until the present dry spell.

Island Woodfuels:

We remain the sole supplier of woodchip across the island and continue to supply cut and split logs. Construction of the shed is well under way in the West Ardu Woodland. It's being built by Liam Livett and will make a huge difference to the efficiency of the business.

Housing:

The delivery of housing continues as a priority albeit frustrated by issues beyond our control related to proving demand, definitions of need and available funding streams. Last year we were still hopeful of working with West Highland Housing Association but unfortunately that now seems unlikely. We are

investigating new options along with Rural Housing Scotland and there will be a meeting shortly with a number of key folk including the council and we still remain optimistic both for the WA site and also in terms of delivering new housing on Ulva.

Replant:

The time for us to begin replanting areas of Langamull is fast approaching. We have a legal obligation to do this. In order to avoid the use of neonicotinoid chemicals in replanting we have been leaving the ground fallow for as long as possible. We are going to come under growing pressure to start the replant. We carried out more billet tests to assess pine weevil levels and the Board took the decision to use no neonicotinoid treatment. Our policy has always been not to use chemicals if at all possible and to date we have used none in any of our operations.

Toilets:

Ownership of the land has finally transferred across to the woodland company and we are in the process of trying to deliver toilets but the Council now want full planning permission to replace the existing ones.

Crofts:

The coffer's continue to make progress and it is great to see trees taking root. An open day has been suggested we hope this could happen in the future..

Eagle Hide:

This year the eagle partnership decided that they wanted to focus on a new facility at the Craignure golf course. They suggested we run our own. We were fortunate to be able to recruit Debby Thorne who worked as the eagle ranger in the past and the tours have been working out really well and we expect to be able to add to the eagle fund..

Eagle Fund:

Eileen Turnbull and Jo Weston agreed to sit on the panel with John Morrison and myself representing the Board, to evaluate applications. Last year the fund supported £1300 for a number of teacher training needs, £500 for Mull Music Makers, £500 for pre 5 music sessions, £500 for a dance teacher, £350 for the school gardening club, £250 for the community Christmas lunch, £200 for a replacement viewpoint seat, £496 to the Mull Aquarium, £500 to the cadets trip and £750 for Seinn is Spors – the childrens gaelic music club. The fund is still open and applications are invited.

Archeaology:

Harp Archeaology ran another summer school/dig at Kildavie, continuing the work of previous years and helping with understanding of the site. This will run again later this year. I hope they will have an evening event where the public can gain an insight into their work.

Burial Ground:

We continue to work towards the establishment of the woodland burial site within the Langamull Woodland.

Peatland restoration:

A study was carried out in the Glen Bellart woodland area to assess the viability of restoring this back to peat bog. This looks viable but possibly an expensive project. We continue to investigate this.

Bellart right to buy (rtb):

We have renewed the rtb along the strip of the Bellart This means if it ever comes up for sale we will have an option of purchase which will allow us access and better management of the Glen Bellart woodland.

Rally:

In the absence of the usual Mull rally we supported the car club to run a targa rally – allowing them to run stages on the haul route.

Dervaig Orchard:

We remain supportive of the orchard project in dervaig, supplying bits and bobs as requested

Christmas trees:

We supplied Christmas trees again this year to the two primary schools.

I would like to thank all the directors and staff for the time and energy put in to keeping things going this year, and I would like in particular to acknowledge the work that John Morrison has put in since the inception of the company. This will be his last AGM as a director and his knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and tenacity will be very much missed from the Board when he finally steps down later this year. Thank you John!

Any questions? none

Ulva Update - JA

It's been just over a year since we heard the island was coming onto the market and we started to work on our bid to buy it for the community. It's been a complicated and demanding process but last month we successfully concluded contracts for the purchase, collecting the keys on 21st June.. It has been a real team effort and without that we would not have succeeded, nor would we have succeeded without the strong majority support of the community. So many thanks to everyone involved, but the real thanks will come from future generations as this is just the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the islands history.

We will be having a ribbon cutting ceremony at 3pm on 21/6 followed by a drink and nibbles at the Boathouse. Everyone is welcome to come along to mark this historic day. A more formal event is planned in August to coincide with the beginning of Community Land Week throughout Scotland.

Main highlights of what's next are:

Renovation of existing housing to provide a secure tenure for the residents and to allow the population to grow to around 20 as quickly as possible. In parallel, we hope to build some new housing to increase the population further. An allocations policy for the existing and new housing will be drawn up.

Piers and slipways need to be improved on both the Mull and Ulva sides.

Anyone visiting Ulva can see the land has been neglected, with bracken and rush growth on unused grazing land and an out of control deer population. We want to get the land working again but in harmony with the need to protect/enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity. A land use options assessment will be carried out, but in the short term land may be rented out for grazing.

We are in discussions with the Crown estate re buying the foreshore they still own in the Sound of Ulva and the Woodland trust Scotland want to work with us to manage the existing native woodlands and also plant more.

Development manager update - CRM.

Woodshed:

This is a 45m by 10m agricultural shed. It needs to be fire retardant and have a concrete floor and apron. It will make the running the Woodfuel business more efficient as we can work under cover in the winter.

Toilets:

We wanted to replace the existing porta cabin with a nice wood clad unit but the council, now say we need full planning permission and possibly a building warrant.

Burial Ground: need to de-stump the area, plant some broad leaf trees etc. but council again, want full planning permission. I have put in the application, which has been validated and accepted, just need approval now. Hopeful that we will get this.

Glen Bellart: looking at restoring it to its natural bog state, working with SNH, a massive project but doable. Highly unlikely we would extract any timber as it's all chipped on site to create dams to allow it to return to its natural state.

Hydro: completed in March, thanks to AM hard work. Generated approx. 45 mw or electricity so far.

Eagle Watch: very successful, we have Debby on board, and our eagles have produced 2 chicks, about 7 weeks old now. Excellent visitor numbers, lots of satisfied customers, and some of the money raised will go back into the Eagle Fund to support local good causes.

CM: Election of directors

Two to stand down – John Morrison and Andy Mayo

Nominations are David Clowes (proposed Moray Finch, seconded Chris Baker), Rhuri Munro (Colin Morrison, Pat Morrison), Pippa Gatty (Nick Evans, J B Austen), Jean Laura (Catherine Evans, Caroline Wood) John Addy (Craig Murray, Lynne Addy), Iain Thomson (Helen Murray, Craig Murray), Belinda Hale (Cath Mayo, Mike Hale) and Craig Whittaker (Ann Evans, Jo Austen).

CM: – this still does not take us up to enough to need an election so all are duly elected to the Board. This gives us 10 directors/co-opted Directors, leaving a co-opted space – always a space for the Community Council to have a member on our Board.

Finance report – AM

(Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting and also on the website)

Main income has been from Scottish Government grant and SGRPID and donations, the woodfuel's business and crofts.

Expenditure has been higher than income – mainly due to shed, office, some harvesting costs and spend on the Hydro.

Balance sheet looks healthy but tied up in the land. There is the future spend of the cost of fencing and re-planting to take into consideration. There is an agreement in principle for a loan for the shed and hydro from Triodos. The hydro should make a net profit of about £11,000 per annum, the shed will help us expand our woodfuel's business and we also have 2 plots for sale in West Ardhru, with 3 at Langamull being marketed soon.

I propose re appointing R A Clements as our accountants – no objections raised.

DC: – where are the plots at Langamull? **AM** along the haul route, past the split on the right

JLL: – do you pay Tillhill for their consultancy? **AM:** yes if we ask them to do work for us **JLL:** – so not an ongoing payment then? **AM:** – no, only for work done.

CM: we will have a Q&A after the AGM. Are there any specific questions regarding AGM business any one wants to raise?

PA I take issue with the word neglected in relation to Ulva – it's a loaded word and open to interpretation, it's more that it's been re-wilded. I totally object to the word and it reflects badly on Jamie Howard.

BP: if you replant Langamull with firs it will create an un-useable desert in 40 year's time **CM:** we are certainly looking at more of a mix of planting.

CB: who is on the Ulva sub-committee? **CM:** Rhuri, Rebecca, Emma and all directors except John Morrison

CW: how do you see Ulva and the Woodland's panning out? Is it totally separate? **CM:** in the long run as separate, **TM:** more of a guardianship then? **CM:** yes **JA:** always seen ourselves as facilitator's not micro managers. SLF will be funding a development manager for 2 years for Ulva, SLF not leaving us to it, they are being very supportive. **CW:** do you envisage an Ulva Community Trust? **JA:** personal view, yes, especially in the years to come with 20,30 or even 50 people living there. **BP:** some community buyouts are starting to fail **CM:** what ones? **BP:** a general observation, I hope you don't struggle **JA:** Eigg for example, is very successful and not failing, just celebrated 21 years of community ownership. Some are obviously more successful and others.

AE: as chair of the MNWG we are concerned that the Board will look positively about using chemicals both here and on Ulva. There are other ways to look at woodland. **CM:** I think we have been absolutely clear that we have not used them and it is not our intention to.

JLL: what assurances can you give that local contractors will given a fair opportunity to tender for work?

CM: I can give you every assurance that local contractors will be given a fair opportunity to tender.

CB: further to this, how many contractors were asked to tender for the shed and Hydro.

AM: 3 tendered, 2 were far too expensive and 1 didn't respond. **CB:** was it actually offered locally? **AM;** yes but those that came back were prohibitaly expensive. **AM** then explained the engagement of LES and SEPA and how a partner was found. Some of the construction work was carried out by a local contractor. **CB** commented that he had expressed an interest years ago about being involved with the scheme but heard nothing from us, he was available, was involved with 3 other schemes on the island so not happy with the term "local". Regarding the shed, what was put out to tender? Building? Steel work? There are a number of people who would have taken that on locally? **CRM:** not many actually, we put it out to 3 for tender and it went to the best one. Ground work, brickwork all being done locally, electrics will be put out to tender also. **CM:** Chris, can you have a conversation with Andy about Hyrdo?

CM: I'll call the AGM to a close now – 8.40pm

DRAFT