

North West Mull Community Woodland Company Limited

Minutes of

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held Friday 28th March 2008 at 8pm in Dervaig Village Hall

1. Present:

Michelle Cowe, Colin Morrison, Julie Paton, John Morrison, Tony Proud, Frances Proud, David Banks, Val Thomas, Andy Mortley, Matthew Reade, Cath Mayo, Mike Mayo, Basil Barton, Patricia Smith, Helen McCallum, Donald Smith, Chris Baker, Linda Paterson, Lorna Paterson, John Addy, Ann Evans, Janet Evans, Alastair Taylor, Alastair Morrison, R. Denovan, I. Denovan, Tom Addy, Lorna Boa, Hugh Boa, Diane Dewhurst, Frank Dewhurst, Bill Patterson, Suzanne Patterson, David Winfield, Pat Morrison, David Wathen, Donald Munro, Gregor Munro, Andrew Stevens, Jill Galbraith, Gordon Turnbull, Nick Turnbull, Aileen Thomson, John Caskie, James Hilder, Brennen Fairbairns (45)

2. Apologies:

Ailsa Morgan, Colin Morgan, Joan Hepburn, Ian Hepburn, Jan Morrison, Carolyne Charrington, Somerset Charrington, Colin Minton, Caroline Wood, Mike Hogan, Anna Hogan, Ada Cowe, Douglas Cowe, Ian Lowe, Avril Lowe, Julia Reade, Andrew Mazur, Barbara Hartley, Iain Morrison, Rae Morrison, Ester Nailen, Rob Strachan, Becky Roth, Helen Mortley, Phil Tiernan, Stevi Benson (25)

3. Welcome:

Colin Morrison opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance.

4. Minutes of Annual General Meeting held Tuesday 7th November 2006.

The minutes were approved. Proposed by Tony Proud and Seconded by Nick Turnbull.

5. Chairman's Report, Colin Morrison summarised the past year's activities:

It is only a little over a year since the woods were acquired and it is essential to look long term at this stage to ensure what is put in place works sustainably for the benefit of the community. In this short space of time a huge amount has already been achieved. Within the next 12 months or so however we hope to see more things physically happening within Langamull and West Ardhu. This will be due in large part to the preparatory work carried out over this last year and which is still ongoing.

We have finally finalised our Business Plan. I will be summarising it immediately after this report. It is fair to say that the process of putting it together has not been straightforward. Much has been learnt however and a lot of time has gone into straightening it out with advice and support from numerous individuals. Hopefully it is both ambitious and

achievable. In order to avoid too much repetition some information that would otherwise have been covered in the report from the chair will be dealt with through the business plan presentation.

An application has been made to the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Fund to provide part funding for the construction of a timber transport road. Our contribution will come from timber sales. This is of critical importance due to the fact that Langamull is over mature and if not harvested soon will be increasingly prone to wind blow. The road will be absolutely fundamental to proper forest management as well as allowing access for much of the other plans.

Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland have jointly given a grant to kick start our Forest Design Plan. Normally we would have needed to wait for the next round of Scottish Rural Development Programme funds.

The Forest Design Plan is a document that is required by the Forest Authority part of FCS and John Addy is currently working on this. This alongside the business plan shows what will be happening when and where within the woods, encompassing felling and restocking, expansion of broadleaf and open spaces, forest crofts and much of the range of other stuff within the business plan.

IACS registration will allow environmental payments, replanting grants and other funding through the SRDP.

We applied for and received a thinning license for West Ardhu. This will allow up to 15% of the timber to be thinned out. This is useful in the short term since it means we can fulfil any initial local timber needs. It is also good practice in that the remaining timber should improve in quality. It is too late to thin Langamull.

Volunteers walked all boundaries and paths giving us a much better overview of the current state of fencing, roads and pathways. Following on from this a small grant was accessed which allowed volunteers to take care of a few of the more pressing areas of fencing in need of remedial attention. Thanks to all who helped with this.

Fire notices were printed and displayed at the various entrances to both woodlands. If you come across a fire please dial 999 in the first instance – we have an agreement with the Forestry Commission that they will assist at any fire and vice versa. This practise will continue this year. **ACTION: PREPARE NEW FIRE SIGNS**

It has been frustrating to wait almost a year to hear that West Highland Housing association believe infrastructure costs make it too expensive to put in low cost rental housing at West Ardhu. We had hoped this would be the initial phase of housing development. While we continue to look at options for the provision of rental housing it seems that our first phase will now have to be geared to providing housing under Rural Home Ownership Grant criteria. We are in the process of developing a scheme and hope to make this public shortly. In January this year we became a Rural Housing Body which means we can place conditions on any sales to ensure continued affordability.

The last thing we wanted in our first year of operation was to be drawn into a battle but this is what has happened with SEPA and Scottish Water over the new sewage treatment works. We have so far managed (we think) to get them to agree to moving the discharge below the Smiddy Bridge and away from the school, but as yet are having a somewhat frustrating time trying to persuade them to add on additional treatment to ensure the effluent meets the designation of the water into which it discharges. As you can see they seem to be carrying on regardless of our concerns, and possibly without planning permission for the pumping station but we will continue to lobby in the hope that sense prevails.

We have agreed that the Dervaig recycle bins can be situated on community land at Dunan Neil which takes them away from their unsatisfactory position at the school although there may be another claim of ownership for this area. Watch this space!

A grant for funding from BBC breathing spaces to part fund a Hide project has been applied for. This will be match funded from a number of sources including Pig Day. Hopefully this can be up and running by next year.

We have inherited the running of Dervaig Village Toilets from Argyll and Bute council and will continue to ensure they are operational.

Fundraising has included the Rally Cafe, stalls at producer's markets, Calum Duffy's "ride of your life" raffle, race nights, a 60s disco, other raffles, plant sales, the Buyat website where a proportion of all sales comes straight to us – check it out www.buyat.co.uk, Pig Day, bonfire night (though this is ring fenced for itself) sale of Christmas trees, bird boxes, football 7s

The Big Lottery Grant, Awards For All allowed us to get new signage for which the school children provided great pictures. Matthew with the help of John and Andy "designed and built" the structure that holds the sign at Langamull and another similar sign is proposed for West Ardhu. The same grant also funded our web site – www.nwmullwoodland.co.uk, office equipment and the cost of our temporary office which is now situated within the church hall.

Michelle attended the Ignite Woodfuel Course and we also ran a Director Training course attended by most woodland directors, directors of other local trusts and local members of the public who are all now hopefully better equipped to run community companies. A chainsaw course was run last summer training 4 members of the community in best practice enabling them to work in the woods.

We arranged a visit from Alan McIntosh of Logical Buildings and he confirmed it would be possible to use our own timber to build with. We also hosted a visit from Jake Willis and others from Sunart Oak Woods and this provided an opportunity for each group to pick the others brains!

It was decided to organise the structure of the board into sub groups covering housing, renewable energy, forest management etc. In this way different directors can focus on different areas. It will also allow for non directors to become involved in areas that interest them. The Wood energy supply company feasibility study is being run through a sub group of NMWCWC which includes a number of interested individuals from out with the company. Some of these groups are very active, others will become more so as we progress. If you are interested or have skills you think may be useful please contact any member of the board – the workload is only going to increase and many hands apparently make light work!

John Morrison and I attended the Scottish Islands Federation Seminar in Craignure last year. The Federation aims to be a representative body for Scottish offshore islands. Out of the initial meeting a Mull group is being set up, and the inaugural meeting will be held in Craignure Village hall at 7.30 this Friday coming. We will be sending at least one delegate.

We are in the process of becoming members of the Development Trust Association. We are members of the Community Woodland Association and the Rural Housing Service.

A number of orders for Firewood have been filled on a fairly ad hoc basis. It is hoped that once this expands slightly this can provide a part income for an employee or partner.

We have taken on PC MacCuish and friends to undertake Deer Control, initially on a no fee basis. They should be able to fund this through sale of carcasses, but, once we begin replanting deer control will become more of an issue and we will need to find the cash to employ them more formally. Any adjoining land owner with deer issues should be in touch either with us or PC MacCuish.

In partnership with MICT and others we are in contact with Napier University's Centre for Timber Technology with a view to using our own and other island timber for building and other purposes.

We hosted Michael Russell MSP, Minister for the environment on March the fourth. It was a good opportunity to ensure he was aware of the various issues we face and to pick his brains. We also got an excellent steer that he is

VERY keen to see forest crofts up and running and this has given us the confidence to work towards that aim in the nearer rather than more distant future.

Dervaig Community Renewables Trust approached the Woodland Company proposing the commissioning of a feasibility study into whether it would be viable to site a community owned wind development within Langamull. The board agreed that provided a community meeting voted in favour the feasibility study could go ahead. The study is now complete and a consultation period will follow.

The feasibility study into setting up a woodfuel energy supply company has recently reported, but the board have yet to make a decision as to whether to go ahead with setting up this venture. This decision will be made shortly.

Hopefully this run down of the last 12 months covers everything in enough detail, but if you have any questions I or one of the other directors would be pleased to answer any queries you may have. Alternatively you can collar any or various of us over refreshments after the business of the meeting is over.

Business Plan

A business plan has been created using funds from The Big Lottery's Investing In Ideas Programme. The business plan will assist us when applying for future funds and as a guide for what we should be doing when. The business plan covers everything from company structure, Forest Management, Future Development, Access, Amenity and Recreation, Archaeology and Education. Copies of the plan are available on CD or by email or paper copies if appropriate, please ask Michelle.

6. Finance Report by John Morrison, Treasurer :

I am not intending to spend a long time going through the Accounts for the year to 31 July 2007 but it is worth noting why our AGM is much later this year compared to 2006. Under Charities Regulations, where income, which includes Grants, exceeds £100K, the accounts for that year require an audit to International Standards to be undertaken and this understandably requires a lot of extra work by both the Company and the Auditors (including checks on all Directors to ensure that they are not guilty of Money Laundering!!).

Our Income for the year to end July 2007 significantly exceeded the £100K figure as we had grants and our own fundraising income in order to complete purchase of the Woodlands; this cost being £340K plus legal expenses.

The accounts format, which is significantly longer and appears more complex than the previous year's accounts, is also that which is required by Companies House and OSCR (the Charities Regulator) for audited accounts. The Board took a decision to appoint R.A Clement Associates to prepare and to audit the accounts.

There are a number of paper copies available for reading, but in the interest of saving trees we have limited the print number. Electronic copies are available for anyone who wants them - if you do require an electronic copy, please register that requirement with Michelle Cowe at the end of this meeting.

In summary the year to end July 2007 saw the successful completion of purchase of the Woodlands with all bills paid, the securing of a second Animateur Grant and a Grant towards costs for preparation of a Business Plan which is essential for us to move forward with management of the woodlands and progressive implementation of objectives identified by previous consultations with you, the members.

At the year end the company had cash resources at the bank of £12,425, which was adequate to support the ongoing activities of the Company.

That is all I propose to say about the Accounts. These accounts were approved by the Board at our 20th February meeting. It is not specifically required for these Accounts to be approved by this meeting but I personally would prefer that someone propose and second the approval of the accounts and that they be minuted at this meeting as approved. The accounts were proposed by Alastair Morrison and seconded by Mike Mayo.

The next steps are for Clements to complete the Auditors report and supply a copy of the Accounts and report for filing at Companies House. They retain a copy and the remaining copies of accounts and auditor's report are returned to me for filing and for supply to OSCR together with our Annual Charities Return Document.

I would now like to make several comments re the audit. Firstly I have been impressed by the service we received from Clements. I have written to them expressing the Board's thanks for their services and would wish that we minute our thanks for a professional service and a job well done.

The audit has not shown any significant issues. The auditors however have made a number of recommendations for adoption in the future in terms of style and format for our accounting records. To date it has been possible to keep our records on a simple basis, broadly as 'Receipts and Payments' style. The Company will however soon become significantly more complex, with a corresponding need for more complex accounting records, as we begin to implement management of the woodlands and commence work on other projects e.g. housing to take a single example. This is likely to require the services of a part time book-keeper or similar as this work is outside my current abilities in terms of accounting systems and spreadsheets.

The auditors have expressed their opinion that for the year to 31st July 2008, we are unlikely to require audit of accounts for legal reasons. The Board will take a view on that as we approach the year end. It is however our intent to retain R.A. Clement Associates for preparation of our Annual Accounts and for audits if and when required and I would thus wish to propose that Clements be reappointed.

John Morrison put forward that RA Clements remain as NWMCWC auditors. This was proposed by Nick Turnbull and Seconded by Andrew Stevens.

7. Election of Directors:

As stated in the company's Articles of Association: at the second and subsequent AGMs, one third of the Elected Directors(or nearest number upwards) shall retire from office but can be re elected. Colin Morrison, Tom Addy, Chris Baker and John Morrison stood down and were re elected. The existing board were unanimously re elected by the members.

A letter of nomination was received proposing Alastair Taylor as a new director. Alastair Taylor was proposed by Ann Evans and Seconded by Andy Mortley.

8. Close:

Colin Morrison thanked everyone for coming and for their support over the past years. Thanks were given to the board for all the hard work.

James Hilder added what an amazing job had been done by NWMCWC, Well done!

Refreshments were then served allowing members the opportunity to talk with the directors in a less formal manner.

Michelle Cowe, Community Animateur

North West Mull Community Woodland Co Ltd, 1st April 2008