



## Strathlachlan Community Centre, Cowal - Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013

A networking event for those who are or wish to become involved in forests which are community owned or managed for community benefit.

### Agenda:

10.00	Arrive, tea and coffee
10.25	Welcome and Introductions - Syd House
10.30	Regular Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forestry Commission Update - Bob Frost</li><li>• FCS Seedcorn Funding – Elaine Jamieson</li><li>• Community Woodlands Association – Diane Oliver</li></ul>
11.00	Woodlands Crofts – Ian Hepburn
11.30	Our Power – Lorna Watt
11.50	Morning Q and A
12.00	Lunch
13.00	Project Update from Around Argyll <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cowal Community Task Force – Janet McKellar</li><li>• Dalmally Community Orchard – Anne Rae</li><li>• Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise – Hugh Fyfe</li></ul>
13.40	Stronafian Forest Purchase – Charles Dixon-Spain
14.15	Site Visit to Stronafian Forest
15.45	Coffee and Summing Up
16.00	Finish

### Attending:

Dennis Gower (Ardentinny Community Trust); Colin Campbell, Hugh Fife and Pete Creech (Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise); James McLuckie, Jim Wilson, Charles Dixon-Spain and Rhona Sutherland (Colintraive and Glendaruel Community Development Trust); Diane Oliver (Community Woodlands Association); Anne Rae, Catriona O’Keith and Ian McAdam (Dalmally Community Orchard); Dinah McDonald (Deer Park Community Woodland Trust); Bob Frost, Elaine Jamieson and Syd House (Forestry Commission Scotland); Janet McKellar (HELP Argyll & Bute Ltd); John Smart, Lorna Watt and Helen MacRaid (Here We Are, Cairndow); Eamon King and Jamie Chaplin-Brice (Kilfinan Community Forest Company); Gordon Gray-Stephens (Native Woods Co-op); Ian and Joan Hepburn (North West Mull Community Woodland); Graeme Murray (Sandbank Community Development Trust); Elizabeth Pryor (Scottish Natural Heritage) and Ed Tyler (Tarbert Castle Trust).

### Apologies:

Emma Cooper (Bute Community Land Company); Linda Mitchell (AliEnergy); Lorna Elliot and Sheila McLean (Argyll and the Isles LEADER); Neil Donaldson (Argyll Farm Woodland Collaboration Project); Barbara Halliday (Business Gateway); Charlie Cairns, Stewart Campbell and Alastair MacBeth, (Friends of Duchess Wood); Michaela Hunter (Dunbeag Croft); Jane Isaacson (Dunollie House); Matthew Huddleston (FCS); Christina Noble (Here We Are, Cairndow); Helen McDougall (Highlands & Islands Enterprise); Andy Robinson (RSPB); Jim Frame (Scottish Environment Protection Agency); Ian Mathieson (SCVO); Anne Paterson and Fiona Hamilton (North & West Argyll FEI Cluster Group).



**Welcome:**

Syd House, Perth & Argyll Conservancy Area Manager, Forestry Commission welcomed everyone to the third Argyll networking event.

**Forestry Commission Scotland Policy Update – Bob Frost**

Bob had previously visited Stronafian Forest 2 ½ years ago as part of the NFLS (National Forest Land Scheme) process and was delighted that the process was now complete and that Colintrave and Glendaruel Community Development Trust now (as of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013) owned the forest.

He confirmed that the land reform consultation and community empowerment bill are ongoing processes as are current NFLS proposals. He re-iterated that anyone with questions should phone him, and that he would be delighted to hear ideas about how FCS can better promote Community Seedcorn funding.

**Seedcorn Funding – Elaine Jamieson**

This presentation is available online at <http://youtu.be/peknV4X3FKk>

Elaine highlighted the projects currently receiving/ in discussion with FCS re Seedcorn funding and emphasised that FCS is keen to receive further applications for both the Seedcorn Funding and Community Seedcorn Funding to ensure that Argyll continues to utilise the fund well. With the positive feedback received from the Wood of Our Own events it is likely that FCS will continue to fund CWA to run some more during 2013-14.

Please get applications in to Elaine by May 2013 as this will enable the Perth and Argyll Conservancy to monitor spend and ensure maximisation of the funds available.

**Community Woodlands Association Update – Diane Oliver**

Diane highlighted some forthcoming CWA events including:

- 7-8 March, Wood Product Development, Lochgilphead
- 9 March, Intro to Charcoal Making, Loch Lomond
- 21 March – Social Enterprise Exchange
- 23 March, Woodland Survey and Management, Fintry Development Trust
- 27-28 April – Growing Woodlands Seminar, Torridon
- 2,3 and 10 May – Train the Trainer, Perth
- 25-26 May – Greenwood Weekend at Wooplaw, Borders
- 24-25 August – CWA celebrates 10 years with a conference at Sabhal Mhor Ostaig, Skye

**Woodlands Crofts – Ian Hepburn**

Ian kindly stood in at the last minute and gave his presentation about Woodland Crofts which he had given at the CWA Woodland Living seminar at Mugdock Country Park the day before. The presentation is available to view online at <http://youtu.be/rmj4MVNfalU>

Ian emphasised the importance of the robust and open selection process for their crofts and safeguarding that the agreements between the Woodland Company and the crofters ensured that the Company could not be perceived as profiteering.

### **'Our Power' – Lorna Watt**

This presentation is available to view online <http://youtu.be/DZ0Urf5wvuE>

Here We Are, Cairndow undertook a survey about power supplies in their area and ran a competition at the local primary school on power consumption followed up with energy saving measures and an exhibition. They then assessed power options in the area and undertook a feasibility study with funding from Community Energy Scotland. Solar and wind proved insufficient and hydro unviable at the time. Biomass was taken forward in partnership with a local smolt farm. As there was no wood chip supplier in the area Here We Are established a business – Our Power CIC opened in 2007 and the boiler in 2008. Our Power involves partnering with Lakeland Smolts and Fish and Chips boilers. Our Power has now paid off the loan taken to set it up and are now looking at installing a drying floor and portable drying boiler. They are also continuing to investigate hydro options on the Merk burn and have set up a partnership between here we Are and CR Foster (local hydro developers). Here We Are can be found online at [www.hereweare-uk.com](http://www.hereweare-uk.com).

### **Morning Q and A**

Discussions centred on the range of activity outlined in the North West Mull crofters' business plans; leasing FCS land and renewables including community investment opportunities

### **Cowal Community Taskforce – Janet McKellar**

This presentation is available to view online at [youtu.be/dH2hHO5muBQ](http://youtu.be/dH2hHO5muBQ)

HELP Argyll and Bute started in 1999 as a housing support organisation and covering Dunoon and Rothesay. The Community Task Force established following an application to Community Jobs Scotland to provide 6 x 9 month employment opportunities. Requiring a minimum of 4 places to run the Task Force it took 6 months to negotiate and after interviewing 10 people, HELP negotiated a further place and was able to appoint 5 people to the posts with another of the interviewees securing a CJS funded post at the local office. The remit of the Task Force is to provide a supportive practical resource to local community groups and the team started in January 2013. To date they have undertaken a range of tasks including community hall painting, fundraising events, litter pickups in various locations and establishing a sensory garden.

### **Dalmally Community Orchard – Anne Rae**

This project potentially covers Glenorchy and Inishail Parish District which almost surrounds the lower waters of Loch Awe. The group aim to develop a database of local orchards, improve local biodiversity and create new orchard areas. They have established links with Dalmally Primary School and seek to link quality produce and healthy eating. The group has been researching tree varieties, had a visit from John Hancox of Scottish Orchards and visited a school orchard in Tarbert. They have now secured some glebe land which they have cleared of scrub, installed a deer fence and are working with the school and Dalmally Community Centre who have also set aside some land for the project.

The group are all volunteers and a few weeks ago held a community day to plant new fruit trees – purchased with money donated by the local community. Some pictures and event notifications are available online at [www.facebook.com/pages/Loch-Awe-Connections/222498191168741](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Loch-Awe-Connections/222498191168741)



### **Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise – Hugh Fife**

This presentation is available online at [youtu.be/F3jtpfTSh1c](https://youtu.be/F3jtpfTSh1c)

The Argyll and Bute Hospital is 150 years old this year and Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise (BWE) manages the policy woodlands through an agreement with the NHS. Initially BWE cleared out areas, created an all abilities path, brought in a milling machine and used their own timber for benches, signage and interpretation. BWE run a small local wood fuel business which brings in around £2-3k pa. They also tender for contracts and are currently installing and repairing paths. Other enterprise activities include making tree guards, tree and plant nursery, CDs and cards. All of these are based around their core business of running therapeutic activities for people with poor mental health, addiction issues, learning difficulties, hospital patients and dementia patients from the nearby Mid Argyll Community Hospital.

After last year's storms, BWE has now milled much of the windblow however, now requires to build storage to ensure quality and value is retained. There are changes coming at the hospital as well with reorganisation and potentially new hospital facilities.

Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise can be found online at [www.blarbuiewoodland.org](http://www.blarbuiewoodland.org) and [www.facebook.com/pages/Blarbuie-Woodland-Enterprise/305698996135299](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Blarbuie-Woodland-Enterprise/305698996135299)

### **Stronafian Forest Purchase – Charles Dixon-Spain**

This presentation is available online at [youtu.be/hisaO3XeVKU](https://youtu.be/hisaO3XeVKU)

Charles outlined the history and development of Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust. The Trust has currently employs a local development officer and is recruiting for a forest project officer. The Trust is account managed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Now that the forest purchase has gone through the Group will be busy – the Development Officer will now begin taking forward other projects for the Trust and the new Forest Sub Group will lead on managing and developing the forest. The Trust has sublet the commercial forest management to a private tenant but will be taking forward a range of projects including 35 hectares zoned for 6-8 crofts, linking the area from the crofts to a new amenity area, mountain biking, affordable homes. Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust can be found online at [cgdt.org](http://cgdt.org).



**Site Visit to Stronafian Forest:**

In glorious sunshine the group visited what will be the two main entrances to the forest - the first, across the road from Glendaruel village and the second, just over the hill from Stronafian village. Work will begin in the near future to develop public access and take forward short and long term projects and aspirations which include path networks, interpretation, timber management and housing.



Looking over to Colintraive and the Hotel (currently closed)



Entering the forest from Colintraive village



Overlooking the burn



Pretty woodlands



Arriving at the Glendaruel 'end'



Looking over to potential housing zones

More photos are available online at the CWA Flickr site [flic.kr/s/aHsjEzi5Lb](https://www.flickr.com/photos/cwa/)



**Feedback Summary:**

General verbal feedback was very positive and 12 feedback forms were completed. All felt that the event met their expectations. Delegates were asked to score the following (none scored poor):

	Organisation	Location	Venue	Catering	Speakers	Site Visit
very good	12	8	8	12	10	7
good	1	4	5	1	1	2
fair		1				

Delegates felt they gained the following benefits:

- It was fact finding for me and I gained a lot of good information
- A greater awareness of the outcomes required for applications
- A greater awareness of community woodland projects in Argyll & Bute
- I feel well informed and inspired
- Learned about community woodlands
- Excellent networking opportunities
- Interesting and stimulating discussion
- Broadening learning curve and Diversity
- Always learning! Speakers good, to the point and learned more or increased my knowledge of funding, planning, current state of hydro power development and more
- Catching up with what is happening with my local woodland, networking with others
- Promoting SNH's community action grants
- Meeting people
- Networking, catching up with other projects, learning about new projects, learning about funding
- I'm new to community forests to it was good to hear other people's stories and experiences
- Understanding more about CWA and how FCS play a big role in the development of community woodlands

Next meeting agenda suggestions included:

- How to work together more
- Sharing expertise, skills and knowledge
- Updates and Q&A sessions
- Something on funding for community woodland projects – sources/ requirements/ process and methodology
- Knydart seems to be a tough cookie given the 'island' feel – holding a meeting here would boost morale and see if ideas can be raised
- Joined up thinking

All would recommend others to take part in similar events, because:

- V. informative
- Need to widen experience, exchange views + info
- Think outside the box ie one's own perspective
- You can't fail but learn something!
- Good networking
- Great to meet other people in similar situations and pass knowledge/ experience

Delegates would like further training in:

- Resilience (economic – local)
- Management/ governance
- More weekend events
- Forest design planning

Other general comments included:

- Guy Elder or any other very skilled wood craftsman could maybe give a talk/ demo on diverse uses and trades for woodland products
- Well worth attending, very informative and enjoyable
- I thought the venue, content and speakers well all very well chosen, thanks for your efforts in organising the day. (Nice soup and sandwiches too!)