



## Conflict Resolution Workshops

**Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern, Argyll  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**The Netley Centre, Highland Hospice, Inverness  
Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014**



*Conflict resolution is about consensus building*

### **Synopsis:**

Many community groups will at some time face conflict either within their group or the wider community and this can have devastating effects on the work of the group and people's personal lives. Managing expectations, staff and resources can be challenging and time consuming for volunteers and hard pressed staff.

Following demand after a short workshop on Conflict Resolution held at the CWA Conference 2013, CWA teamed up with Highlands and Islands Enterprise to deliver one-day workshops exploring the issues around conflict and looking at ways to resolve them.

### **Workshop Objective:**

The workshops covered ideas and solutions including:

- How to get the late majority involved
- The surprise which creates the kick-back
- Spending time analysing the reaction
- Finding the appropriate spokesperson
- Getting to yes
- Finding sources of help and techniques
- If consensus is not possible - moving to an acceptance of the community's decisions
- How to acquire the skills.

James Hilder of An Roth Associates led the workshop. An Roth Associates is a social enterprise specialising in work with social enterprises and charitable boards and An Roth Trading Ltd is a trading subsidiary of Mull & Iona Community Trust ([www.mict.co.uk](http://www.mict.co.uk)). James has extensive experience of working and volunteering in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and has run several successful workshops for CWA.



## Attendance:

Charles Dixon-Spain	Colintraive and Glendaruel Trust
Nikki Woolf	Colintraive and Glendaruel Trust
Lorna Schofield	Knoydart Forest Trust
Panagiotis Pliatsikas	ALLenergy
Vicki Hendrick	ALLenergy
Jean Maskell	Argyll Mausoleum
Heather Craig	Craignish
Sandy Mackilligan	Craignish Community Company
Morvern Gibson	Mull and Iona Community Trust
Cally Fleming	Mull and Iona Community Trust
Diane Oliver	Community Woodlands Association
Catherine Hill	South Loch Awe-side Community Company
Anne Rae	South Loch Awe-side Community Company
Emily Wilkins	Mull and Iona Ranger Service
Lucy Sumsion	NFU Scotland
Monica Brooks	An Tearman
Cat Newsheller	GRAB (LORI Project)
John McGurk	GRAB (LORI Project)
Jenny Allen	Ardroy Outdoor Centre
Pam Noble	Highland and Islands Enterprise
Brigitte Geddes	Gearrchoille Community Wood Ardgay
Suzann Barr	Abriachan Forest Trust
Margaret Davidson	Abriachan Forest Trust
Chris Marsh	Sleat Community Trust
Alison Macleod	Applecross Community Company
Valerie Hodgkinson	Applecross Community Company
Jean Barnett	Dunnet Forestry Trust
Diane Campbell	DTAS
Viv Halcrow	Coigach – Assynt Living Landscape (CALL)
David Smith	Evanton Wood Community Company
Adrian Clark	Evanton Wood Community Company
Serena Mason	Badluarach & Durnamuck Community Woodlands
Gillian Meighan	Ullapool Community Trust
Lee Heaney	Ullapool Community Trust
Jan Breckenridge	Ullapool Community Trust
Cormac Seekings	Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Woodland
Jim Prentice	North Kessock Community Pier
Agnes Bell	West Glenmoriston Community Company
Lynne Bannister	Partnerships for Wellbeing





Time was taken to talk about change management and maintaining effective committee working: setting proper agendas, meeting skills training for new board members, agreeing protocols and codes of conducts for boards, building relationships, learning to recognise and accommodating diverse 'characters' on a Board and – above all – the importance of separating *personality* from *position* when a difference in opinion is becoming apparent.

The afternoon sessions concentrated on minimising and dealing with conflict. This included approaches to negotiation, negotiation tactics and integrative negotiation. Looking at separating the people from the problems and identifying what is wrong and what approaches can be taken before following up with actions.

Throughout the sessions, workshop attendees were broken into groups to work through case studies – nicely illustrating how apparently straight-forward community projects and relationships can become complex and unworkable. The groups had a chance to employ their newly-taught skills in analysing key factors leading to the current state of affairs and consequently proposing different ways in which impasse might have been avoided if managed differently.

For those with previous experience of business or project management training, a number of the techniques and skills that James used to help analyse and address issues were familiar: the Kubler-Ross Change Curve, using Stakeholder Analysis to analyse and prioritise efforts to bolster support for Change/a project, Fisher's 7 Elements of Negotiation Skills, with Fisher & Ury's seminal 1981 book "Getting to Yes" being frequently name checked and drawn upon for useful techniques for consensus building and Win-Win negotiating.

Following the event, the PowerPoint slides and handouts were circulated to the delegates.

**Booklist:**

Getting to Yes – Fisher & Ury

King Arthur's Round Table – David Perkins



**Feedback:**

Argyll	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
Location:			2	4	9
Organisation:				4	11
Catering:				2	13
Facilities:				4	11
<b>Inverness</b>					
Location:				10	9
Organisation:				8	11
Catering:			1	11	8
Facilities:				11	9

All delegates said that the event met their expectations.

*Comments re expectations:-*

- Conflict, I have in the past used the avoidance technique, 3 times in 5 years, consisting of 6 months off work, each time using the committee and my boss to sort it out.
- More focus on the conflict resolution part would be good, maybe a bit too much on running meetings
- Flagged a little in the afternoon and ran out of time – spent too long for ‘meetings’ in the morning

*Delegates wanted to take part because:*

- Skills we believe we will need in the new organisation
- To help in Board meetings that haven’t been going well. To help with conflicts at work
- Recommendation from line manager
- My boss asked me to attend, but I feel that what was talked about had a minimal affect on what I do for a living. If I wanted to join a committee it would be great information and would help me on my way.
- My boss signed me up for it
- Help with conflict management
- Unresolved conflicts
- To increase understanding of conflict resolution, especially with regard to community organisation
- Develop skills
- Tips on how to deal with any problems which might arrive in the future – fore warned is fore armed
- Better awareness of potential problems and solutions in community engagement
- Interested in community groups and how to avoid/ deal with conflict, as tends to happen. Have been a community trust director in the past
- Help me in my work dealing with land managers and areas of conflict
- To learn more about the subject, develop techniques and network with other groups
- Some conflict issues in past, expecting more!
- To gain skills in how to manage situations where conflict arises more confidently
- Take the stress from Board meetings
- Hoping to participate more in community meetings and to be more successful than before in contracting to community groups, decisions to understand better the management of conflict
- Useful for me as a director and studying ‘Developing Communities’ module
- Carrying out community consultations

- I work in a community group where negotiation and consensus building is an almost weekly (and ongoing) activity
- To help give myself perspective & recognise what is happening in the communities I work in
- Conflict is a recurring event within managing people & I directly manage expectations of a team who then manage expectations of public – so tips to embrace better practice is very helpful
- There are many ongoing conflicts & potential conflicts in my area. I wanted to learn how I might better deal with this to a positive end without confrontation, exasperation & associated stress
- Personal development & better communication
- To help identify and resolve issues around the community ownership of our wood
- To help me think about ways in which I can support community groups facing conflict
- I wanted to learn more about resolving conflict within the community and to encourage doubters
- I know it will be useful in different aspects of life – anticipating / reflecting
- To give me more insight into dealing with potential conflicts that may arise both as a director and in my work
- Need negotiating skills for development project
- Recommended by others from CWA conference, assist my role as committee member of community woodland and other organisations
- To manage effectively, avoid conflict where possible & handle it well when it arises. Ultimately to save time and make more progress for the Trust
- Conflict situation limiting progress with work
- To learn how to cope better with conflict and other stressful situations
- To be prepared for any potential conflicts in my new role

*Benefits gained include:*

- A good drawing together of a number of important aspects of the topic
- Good summary. Inspired me to read up on more conflict resolution/ negotiation
- Everyone has different objectives and I feel as a bike mechanic/ site assistant, most of this discussion hasn't done anything that can help me with my job
- Knowledge of how to diffuse situations and look at things in different ways to reach consensus
- Will be able to deal with conflict in the workplace in a non-confrontational manner to achieve the results I desire
- Learned techniques I could use
- Greater insight
- Focus on the most important aspects and techniques
- Really helpful day – lots of useful pointers and info
- Was able to reflect on situations in the past and how could have dealt with them better, also learnt new skills
- Better understanding of issues and processes
- Networking with other groups; understanding that there are many common issues amongst different community groups – solace in this fact. New techniques for dealing with conflict
- Better understanding of importance of preparation and understanding of the needs of those involved
- Mechanisms to deal with conflict situations & not avoid them, that it is important to stick to the issues

- Gained a framework on which to base relationships which may result in conflict (that may help prevent conflict) & ideas on how to deal with conflict when it arises & possibly not take it so personally
- More confidence in techniques & approaches to deal with situations & will general events
- Some new tools for the box, good ideas, a refresher and new connections for networking
- Picked up more approaches, good interaction, analysis of own experience
- Tools to use to diffuse conflict & prevent situations becoming difficult
- A structure to follow when facing possible conflicts
- Feel more confident about tackling issues
- I've had more insight into ways of negotiating and reaching consensus which will be helpful in my daily job
- Clearer understanding of how to manage conflict issues; acceptance that conflict can be healthy as long as consensus of the issues can be reached; useful networks
- A better understanding of how to avoid confrontation
- Valuable to hear different approaches and that conflict is a common thread
- Some practical pointers – especially good in handouts & wider context of my own research via TED talks & literature also useful. Great as always to discuss with others and meet
- Some perspective & understanding, especially around separating issues from positions
- Good to share relevant & mutual experiences with others. Clear, logical, helpful guidance from James Hilder in resolving conflict & networking consensually
- A better understanding of how to engage a group and respond to problems
- Many more strings to my bow & now understand how to hide any poisoned arrows
- Understand more about group governance, procedure & participation theory
- Understand more about how group organisations see themselves and the world. Met a variety of interesting people and their views
- Insight into dealing with conflicts of interest

*Will do with the skills and experience gained:*

- Disseminate around the organisation and put some into practice on a personal level
- Will be able to plan strategy at work better
- Put them to good use in my volunteering and paid work
- Hopefully will achieve a more cooperative work environment
- Use them in the negotiations related to my project
- Put into practice! Pass on to others
- Lots to think about and apply
- Use them!
- Try to apply them in practice. Recommend them to the board
- Hopefully won't have to use them
- Hope to become involved in community groups in the future
- Put them into practice
- Use them to improve the capacity of our organisations to manage conflict and therefore better meet the needs of the community but also the organisations win/win
- Put them into practice (if needed)
- Will improve my relationship with my board. Renewed my determination to make improving communication a top priority
- Implement some and disseminate to other board members
- Put them to work in the Trust, at home and at work

- Committee positions – various
- Use them on the development of community projects
- Integrate them into my work
- Much will be kept in the back pocket and taken out before/ when required
- Try to use them in dealings with relationships in the community and report on today's experience to our board
- Use them in my dealings with client groups. Pass on info to colleagues
- Take them back to the community
- I will put them to immediate use in my dealings with others both personal & professional
- Try and put this into practice & follow up references given
- Employ the teachings
- Use them in daily in my job
- Use it in public meetings, board meetings, etc
- Share with colleagues and use at meetings
- Apply them in practice and academically
- Maybe be a bit more effective and less reactive
- Apply to group and public meetings

*CWA were requested to:*

- A follow up course/ similar course
- Send notes and booklist of seminar and the powerpoint
- Run more so that more board members/ staff could attend and/or do a workshop focusing on what to do when in the midst of conflict
- Offer more & support with info
- Spread the training opportunity elsewhere
- Further sharing of good and bad case studies
- Canvas members to find out if more conflict resolution seminars are needed
- Email the PPT slides please
- Support groups and offer information on conflict resolution
- Share the info & feedback
- Keep this programme of events going and change them from time to time
- Assistance with grant funding applications

*Would recommend others to take part because:*

- If it is down to projects that are starting up then yes, but if it's down to one to one problems at work, then no
- The more people who have good negotiating skills the better, especially if we deal with them in the future
- It is important to have a good understanding of the issues in order to succeed
- Very practical
- Valuable training
- Because these issues are relevant to all community work
- Interesting
- Good insight into how to effectively manage situations where conflict may arise
- Important in all areas of work
- Increase cohesiveness of decision making process
- Of great benefit
- Useful
- Especially some of my colleague and community facing people

- It would be valuable for other community board member, management groups, committees to also have this perspective
- Useful exercise for everyone involved in boards and committees
- It offers time and guidance in working through a structured approach to conflict resolution
- Worth learning about
- Useful, free, networking, skills and knowledge all worthwhile
- Training improves effectiveness
- The more people with these skills the better

*Other training requested:*

- One to one conflict at work
- Grant application writing
- Woodland management
- Working with people/ managing expectations/ project management type things – always
- Marketing, promotional techniques
- Perhaps something adding to this course – case studies – working ‘through’ conflicts
- Other governance issues
- Broader project management training. Committee and board working protocols
- Boards – best practice
- Ways of going ‘forward’ in Applecross to move towards a real community owned woodland
- Coracle building, crafty workshops – enterprise support
- Project management, meeting management, people management, good community communications
- Funding applications. Study visits
- Community engagement, funding

*Other comments included:*

- James was his usual entertaining, interesting anecdotal self
- Always find CWA events useful. Also good meeting old friends and new people
- Great! Many thanks. Start and end times on the leaflets please. James was a great tutor
- Good day – made me reflective and gave me confidence in some of the things I do
- Very well organised and delivered with humour. Well managed by excellent facilitator – great trainer!
- Thanks to James for useful input and helpful guidance
- Thanks – great seminar and great food
- Thank you very much!
- Very good, thanks
- Excellent workshop, thanks
- Useful training
- Good pace to the day – humorous
- Useful workshop with networking
- Enjoyable and informative day
- Great day, thank you
- A stimulating day – thank you
- Uncomfortable chairs (Argyll)
- Really enjoyed day, thank you
- Very useful, thank you for organising
- Overall a good day
- Excellent day, thank you
- Very informative, great day, thanks