



**Dalmally Community Centre – Tuesday 8 March 2016**

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**      *Arrival and coffee*
- 10.25**      **Welcome** – Jon Hollingdale CWA
- 10.30**      **FCS Funding update** – Elaine Jamieson, Forestry Commission Scotland
- 10.50**      **FES update** – Craig Millar, Forest Enterprise Scotland
- 11.10**      **Scottish Land Fund update** – Helen Macdougall, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- 11.25**      *Coffee break*
- 11.45**      **South West Mull & Iona Development** – John Clare
- 12.00**      **Dunollie House** – Melanie Davies
- 12.15**      **North West Mull Community Woodland Company** – Malcolm Ward
- 12.30**      **Kilfinan Community Forest** – Sara Maclean
- 12.45**      **Argyll Small Woods Cooperative** – Gordon Gray Stephens
- 13.00**      *Lunch*
- 13.45**      **Glenorchy & Innishail Community Orchard – Site Visit**
- 15.15**      *Coffee break*
- 15.25**      **Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust** – Ian Hepburn
- 15.40**      **CWA Update & Discussion** – Jon Hollingdale
- 16.00**      *Finish*



**Attending:**

|          |                  |  |
|----------|------------------|--|
| Gordon   | Gray Stephens    | Argyll Green Woodworkers Association                 |
| Pete     | Creech           | Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise                         |
| Tony     | Carter           | Bute Community Land Company                          |
| Jon      | Hollingdale      | Community Woodlands Association                      |
| Douglas  | Locke            | Cormonachan Woodlands Association                    |
| Liz      | Evans            | Cormonachan Woodlands Association                    |
| Melanie  | Davies           | Dunollie House                                       |
| Craig    | Miller           | Forest Enterprise                                    |
| Elaine   | Jamieson         | Forestry Commission Scotland                         |
| James    | Wilkin           | Glenorchy & Innishail Community Council              |
| Janet    | Buchanan         | Glenorchy & Innishail Community Orchard              |
| Jim      | Moir             | HELP (Argyll and Bute) Limited                       |
| Sara     | Maclean          | Kilfinan Community Forest Company                    |
| Ian      | Hepburn          | North West Mull Community Woodland Company           |
| Malcolm  | Ward             | North West Mull Community Woodland Company           |
| Helen    | Macdougall       | Scottish Land Fund Adviser                           |
| Catriona | O'Keeffe         | South Loch Awe-side Community Company                |
| Martin   | O'Keeffe         | South Loch Awe-side Community Company                |
| John     | Clare            | South West Mull and Iona Development/ Tiroran Forest |
| Ellen    | Cattanach        | Strathfillan Community Development Trust             |
| Kelly    | Clapperton-Bates | Strathfillan Community Development Trust             |
| David    | Herriot          | WoodWatch Heritage Bute                              |

**Welcome:**

Jon Hollingdale, Chief Executive of the Community Woodlands Association, welcomed everyone – especially those who hadn't been to one of these events before - to the ninth Argyll networking event, funded by Forestry Commission Scotland. The aim of the day was to provide an opportunity for groups engaged in community woodlands to network and share experience of their projects.

**FCS Funding Update – Elaine Jamieson, Policy, Support and Development Officer, FCS**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/sC44XD-yyDk>

Elaine gave an overview of the Forestry Grant Scheme, focussing on the following schemes:

- Woodland Improvement Grants (WIG) Woodlands in and Around Towns (WIAT) which supports the sustainable management of urban woodland for public access. Groups falling within the WIAT scope must be woodlands within 1km of a settlement which is greater than 2,000 people. To apply groups must have appropriate supporting information including the WIAT Urban Woodland Management Plan and WIAT Operational Plan. The fund is for capital items. Elaine noted that the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme "Improving Public Access" includes funding for capital items similar to WIAT, but within rural areas (outwith settlements with a population >3000). Paths would usually be expected to part of a larger network (e.g. core paths).
- Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF) WIAT aims to support the sustainable management of urban woodland for public access and is based on annual payments.



- SMF Rural Woods aims to support the costs of maintenance of public access in woodlands with standardised payments for up to 5 years. Applicants must have an approved Forest Plan for woodlands > 100ha and an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan for areas <100 ha.

Forestry Grant Scheme information is available online at

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/grants-and-regulations/forestry-grants> and via the Rural Payments and Services website

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/>

Elaine highlighted two other funds managed by Forestry Commission Scotland.

- The FCS Community Fund which supports community groups and projects with projects which facilitate greater use of woods by people for health, wellbeing and community benefit. The Perth & Argyll budget for 2015/16 was £60,000 and c. £57k was allocated across 20 projects: Elaine gave a brief description of each to demonstrate the range of projects which can be supported.
- FCS also has a Seedcorn Fund, which has a small budget aimed at helping to facilitate projects that fall outwith the Community Fund remit e.g. materials and tools. In 2015/16 14 projects were supported with a total of £24,770: again Elaine detailed the projects funded.

Budgets for the 2016/17 Community Fund and Seedcorn Fund have not yet been finalised, but it is anticipated that these funds will be available again, perhaps with a greater emphasis on delivering Scottish Government targets.

Elaine can be contacted at [elaine.jamieson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.jamieson@forestry.gsi.gov.uk). More information about Forestry Commission Scotland can be found on their website <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ForestryCommissionScotland>

### **Forest Enterprise Scotland – Craig Millar, Communities Coordinator, FES**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/8WkhgkBBHZs>

Forest Enterprise Scotland is an agency of Forestry Commission Scotland and manages the National Forest Estate (NFE). Craig is working with a colleague, Rebecca Carr, to update FES's processes and procedures for working with communities in the light of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act which was passed last year and will come into force later in 2016. (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>)

The Act amends the Community Right to Buy provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and gives eligible community bodies the right to apply to buy, lease, manage or simply use land and buildings owned by Scottish public authorities. A consultation on the regulations which accompany the Act will begin shortly, and guidance for community bodies and public authorities will be published in the summer.

FES use a four-fold typology of community involvement from (in increasing order of community responsibility over land) permissions to management agreement to leases to ownership. The majority of activity takes place through a well-established permission system – Forest Districts may process 100 a year – and at the other end of the spectrum community ownership through the National Forest Land Scheme has a good track record. Whether a management agreement or a lease is more appropriate usually needs to be assessed on a case by case basis.

**Scottish Land Fund Update – Helen Macdougall, Senior Development Manager, HIE**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/jziAMsTnEwc>

Helen gave an overview of the Scottish Land Fund, which uses Scottish Government funding and is delivered in partnership by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Big Lottery. HIE can also support community groups through its Maximising Community Assets programme.

The second Scottish Land Fund, which ran from June 2012 to March 2016, supported 54 projects (including 8 community woodlands) across rural (communities with <10,000 people) Scotland, investing £9.76M to buy a total of 30,000 hectares.

The new Scottish Land Fund, to be launched later this month, has a £10 million annual budget and will run from 2016 – 2020. It will be open to community led/controlled organisations with a social purpose and open membership within a defined area across Scotland, including those in urban areas.

It will fund the acquisition of a range of assets to enable local economic development; support amenity, tourism and heritage development and provide key local services: shop, fuel stations and land for affordable housing. It will also fund additional assistance at the initial stages, legal fees associated with purchase and support following acquisition of the asset.

**South West Mull and Iona Development – John Clare, Forest Officer, SWMID**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/QTViXzjm9Q0>

John gave an overview of Tiroran forest on Mull - c. 790 ha – which the community has recently purchased from FCS. The bulk of the funding came from the Scottish Land Fund, but there was also a loan of £200k from Social Investment Scotland that must be repaid within five years. SWMID have contracted Tilhill to carry out the first phase of the harvesting work: the timber will leave the island from the floating pier at Pennyghael.



The forest is largely comprised of coniferous plantation: notably some good quality Sitka spruce stands, some Larch which is affected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and some generally poor quality Lodgepole pine. There are also areas of broadleaved woodland and open ground habitats, and significant archaeological and environmental interest, including white tailed eagles.

The key task for SWMID is to balance the commercial management of Tiroran, which will provide a sustainable income, with community involvement in the forest through history and archaeology, arts and crafts, education and volunteering – careful zoning is required!

You can find out more about SWMID on their website at <http://swmid.co.uk> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/southwestmullandionadevelopment>

**Dunollie Woods for People – Melanie Davies, Community Engagement Officer, Dunollie House**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/jfJlUOER0MI>

Melanie described some of the community access and engagement projects that have been taking place at Dunollie. These have included a series of woodland workshops, covering woodland instruments, den building and woodland flags, bug nest building and tribal costumes.

They have commissioned a beautiful fairy table, and compiled a book of faerie tales, which have proved very popular with early years groups. They have also been working with the additional needs group from Oban High School.



You can find out more about Dunollie at <http://www.dunollie.org/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DunollieOban>

**North West Mull Community Woodland Company – Malcolm Ward, Development Manager, NWMCWC**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/lWiO-oMZkzA>

Malcolm gave an update on recent developments at North West Mull. The review of the five year forest plan is in progress, each of the 9 woodland crofts has their own plan: these are included as annexes to the main document.

Last autumn they were visited by the BBC Landward team who were interested in the woodland crofts and the Island Woodfuels business, which has benefitted significantly from the acquisition of a small lorry, which allows the delivery of logs in cubic metre vented bags. The next phase will be the construction of a drying shed for wood, which will also facilitate indoor storage of equipment.

NWMCWC have also been taking forward various social and environmental projects: path and bridge building to improve access through the forest, supporting archaeological investigations, and joining Mull Eagle Watch.



You can find out more about NWMWCW at <http://nwmullwoodland.co.uk/> and at <https://www.facebook.com/nwmcwc>

**Kilfinan Community Forest Company – Sara Maclean, Forest Access Co-ordinator, KCFC.**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/7ihAiyxDwXM>

Kilfinan having been making progress on several fronts: the hydro scheme has had a number of snags but has been running at 140% of its estimated output after a winter with 180% of expected rainfall, and the first three families have been invited to take up woodland crofts.

Sara's role is focussed on developing community use of the forest; this has included working with eight young people through their Youth Skills Development programme, and trialling different approaches to volunteering by hosting sociable events for all ages.



Initiatives include a tree seed project with Kew, involvement with Branching Out Argyll, working with Froglife to create ponds, a "Hydro Heritage" project building on the historic use of the water resource in the forest, and a partnership with Tighnabruaich Primary School, who are very keen on Forest School.

You can find out more about KCFC at <http://www.kilfinancommunityforest.co.uk/> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Kilfinan-Community-Forest-145208138905268>

### **Argyll Small Woods Cooperative – Gordon Gray Stephens, ASWC**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/wqFQ4VsU52Y>

The Argyll Small Woods Cooperative, which grew out of the Kintyre Farm Wood Pilot Project, was established to encourage and support small scale woodland management. Membership costs £50/year and is open to woodland owners and workers whose primary purpose is to generate sustainable income from small woodlands.

They organised 4 chainsaw courses in 2015, and held a series of events with the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, looking at agroforestry, timber transport, woodland grazing and farm woodlands.

ASWC is one of the pilot groups in the Making Local Woods Work project, and are looking to develop their business plan. They are piloting the myForest woodland management planning system being developed by the Sylva Foundation and will be hosting a hardwood timber marketing event at Luss.

ASWC's website is under construction. The Secretary, Neil Donaldson, can be contacted at [mail@donenvironmental.co.uk](mailto:mail@donenvironmental.co.uk)

### **Site visit to Dalmally Community Orchard & Woodland Garden – Janet Buchanan**

Janet led delegates on a site visit to the community orchard and woodland garden, which is located the Glebe by Glenorchy Kirk, within a broadleaf woodland adjacent to the River Orchy. Community Orchards have also been created in Bridge of Orchy, at Dalmally School and Dalmally Golf Club.

As well as an orchard with a variety of fruit trees and bushes there is a children's play area, a bird hide, a wooden shelter, picnic tables and chairs plus a woodland walk with a couple of bug hotels and a bog garden..



You can find out more at <http://www.loch-awe.com/local-groups/community-orchard/> and <https://www.facebook.com/GlenorchyandInnishailCommunityOrchard>

### **Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust – Ian Hepburn, Chair, ACT**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/5frkb7EiAhE>

Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust is a partnership of Forestry Commission Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, NHS Highland and the communities of Argyll, established to care for, enjoy and benefit from and encourage investment in the environment, as well as sharing ideas, increasing opportunities and supporting existing networks.

Key projects are ACT Argyll Ltd, tackling *Rhododendron ponticum*, the development of Secret Coast Trails and Long Distance Routes, and Branching Out (a partnership programme between NHS, FCS and community organisations providing woodland activities on referral for mental health services).

ACT Argyll Ltd delivers environmental contracts for registered social landlords and others, whilst offering training and skills provision and work experience placements. There are currently two teams, based at Oban and Helensburgh, each with a mix of paid staff and short term Job Centre Plus assistances. Placements are highly sought after.

You can find out more about at <http://www.act-now.org.uk/en> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/actargyll>

### CWA Update & Discussion – Jon Hollingdale, CEO, CWA

Jon updated the group on a number of CWA projects and events.

- **The 2016 CWA Conference** will be at Findhorn, Moray, 1/2 October.
- CWA hopes to run 2 more **A Wood of Our Own networking events** in the next financial year, subject to funding being available through the FCS Community Fund.
- CWA has produced a report on options for **community groups sharing resources**, the initial stimulated for which was the interest amongst groups in and around Argyll in a “shared forester”. We will be following this up shortly with a questionnaire to these groups looking for additional details as to what they require.
- CWA has also been working with FCS and others on guidance for **community groups working with the private sector**, in which a number of Argyll groups feature as case studies. The report is with the FCS designers and will be published soon.
- CWA are partners in a UK-wide, Lottery funded project called **Making Local Woods Work**, which will, over the next 2+ years, support at least 10 Scottish groups to develop their business ideas. The full list of groups will be published very shortly. The project will also support training events and the production of guidance which will be available to all groups.

Jon closed the event by thanking all those who attended, especially the speakers, Janet Buchanan for her help in organising the event, our hosts at Dalmally Community Centre, our caterers Lagganbuie Farm Shop and our funders Forestry Commission Scotland.

The Community Woodlands Association is a membership organisation established in 2003 to support and promote community woodland ownership and management in Scotland.

You can find out more at [www.communitywoods.org](http://www.communitywoods.org) and at [www.facebook.com/Communitywoods](http://www.facebook.com/Communitywoods). The CWA website contains a range of information including back copies of all the A Wood of Our Own reports (<http://www.communitywoods.org/resources-details.php?id=16>).

## Feedback Summary

General verbal feedback was very positive and 12 completed feedback forms were received. Delegates were asked to score the following (no-one scored anything as poor or very poor):

|           | Organisation | Location | Venue | Catering | Speakers | Site Visit |
|-----------|--------------|----------|-------|----------|----------|------------|
| very good | 9            | 10       | 10    | 9        | 10       | 9          |
| good      | 3            | 2        | 2     | 3        | 2        | 2          |
| fair      |              |          |       |          |          | 1          |

All 12 delegates who returned their feedback forms felt the event met their expectations, and all 12 would recommend taking part in such an event to others.

Benefits gained from attending the event included:

- Networking (7)
- Inspiration and ideas (4)
- Information on funding (4)
- News and contacts for projects (4)

Suggested locations for the next event included:

- Mull (3)
- Cormonachan(2)
- Dunollie(2)
- Lochgoilhead (2)
- Dalmally

Suggestions for inclusion on a future agenda included:

- Updates plus 'expert' from another area either a specific project or subject;
- Similar to today, I like the woods updates;
- Business development; alternative funding for projects;
- Getting money is always of paramount importance;
- Feedback from some community woodlands;
- Good varied agenda – Rhododendron eradication;
- How to get car parking funding;
- I think the present format works well;
- Nature conservation in woodland;
- Smaller projects for local communities;
- I really enjoyed the site visit so another one of those at least.

Other training events that delegates would like to see organised included:

- How to raise income from small amenity woods that don't have an option to develop a commercial timber enterprise or income – or even woodfuel;
- How to get funding from sources other than FCS;
- First Aid course;
- Basic forestry i.e. site visit.