



Friday 2nd September 2016

**An Roth Community Enterprise Centre, Craignure  
& Tioran Forest, Isle of Mull**

**11am - 4pm**

**Outline of the Day**

- 11.00** *Arrival @ An Roth and tea/coffee*
- 11.15** **Welcome/Introduction**
- 11.20** **FCS Community & Seedcorn Funds** – Elaine Jamieson, *Policy, Support & Dvlpmnt Officer (Argyll)*
- 11.30** **FCS Policy update** – James Ogilvie, *Head of Social & Planning Policy*
- 11:40** **NFLS and beyond** – Craig Millar, *FES Communities & Rural Development Coordinator*
- 11.50** **Community Woodlands Association update** – Chris Marsh, *CWA*
- 12.00** **NW Mull Community Woodland update** – Malcolm Ward, *NWMCWC*
- 12.15** **Morvern, Community & Forests** - Veronique Walraven, *Morvern Comm Woodlands*
- 12.30** **Cormonachan Woodlands** – Liz Evans, *Cormonachan Woodlands Association*
- 12.45** **Argyll Small Woods Co-operative update** – Neil Donaldson, *ASWC*
- 13.00** **Garmony Hydro Scheme** – Richard Thorne, *Mull & Iona Community Trust*
- 13.15** *Depart on minibus (packed lunch provided) for Forest Site Visit*
- 14:00** **Tioran Forest – Site Visit**  
Host: John Clare, *Community Forester - SW Mull & Iona Development*
- 16:00** **Finish & Minibus back to Craignure.**



**Attending:**

Neil	Donaldson	Argyll Small Woods Co-operative
Pete	Creech	Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise
Chris	Marsh	Community Woodlands Association
Douglas	Locke	Cormonachan Woodlands Association
Liz	Evans	Cormonachan Woodlands Association
Craig	Millar	Forest Enterprise Scotland
Elaine	Jamieson	Forestry Commission Scotland
James	Ogilvie	Forestry Commission Scotland
Margaret	Horrell	Friends of Duchess Woods
Richard	Horrell	Friends of Duchess Woods
Veronique	Walraven	Morvern Community Woodlands Company
Alasdair	Firth	Morvern Community Woodlands Company
Richard	Thorne	Mull & Iona Community Trust
Gordon	Gray Stephens	Native Woods Co-operative (Scotland)
Ian	Hepburn	North West Mull Community Woodland Company
Malcolm	Ward	North West Mull Community Woodland Company
Colin	Morrison	North West Mull Community Woodland Company
Andrew	Hill	South Loch Awe-side Community Company
John	Clare	South West Mull and Iona Development
Tony	Jeffree	South West Mull and Iona Development

**Welcome:**

Chris Marsh, CWA's Community Woodlands Officer, welcomed everyone to the 10<sup>th</sup> Argyll community woodland 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 projects as well as visit Mull's most recent community forest acquisition – Tiroran Forest - in the company of owners, SW Mull & Iona Development.

There were 8 presentations scheduled for the morning (indoor) session and these were as follows:-

**FCS Community & Seedcorn Funds – Elaine Jamieson, Policy, Support and Development Officer (FCS)**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/rFtUTd5WLN4>

Elaine opened with an apology for not baking a cake for this the 10<sup>th</sup> AWOO event. Previous presentations had described the (relatively new) Forest Grant Scheme. With most attendant groups now familiar with this scheme, her presentation focussed specifically on the two FCS grant schemes targeted at supporting the more social aspects of woodland development and fall outwith the remit of the Forest Grant Scheme:-

- The FCS Community Fund supports community groups and projects which facilitate greater use of woods by people for health, wellbeing and community benefit. The Perth & Argyll budget for 2016/17 is £60,000 with currently c.£31k committed across 5 significant projects. Elaine gave a brief description of each to demonstrate the range of projects and themes likely to gain support.
- FCS also has a Seedcorn Fund which has a smaller budget aimed at helping facilitate projects that fall outwith the Community Fund remit e.g. materials and tools. Of a budget of £25k for 2016/17, £8.2k had now been committed. Again Elaine detailed the projects funded.

Elaine finished by encouraging groups to get in touch with her or other Conservancy staff if they are exploring projects that might fit the eligibility criteria of these two funding streams.

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>



## FCS update – James Ogilvie, Head of Social & Planning Policy (FCS)

James provided an update on a broad range of subjects relevant to the community land and forestry agenda as well as emerging forest policy context. Topics included:-

- The NFLS (established: 2005) is to be replaced by a new Community Asset Transfer Scheme as a result of legislation emerging from the 2015 Community Empowerment Act (*next speaker: Craig Millar to expand on this*);
- Sale of National Forest Estate land - standing @ 27 community acquisitions through NFLS - is contributing significantly to the Scottish Government's "1 million acres by 2020" target for community ownership.
- A new publication 'A Guide to working with the private sector forestry sector' is due for publication and will be launched at the CWA conference on 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- Community Land Scotland have been working with Scottish Land & Estates to agree a joint, voluntary 'Protocol for Negotiated Sales' - for buying/selling land by negotiation rather than by the Community Right to Buy route.
- Crofter forestry applications have been in decline since SRDP inception however the concept of Woodland Crofts is seeing healthy interest. A number of community woodlands (e.g. NW Mull & Kilfinan) are now creating some.
- Scottish Woodlots is another method of third-party leasehold of woodland/timber rights that may have relevance to some community woodland groups (7<sup>th</sup> woodlot licence agreed recently in Dumfries & Galloway);
- Reforesting Scotland have produced a new best practice guidance publication 'New hutting developments' covering planning, tenure/ownership & hutting ethos – another initiative relevant to some community woods;
- 2 CWA member groups received Scottish Finest Woods Awards this year: Kilfinan Community Forest (Tim Stead Trophy for viable livelihoods) & Evanton Woods (Healthy Lifestyles award).
- FCS is organising the 2016 Outdoor Recreation Conference in Pitlochry on 5/6<sup>th</sup> Oct on the theme of 'Outdoor Recreation & Active Lifestyles – understanding behavioural change'.
- A public consultation is now open - seeking to gather views on the Scottish Government's approach to future arrangements for fully devolved governance, development, support and regulation of forestry in Scotland.

## FES update – Craig Millar, Communities & Rural Development Coordinator, FES

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/O2AiBclDwo4>

Forest Enterprise Scotland is an agency of Forestry Commission Scotland and manages the National Forest Estate (NFE). Craig is working with 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. Although still a work-in-progress, Craig presented a series of flowcharts explaining how a new Community Asset Transfer Scheme (CATS) is expected to operate in this regard. The Scheme will cover purchase and lease of National Forest Estate (NFE) land but also requests to manage, use or occupy NFE assets.

An interesting distinction of the scheme (and the related Act) is the definition of 'community' which may be a geographic community but also a 'community of interest' or of shared characteristics e.g. religion, ethnicity or disability. His presentation highlighted the key elements of the application, validation and evaluation process that lay at the heart of the emerging CATS. The intention is that applications will take a maximum of 6 months from validation to final decision notification. The Scheme is expected to be in place by January 2017.

### **Community Woodlands Association Update – Chris Marsh, Community Woodlands Officer, CWA**

Chris introduced himself as new CWA employee with remit to provide broad range of support to CWA member groups and potential groups. Immediate focus since his recent start was delivery of the AWOO event and working with several west coast groups involved in the 'Making Local Woods Work' initiative in which CWA are a (sole Scottish) partner organisation. He provided the following general CWA updates:-

- The **2016 CWA Conference** will be at Findhorn, Moray, 1/2 October.
- A number of **CWA directors** are to stand down on rotation at the AGM. Any nominations from member groups for new directors would be gratefully received and considered.
- CWA will run another **A Wood of Our Own networking event** before Easter 2017. Use feedback forms to record any particular preference/interests.
- 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 project will also support new training events and the production of guidance which will be available to all CWA groups.

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>).

### **NW Mull Community Woodland update – Malcolm Ward, Development Manager, NWMWCW**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/PShNA7i649Y>

Malcolm delivered a regular update on progress at NWMWCW. Since presenting at the March AWOO meeting (see report <http://bit.ly/2cEinH3>) they have passed UKWAS re-certification and finally opened their new woodfuel handling/storage facility. The large-scale clearfell operations of the group's early years have now finished and the emphasis is on switching to more small-scale, value added exploitation of standing timber utilising local contractor/employment as much as possible. The 7.5 tonne delivery truck & crane has greatly improved woodfuel and milled timber deliveries. They continue to progress the West Ardu micro-hydro proposal – now at detailed design stage - with many planning, grid connection, FIT & licencing issues now completed. An innovative community debenture scheme is envisaged for project financing. They have agreed Heads of Terms with West Highland Housing Association and have ambitions for 5 affordable homes, 5 affordable plots and 5 open market plot sales. The Forest Plan is being reviewed including the plans of all 9 integral woodland crofts. Green burial proposals are moving slowly but steadily forward. There a wide range of community/social projects all in progress: forest schools, archaeological digs, new community seating, new Eagle Watch viewing facility and – finally – applying to take over and renovate the rather shabby-looking Dervaig Toilet block.



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

**Morvern, Community & Forests – Veronique Walraven, Director, Morvern Community Woodlands**

This presentation is available online at [https://youtu.be/3hN\\_93TNpKE](https://youtu.be/3hN_93TNpKE)

The Morvern Community Woodlands Company was started by local volunteers in 2002 to bring local woodlands back into management for community benefit, to run public events and training courses, to provide woodland education and recreation opportunities, and to promote woodland and timber-related skills within the community. Membership is a one-off payment of £2.

Since inception the majority of their effort has been concentrated at the 8 ha FCS-owned Achnaha Woods where they initially managed the woods in partnership with FCS but later purchased it through NFLS (2014/15). A considerable range of activities have gone and continue to go on there – forest schools and children’s events/parties, guided walks, wooden structures, rhododendron clearance, walking theatre, compost toilet and (current project) large/ambitious dug-out canoe!

The group have been increasingly interested in looking beyond Achnaha... The Morvern peninsular is very remote, the economy fragile and the tourism and recreational potential of the area not fully realised. The forest resource in the area is significant however what local facilities are present (mainly trails) are perceived locally as not adequately managed and promoted. The group feel that potential local employment opportunities are not therefore being fully realised. The group are now actively discussing with the local Forest District ways and means in which they might more greatly influence management and forest planning to deliver greater local benefits. They are also more actively engaging with and visiting other community woodlands to learn how others have developed and capitalised on their community woodland resources.



You can find out more about Morvern Community Woodlands on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MorvernCommunityWoodlands>

**Cormonachan Woodlands – Liz Evans, Cormonachan Woodlands Association**

This presentation is available online at <https://youtu.be/XsXalvNxQ10>

The Cormonachan Woodlands are situated on the west shore of Loch Goil between Lochgoilhead and Carrick Castle. They are owned by FCS but managed as a partnership of FCS, the Ardroy Outdoor Education Trust and the Cormonachan Woodlands Association (CWA). The woodlands are historically Atlantic Oakwood with areas of hazel but also with under- and inter-planted conifer plantation. FCS have been felling maturing conifer stands since the 1990’s to restore and extend the deciduous forest cover.

With an original remit for access and conservation management at the northern end of the woodland, the CWA now work across the entire property with a well-attended and enthusiastic volunteer programme tackling rhoddie and bracken control, trail development & footpath maintenance and native tree planting. The woods are used year-round by local school groups as well as the Ardroy Outdoor Centre and are an important local and tourist attraction offering walking & wildlife appreciation (wildflowers & red squirrels in particular). The Association are currently trying to improve the considerably limited car parking available at the threshold to the woodland trails. A fund-raising initiative is underway and they have been successful in gaining support from FCS and an adjacent mobile phone mast owner in progressing an innovative re-design of this area.



You can find out more about Cormonachan Woods and the CWA at [www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk](http://www.cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk) , at <https://www.facebook.com/cormonachan> and contact their secretary at [Secretary@cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk](mailto:Secretary@cormonachan-woodlands.co.uk).

### **Argyll Small Woods Cooperative update – Neil Donaldson, Secretary, ASWC**

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

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

During 2015-16 they ran a number of training and knowledge share events, undertook a membership needs survey and have set up a new website and Facebook presence. They are now busy with a number of new projects:-

- They are piloting the 'myForest' web-based woodland management planning system with management plans being drawn up for a number of constituent members to populate this system.
- They are a chosen Making Local Woods Work group – hoping to establish a collaborative timber procurement and marketing business across the region to secure a reliable 'route to market' for small-scale timber operations undertaken by members.
- They are developing further training and workshop events – the most immediate being a hardwood timber evaluation and marketing event at Luss in October (see website for details).
- Building on the idea of establishing a regional Shared Forester resource (seen elsewhere in UK & Europe) - and on feedback to a recent CWA survey gauging appetite for the idea amongst member groups - ASWC are keen to lead on the idea in the region. They would very much like to hear from other groups who may be interested in using Shared Forester services and are actively working up proposals for a Stage 1 LEADER application for a pilot project - possibly incorporating neighbouring Lochaber and Dumfries & Galloway regions too. Contact Neil to learn more.



You can find out more about ASWC at <http://www.argyllsmallwoods.coop/> and Neil can be contacted at [mail@donenvironmental.co.uk](mailto:mail@donenvironmental.co.uk) . ASWC also presented at the previous AWOO event in March 2016 (see <http://bit.ly/2cEinH3> )

### **Garmony Hydro Scheme – Richard Thorne, Project Manager, Mull & Iona Community Trust.**

This presentation is available online at [https://youtu.be/dMns\\_bmpakE](https://youtu.be/dMns_bmpakE)

Richard thanked the group for an opportunity to expand on the evolution and implementation of MICT’s hydro-electric project. Although not strictly forestry-related he had tailored his presentation to highlight the principle stages involved (project design, permissions, financing and delivery) and lessons learned that might prove transferrable to any significant social enterprise capital project.

The hydro scheme is on leased FCS land (annual rent = 6% of gross income) and was part-financed through a community share offer raising £485k (200 investors, two-thirds from Mull). The chosen legal entity for the new MICT subsidiary company is a Community Benefit Society - giving them a simple legal structure that can raise capital, is community controlled (1 member/1 vote rather than 1 share/1 vote principle) and not for profit. Early development capital was painstakingly negotiated with banks when Feed in Tariffs were more lucrative than today. Design and build work was competitively tendered, costs were substantial (i.e. turbine itself was £175k with a 12 month delivery timescale), planning and grid connection issues were complex and often frustrating. MICT also established a subsidiary SCIO with local ‘dignitaries’ as Trustees (e.g. head teacher, council convenors, bank & church reps etc) who administer ‘The Waterfall Fund’ to distribute the gifted profits of the scheme to island-based groups and projects. After just nine months of generation, the Fund has just received its first net profit payment of £95k.

Richard’s presentation finished with some Top Tips one of which was “Believe in Yourself” – he could remember numerous occasions when their vision was deemed too ambitious, unrealistic, “impossible” etc and their confidence was often rattled and support sometime seemed very thin on the ground. Looking back now he is glad they had the courage of their convictions. Don’t be put off, grow a thick skin *and* broad shoulders and you can achieve the seemingly impossible!

You can find out more about MICT at <http://www.mict.co.uk/> and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/mullandionacommunitytrust](http://www.facebook.com/mullandionacommunitytrust)

**Site visit: Tiroran Forest – host: John Clare, Community Forester, SW Mull & Iona Development**

John gave an overview of Tiroran forest - c. 790 ha – bought recently by the community 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 to be repaid over five years. SWMID contracted Tilhill to carry out the first phase of clearfell harvesting work. The timber travelled a short distance by single track public road to a temporary floating pier at Pennyghael. Tilhill are also now working on a Long Term Forest Plan with SWMID. The upper slopes will most probably be restocked as commercial, largely coniferous, forest. The flatter, more fertile glen floor - closer to the forest entrance, public road and broadleaved fringed river – will be more deciduous, amenity re-planting.

The forest is largely comprised of coniferous plantation: 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.

SWMID have recently submitted a significant bid to the Lottery’s Community Assets programme for new forest roading that would help open up the forest for improved commercial and recreational access. The group are also a Making Local Woods Work candidate group – hoping to define aspirations for a Visitor Centre at the threshold to the forest. There is no such centre on the island at present.

The site visit saw and discussed a number of fledgling community projects now evident and establishing in the forest: a Mull Eagle Watch interpretation and viewing shelter, a children’s den-building and wildflower restoration zone, a circular trail through the cleared village site of Knockroy (interpretation being developed by a local history group), a portakabin/environmental field study room and a woodland trail incorporating ‘Faces in the Forest’ – large woven masks hanging in a grove of mature sycamores. There was also a wide range of discussions amongst the group around sycamore coppicing, hazel wood management/ecology, use of ‘rotten rock’ outcrops for forest road construction, ragwort control and the cinnabar moth.

As an ecologist by training and experience, John sees his community forester role as that of balancing the commercial management of Tiroran - providing vital, hopefully sustainable income - with community involvement through archaeology, arts and crafts, environmental education and volunteering. One particular concern has been the arrival and repercussions of *Phytophthora ramorum* in some of larch stands which has necessitated extensive areas of ‘sanitation felling’ as a statutory control measure. John remained to be convinced of the efficacy of this control measure whilst the felling itself has reduced the wind stability of adjacent forest stands resulting in incremental wind damage of neighbouring standing crop.





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



Feedback Summary

12 Feedback Forms received from potential maximum: 15.

Please rate the following by ticking the statement which best matches your opinion:						
	Organisation	Location	Venue	Catering	Speakers	Site Visit
very good	10	9	8	1	7	7
good	2	3	4		5	1
fair				6		
poor				1		
n/a				4		4

Do you feel that the event delivered your expectations?

Yes: 12 No: Partly:

What benefits do you feel you gained from attending the event?

*Great to get more information about what other similar groups are doing and what can be achieved.*

*Knowledge of the reorganisation of FCS.*

*Better understanding of the implications of the Community Empowerment Act*

*and its implications for community asset transfer via SCATS. Ideas and activities from other community groups.*

*I only attended for the morning but the speakers I heard were informative and accessible. Great opportunity to hear about what other people are doing, and to discuss this. Also, useful to have conversations with FC & FE staff with national remits.*

*The networking is always beneficial – hearing about innovative projects and how other groups have tackled problems. The FC updates are very useful and informative.*

*Updates from FCS on policy and upcoming changes. Innovative ways other groups are using woodlands and engaging communities.*

*The feedback I got to my presentation. Feeling of not being the only group with certain aspirations.*

*Meeting other groups. Hearing about initiatives of interest.*

*Useful updates from FCS + catch up with several groups.*

*Information updates, networking.*

*Very interesting presentations some of which relate to our wood*

Where would you like the next event to be held?

*Mull is good for me!*

*Ardroy, Kintyre (ASWC or some of the stuff Ed Tyler is working on), or how about Morvern?*

*No preference.*

*Preferably near a medium sized community owned commercial woodland where there is a good community/commercial balance.*

*Close to Morvern again.*

*Perhaps a small wood visit?*

*Anywhere new – not been before.*

*no preference anywhere is a trip.*





### What would you like to see on the agenda for the day?

*No preference.*

*How the community is re-engaging with the woodland when the dust has settled after a period of ownership i.e. when the honeymoon period has ended.*

*Update on shared forester proposal.*

*More about funding opportunities other than FCS.*

*Feedback on CWA conference membership fees and Forestry policy consultation.*

*A bit more time for networking*

### Would you recommend others to take part in such an event?

Yes: **12** No:

Please explain why / why not:

*You always learn something new – networking always very good.*

### Please list any other training/ events you would like to see organised:

*Use of herbicides.*

*Woodland Planning.*

*Strimmer training for volunteers.*

### Any other comments:

*I think there has been and remains scope to organise similar events elsewhere in Scotland*

*Thanks Chris, good job on your first one!*

*Thanks for organising yesterday it went well*

*Packed lunch was a bit disappointing. Good to see a community buy-out forest. Would like to see how the finances work. Any chance of a case study?*

*Catering not up to normal AWOO standards: coffee/tea: basic, no biscuits; packed lunch again very basic, initially no drink, organised subsequently by Elaine Jamieson with much thanks. Venue otherwise excellent.*