

## Arran Community Council

### Forestry Extraction Working Group.

#### Approved Minutes of fourth meeting held 27th Aug 2015 at the Kinloch Hotel, 18.15 to 20.00

Present: R McMaster (ACC and Chair), D Price (Machrie resident and minutes), L Gunaydi (Machrie resident), N Arthur (ACC), A Walker & J Lauder (both Forestry Commission (FC)), G McLeod (NAC).  
In attendance: Bill Calderwood (ACC), Hazel Gardiner(ACC)

#### 1. APOLOGIES Liz Evans (ACC)

#### 2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1 Some minor changes were discussed and approved. Proposed by NA and seconded by JL.

2.2 Although the reference in the minutes to road improvements stated in 3.3 ... `For instance the Boguillie was about to have around £2m of SPT-funded improvements which would almost certainly improve its suitability for timber transport from part of the west coast to the existing slip at Sannox.`...was agreed to have been stated at the time, GM stated that the correct situation was a fund from SPT of £2.1m over three years, of which £700k was to be spent this year between Brodick and the Castle followed by £700k in 2016 at Merkland, then £700k in 2017 between Corrie and Lochranza. Thus the amount to be spent on the Boguillie was much lower than indicated previously.

#### 3. ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

3.1 Proposed meeting between North Ayrshire Council and the ACC to discuss Arran roads.

GM stated that there was an Arran roads meeting scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> Sept., but it was not an appropriate venue for discussions about road suitability for timber extraction. That meeting was intended for discussion about the immediate roads repairs programme. When necessary, the timber routes would be better tackled initially in writing to NAC with subsequent meetings as appropriate.

3.2 Ranking of options. It was agreed that the existing Brodick site should also be evaluated as the `status quo`

AW had done a ranking evaluation but did not have the report with him. It was agreed to defer discussion and that AW would send the document to DP for circulation. (DP sent out to members as attachment to these minutes). RM repeated his previous concerns about the subjective nature of the rankings and that the other group members would probably have different rankings. 3.3 Harvesting rate on Arran over last 5 years

JL had provided updated data by email. In summary, the averages for the last four years were 40,358 t p.a. (50,044 m<sup>3</sup>), still below the target 60,000 m<sup>3</sup> p.a. The last year, 2014/15, also included 13,580 tonnes of `standing sales` in an attempt to maintain barge and haulage tonnages shipped, in line with haulier`s expectations. Standing sales are continuing this year (extracted from the Dyemill area).

3.4 Approved WG minutes be sent to Rob Soutar, Galloway Forest District Manager

DP had done this and received confirmation of receipt. JL stated that the next FC Arran Project Board meeting was on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, which he would be attending.

3.5 Next Forestry Arran Environmental panel meeting.

AW confirmed the date as 31st Oct. The work of this group would be a minor agenda item. DP asked to attend. This was agreed.

#### **4. UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH CALMAC ON `TRAILERS ONLY` PROPOSAL**

JL had received further data from Ian Fox of Calmac and this proposal was being followed up by contractors and hauliers. Calmac had indicated that the last ferry sailings, on average, were only at 27% capacity, so trailer space was available. There was also the possibility of using other sailings. JL stressed that the FC act only as facilitators as regards haulage but confirmed that the ferry route was the cheapest option for exporting timber off Arran. JL confirmed that at 3.5 sailings per week with 6 trailers per sailing, this could account for about half the Arran tonnage harvested. He indicated that a trial was planned.

#### **5. UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH HAULAGE CONTRACTOR OVER TRANSPORT RATES**

JL had had a meeting with Ian Thomson, but was unable to give details. NA stated that Mr Thomson had given him permission to state that he (IT) was prepared to have `open book` discussions about costs to facilitate lowering the haulage costs and that he was prepared, at his expense, to upgrade the Brodick slip to accommodate the FC landing craft vessel instead of being only suitable for the barge system at present. RM queried whether there was, in general, any link between tonnages via a particular route and investments by hauliers etc. JL said there was not.

#### **6. UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF CONTRACT NEXT YEAR (2016) FROM THE PRESENT `ROADSIDE SALES` TO `STANDING SALES`**

6.1 JL confirmed that this was still the plan. Estimating the tree quantities in the designated forests and evaluating the data would be completed by end November. (This was organised centrally). Contracts would then be out for tender. The contract form was not simply based on costs but had other factors included, such as road miles. JL stated that he hoped for more than one contractor to bid for the contract (unlike in previous years). This competition would hopefully reduce costs. RM asked for clarification of the new *versus* old systems. JL confirmed that although the FC sold the trees `standing` to the merchant, it was still of benefit to the FC to minimise the haulage costs as this still affected the price received from the timber merchant. It would be the responsibility of the purchaser to negotiate contracts to fell and transport timber to the processing facility.

6.2 Given that, with the new system, the merchant will play a more prominent role, and it was agreed that it could be useful for the merchant to join this working group. No specific action was agreed, but this item will be picked up as required.

6.3 RM stated that he had asked a local haulier about haulage costs of moving timber from Kilpatrick to Brodick v Kilpatrick to Machrie. There was only £0.40 /tonne increase in cost to go to Brodick as fuel costs were a small part of the cost equation.

#### **7. UPDATE ON MARINE LICENCE APPLICATION**

7.1 JL confirmed that draft approval had been granted by Marine Scotland. He stated that planning permission was not need to build the slip at Machrie. NA queried this. GM said it was because the slip was below the high water mark and came under the Crown and not local

authority. This too was queried as the concrete slip will continue up to the road, i.e. above the high water mark. **ACTION** ... NA to follow up

7.2 JL confirmed that, as planning permission for the rest of the Machrie scheme; roads and storage facility etc. would be needed, the FC would not be progressing with the slipway build anyway until the whole scheme was fully drawn up, costed and approved. The next action would be to obtain proper drawings for the storage area.

NA asked about the proposed timescale of the Machrie scheme. JL said ideally he was hoping for work to commence in Spring/Summer of 2016, but this was probably optimistic. BC asked if an environmental impact assessment (EIA) was required. JL said not for the actual slipway.

## 8. AOB

8.1 RM raised the island-wide aspects of timber extraction. JL confirmed that he was looking at multiple slipways,(inc. Brodick and Sannox) to facilitate local export from nearby forests to minimise road miles. Discussions about two sites in the south and east of the island were on-going. RM declared an interest at this point as one of the proposed sites was adjacent to his land at Kildonan.

8.2 RM stated that because of the island-wide nature of the forestry strategy the ACC, at its recent meeting, had requested that a council representative from each village join the working group. This would increase numbers by three over today`s level. This was agreed. It was also agreed that the ACC would hold a meeting on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> with the new members to bring them up to speed....**ACTION RM**

8.3 BC asked for details of the privately owned forests. JL confirmed the forests at Pirnmill and a small section of the Machrie forest were privately owned. These additional tonnages were quoted as 76,000t, harvested over a 10 year period and would have to travel via Lochranza to the Sannox slip, to the Machrie slip, if approved, or to Brodick slip via the String.

8.4 BC asked for clarification of the forestry facility opposite the museum in Brodick. AW confirmed that this was purely for the timber from Stronach woods.

8.5 JL confirmed that costs were a major factor influencing decisions, but cognisance had to be taken about such issues as road miles and environment. HG asked what drove environmental considerations. JL stated that there were no specific requirements or deadlines, but that there was a `steer` from Government.

8.6 JL then informed the Group that at the FC Arran Project Board meeting on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, he expected a decision to stand down the Arran project committee would be made. He stated that due to the current £:€ exchange rate, Forestry Commission Scotland was facing a significant reduction in income so he was expecting that expenditure would have to reduce accordingly. **ACTION JL** will inform this group of the decision.

In response to a question from NA, JL stated that there was no Gantt planning chart relating to the works.

8.7 It was agreed that the work of this group would continue, the benefit of any delay being the likelihood of a better overall solution to long term timber extraction on Arran

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 29<sup>th</sup> Oct, 6pm at Machrie Hall.