

Arran Community Council

Forestry Extraction Working Group.

Approved Minutes of sixth meeting held 21st Jan 2016 at Machrie Hall, 18.00 to 20.00 hrs

Present: R. McMaster (ACC and Chair), D. Price (Machrie resident and minutes), N. Arthur (ACC), W. Calderwood (ACC), H. Gardiner(ACC), J. Henderson (ACC), A. Walker & J. Lauder (Forestry Commission (FC))

1. **APPOLOGIES** G. McLeod (NAC), L. Evans (ACC), L. Gunaydi (Machrie resident)

P Randell (ACC) has resigned

2. **CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Some minor changes were discussed and approved. Proposed by J. Lauder and seconded by W. Calderwood.

3. **ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING**

3.1 Update on Machrie slip planning application W. Calderwood had confirmed with N. Ayrshire Council that planning permission was required for any works above the tide high water mark. This includes the slip and storage area.

3.2 Return loads N. Arthur had talked to two local hauliers and, whilst specific data was commercially confidential, there was a significant cost difference if there was a return load, and there would be potential additional benefits to the Arran community generally if haulage costs were lower resulting from more return loads. It was expected that there would be an increase in return loads over the next 18 months or so resulting from the import of materials for the new ferry terminal. The hauliers view about using Red Princess for incoming loads was that it was theoretically feasible but not a realistic option logistically or cost-wise. N. Arthur also stated that the most significant cost saving to timber haulage would be the introduction of RET rates for HGVs.

4.0 **ARRAN FORESTRY ACTIVITIES**

4.1 **Production data 2015**

Timber extraction by route (tonnes):

Brodick Calmac ferry 4,827

Brodick slip 9,566

Sannox slip 23,144

Totals 37,537

This tonnage is below the target of 48,390t (60,000 m³) primarily due to lower demand by the respective timber merchants. The Calmac tonnage equates to ~200 trailer loads.

J. Lauder tabled a production forecast to 2045 amounting to an average of ~57,600 t/y (71,480m³), but this was front loaded during the period 2016-2020 at 133,250t/y (165,230 m³) due to the need to harvest fallen and aged trees and the lower than planned harvesting rate in recent years. The latter figures were considered unlikely to be achieved but the 2045 smoothed figure was achievable and should be attempted.

4.2 Status of slips

4.2.1 A. Walker tabled an updated table of potential slip sites, showing pros, cons and a score. It was confirmed that the Kings Cross and Clauchlands sites were no longer available, essentially for environmental reasons. The current overall export strategy is: W coast forests via Machrie, S-end forests via Springfield site, NE forests via Sannox and the Merkland and Glenrickard via Brodick.

4.2.2 R. McMaster had been in discussion with Mr. R. Soutar regarding extraction of the Kings cave forest in Machrie. Irrespective of whether the timber was exported via Brodick or Machrie, the Machrie forest link road (track) would need to be built so as to avoid the narrow bridge at House of Machrie on the Machrie Moor road. This is different to what was minuted at the last meeting.

J. Lauder stated that the section between the two Forestry Commission (FC) Machrie blocks would hopefully be linked via the private sector ground managed by Robin Dixon as this makes sense irrespective of what way the timber has to be taken. This would initially use the existing FC access onto the Machrie Moor road. The Glaister option is a sensible one and we should try and get there if we can, but cannot confirm it at this stage.

4.2.3 J. Lauder stated that the two year delay at Machrie was possibly no longer in place due to other potential sources of funds being explored. No further commercial data could be supplied in relation to D. Price`s paper, but R. Souter had confirmed in a letter to R. McMaster(tabled) that no scheme would be pursued if it were not cost effective, and J. Lauder confirmed that the latest assessment of Machrie was a 5 year payback. Thus, as the FC were planning to replant extracted softwoods with further commercial species (not a native woodland option as had been once mooted), the need for export off Arran was in perpetuity.

4.3 Standing sales

Negotiations for the change of contract with Wilson`s on standing sales are well advanced for a 5th April 2016 start. An initial 5 year contract is proposed. It was agreed to take up the offer from Mr Alex Murray of Wilson`s to attend the next meeting. It was confirmed that the FC would still be responsible for determining which forest areas were harvested, but that Wilson`s would be responsible for negotiating extraction and haulage with the appropriate contractors/hauliers. It was expected to be more efficient, so being a win:win for the FC and Wilson`s.

4.4 Trailers-only

UPM Tilhill would still like to do a trial before the end of March 2016 as they see this as being a viable option. J. Lauder stated that this route would be a sensible option for the timber from the Markland and Glenrickard forests (see 4.2.1).

5. AOB J. Lauder confirmed that he would be retiring at the end of April. He would like to bring his boss Mr Neil Murray to the next meeting. Agreed.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 25th Feb 2016, 6pm at Machrie Hall.