

Arran Community Council, Forestry Extraction Working Group.

Approved Minutes of 8th meeting held 25th April 2016 at Machrie Hall, 18.00 to 19.45 hrs

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

In attendance Mr Dennis Coy (A. Wilson`s) from 18.30.

1. APOLOGIES L. Evans (ACC), L. Gunaydi (Machrie resident), J. Henderson (ACC), A. Murray (A. Wilson`s)

2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Corrections proposed by N. Arthur, W Calderwood and N. Murray were discussed and minutes approved. Proposed by W. Calderwood and seconded by N. Murray.

3. PROGRESS OF FORESTRY COMMISSION STRATEGY FOR ARRAN

3.1 Sannox slip

3.1.1 There has been no progress on the action regarding the road from the picnic area to the main road. G. McLeod confirmed C. Dempster of NAC roads dept. has all the necessary information. To remain an ongoing action....**ACTION GM**

3.1.2 Timber felling will be complete in three weeks and shipping in six weeks. Thereafter landscaping and replanting will commence. The Marine licence is valid to 2018. In response to a question from D. Price, N. Murray confirmed that water management by landscaping was a key factor for de-forested areas to prevent unnecessary run-off and land erosion.

3.2 Springfield site There has been no further work pending SSSI assessment. N. Murray, as a former plant operator himself, commented that the site was of concern, being steep and narrow, challenging with unstable banking and land slippage. W. Calderwood enquired about any other S. end sites, given the high tonnage of timber in the S. end forests. N. Murray confirmed a few sites had been looked at, but to no avail, but was keen to find a workable one.

3.3 Machrie

3.3.1 N. Murray confirmed that he had written to D. Price immediately after the previous meeting stating that there were one or two issues which needed to be bottomed out so, on reflection, he did not feel that the timing was right yet for FC to submit a planning application. Regarding the suggested `alternative` Machrie site both N. Murray and A. Walker felt that the site was unsuitable, being very shallow with a non-sand seabed which would mean building a very long pier which would be very visible from the Machrie bay properties. The road access was also difficult with poor line of sight on/off the coast road. Mr Robin Taylor of the Red Princess would be making a site visit in May to refresh his opinion as minuted previously... **ACTION...** N. Murray to inform D. Price by email of Mr Taylor`s report.

3.3.2 Further discussion about the original proposed Machrie site ensued. N. Murray reiterated A. Murray`s invitation to visit Troon to see their operations, particularly regards timber traffic across public roads. Both D. Price and H. Gardiner stated they did plan to visit. N Murray said that during ship loading two men would be available from the Red Princess to direct the timber transporter, i.e. the aim would be to maintain public traffic flow, not hold it up.

3.3.3 N. Murray confirmed that, contrary to the previous situation, a timber road fund of £1.85million had now been granted for 2016. G. McLeod stated that N. Ayrshire Council had made a general application, which the FC were not party to, but it was agreed that there was an urgent need for all interested parties (NAC/FC etc) to submit a joint specific proposal for 2016 and to produce a longer term plan for later years. All schemes had a better chance of success with multiple sponsors/contributors. ...**ACTION** N. Murray/G. McLeod.

N. Murray also stated that any bid must be deliverable and hence requires the necessary consents to be in place. He felt that they had missed an opportunity for some funding for Machrie Moor road as they had been unable to progress with a planning application for Machrie.

3.3.4 Discussion then followed about what the fund could be used for. N. Murray repeated the FC aims to reduce road miles as a strategic objective. N. Arthur repeated previous comments that it would better spent on the String road, particularly give the planned increased housing in Blackwaterfoot and the new distillery. N. Murray and G. McLeod said this would not meet the funding criteria, but that using it for the Machrie Moor road (to help fund the £1.2 m upgrade needed) would be more suitable.

3.3.5 A. Walker advised of blasting within the FC large Machrie block. This is unrelated to the project but was provided for the group`s information.

3.3.6 N. Murray flagged up his desire to prepare and submit a planning application for access into the small FC Machrie block as this is required irrespective of what happens. There was no objection from the group.

3.3.6 With reference to the last minutes (item 3.4) on public concerns over timber traffic and the String road, N. Arthur stated that there were many locals who had absolutely no concerns about timber traffic over the String road.

3.4 Brodick

N. Murray stated that Mr Taylor would be discussing upgrading the current barge slip in Brodick with J. Thomson Construction so that the Red Princess could be used at Brodick. D. Coy said that this would provide Wilson`s with extra flexibility over export routes. Both N. Murray and D. Coy reiterated previous views that the use of the Calmac ferry route with trailers would be expected to continue, but was not expected to be a significant export route due to the reasons minuted last time (see previous 3.6).

4.0 AOB

4.1 Given the expected increase in timber tonnage exported, G. McLeod requested information from the FC on local (Arran) employment resulting from forestry activities, ie both as direct employees and in related activities such as contractors and transport... **ACTION** N. Murray agreed to supply.

4.2 N. Murray stated that the FC was currently undergoing reorganisation and this may impact on project funding generally.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No date was set as a future timing and agenda would be affected by any decisions about the Springfield site generally and the Machrie site planning application specifically. N.Murray will inform D. Price by email of any significant event... **ACTION**...N. Murray