

Arran Community Council, Forestry Extraction Working Group.

Approved Minutes of 9th meeting held 24th Jan 2017 at Machrie Hall, 17.00 to 18.30 hrs

Present: D. Price (Machrie resident and minutes), N. Arthur (ACC), W. Calderwood (ACC), A. Walker & N. Murray (Forestry Commission (FC)), A. Murray (A. Wilson`s)

In attendance Mr Dennis Coy (A. Wilson`s), Mr Robin Taylor (Skipper of Red Princess)

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

In the absence of R. McMaster, the meeting was chaired by N. Arthur.

2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Corrections proposed by N. Murray and W. Calderwood were discussed and the minutes approved.

2.1 Actions

2.1.1 Sannox road. The FC are maintaining the unmade road at present should further use be needed for private forest timber extraction. It is thought that this will be a lower cost option overall. NAC are aware.

2.1.2 Alternative Machrie site. R. Taylor`s report (a summary) had been previously shared with the FWG...` *the alternative site was unsuitable, on the grounds of visibility, access public road interphase at both ends, sight lines and indeed the distance out on the shore the causeway would be needed would be to provide a landing platform for the vessel.*` At the visit at the end of the May Meeting, the Council also confirmed that access at both ends onto the public road was unsuitable.

2.1.3 Timber road fund...see 3. below

2.1.4 Local employment related to forestry. A. Walker quoted 4 full time FC employees plus 26 man-year equivalents in related activities like saw mill and timber transport.

3. FOREST ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND (FES) TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The previous timber transport funding application by NAC had been turned down as there was no direct link to the FC activities. Funding is not for general road maintenance, but had to be linked with roads (main or forest tracks) specifically to facilitate timber movement. To help facilitate funding in the future N. Murray tabled three Arran maps which had been recently discussed with and given to N. Ayrshire Council to help facilitate a new application in later years. It was too late to apply for funding in 2017/18 as schemes had to be `shovel ready` and the funding available was as yet undefined.

The maps compared; no.2, the status quo, ie no additional sea freight facilities at Machrie or S. Arran`, no. 3, assumption of a new facility at Machrie plus forest link`, and no. 4, showing the effect of new facilities at Machrie and S. Arran. The maps show the timber lorry routes (on tarmac roads) together with the expected timber volumes (m³) moved per annum via colour coding. Note that these were FC timber only and private timber volume is not included.

4. TIMBER SALES

A. Murray quoted 60km³ OBS (over bark standing) of timber planned for 2016 had been a real challenge and they will fall short of this volume. N. Murray highlighted a further 40k increase on the previous target and that this was included in the programme for 2017/18 to take the island total to

100km³ OBS as outlined on the maps Jim Lauder circulated two years ago. A. Murray cited considerable difficulties in getting all the timber required exported via Brodick – currently the only route available. Timber export via Calmac was lower than previously expected as one local haulier had decided to discontinue this route, citing it as being uneconomic (requires return loads).

Wilson`s and I. Thomson had been in discussions that day with a view of enhancing Thomson`s slip at Brodick so that the Red Princess could berth there to provide additional export capacity – as well as the tug route currently used. However, this would still not achieve the required export levels; additional slipways were needed as a matter of urgency, hence the pressure on Machrie and S. Arran.

In response to a question from N. Arthur, A. Murray said that he had had a preliminary look into the possibility of using the proposed new Brodick ferry terminal pier for berthing of additional timber ships and for storage of timber. More details of the design were needed and not yet available but R. Taylor indicated that the initial drawings showed lack of space for timber and health and safety concerns particularly in relation to the distance between the walkway and the pier side.

R Taylor stated that he had been involved in timber export via Brodick for many years without incident.

5. MACHRIE

5.1 N. Murray stated that the current NAC planning application for forest roads and access to the Machrie Moor road was a stand-alone requirement and was not dependent on the main Machrie scheme, it being needed to extract timber from `the wee Machrie forest` which is physically separated from the main forest by a private forest and has no access currently. This was flagged at the May meeting but it had taken some time to submit. However in the event that the full scheme gains planning consent and finance is secured, then this access point will be used to reduce the pressure on the Machrie Moor road but at present it is merely for the wee Machrie block.

5.2 Due to the need to export the tonnes required as described in 4. above, it was absolutely essential in his view to have a facility at Machrie. To this end he would be engaging a consultant to prepare a planning application for NAC, aiming to complete the project during the financial year 2017/18, ie complete by April 2018. An agreement with the landowner had been obtained. This theoretically could mean slipway construction during Autumn 2017 (subject to consents and funding) when there were lower tides. He stated that the proposed slipway would be designed to facilitate access by vessels other than the Red Princess. Marine planning approval had already been obtained as noted in previous meetings. Given the time delay since approval, we will need to resubmit this.

N. Murray and R. Taylor confirmed that the expected tonnages (3,000 per month) meant one Red Princess shipload per week. The operating cycle was 1 day to load (12 hours), 1 day to sail to Troon, 1 day to unload, and so on. The vessel would not be solely on the Machrie -Troon route.

6. SPRINGFIELD SITE

N. Murray confirmed that the SSSI assessment, coupled with the physical concerns of the site have ruled this site out as a possible option. Three others at the S. end of the Island were shown on map 4 and discussions with the landowners are ongoing. This area of the coast is also a special protection area (SPA) so these sites too are by no means readily confirmed as suitable yet.

7. AOB

D. Price thanked R. Taylor, A. Murray and D. Coy for their contribution and stated they were welcome at any time. It was agreed that B. Calderwood would discuss membership attendance with Community Council colleagues in view of the Arran-wide strategy...**ACTION** B. Calderwood.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING 20th March, 2017, 18.00 hrs at Forestry Office, Brodick