

**WEST ARDHU AND LANGAMULL WOODLANDS, MULL  
THE POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**for**

**NORTH WEST MULL COMMUNITY WOODLAND GROUP**

**MARGIN**

**in association with  
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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study was commissioned by the North West Mull Community Group to analyse the potential opportunities for the Dervaig community in North West Mull from the purchase of two Forestry Commission woodlands that have come onto the market.

It attempts to address the nature and potential value of the woodlands and opportunities and constraints relating to future management and use. It also addresses the aspirations, opinions and ideas of the Dervaig community and the skills and resources that they might require if one or both of the woodlands come into their possession. The two woodlands offer different opportunities and are considered individually.

North West Mull Community Woodland Group was formed following a public meeting attended by 50 local people when the community received news that the two woodlands were on the market. The first newsletter was produced and distributed to all households in the NW Mull area prior to the beginning of the consultation. If the community agrees to proceed with a purchase of one or more of the woodlands, a Community Company Limited by guarantee with Charitable Status will be set up. It is intended that the recommendations contained in this report will be presented to the community as the basis for a community ballot.

The community for the purposes of this study is defined as the 250 people on the Dervaig electoral roll. This includes the small village of Calgary plus nearby Ulva Ferry residents. However given the nature of the island, and distribution of schools, and other local and visitor foci, the potential value of the woodlands has also been considered in a wider context.

The first part of the report covers the outcomes of the community consultation, the second the analysis of the woodlands. Final recommendations are based on the opportunities offered by the woodlands to fulfill community aspirations.

### **1.2 Background to the study**

The island of Mull covers about 300 square miles. It is one of the few Western Isles whose population is not declining. Recent years have seen the establishment of a number of enterprises concerned with promoting the welfare of the island and its inhabitants, such as the Mull and Iona Community Trust, the Holiday Mull marketing group, and initiatives such as Wild Isles Week. A generally vibrant and entrepreneurial culture prevails, and the Dervaig community is no exception, having recently been involved in the development of a new village hall and currently actively pursuing a sports centre and major community windfarm proposal to the east of the area.

Tobermory, 8.5 miles from Dervaig is one of the key communication centres for the islands. The Balamory connection has created a recent rise in visitors which in spite of

the short term local focus is developing a general interest in Mull as a holiday destination that is likely to last well into the future. Apart from this, most visitors to Mull come for the wildlife and other outdoor activities such as walking. Common to most of Scotland they tend to be in the 45+ age bracket, higher socio-economic groups, mainly ABs .

Wildlife tourism is a growing industry in Scotland and has been identified as a target 'niche' sector by the Scottish Executive. The Dervaig area, like much of the rest of Mull potentially offers special wildlife experiences such as sightings of sea eagles, golden eagles and hen harriers. There is a Mull and Iona ranger service and RSPB is very active on the island in the monitoring and promotion of the island's birds. There is also a thriving range of art and craft initiatives.

Tourism is an important part of the island economy and increasing attractiveness to tourists could increase inward investment in the Dervaig area.

There are two primary schools in the area, at Dervaig and Ulva. Between them they currently have a total of 14 children. Salen Primary school, approximately 12 miles away has 60 pupils, and is the only Gaelic school on the island. Salen school has an active programme of events and takes pupils to a wide range of island destinations. Older children in the North of Mull attend the secondary school in Tobermory,

A number of studies produced over the last 10 years have highlighted the need on the island for:

- Affordable housing and wider employment opportunities for local people
- More low budget or camping accommodation for visitors, plus more wet weather facilities, facilities specially marked as suitable for physically disabled, self-guided walking routes and designated stopping or parking places.

General suggestions have included the development of nature-based tourism with a network of accessible habitats and hides.

The general attitude of Mull residents consulted as part of these studies was for low-key tourism development, protection and enhancement of wildlife, and minimal on-site interpretation.

The roads on Mull are generally in a poor state. The roads to Tobermory and Salen are mostly single track and in need of repair. The Dervaig-Tobermory road is particularly bad as well as being switchback. There are now weight restrictions on both these roads. The cost of fuel is around 11% higher than on the mainland.

A bus runs daily (3-4 times in the summer) between Tobermory and Calgary, past both Langamull and West Ardhù woods.

## **SECTION 2: THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Method**

The attitudes and opinions of the local community were gathered by a well-advertised evening public meeting, run as a consultation workshop. There was also an afternoon drop-in session, semi-structured interviews were carried out with people in and around Dervaig and phone calls were made to all relevant organizations and local land owners.

There were few people who were not aware of the proposal generally, but some had not any real understanding of the potential for themselves personally or the community. This is common to any community thinking about community land ownership for the first time, and takes time to shift the response from “It all depends what they do with it” to “What I would like to do with it”. Responses to the particular issues people were asked to address are summarised below. The full outcomes of the consultation are contained in the appendix.

### **2.2 Responses from the evening workshop and afternoon drop-in**

Participants were asked how long they had lived on Mull and how long they intended to stay. Not all responded, but of those who did the greatest number had lived there for 5 years or less, and all said they intended to stay for ever.

#### **How local people currently related to the woods:**

Possibly due to lack of proper management and restricted access, the woods do not seem to be used extensively by the community.

Both woodlands contain walking routes, with bridges and way-markers, but some of these have fallen onto disrepair and are again not extensively used by visitors or locals. West Ardhu tends to be used for local dog walking, and Langamull for more recreational walks (to the Langamull beach, or to the ruined village) by visitors and some locals.

Local people tend to go to Langamull by car and West Ardhu on foot. Langamull seemed to be described with locals with greater affection and as providing more scenic and sentimental attraction, but there appeared to be surprisingly little local detailed knowledge of either woodland (e.g. no one mentioned the River Bellart running through West Ardhu).

Reasons given for low use were mainly the lack of good dry access, and the flies in summer.

During the local core path network consultation, a route through Langamull, the Langamull-Kilninian path, was identified by the community as important and there is a strong interest in the development of better bridleways and other riding opportunities.

### **What individual aspirations people had regarding woodland use.**

People were asked to consider each woodland separately but in fact there was very little difference in the responses, which ranged from doing nothing at all to activities such as paintball. People were then asked to give weightings to the most desirable uses. The most favoured were:

- Nature reserve, better habitats and observation hides (including opening up riversides, improving wetland etc) (21)
- Affordable housing (5) smallholdings and crofts (9)
- Fuelwood production of various kinds (8) and a renewable energy centre (4)
- Better walks (3), bike tracks (2) bridleways (4) and open areas (1)
- Increased diversity of species/broadleaves (included an arboretum) (5)
- Play facilities such as a children's area/park (3)

Potential uses people were most opposed to were:

- Signage
- High profile leisure activities such as festivals, centres, motorised vehicle tracks, wildlife foci such as web cams.
- Wind farms

Certain uses such as camping and bike tracks scored both positively and negatively.

### **What benefits people thought a community woodland could bring to the community as a whole.**

Again people were asked to weight these. The most important were considered to be:

- Amenity (10)
- Employment (10)
- Housing land (9)
- Renewable energy potential (9)
- Rentable land for community projects (5)
- Control of the local environment (4)

### **What community problems or issues people thought such a project might engender (these were not weighted)**

- General time commitment
- Financial responsibilities and burdens
- Clashing of agendas
- Threats to the local landscape.

### **What skills and resources people thought would be needed, and what they thought might be available locally**

There was a mixed understanding of the potential responsibilities, some people had little conception of the range of skills that would be required, others a good understanding that far more than forestry management would be required. Opinions also differed in terms of what skills would be accessible locally. Some were confident that “most skills” were available, others that quite a lot would have to be bought in. Fundraising, people/community liaison and ecological knowledge were three that people felt it would be important to secure.

### **How much voluntary help would be people prepared to give**

Participants were asked to set down how many days a year, realistically, they felt they might put into a community woodland project. The majority who participated (not all did) suggested one day a month or slightly more. Of those who were prepared to indicate what kind of help, 5 offered hands on work, 3 fundraising/administration, one “art” and one running a tree nursery. There was a general feeling that if and when the project was up and running and tasks were clearer, people would be quite happy to get involved. Pony Club members for example indicated that they would help create and upkeep bridleways

### **How involved do people want to be in decision making?**

No involvement: 2

Kept informed: 17

Regularly involved: 7

Total control: 1

## **2.3 Street interviews**

People in and around Dervaig who said they were not planning to attend either meeting were also consulted on their views. Some were slightly more guarded in their response to the concept, though generally became more enthusiastic as the discussion developed. Most gave cautious approval, as long as there was nothing intrusive and wildlife management was a key element. A few became interested in the idea of locally available fuelwood

Initial responses included:

Crazy idea – not thought through, not feasible, needs professional input. Far rather the land was owned by a sensible ‘proper’ landowner

Generally village residents are non-participants in these things, incomers are always trying to organise the locals, are there locals on the committee?

If it benefits the community rather than those with tourist businesses i.e.local shops, the PO then I’m all for it.

There’s not much for tourists to do – or locals. If it produces long-term jobs I’m all for it, especially if it can bring in younger people and more families.

More housing is needed in the village not the woods

Don’t want to see changes to woods I have known for years

Don’t want an increase in tourists

Might as well be the community as anybody

**TOTAL NUMBERS OF PEOPLE AT  
PUBLIC MEETING 6            DROP IN Y            and STREET INTERVIEWS H**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>
<b>0-10</b>		Y
<b>10-20</b>		
<b>20-30</b>		
<b>30-40</b>	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 Y Y H H H	6 6 6 6 6 6 Y Y H H
<b>40-50</b>	6 6 6 Y Y H	6 Y Y Y Y H
<b>50-60</b>	6 Y Y Y H H	6 6 6 6 Y Y Y H H H H
<b>60-70</b>	6 6 H	H
<b>70-80</b>		
<b>80+</b>		
	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>

## 2.4 Schools

A workshop was held with the pupils of with Dervaig and Ulva Primary schools. As part of this the children were taken for a walk in West Ardhu. They were all very enthusiastic about having an accessible wood and things to do there.

The staff of Ulva, Dervaig and Salen schools were also consulted. (there was no interest from Tobermory Primary School). Salen school felt the distance to Dervaig was no problem. All three were very keen on an accessible dedicated study area, which would be used regularly. All commented that local children knew surprisingly little about their local environment or wildlife, and were keen for resources to help redress this. All schools would like to have their own dedicated school area with benches and tables, a hide and possibly access to a nature trail. Salen would like with a wet weather shelter. All would like somewhere to plant their own trees, somewhere for art/craft projects, a wet area for pond dipping (the wetlands adjacent to Dervaig school offer one opportunity) Ulva and Dervaig would find an information pack linked to the nature trail and changing seasons useful, and welcome ranger input. Important would be permanently accessible resources such as binoculars, bug boxes etc, which are currently only intermittently accessible via Nadair. Salen school were keen to offer practical help in terms of designing and constructing educational areas.

## **2.5 Adjoining landowners**

As many landowners as possible were contacted –there was little concern about community ownership and some positive comments and offers of help. The only concerns expressed related to the possibility of extraction roads and ongoing fencing problems.

## **2.6 Conclusions**

While some members of the community obviously still lack a proper understanding of what a community woodland might be and are possibly dubious about community responsibility there is no significant opposition to the concept, and the few reservations encountered are very much outweighed by the enthusiasm of others.

The main benefits wanted by community from the two woodlands are control of the local environment, improvement of the local wildlife, and landscape and access and amenity for both locals and visitors.

Tied into this, ownership was seen as offering the opportunity for a wide range of local projects and development opportunities, such as a woodfuel project, sale or lease of land for housing and a wide range of other projects that could either be run by the community or by individuals leasing land from the community.

## **SECTION 3: THE WOODLANDS**

This section addresses the two woodlands, analyses whether they can deliver the expected community benefits and what the financial and other implications of ownership would be

The two woodlands form part of the Isle of Mull Forestry Commission holding. They are both located to the west of Dervaig and the Bellart estuary. Public road access to both blocks is from the B8073. There is a 12t weight limit on this road. Both woods have most of their perimeter fencing in need of major repair. Deer and stock ingress has been an ongoing issue.

### **3.1 Langamull**

Langamull is an attractive mixed woodland totalling 250.83ha. The majority of the area was planted in 1963 and has generally established well and is ready for harvesting. There are small areas of windblow within the woodland but mainly on waterlogged sites. The area consists of 170 ha Sitka spruce, 17ha Japanese larch and 20ha of Lodgepole pine. The remaining area consists of 11ha of native broadleaf woodland and 32ha of open ground. Crop growth is generally good with Sitka spruce averaging Yield class 12. The B8073 bisects the area and there is an internal forest road in the northern block which would require some upgrading for timber extraction. There are a number of well used walks within the woodland, in particular the path from Kilninian to Langamull Beach.

### **3.2 West Ardhru**

West Ardhru is a larger forest block totalling 440.24ha. It comprises 162ha of coniferous plantation with the balance made up of open ground and native broadleaves. The crop is comprised of predominantly Sitka spruce; 117ha with Japanese larch; 11ha and Lodgepole pine 34ha forming the remainder of area. There are significant areas of native woodland ( 50ha) scattered throughout the valley sides which will form a useful seed source for future expansion of the broadleaf component. The remaining area consists of open ground and significant areas of failed plantation along the side of the River Bellart. There is an area of unplanted wetland near to the village.

The growth of the surviving crops is generally good with SS at yield class 18 - an indication of the fertility of the site. This woodland offers tremendous scope for developing the wildlife, sporting and conservation potential.

There are no forest roads within the site but the minor public road to Torloisk bisects the area and offers the opportunity to access the site at various points. There is a short footpath from the B8073 to Calgary to the B8073 to Croig through the woodland, with an area of dedicated hard-standing on the latter road.

### **3.3 Environmental considerations**

Both woodlands sit in a landscape peculiar to this part of Mull, characterised by SE-NW basalt outcrops and undulating moorland. They are very visible and an important part of the landscape. Management to open up some of the areas of moorland, wetland, ridges and ruins is recommended, plus gradual re-introduction of native broadleaves.

The hill fort in West Ardhu is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are also many NMRS records around and within both blocks (10 in W Ardhu, 5 in Langamull) each of which has some significance. Many of these will be building remains of varying dates or sites where ancient artefacts were discovered. The most significant is the ruined village of Kildavie in Langamull set in an unplanted clearing in the forest. Ideally trees should be cleared from these sites to create historically appropriate and accessible settings.

No areas of significant ecological interest have been discovered in either woodland, though both have areas of broadleaf and West Ardhu as well as significant wetland areas contains several areas of “ancient woodland of semi-natural origin”. Both offer considerable scope for improvement of biodiversity. For both woodlands a Phase 2 and NVC report exists, but we would recommend that at least a brief bird (and possibly bat) and bryophyte survey be carried out.

### **3.4 Development opportunities**

Following discussion with Argyll and Bute Council Development Services, the enclosed plans from the Argyll and Bute Consultative Draft/Finalised Plan were produced which show: sensitive countryside (light green) and rural opportunity areas (dark green) within each of the woodlands. Rural opportunity indicates “a general capacity to absorb small-scale development”. This is defined as up to 5 houses or small-scale business and tourism developments.

### **3.5 Financial projections**

The financial projections for each woodland (given for 5-year periods) are based on the assumption that felling and replanting regimes would be undertaken with the objective of changing to largely broadleaved woodlands and enhancing biodiversity, amenity and landscape value.

All elements shown in the projections are those that would normally be included – rough estimates are given for lengths of footpaths etc (including some all-ability access). The aim was for these to be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the NMCWG to fine tune as necessary. A low figure of voluntary input has been shown over the 20 year period, but no other community resources or input included.

## Notes

**Other projects:** such as fuelwood production, plot sale or leasing may affect these baseline projections. Indications of possibilities are given below.

**Grant sources:** we have only provided basic levels, but there are likely to be other sources (for footpaths etc) which should be pursued with diligence and imagination (e.g HLF opportunities through the Eagle Island Project, direct Lottery funding, local authority, Local Enterprise Company, etc)

**Extraction:** we are conscious that access for extraction is problematical due to weight restrictions on all roads from the forests. Various options include:

- a new forestry track from Langamull to the coast plus sea-borne jetty for loading onto barges. (This may be feasible depending on detailed survey by jetty operators, and would be vulnerable to adverse weather since the coast is exposed. A similar situation has been resolved successfully elsewhere)
- transporting timber from the south end of West Ardhu. The FC plan to build a forestry track up to the NE corner of their forest block in Glen Bellart. It has been suggested that the track past Kengharair Farm could be upgraded (4km @ £5-10,000/km) and a track could be built from the end (Cille-a-mhoraire) to the FC block. This is difficult terrain and involved bridging the River Bellart, at a total cost of £20-40,000. It would probably be possible to build a track linking West Ardhu and Langamull, but as the terrain is difficult, the cost for the 2km needed would be £20-30,000. At a total cost of over £100,000, this would be a very expensive option, and would be subject to permissions from the owners of the land through which the tracks passed and the FC.

These and other options may be considered by the NWMCWG. Our projections are based on the appointed contractor taking full responsibility for developing access roads and removing the timber safely. Discussions have been held with local contractors confirming this is feasible. The low returns on the timber reflect the costs that will be borne by the contractors.

**Insurance:** this covers fire and associated Public Liability. Any NWMCWG employees would need additional insurance – see below

**Training:** would be in all the general forestry skills - chainsaw course/paths etc

## SECTION 4: COMMUNITY AND POTENTIAL INCOME-GENERATING PROJECTS

The above figures provide the baseline, for any kind of ownership and show that with minimum community involvement and responsibility, the woodlands would not be a financial burden, over the first 20 years period.

Given the very low returns on sale of timber (50p-£1 a tonne) in the4 above scenarion, it is likely that other uses of the timber and parts of the woodland could generate a higher income per hectare/tonne.

It may be necessary to set up companies subsidiary to the NMCWG to do this or enter into direct sale or leasing agreements with other parties.

### 4.1 Overall management costs

Additional to the woodland management costs (consultants and contractors) will be the costs of running NMCWG. The assumption made is that a full-time project officer would be employed. The administration costs shown in the baseline financial projections could probably be absorbed in the below costs, but no others. (£400 per year per wood). Funding for the project manager is likely to available from the Scottish Land Fund (see appendix)

Typical annual baseline\* expenditure by a community group owning land could be:

Project office rent	£2,000
Project office services	£500
Project manager** (p/t)	£10,000
Administrator (p/t)	£7,000
Audit etc	£500
Meetings, venues, printing etc (communicating with members)	£2,000
Insurance (public liability, employers liability, etc)	£1,000
Transport	£2,000
Total	£25,000

\*Baseline expenditure is what is needed to keep the organisation going irrespective of what activities (eg forest management, building paths) it carries out.

\*\*The project manager's role is to run the business: develop plans with the community, seek funding, ensure implementation and ensure that legal obligations are fulfilled.

### 4.2 Additional Income

Income may come from a variety of sources:

- Sale of land
- Lease of land
- Lease of rights
- Sale of timber

Note that any of these could be to private companies or to other companies set up by the community.

- Land could be sold for building houses, or for businesses such as a tree nursery, riding stables, campsite or forest cabin site. Guideline prices are: £45-65,000 per 0.25 ha plot (for housing)
- Land could be leased for businesses such as a tree nursery, riding stables, campsite or forest cabin site or even for wind turbines. Rent per hectare will depend on the use – agricultural rates start at £1-200 p.a
- Lease of rights could include deerstalking, harvesting fungi or short-term activities such as holding events or school visits - deerstalking has been included in the baseline projections

An overview of potential activities is provided in the appendix, but the following are discussed to provide examples:

### **Fuelwood**

Predicted volume production from Langamull is 72000t over the next 15 years and for West Ardu 77,000t over the next 25 years. The 3 fuelwood production possibilities are:

- (1) logs for households and possibly larger buildings (current low demand)
- (2) chips for larger buildings and district heating schemes (none currently in existence)
- (3) chips for CHP (combined heat and power) schemes (none currently in existence)

Following the establishment of a Mull woodfuel group two landowners, one of whom lives near to west Ardu Alan Parker and Robin Sedgwick (Crannich Farm) are committed to installing boilers and submitting a bid for grants to assist with setting up a chip supply on the islands. Their stated aim is that they wish to work collaboratively with NWMCW as and when it is up and running . They have offered the existing farm buildings at Crannich to store wood chips, but hope that when demand increases, that the portable equipment can be moved / sold / or leased to the NWMCW for them to make the most of their forest. i.e they wish to actively help kick start the process.

As can be seen from tables provided in the appendix, supply of woodfuel can generate more income than standing timber but is unlikely to generate significant amounts, due to the relatively low quantities needed to satisfy local demand.

**Small-scale in-forest timber conversion:** A mobile sawmill in the forest, cutting softwood logs for agricultural use, could cut some 1,500t of sawlogs per year, at 10t per day and 150 working days per year. Actual throughput of sawlogs would depend on markets for sawn timber, down time (for maintenance, weekends, holidays, etc and staff time spent on timber extraction). It is questionable what the demand is for sawn softwood, given that there are already 2 sawmills on the island producing the same types of timber.

**Woodland burials:** could be undertaken as a community business or in partnership with a natural burial company, the advantage of the latter being that such companies have contacts and advertising far beyond the local area (especially in greater Glasgow, England and overseas).

Site selection would be critical, since soils on Mull are generally thin, peaty and poorly-drained. However, the woodlands do include areas of better soils. Sites, which would be around 2-3ha, require some preparation before use, including possibly some structured planting and stock fencing. Good vehicle access is important, and construction may include a junction with the public road, a good forestry-type track to the burial area and a 8-10 car car-park.

Site investigation (including ground-water survey) would cost £10-25k and infrastructure and other early works a similar amount. A site could move into profitability within 5 years, with annual profit of £10-30k per year. Early costs could be cut by setting the ground up in partnership with a natural burial company. Border Community Woods set up a woodland burial site 3 years ago and would be happy to give advice.

**Camp site:** A small campsite may require 0.5 ha. Location would be important, with sufficient flat ground that could be grassed over for pitches and some distance from running water. It would need good vehicle access including a junction with the public road (£3-5k) plus a good track (£20-40/m) and possibly a car park (£1,500-2,500). It would probably need an electricity supply (£1-2k), at least for lighting, and would be unlikely to be permitted unless it had a fresh water supply (£1-2k) and sanitation (£10k for a double cubicle and septic tank). Total capital costs would thus be in the region of £17-25k.

**Wind turbines:** It may be possible to site a small group of 2-3 turbines in the forest with far less landscape impact than on the open hill. This is a contentious issue, and it may be impossible to avoid significant landscape impact. However, in other places, woodland owners can receive a net income of £6,000 per year per turbine.

## SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As can be seen from the baseline financial projections, both woodlands are capable of paying for the necessary replanting, refencing etc over the next 20 years, but not of producing any significant income. This is mainly due to the extraction problems.

### **Scenario 1: Purchase of both woodlands with minimal involvement**

In this scenario, while there will be no income to the community and a small requirement for voluntary input, the outcome would satisfy the main community needs i.e.:

- community control
- improved biodiversity
- improved landscape
- improved access.

Voluntary input from the community and community groups, schools etc could add, with little extra fundraising needed, elements such as nature trails, ‘discovered’ ruins, hides, picnic areas etc

Assuming that most of the marketable softwoods had been extracted in the 20 year period, little income could subsequently be expected from timber after this point but the community would be custodians of two mixed aged broadleaf woodlands. These will produce smaller amounts of diverse timber, but markets and saleability in 20 years time are not possible to predict.

Apart from the above advantages, felling and replanting as proposed in the projections (which might not take place if the land were bought by someone solely for its sporting interest) could contribute significantly to local employment. A rough estimate is that management of West Ardhu over the 20 year period would provide 13 man-years of employment.

### **Scenario 2: purchase of West Ardhu with minimal involvement**

If only one woodland is purchased we would recommend it be west Ardhu as it offers far better opportunities in terms of softwood production time, local accessibility and diversity of habitats. It also contains a Scheduled Site. Similar benefits would be obtained as above.

### **Scenario 3: purchase of both woodlands with active ongoing community involvement**

This scenario would depend the highest level of community involvement, entrepreneurship and intelligent management. While there is a good possibility of generating income from a range of developments projects and enterprises, it will important that the constituted management group has a clear strategy for responding to what may be a significant range of land use and project ideas. There will also be an essential outlay of a bare minimum of £25,000 per annum, which will have to be sourced immediately, for overall management.

In this scenario it is recommended that:

**Langamull** is largely dedicated to amenity and timber production, but could also 'hide' a bunk house camp site or wood fuel "centre" (which would slightly reduce the volume of timber available to contract, but could produce alternative income)

**West Ardhu** is the main focus for housing, plot leasing and small scale developments, nature trails, local walks, rides etc. All these should be well hidden in the landscape and not in sensitive areas and that the wetland and woodland up the hill beside the burn should be mainly left for amenity/wildlife. Any fuelwood boiler should be somewhere near Dervaig where the concentration of houses, buildings and the electricity substation is sited, plus the opportunity of a wood-fuelled district heating scheme for a small (6 house) development by the electricity substation at W Ardhu.

If community and other projects generate sufficient income, the softwoods could be felled over a slightly longer period.

In this scenario it would be an added bonus if some off-road footpath/trail could eventually be secured which would physically link both woods for walkers etc

#### **Scenario 4: Purchase of W. Ardhu only with active ongoing community involvement**

West Ardhu is sufficiently large and diverse to satisfy all community needs and all significant project ideas, with careful planning and management.

While purchasing only one woodland would reduce the amount of responsibility, it would also reduce community assets, community control and possibly local employment opportunities. The management and administrative requirements and costs (e.g project officer) would be similar whether a range of activities were concentrated in one wood or spread between two.

#### **Consultants' recommendation;**

**That both woodlands are purchased, management is contracted out as per the baseline projections to give NWMCWG time to develop project ideas, raise further interest and support and in particular funding for a project officer. The most favoured viable projects can then be introduced into the management scenario (with agreement with the contractors) as they develop. Purchasing both woodlands will provide a better spread of options and opportunity for early income, local control and local employment.**