

Dear All,

**Bliadhna Mhath Ùr!**

There have been a number of requests for information regarding the Woodland Company recently. While a full report of progress to date will be made at the Annual General Meeting in March clarification of a number of points is set out below.

It is proposed to create a number of Woodland Crofts in Langamull. These will be around 4Ha each. An area of common woodland/ grazing is anticipated. An exact proposal and policy for allocation is not finalised as we are in the process of working through advice from The Crofter's Commission, Forestry Commission Scotland, lawyers and the Community Land Unit. All these must be satisfied before we can progress. Once created the crofts will be advertised and ANYONE will be able to apply. As much weight as possible will be given to residence and local connection in the allocation process. NO-ONE has yet been allocated a croft. Hopefully crofts will be created in 2009.

A housing development is proposed in the Potential Development Area at West Ardhru. At this stage 5 affordable rental units, 5 Rural Home Ownership Grant houses and 5 plots for sale on the open market are envisaged. Moxon were contracted to carry out the work to planning application stage after formal interviews with a number of potential architects. An application to the Rural Homes For Rent Scheme has meant pushing the design process for the scheme to the tightest time scale, but if successful will provide a significant part of the funding required for the affordable element of the scheme. If unsuccessful more funding will need to be found from other sources.

While feedback looks promising we still await notification regarding our application to the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Fund to part fund the timber haul route. The remainder of the cash would come from the sale of timber. The figures for this road have been based on industry standards and advice from the Forestry Commission.

A long term forest design plan is currently being developed by contractors and a consultation open day will be held on the 29th of January from 1.30pm to 8pm in the Church Hall to present the plan and to gather feedback.

An access sub-committee has been formed to progress the development of a network of trails. These will include mountain bike routes, bridle paths and walkways. Some funding will need to be found for an all abilities pathway, but other more basic pathways may in part be created by volunteer work parties.

Ways of supplying woodfuel continue to be investigated, but it is important not to provide unfair competition to others. To this end the company has agreed to work alongside the main firewood supplier in the area rather than in competition. Discussions are ongoing to find ways of extraction of timber to feed the expanding woodchip market.

Since its inception the Woodland Company has received a number of grants. Without this assistance a fledgeling company such as ours with no steady income would not be able to operate. It is hoped over time to develop income streams to allow progress sustainably without the need for regular grant support. Notwithstanding this, all land owners make use of schemes such as the Scottish Rural Development Programme to finance infrastructure, replanting etc and we expect to tap into this funding. Grant funding this financial year has mainly covered salaries, overheads, expenses and training.

A summary of approved minutes of board meetings will be placed on the website – [www.nwmullwoodland.co.uk](http://www.nwmullwoodland.co.uk) from this month. A copy will also be posted on a new notice board in the Church Hall window along with other notifications and information. A summary of approved minutes can be received by email on request from [michelle@nwmullwoodland.co.uk](mailto:michelle@nwmullwoodland.co.uk), by calling 01688 400600 or by visiting the Church Hall Office during office hours (normally 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday).

The Company Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of March at 7pm in the Village Hall where further information will be available including the latest updates on the above. The AGM is an opportunity to discuss any comments, concerns, suggestions and opportunities.

The Board of Directors are all volunteers giving their own time willingly to run NWMCWC and without their efforts there would be no community company. Progress may sometimes be slower than hoped, but progress is nonetheless being made.

Yours,

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