



Minutes of the second Annual General Meeting of the Kilfinan Community Forest Company Wednesday 7th July 2010 at Kames Church Hall, 7.30pm

David Blair, Chair of the Board welcomed members to the Second Annual General Meeting of Kilfinan Community Forest Company (KCFC).

Attendees of the Board: Vanessa Barlow, Peter Black, David Blair, Rob Blair, Andrew Graham-Weall, Penny Graham-Weall, Michaela Hunter, Kristin Leicht. . **Members:** Hugh Allan, Maureen Gairns, Fiona Irvine, Ronnie Irvine, Michael Mitchell, Jane Mitchell, Lex Mitchell, Heather Nevay, Anne Slinger, Mary Stevenson, Rob Stevenson, Doreen Sweeney

Apologies from: Ian Holt, Stuart Jack, Kim Irvine, Jock Hamilton, David Kibble

David Blair asked attendees to take a few minutes to peruse the minutes of the previous AGM on Wednesday 24th June 2009, Kames Church Hall. These were proposed as correct by Andrew Graham-Weall, seconded by Vanessa Barlow.

1. Chair's Report - David Blair opened the meeting by thanking those members present for their attendance. The Chair's Report highlights some of the many developments since the last AGM in June 2009.

Progress/Developments of the KCFC project-June '09 to July '10 - David began by restating that after a period of uncertainty there had been an agreement for a smaller acquisition of 127 hectares of the forest which was revalued at £130,000. Initial deadline for the sale of the land set for January 2010 was extended until the end of March. Most of KCFC's activities last year centred on raising awareness, support for the project and fundraising activities to enable the community to buy the forest:

- KCFC took shop window in the village raising awareness and informing the community of how fundraising was progressing.
- Members taken on guided walks in to the forest. Several walks took place as well sessions where volunteers helped open up the access into the forest.
- September saw a 'Forest Funday' and Sponsored Cycle, raising around £700.

October

- KCFC explored ideas to help raise further funds and looked at getting 'pledges' from members of the local community.
- Technical Assistance funding secured from H.I.E. resulting in suggestion that KCFC should put in a bid to the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). The bid was put together by Peter Black, Penny Graham-Weall and David Blair, submitted in January 2010.
- A new website was designed as part of H.I.E. Marketing support.
- McLeod and McCallum were appointed as KCFC's legal representatives.
- Xmas Cards, designed by a local artist went on sale to raise funds, pledges started to come in from December. KCFC had positive media coverage from local press and ForArgyll website. The Kilfinan Trust was approached about an interest free loan.

November

- An initial offer to KCFC from HIE for 40% match funding to assist with the forest purchase was increased to 50% which left the community to find £65,000.

February

- Interest free loan of £30,000 was confirmed from David Blair.
- H.I.E. notified KCFC that no standard security would be necessary in respect of the forest purchase meaning that KCFC would be unrestricted in how to best develop the forest for the community.
- Charity auction of paintings was organised by the Tighnabruaich Gallery, raising £2,000.
- The 5-Year Business Plan was signed off.
- Access was all agreed satisfactorily with Argyll and Bute Council
- Further Community Consultation was carried out amongst the second and holiday home owners within the community.

March

- Funds from the Kilfinan Trust were secured and several very generous last minute pledges came in; fundraising target was achieved.
- 26th March 2010 the forest became community owned. David expressed a huge amount of thanks to the Board and the local community for their hard work, generosity and support in achieving this.
- CCF approved the KCFC application, project awarded £165,000 to develop and deliver the aims and objectives of the application.

Developments and Progress since Forest Acquisition - Receipt of the CCF funding means that the rate of progress of the project has increased considerably. The budget of £165,000 was received to develop and deliver the aims and objectives of the application – development of allotments, community composting, all abilities trails, job creation, and reduction of community carbon footprint. On receipt of the funds recruitment started for a Carbon Savings Project Officer (CSPO). Investigations began into secure potential office space, the recently vacated Doctor Surgery was seen as a prime site from which to manage and promote the project within the local community. In summary since March:

- Sara McLean as CSPO and Jean Donaldson as Project Administrator, recruited in May. Additionally,
- Future Jobs initiative allowed the recruitment of three people from the local community, who had been long-term unemployed. They form the Forestry Operations Team (FOT) – David Bannister in a supervisory role, Sean Convery and Scott Hood making up the rest of the team. They have been employed since 24th May preparing the forest by felling trees for the access road and clearing the proposed allotments site.
- A digger has been onsite since mid-June creating the access road, and at present, there is approximately one week of work left to complete this access.
- Chainsaw training has been run for local community members and there will be future courses in the pipeline to train up the FOT to increase their skills and knowledge.
- 26th June saw first Local Producers Market at the Kames Recreational Hall - this was a busy, enjoyable event. Markets will be running on a monthly basis until November, on the last Saturday of every month, providing the local community with opportunities to support local producers and 'shop' locally.
- It was confirmed that although a large amount of felling had taken place, much of the native woodland will be retained, preserved and extended as forest management continues.
- Vanessa Barlow added that although there is slightly better accessibility for visitors there are still trip hazards for potential visitors wishing to see the rate of progress for themselves.

- David stated that things are developing well, that due to the rate of on-going work felled, timber will soon be available for fuel and for milling for the proposed building site buildings.

2. Election of Directors - Michaela Hunter confirmed that no nominations for additional directors had been received. Anyone willing to assist the board in its duties could be co-opted. Two current members will be approached to see if they are willing to be co-opted. Michaela Hunter officially stood down from her position on the board but confirmed that she will retain the role of Company Secretary on behalf of the board, to ensure all legal structures and duties are fulfilled in line with the Charities Commission and OSCR.

3. Financial Statement - Penny Graham-Weall explained the summary financial statement to the attendees of the meeting to clarify the income to the company and its sources and its expenditure.

- Total incoming resources for the financial period from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010 totalled £42,693.63. This comprised of an opening balance of £6,053.72, Grants and Funding of £6,718.00, Donations, Sponsorship and Fundraising totalling £29,918.75 and £3.16 of accumulated interest from the bank account with RBS.
- Resources expended over the same period totalled £37,805.58 which included general company expenditure as well as £3,000 for the business plan, £625 for the new website, £1,100 for the Community Consultation. Additionally there was also the sum of £30,000 which was the community's contribution towards the purchase of the forest.
- The purchase of the forest was financed with a grant of £65,000 from the H.I.E. Community Land Unit, a Community contribution of £30,000, an interest free loan of £30,000 and an interest free loan from the Kilfinan Trust totalling £5,000.
- The closing balance in the account at 31st March 2010 was £4888.05

Member asked who pays the wages for the employed staff. It was explained that there are no direct costs to KCFC, the Climate Challenge Fund pays the full-time CSPO and part-time Project Administrator, FOT were paid by the Future Jobs Fund. It was noted that this scheme is now closed but that the company will actively continue to investigate and explore any further Government schemes to support the development of local employment within the community.

A member asked if it was the Scottish or UK government that was responsible for the Future Jobs Fund. It was clarified that it was the Department of Work and Pensions for the Scottish Government.

A member asked what the time limit of the interest free loan was. They were informed that it was 5 years and that there is a 5 year company business plan in operation ensuring the terms and repayment of the loan were met.

4. Appointment of independent financial examiner - Henderson's & Co in Greenock was retained as KCFC's independent financial examiner.

5. Any Other Business - David Blair discussed the proposed sale of the Doctors Surgery. KCFC has been interested in acquiring the building, now surplus to NHS demands, to provide office space for the KCFC staff and a valuable community resource providing much needed access to the project for the local community due to its location on the High Street. The building will be going on the open market but until it is sold the local NHS Board have agreed to let KCFC have it on a short term lease agreement. KCFC has to consider whether it's in a position to purchase the surgery as a community resource. The building it would be difficult to adapt for domestic use thus affecting both interest and price. David asked the members that if finances could be raised would it be appropriate for KCFC to make an offer for the building. Vanessa Barlow commented she felt it was better for a building in such a key location be used and available to the local community than an office located in the forest. There are interest free loans available and these could be pursued for the purchase of the Doctors Surgery. Separate security would be put into any purchasing agreement to ensure that the forest project would not be affected by purchase of the surgery. Those members in attendance agreed it would be an invaluable resource to have. A member commented that were this to

be pursued that there would have to be total transparency in all financial dealings concerning KCFC as they could come under close scrutiny.

David Blair brought up the question whether the defunct reservoir would make a suitable asset for KCFC due to its location within the forest. He admitted he was unsure as to how KCFC could proceed with this. Vanessa Barlow commented that this could be pursuable as a Community Asset; however, KCFC didn't currently have the resources or time to pursue this as the 'Community Right to Buy' option. There were comments from the members as to who else might be interested in buying the reservoir, such as angling clubs or groups; however the water does not currently support fish stocks. It was noted that there is no current right of access to the reservoir site except through the Community Forest, so whoever buys the reservoir will have to negotiate with KCFC regarding access. Andrew Graham-Weall has been following this up with the auctioneers in Glasgow.

Report from Climate Savings Project Officer – Sara McLean

Sara informed the members that her post is funded by the CCF and her contract runs until March 2011. Her remit is to use the forest to develop and deliver carbon savings initiatives to the local community using the community owned forest as a prime resource for this part of the project. The W.A.T.C.H. acronym was explained to attendees:

W – Wood-fuel: Stocks of wood-fuel are already being laid down with a view to local sales. Sara is forging links with ALLenergy to raise awareness within the community of the benefits of wood-fuel domestically/commercially. She has a target of 10 local homes to be converted to wood-fuel.

A – Allotments: 16 plots will be available to the local community. Lot of interest generated in this part of the projects, still some plots available. Plot holders will benefit from share of the site and the Polytunnels. There will be 3 or 4 Polytunnels available. It is hoped that the site will be ready for September.

T – Transport: Sara is hoping to facilitate a car-sharing scheme and is looking at ways to minimise the impact of journeys on the local environment. It is hoped that those travelling regularly in Dunoon or further afield will be receptive to the idea of car sharing. Plans as to how this scheme will work are still in development.

C – Composting: The Community Composting site is hoped to be set up soon, potentially before the allotments. The site will be available for garden waste and will replace the current site at Dunbeag. The compost produced from the site will be used in the allotments to grow crops.

H – Home Energy: Sara has been recruiting for home energy checks in the area, she will meet with homeowners, complete a form regarding energy use, insulation etc which will be forwarded to the Energy Savings Trust. Feedback will be sent to the homeowners to implement strategies and measures that will help save money.

In summary, Sara said that the Climate Challenge Fund and her post are about helping the community to save money and reducing their carbon footprint.

Member asked Sara if she would be able to offer alternatives to wood-fuel. She responded that yes, she could look at other issues affecting home energy efficiency.

Member suggested that their needed to be more posters about project activities displayed locally. Michaela Hunter said that newsletters were about to be delivered in the area and there would be a supply for the Doctors Surgery. KCFC is aware of the necessity of keeping the local community informed of their activities and will be pursuing strategies to ensure this happened on a regular basis.

Member commented that the work done so far was great however the real work started now and that KCFC would need to work hard at keeping their profile and the interest of the local community high. It was agreed that this and a 'head on, face to face' approach would be key in KCFC maintaining local interest and support.

Member questioned whether KCFC were rivals to the Bute forest purchase, in terms of funding resources. David Blair said no, KCFC is independent groups whose aim is to work co-operatively and support similar projects. It was commented that KCFC had already been in communication with the Bute group about developing relevant structures for nominating and electing a board and sharing experiences.

Member asked if KCFC were aware of the potential sale of Toward Castle, whether that could present further co-operative initiatives in the future. Michaela Hunter commented that this was a possibility; KCFC has already been

working with / knowledge sharing with ColGlen Development Trust. Vanessa Barlow commented that KCFC has been sharing and hiring equipment with other similar organisations.

With no further business, the attending members were thanked for their continued support and the AGM brought to a formal close.