

WEST KINTYRE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Special meeting called on the 12th February 2018 at Clachan hall to discuss community response to planning application for proposed forestry development at Talatoll Clachan

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

1. Present:

Margaret Pratt (MP) (Convenor), Linda McCrae (LMcC) (Vice Convenor), Margaret Soudan (MS) (Treasurer), Zofija Sloan (ZS), Morag Branson (MB) (Acting Secretary)

2. Apologies:

Michele Seddon, Christine O;Hanlon, Duncan Macalister

3. In Attendance:

Tom Nisbit and Elaine Jamieson of FCS
Councillor Anne Horn and approx. 20 members of the public

4. Declarations of Interest:

None noted

5. Cameron Maxwell, Conservator Perth & Argyll:

Cameron gave us a overall view of what his input into this process is and will be. He spoke of having "2 hats" in regard to overseeing creations of new woodlands, and his regulatory oversight of land issues. In this case he is looking at all impacts and outcomes. He said he was keen that RDS as the agent, engage with all stakeholders which then fed into how forest plan, environmental surveys were conducted and possible issues rectified. If all completed the application by the agent then goes on for consideration for grant.

6. Presentation by Andrew Dixon of RDS Forestry:

Andrew spoke of the outline of the area, of the process that RDS take from acquiring the land, assessing all the structures, antiquities and water courses present on site, preparing a detailed woodland planting scheme which includes swathes of mixed broadleaved trees as shelter and to give newly planted conifers weather protection.

There were many detailed maps of site outlining where each tree grouping would be placed, how far back from the road the planting will be and how the

plan gives a patchwork effect of planting unlike the forest planting of previously, ideas from European forests were being utilised so no mass feeling would occur.

Residents were anxious to discuss the issues around flooding which is problematic in the area. Tom Nisbet spoke of the water conservation measures which are encouraged to prevent water and silt cascading from site to village. He also spoke of new ideas surrounding water management by not removing all debris falling into water courses as this can build up and stem the flows.

He described how there are signs of land slippage already on the site and that many of the measures used to plan the trees would make the flooding reduce. Cameron also spoke of how water and silt will not be countenanced leaving the site and mitigating measures will be enforced.

Andrew talked of plans to protect antiquities on site by leaving space around those identified now or during the planting. There is a proposal to make a circular track of about 5km for walkers on the site and other tracks will be available. The whole site will have deer fencing with various gates, still to be decided by community experience, in place around site. Various surveys of the site have identified the current bird, mammal species either present or which use the site including beavers.

There will be more consultation with all stakeholders prior to any planting plan being forwarded for grant. It was felt that all current documents should go meantime to SEPA to assess the water management on the site.

The site will have around 376 Hectares planted woodland, comprising approx 376 hectares of Sitka spruce as this is the industry preferred for this part of Scotland.

42.2 Hectares mixed conifer with smaller percentages of mixed native and broadleaf trees.

Many questions were brought up all with the theme of concerns over flooding risk increasing, visual impact, environmental issues and who would be liable if things went wrong. There was a 20 question and answer sheet available.

6. AOCB:

No date was agreed for next meeting