



Annual General Meeting

28th January 2023,

11am Creich Hall

Present:

Cameron Anson (Chairperson), Stewart MacDougall (Vice Chair), Brik Halcrow (Company Secretary), Martin Putsey (Director), Julie Ward (Director) David Greenhalgh (Director) Rutger Emmelkamp (Director), Miek Zwamborn, Janna Greenhalgh, Jenny Wright, Sandy Brunton, Emily Wilkins, Jon Lloyd, Wendy Lloyd, Nigel Burgess, Rob Claxton-Ingham, Janet Claxton, Alesha Claxton, Rachel Wardle, Rowan & Douglas Wardle, John Billard, Sorley & Wren Billard, Gill Morley, Judy Gibson, Kirsty Lord, Glen Cato, Rachel Cato, Sarah Crook, Linda Cameron, Derek Crook, Tony Jeffree, Sandra MacDougall, Lynn Kitching, Jacob Boulton, Margaret Matthew, Jane Putsey, Fiona Brown, Brian Thomas, Sue Murdoch, Janice Ryding

Staff: Celia Compton, Mags Brennan, Lorraine McCafferty, Philip Yelder, Leigh Eisler, Matthew Burgess

Apologies: Jane Brunton, Morven Gibson, Saskia Davidson, Neil Harvey, Hannah Fisher, Terry Ward, Rosie Burgess

Chairpersons Welcome

Cameron Anson welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that the meeting would be recorded, asking people to switch off their videos if preferred.

Cameron gave a summary of SWMIDS activities during the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

Bendoran

Funded by the Islands Green Recovery Fund , TSL were finally able to start groundworks at Bendoran in January 2022. A new car park was created and the road was resurfaced. The derelict building was demolished and the slipway was restored with additional concrete being added. The addition of a well-being unit is anticipated in 2023..

Bendoran Watersports launched in May 2021 and held a successful open day in July 2021. They continued to offer sessions throughout the year which attracted groups and individuals of all ages.

Tiroran Community Forest

Timber felling and hauling continued throughout the year with a total of 9370 tonnes being sold. In excess of 28500 trees, a mix of conifers and broadleaf, were replanted by the Community Forester and a team of sessional workers. The Community Forester also led a team of enthusiastic volunteers who took part in seed collecting in the forest over a couple of days.

Rutherford Plant began a repair project on the main bridge in July 2021. This work has taken place in stages and we anticipate completion in spring 2023.

Another exciting project within the forest took a step forward when our Woodland Crofts application was submitted to The Crofters Commission in June 2021. This was a lengthy process, with our application finally progressing in January 2022. The process is still ongoing, but we are hopeful to receive confirmation of the registration in spring 2023.

In 2021, the Junior Forester Awards programme was run with Emily Wilkins, Mull and Iona Community Ranger, for Bunessan and Iona Primary School pupils. The Junior Forester Award gives children an insight into a career in forestry as well as learning practical woodland management skills to help with woodlands in their own community. The children took part in fun activities to learn about tree identification, habitats, tree planting and risk assessments. All pupils from P1 to P7 qualified as Junior Foresters.

Funding was received from Scottish Forestry in March 2022, to host a mountain bike trail building course with B1KE Ltd and to purchase the necessary tools.

Finally, at the end of March 2022, a survey was compiled and distributed to residents and members to establish the viability of supplying milled timber from the forest. This generated an overwhelming positive response which led us to develop the sawmill project on 2022-2023.

Ross of Mull Community Garden

The garden continues to be a popular meeting place within the community. 2021-2022r saw a hugely successful fundraising campaign for a polytunnel and the response was overwhelming. The addition of the polytunnel will allow a wider variety of produce to be grown. An award from CalMac Ferries Community Fund, combined with National lottery funding enabled us to construct an outdoor workspace and seating shelter. Bunessan primary school are regular visitors and were involved in the artwork for our garden shed. Emily Wilkins, our local ranger has also been running the After School Nature Club. Other events throughout the year included an Easter fun day, pottery wind chime workshop, wreath making, and plant swaps. In addition to

this, Faith and Lorraine, our new Community Gardeners, host regular garden sessions each week and have supplied a selection of produce to the community.

Columba Centre, Fionnphort

Covid continued to restrict the use of the centre. Ongoing changes to Government guidance saw SWMID staff return to the office in April 2021, only to be back working from home in December 2021. Fortunately this was short-lived and we began a phased return in Jan 2022 with South West Mull Makers anticipating to reopen just before Easter 2022. Ross of Mull Community Gym remained open with restrictions in place.. Rural Housing Scotland were governed by different guidance and adopted a hybrid working pattern before returning fully in early 2022.

Aird Fada Seaweed Farm

The farm infrastructure was installed in June 2021 by Inverlussa Marine Services and October 2021 saw 6km of seeded line being deployed, around one third of the farm's capacity and grew well. Harvesting took place in the following year, 2022-2023.

Argyll & Bute Council's Islands Infrastructure Fund supported the development of the onshore processing facility at Bendoran. We were able to employ a Project Manager thanks to Highlands and Islands Enterprise Graduate Placement scheme and local fishermen for regular inspections and site maintenance.

Staff

Our staffing levels increased during 2021-2022 with our management team unchanged: Morven Gibson, General Manager; Celia Compton, Finance and Communications Manager; Philip Yelder, Community Forester. Funding was received from HIE for a 2 year Graduate Placement post and Leigh Eisler was appointed as our Project Officer for Aird Fada Seaweed Farm. Saskia Davidson, our Administrator, started maternity leave in January 2022 and Mags Brennan took on the role on a temporary contract until Saskia's return in January 2023. We also welcomed our new Community Gardeners, Faith Fairbairn started in June 2021 and Lorraine McCafferty in the September, both posts being grant funded until May 2024.

Renewed restrictions in December 2021 saw staff members return to working from home until early 2022 with a gradual return to the office.

Other Projects

With the increase in stay-cationers since Covid, funding was available from Argyll & Bute Council for us to install a waste disposal unit in Bunessan. This is an invaluable service for the increasing

number of motorhomes and campervans visiting the island and was opened in August 2021. To date, it has been well used and the income generated is covering the related costs.

Bunessan Housing Project received an award from The Waterfall Fund which is to enable us to contract Rural Housing Scotland to take us to the point of tendering design & construction. This work is ongoing.

Going forward into 2022-2023 we see South West Mull and Iona Development becoming increasingly diverse with the exciting new projects within Tiroran Community Forest and Bendoran. The Affordable Housing in Bunessan, and the expansion and development of Aird Fada Seaweed Farm and its products. CA stated that if anyone is interested in being involved with SWMID in any capacity, volunteering, or becoming a director then please get in touch!

2 Minutes of 2021 AGM

Stewart MacDougall proposed that the minutes be accepted, Sandy Brunton seconded the motion. The minutes were duly accepted.

3 Year 2021/2022 Finance Report and presentation of 2021/2022 approved Management Accounts

Brik Halcrow, Company Secretary, reported on the 2021-2022 Management Accounts.

Turnover for the year, comprising timber sales, of South West Mull and Iona Development was £304,035.

Grant income

In April 2021 we received a restocking grant of £13,608 from Scottish Forestry. Scottish Forestry supported us again in February 2022 with an award of £2300 for a mountain bike trail building course and the required tools.

Aird Fada Seaweed Farm received a total of £68,539 from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, paid in 2 instalments in July and December 2021. In addition to this we received a grant of £50,000 from a private individual to support the direct costs of the Seaweed Farm.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) continued to support us through 50% funding for our General Manager's post. We were also successful in applying to HIE for Graduate Placement Funding which allowed us to employ a Project Officer in November 2021, for Aird Fada Seaweed Farm.

SWMID received a grant of £5000 from Museums and Galleries Scotland for Visit Scotland's Year of Stories and a further £936 from Scottish Sea Farms to support the event, which is expected to take place in summer 2022. The Waterfall Fund awarded £5000 for the Bunessan Housing Project and Argyll and

Bute Council supported the installation of a waste disposal site for motorhomes, caravans and campervans with a grant of £6182.

Finally, the Community Garden were able to employ 2 part time gardeners thanks to a grant of £16,422 received in June 2021 from National Lottery Community Fund.

Donations

A fund-raising campaign for a polytunnel for the Community Garden generated donations of £1048 from My Park Scotland and £591 from the local community. The garden also received £500 from Ross of Mull Heritage Centre for perimeter deer fencing around the garden.

Other income

Our income from sub-leasing the Columba Centre increased following the phased return of tenants as Covid restrictions started to relax.

Funded expenditure

During this period much of our expenditure was funded by grants, some carried forward from the previous year such as the groundworks at Bendoran. A proportion of the £103,555 spent on Aird Fada was also from grants received in the previous year.

£18,525 was spent on trees and contractors for restocking at Tiroran Community Forest – the bulk of these costs were covered by grants from Scottish Forestry.

Salaries were partly funded by HIE (50% General Manager, 100% Aird Fada Project Officer), Leader (Community Forester) and the National Lottery Community Fund (100% Community Gardeners)

Unfunded expenditure

The remainder of the salaries were paid directly from forest income.

Other expenditure such as insurance, overheads at Bendoran and the Columba Centre, other expenses relating to staff such as training, IT service contracts, accountancy and legal fees are primarily paid from forest income.

We ended the year with reserves of £342,479.

The 2021/2022 accounts were accepted by the Board at our December Board meeting. They can be viewed on the SWMID website.

4 Election of Directors

It was explained that in line with the requirements of our Articles of Association, one third of our Directors step down at each AGM. They can be re-elected if they decide to stand again. This year it was the turn of Julie Ward and Cameron Anson to step down: they were both willing to stand again. Janna Greenhalgh

proposed Julie Ward, seconded by Jenny Wright. Cameron Anson was proposed by Sandy Brunton and seconded by Nigel Burgess. Rutger Emmelkamp was also welcomed to the Board, proposed by David Greenhalgh and seconded by Sue Murdoch.

5 The Big Project Update

Aird Fada Seaweed Farm

Rutger Emmelkamp gave a presentation outlining the operations at Aird Fada Seaweed Farm over the past year and plans for next season. A couple of questions were raised and Leigh Eisler responded;

When is the growing season? Seasons vary depending on the type of seaweed, but nutrients increase in February/March, some prefer cooler water but bio foul will settle on these earlier than some of the other varieties.

How much will a tonne sell for? Unfortunately there is no definitive price.

What happens to any seaweed left on the lines? It will eventually fall off and be reabsorbed.

Bendoran

Martin Putsey gave a PowerPoint presentation with an update on Bendoran highlighting the achievements for the year and plans for 2022/2023. One question was raised which was answered by Jon Lloyd

Were there any plans to offer sailing at Bendoran Watersports? There are 6 dinghies available however lack of staff is preventing progress with any sailing activities at the moment but hopefully this will be available soon.

Community Garden

Judy Gibson started by saying what a wonderful opportunity the garden was during lockdown and how it has developed into a valuable resource which is used by many groups. Our Community Gardeners, Lorraine McCafferty and Faith Fairbairn, maintain such high standards. Judy went on to encourage people to go along and enjoy the experience and become more involved.

Housing

CA briefly covered the topic of housing. It is a priority for us and our area and becoming increasingly challenging as time goes on. The first survey dates back to 2016 so this give an indication of how these housing project take . However a bit of progress has been made with funding received to explore the WHHA site at Ardmenach View. There is also potential to look at self build sites in another location in Bunessan. One question was raised and answered by Cameron.

How many affordable homes would be built at Ardmnach View? Currently 6 although the site was originally earmarked for 18 so in theory there is capacity for 12.

Tiroran Forest

Julie Ward updated the members on Tiroran Forest activities and plans. The new bridge is complete and work has started on a cycle trail within the forest. This year saw the exciting addition of the sawmill and a Biochar kiln is also planned. The sawmill will be producing a variety of larch products which should be available soon. We welcomed Matthew Burgess to the Forest as our new Sawmill and Forestry worker and both he and Philip have been working on a shelter for the sawmill. Several questions were raised and answered by Philip Yelder.

Will the Biochar be available to buy locally? We are exploring ways to use it within the forest but once established we will potentially be able to sell.

Is there a possibility to develop wood pellets? This is something we will be looking at in the future. To do on a small scale is labour intensive and to scale up would require consider investment.

When will timber from the sawmill be available? We expect timber to be available in a couple of months time, there are a couple of projects to be completed first but we expect to be in a position to take orders soon.

6 SWMID's Next Steps : Into the Future

We will be treating the next 12 – 18 months as consolidation and concentrate on our current projects . However we are aware of other priorities emerging but must be careful that any new ideas are considered against current projects and the impact on staff as there are limitations. Bigger projects become very time consuming. Neil Harvey in his new role as Business Development Manager is looking to help identify new projects to develop and increase revenue, to diversify away from timber felling. We also need to be aware that while some projects may seem exciting, we need to consider whether other bodies might be better placed to deliver.

Cameron encouraged anyone with an interest in any of the SWMID projects to get involved, if not as a director then to join one of the sub groups and finished off saying that our role as Directors is to be your voice in the community.

7 Any Other Business

Brian Thomas wanted to draw attention to the issue of tidiness within the village, namely litter and dog mess and that we should be aware of this. He questioned whether a sub group could be formed . The general response was that a sub group was not required and the duty was on everyone to be responsible.

Matthew Burgess asked if SWMID would be able to set up an energy sub group covering the whole island. CA responded that there was already a group on the island and Martin Putsey represented SWMID on this group.

Sandy Brunton asked if the Piers and Harbours masterplan could be brought back into the council's vision regarding the current proposals. CA responded that the council to consult again and Janna Greenhalgh confirmed that there is a meeting due to take place in March. Julie Ward stated that the Iona breakwater is due to go ahead first. There will be further consultation on Fionnphort breakwater plans. Argyll & Bute Council hoped to have contractors appointed withing a 12 month timescale.

CA brought the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending,