

North West Mull Community Woodland Company Isle of Mull, Scotland



A large (671 ha) woodland acquired by the community under the National Forest Land Scheme to develop a social timber enterprise

NORTH WEST MULL COMMUNITY WOODLAND COMPANY

This case study is one of a set written as part of a Forest Research project. Some case studies are written by the community group, others by researchers who visited and interviewed group members, but they have all been validated and endorsed by the community groups.

Forest Research developed a standard method for describing the case studies, outlined in Lawrence and Ambrose-Oji, 2013 "A framework for sharing experiences of community woodland groups" Forestry Commission Research Note 15 (available from www.forestry.gov.uk/publications).

The case study comprises three parts:

1. The **Group Profile** provides essential information about the form and function of the community woodland group. Profiles were prepared following the methodology
2. The **Change Narrative** which documents key moments in the evolution of the community woodland group with a particular focus on the evolution of engagement and empowerment
3. The **Engagement and Impacts Timeline** documents milestones in the development of the community woodland group, its woodland and any assumed or evidenced impacts.

The case studies collectively provide a resource which documents the diversity and evolution of community woodland groups across Scotland, Wales and England. The method ensures that the case studies are consistent and can be compared with each other. We welcome further case studies to add to this growing resource.

For further information, and for the detailed case study method, please contact:

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1. Group profile

Woodland: Langamull and West Ardhu
Map ref: Langamull: NM 394525, West Ardhu: NM 434497
Webpage: <http://www.nwmullwoodland.co.uk>
Date of profile: April 2014
Resources: NVMCWC five-year review and appraisal of future plans (Catherine Francis & Munro Gauld, May 2012), Community experiences of NFLS (Forest Research, May 2009), Testing a framework to describe models of community woodland case studies: Six case studies of Scottish community woodlands (Community Woodlands Association, 2012), North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd Business Plan (December 2009).

1. Institutional context (in April 2014)	
1.1 Ownership of the woodland(s)	Langamull and West Ardhu woodlands are two blocks owned by the North West Mull Community Woodland Company Ltd (NVMCWC). Classification of tenure: Ownership
1.2 Access and use rights to the woodland(s)	Responsible public access (by foot, bicycle, horse or canoe) is guaranteed by the Land Reform Act. Both woodlands can be reached from the public road by car. Visitor parking is available at both forests, although available spaces are limited at West Ardhu. The use of vehicles within the forests is not permitted. Because it crosses third party land, only authorised agriculture or forestry vehicles are permitted access on the haulage road.

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1.3 Regulations/ responsibilities affecting the woodland(s)	<p>The minimum legal requirements for H&S, historic monuments and pest and diseases management as outlined in the UK Forestry Standard.</p> <p>UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) accreditation. The UKWAS accreditation guarantees the highest standard of harvesting and sustainable forest management.</p>
2. Internal organisation of the group/enterprise	
2.1 Group members, representation and decision making	<p>The group operates from Dervaig and represents the community of North West Mull. Membership is available to adults coming from within the catchment area of North West Mull (postcodes: PA73 to PA75). Membership is free. NWMCWC also offers Associate and Junior Memberships to people living outside the community and between 12 and 17 years old, respectively. Associate and junior members can neither vote nor are eligible to stand for election.</p> <p>In January 2012 NWMCWC had 163 Ordinary Members, 54 Associate Members, 10 Junior Members and 9 Directors (out of a maximum of 16).</p> <p>Members nominate and elect Company Directors on the annual general meeting. One third of the elected Directors are required to stand down after each AGM. A retiring Director is eligible for re-election after one (3-year) term of office, but no Director can serve more than two consecutive terms of office.</p>
2.2 Communication and learning processes	<p>Reports and minutes of Board meetings are published on the website and on local notice boards. In addition, there is a quarterly newsletter with news and updates on projects, Company business and notices on events and training, which is distributed through the same channels. The minutes and newsletters are archived on the NWMCWC website. Additional documents such as feasibility studies, technical reports, annual accounts, and a membership form can also be found online. The group maintains a mailing list for those interested in updates about the woodland as well as an administration office with an open door policy. It further distributes press releases locally in case of significant events. Finally, there is scope for questions and answers by members of the public during the AGM.</p>

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	<p>Extensive public consultation has been held during the purchase process by means of community open meetings and drop-in type sessions. Local people furthermore were provided with the opportunity to make enquiries by telephone. As a result, the priorities of the communities have been well-documented. There has also been public consultation on other issues (e.g., housing needs, access) in later stages of community involvement.</p> <p>NWMCWC has conducted a community survey in March 2012. This showed that the community perceived the local economic development, the creation of a community asset, affordable housing and forest school as the greatest benefits of community acquisition of the woodland. Factors mentioned as drawbacks were: divisions opening within the community due to a vocal negative minority; a lack of transparency in, and/or information about, the operation and decision-making of the board; the awarding of forest management contracts to mainland firms. The survey also highlighted a strong demand for better recreation facilities.</p> <p>NWMCWC has consulted with local organisations (i.e., local community groups, Mull-wide interest groups, Mull-wide community organisations, and local schools) about awareness of the woodland project, involvement in the past and into the future, and difficulties associated with community ownership. Feedback from local stakeholder groups (accommodation providers, neighbouring landowners, prospective forest crofters), partner organisations (FCS, UPM Tilhill, RSPB, RHS, Napier University), funding organisations (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Community Energy Scotland) and regulatory organisations (SNH, Historic Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council, Crofters Commission) has also been actively sought as part of a five-year review commissioned by Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) published in 2012.</p>
<p>2.3 Structure and legal status</p>	<p>NWMCWC was initially registered as a company limited by guarantee (SC287343) in July 2005. In May 2006 it adopted a mixed legal form by also registering as a charity (SC037336). In addition, NWMCWC wholly owns a subsidiary trading company: NWMCW Trading Company Limited; a company limited by shares (SC309112). This exists to pursue activities and operations that fall outwith the charitable purposes of the holding company. At the moment, this concerns running of the wood fuel business. This does not include the timber sales or the lease of woodland crofts.</p> <p>Classification of legal form: Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee (+Trading Subsidiary)</p>

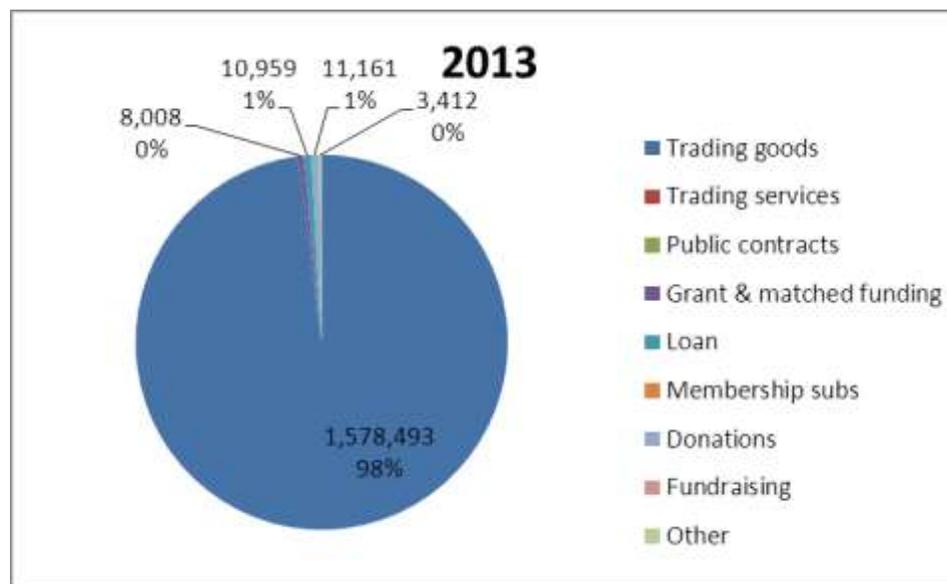
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2.4 Regulations/ responsibilities affecting the group/ enterprise	Company Law, Charity Law
2.5 Forest management objectives and planning procedures	<p>There is a 2008-2013 Business Plan which sets out the eight principal objectives of the Forest Design Plan (2009-2029):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve biodiversity • To protect and enhance the landscape quality • To provide income from timber sales • To increase the amenity value of the woods • To provide sites for affordable housing and forest crofts • To provide sites for woodland based new business such as a community sawmill, woodfuel sales, tree nursery and green burials • To protect and record archaeological sites within the woods • To control deer numbers to reduce grazing pressure and damage <p>Overall aim of plan: Productive woodland and employment</p>
2.6 Implementing the woodland management plan	<p>NWMCWC employs a part-time Administrator and a full-time Development Manager to support the community and bring in funding and planning applications. It also employs a part-time Woodfuel Operator to undertake activities on behalf of the wood fuel subsidiary. These are currently all self-funded posts.</p> <p>Cutting, harvesting and transport of timber are all done by external contractors. This is paid for via an open book contract with UPM Tilhill, the harvesting contractor, which pays the group the net sale proceeds less a management charge. The group can nominate contractors for inclusion in the competitive tender process and is represented on the tender appraisal group.</p> <p>Volunteers organised in a chainsaw group have supported NWMCWC by clearing and improving paths as well as</p>

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	<p>by supplying firewood to local people. An archaeology group is involved in maintaining the Kildavie archaeological site, which involves making access improvements and providing visitor interpretation.</p>
2.7 Business/ operating model and sustainability	<p>In the 2012-2013 financial year, the mix of income was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trading goods: 98%• Trading services (croft tenure): <1%• Donations: 1%• Loan: 1%• Grant & matched funding: <1% <p>NWMCWC has a strong focus on developing social enterprise, which is required in order to manage and regenerate the substantial woodland area currently in community ownership. To this end, the group has developed a Business Plan in which proposals are outlined for affordable housing, forest crofts, a community sawmill, a tree nursery and a green burial site. One of the first activities of the group to develop social enterprise was to construct (and upgrade sections of) a haulage road to transport timber to a pier from where it could be shipped to a sawmill on the mainland. It also created nine forest crofts that are currently all being leased out. More recently, NWMCWC purchased a local wood fuel business to enable trading with local customers directly.</p> <p>The group is currently sustainable and envisages remaining so in the future through on-going timber sales, the wood fuel scheme, the lease of forest crofts and the implementation of a micro hydro scheme. Additional sources of income could be generated from projects currently under consideration. These include a woodland burial site in Langamull forest and affordable housing.</p>

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2.8 Benefit distribution rules

All income is re-invested into the community through paying for forestry contractors, staff wages, infrastructure, improved access, training, forest crofts, replanting and community/school projects.

3. External linkages

3.1 Partnerships and agreements

NWMCWC works in partnership with UPM Tilhill Harvesting, which manages timber harvesting of transport of c. 120,000 tonnes of timber. The group also collaborates with TSL, a local company, which is in charge of timber haulage on Mull. A partnership also exists with the BSW sawmill in Kilmallie, which provides milling services to NWMCWC. NWMCWC has worked in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council and FCS around upgrading the C46 to permit timber transport.

There has been a good working relationship with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) regarding development of the Forest Design Plan. As part of the development of this plan, The Mull and Iona Community Trust, Argyll and

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	<p>Bute Council, SNH, Historic Scotland, SEPA, RSPB, local landowners and a tenant farmer have also been consulted.</p> <p>The process of developing crofting tenancies was done in liaison with Crofters Commission, FCS and the Scottish government. NWCWC has worked informally with the Rural Housing Service in developing the plans for affordable housing. There has been a partnership with Mull and Ilona Community Trust (MICT) in order to secure funding for a hydro-power feasibility study. There is a partnership between NWCWC and two local primary schools around the delivery of a Forest School programme.</p> <p>The group has further collaborated with the Mull Eagle Watch Partnership with members from Strathclyde Police, RSPB, FCS, SNH and MICT, around the protection of a site where a pair of white tailed eagles were nesting.</p>
3.2 Associations	<p>NWCWC is a member of Community Woodlands Association (CWA), Development Trusts Association Scotland, Community Energy Scotland, Community Land Scotland, Reforesting Scotland and Confor.</p> <p>NWCWC also engages in knowledge sharing with other community woodland organisations (e.g., Knoydart Forest Trust, Abriachan Forest Trust, Sleat Community Trust) and external organisations (e.g., FCS, LEADER).</p>
4. Resources	
4.1 Forest/ woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NWCWC manages two woodland areas: Langamull and West Ardhu. Langamull covers 251 ha. West Ardhu covers 440 ha (total = 671 ha). • Both woods are located near Dervaig in North West Mull. • Both forests have a good internal path network for the purpose of walking and cycling. This includes interpretative signage at Langamull. Nonetheless, there is a desire to link up these tracks with other routes in the area to improve the recreational experience. The woods can be accessed by heavy vehicles required for timber transport by means of a newly constructed haulage road. Conventional cars are not permitted on this road but can access the forest through minor roads that are part of the public road network.

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- The soil type varies from 90 percent Brown Forest and 10 percent Peaty Gley in Langamull to 50 percent Brown Forest, 25 percent Peaty Gley and 25 percent Peaty Podzol in West Ardhu.
- Langamull forest predominantly consists of conifers (170 ha Sitka spruce, 20 ha Lodgepole pine, 17 ha Japanese larch). It comprises a further 11 ha of broadleaves comprising rowan, birch, alder, hazel, ash and oak (note, these are figures from before harvesting commenced). West Ardhu similarly is predominantly a conifer forest (117 ha Sitka spruce, 11 ha Japanese Larch, 34 ha Lodgepole pine). Approximately 50 ha of this forest is made up of native woodland (hazel, birch, alder etc.). The remainder comprises open space (West Ardhu: 50ha; Langamull: 32 ha).
- Langamull forest was planted between 1963 and 1965. West Ardhu forest was planted between 1975 and 1985.
- Kildavie, an archaeological settlement, is situated within Langamull. A second archaeological site of interest is Torraclachan Dun, situated opposite the car park at West Ardhu. The coppice that surrounds and overruns it is currently being cleared by NWMCWC on behalf of Historic Scotland.
- **Classification of woodland type: Mixed mainly conifer**
- Harvesting of north Langamull is almost complete, while operations in south Langamull have started.
- Both forests are plantation woodlands that have been somewhat neglected in terms of maintenance. 40 Ha of the total woodland area is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Wildlife of interest includes freshwater pearls and potential otter breeding sites in the river Bellart. There is also a presence of white-tailed eagles (currently monitored in Langamull wood). Hare, golden eagle, buzzard, red deer, hen harrier, barn owl and short eared owl can all be seen from the haul route linking the two woodlands.

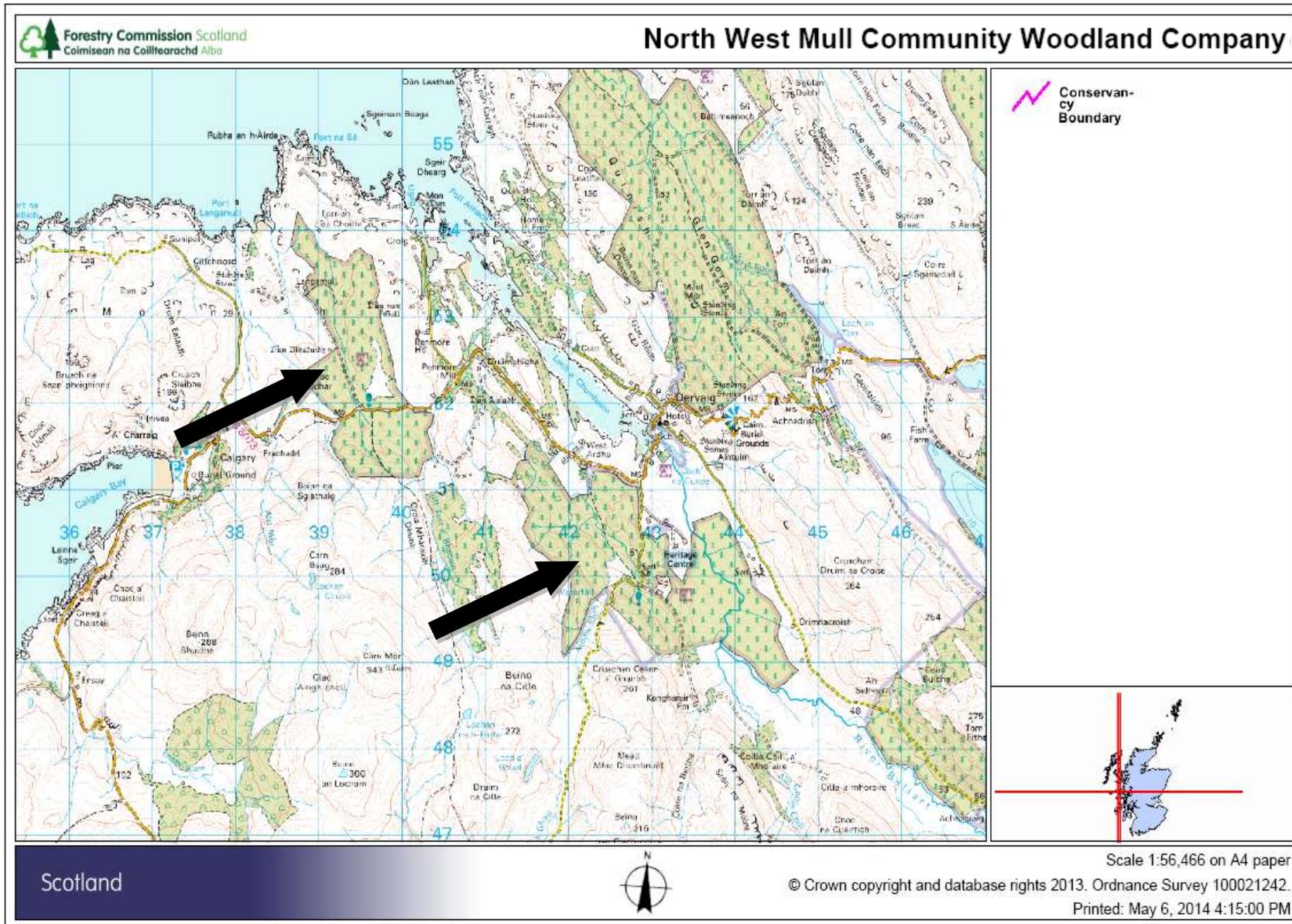
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4.2 Woodland and group funding sources	<p>NWMCWC acquired the funds (£343,000) required for woodland purchase through grants by the Scottish Land Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), The Robertson Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, significant local fundraising and an interest free loan.</p> <p>In addition, The Big Lottery Fund (Growing Community Assets) provided funding, matched by HIE, to cover the salaries of a Development Manager, an Administrator and overhead costs for a period of three years between 2008 and 2011. This also covered the Wood Energy Supply Company feasibility study and the development of architect's plans for an affordable housing scheme.</p> <p>NWMCWC received another substantial grant from The Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Fund, which was used towards constructing parts of the haulage road (£512,330) and upgrade of the C46 (£348,400).</p> <p>Grant funding has additionally been provided by The Big Lottery Fund (Awards for All) for overhead costs (e.g., office costs, website design), HIE for training and the Five Year Review, SNH for a Forest Design Plan, FCS for fencing costs on the Forest schools site, a feasibility study on cycle paths and other access, the Five Year Review, a Forest Design Plan, First Aid training and training in the use of forestry machinery and vehicles, Investing in Ideas for the preparation of community consultation, business plans and other plans, Community Energy Scotland for consultation costs around the micro hydro scheme and Argyll and the Islands LEADER for the feasibility study on access.</p> <p>To cover the preparation costs of the micro hydro scheme, a loan was received from Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES), which is not repayable if the project does not proceed for any reasons that are beyond the control of NWMCWC.</p> <p>Acquisition of Crannich Woodfuel was financed by a private interest free loan from a member. This will be replaced by a commercial term loan. The wood fuel processor was bequeathed and the remaining equipment, purchased following expansion of the wood fuel business, was self-funded.</p> <p>Other projects such as the construction of a forest shed and deer fencing of a school orchard have been financed</p>
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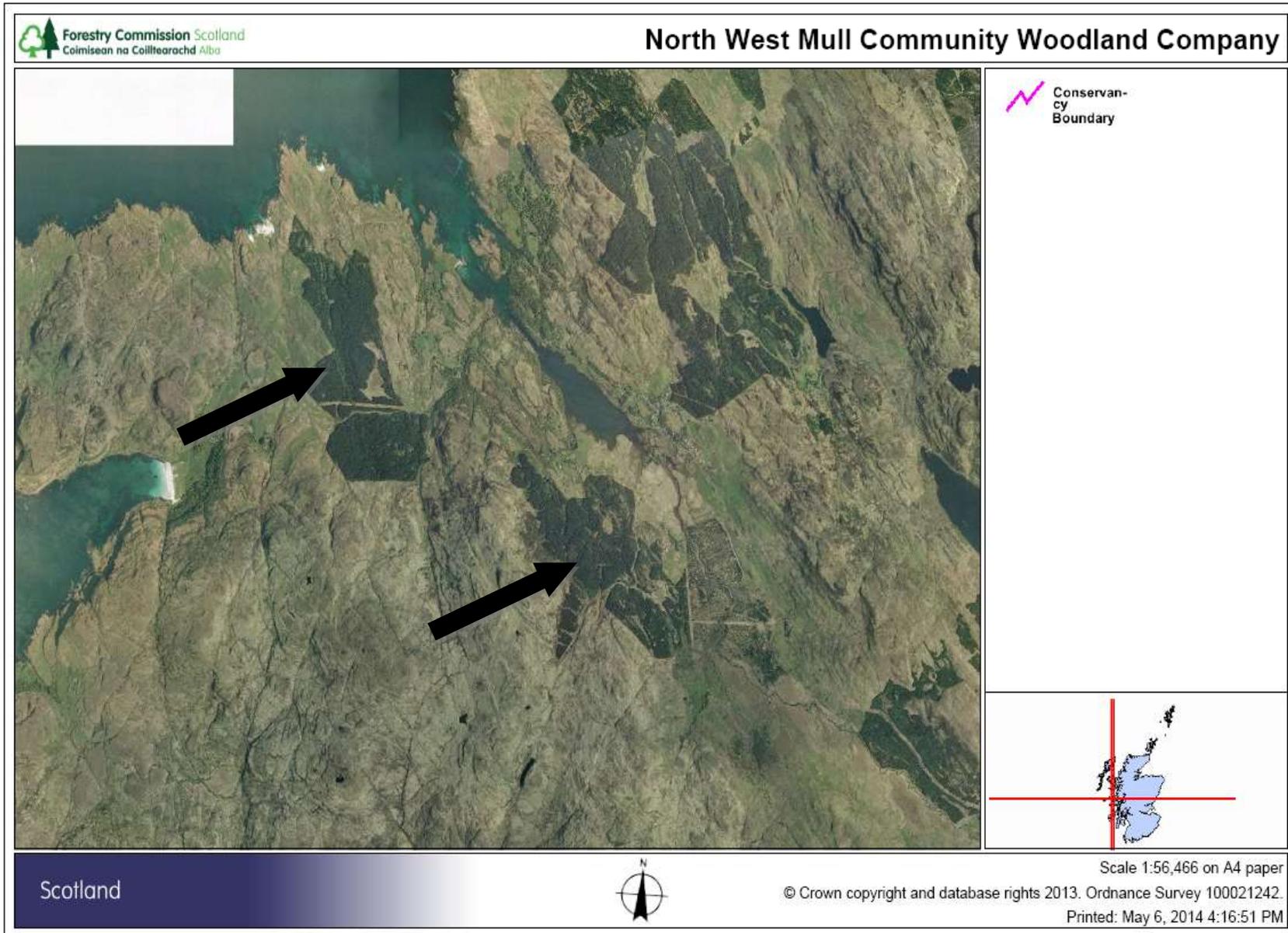
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	<p>from donations and fundraising. To this end, NWMCWC has undertaken a variety of activities including sale of Christmas trees, catering at the Producers Market, 100 Club lotteries, bingo events etc.</p>
<p>4.3 Knowledge, skills, human and social capital</p>	<p>NWMCWC employs a Development Manager (1 FTE), who delivers funding and planning applications and oversees forestry and other operational contract works and an Administrator (0.5 FTE). The Board and the active membership is building up a body of knowledge and experience, and has received valuable input, advice and assistance on forestry and other matters from consultants, FCS, HIE-CLU and CWA. They also benefited from peer support and knowledge exchange within the community woodland movement.</p> <p>The group has gained expertise on forest management through communicating with Forestry Commission representatives. There has been formal training in: Directorship (Mull and Iona Community Trust), recruitment (James Hilder), presentation skills (CLU), igniting woodfuel, chainsaw use (NPTC), archaeological mapping (Scotland’s Rural Past), operation of wood-mizer (Frank Gamwell), telehandlers, tractor and trailers and Hiab cranes (Alba Forklift Training).</p> <p>Due to a variety of professional backgrounds, the Board of Directors furthermore benefits from a broad range of skills and expertise internal to the group, varying from fencing to accountancy, and major project management to IT.</p> <p>The Administrator has been trained in the SAGE accounting system. The Directors have all received training from DTAS Volunteers involved in forestry operations have been trained in First Aid, chainsaw safety, maintenance and use and operating forestry machinery and vehicles. This includes tractor and trailer driving and handling, Botex hydraulic telescopic crane operation and Telehandler operation.</p>

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2. Change Narrative

1. Group History. Moments of change, motivations and engagement

The North West Mull Community Woodland Group was formed in February 2005 following a public meeting in Dervaig Village Hall called to discuss the proposal of looking at the feasibility of making a community bid for the purchase of the West Ardhu and Langamull woodlands from FCS, who had declared them surplus to its requirements. The meeting, attended by c. 50 local residents gave unanimous support to forming a committee and commissioning a feasibility study, which was delivered in May 2005 (**informal enjoyment to group formation**).

There had been no pre-existing community engagement from FCS with respect to these woodlands. Although both woods contained walking routes with bridges and waymarkers, access was poor, and limited maintenance and management had seen facilities fall into disrepair. The feasibility study reports limited use of the woods for recreation, although a popular route to Langamull beach passed through the woods, with lack of good dry access, and summer flies, cited as the main difficulties.

Nonetheless, there was concern in the community that any future private sector ownership might lead to further loss of amenity, and a more positive belief that community ownership of the woodland would open other opportunities, in particular, as a partial remedy to the shortage of affordable housing. In June 2005, FCS launched the National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS), to give community organisations, recognised non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and appropriate housing bodies the opportunity to buy or lease National Forest Land where they can provide increased public benefits, and it was determined that the NWMWC acquisition of West Ardhu and Langamull would be progressed through the new Scheme.

The community had to move quickly: the NFLS timescale for sales of Surplus Land is tight and prescriptive and a second factor was the time-limited availability of funding support from the Scottish Land Fund, which closed in 2006. Although this was due to be replaced by the Big Lottery Fund's "Growing Community Assets", there was a widespread perception, in due course shown to be correct, that this fund would be less supportive of community land buyouts of this sort.

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After incorporating the group as North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWCWC), the NFLS application was submitted in January 2006, and was assessed at an Evaluation Panel meeting the following month. After approval by FCS, the woodlands were purchased for £343,000 with the assistance of the Scottish Land Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, The Robertson Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation, significant local fundraising and an interest free loan. Completed in December 2006, it was the first community purchase of woodland through the NFLS (**group formation to full management**).

The move to enterprise took place when the efforts of NWCWC resulted in the realisation of a new haulage road, allowing heavy trucks to access the woods in order to transport saw logs. Harvesting of trees commenced in 2012 (**full management to social enterprise**). In addition, the group now successfully leases out a number of forest crofts (since 2012). NWCWC was the first landowner in Scotland to take up the opportunity to create new crofts on forest land since the Crofting Reform Act was passed in 2007.

By now, forest logging is well under way. The saw logs were initially transported from the forest to a temporary pontoon, from which a boat further transported them to the mainland for milling. In December 2013, the temporary pontoon was replaced by a permanent structure with a much larger storage capacity of 3000 tonnes. This implies that much larger boats can be used to transport the logs, which generates savings on transport costs.

NWCWC has also gradually developed its wood fuel business. Initially, wood fuel was distributed locally by volunteers. In November 2013, NWCWC purchased Crannich Woodfuel, a Mull-based woodchip supplier. This allowed for more security of supply and the employment of a new member of staff dedicated to the woodfuel business. Crannich Woodfuel now operates under the name of Island Woodfuels and distributes fire logs, kindling and woodchip. To accommodate increased demand, NWCWC has purchased a firewood processor, tractor, self-loading timber trailer and a telehandler.

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2. Challenges, barriers and opportunities for change: Key issues in evolution

Facilitating factors:

- A substantial group of **local people who were willing to invest time and effort on a voluntary basis** (i.e., social capital).
- **A degree of 'idealism'** involved in the purchase, which was converted into hard work and organisation.
- **The introduction of the NFLS**, which allowed community acquisition of the site.
- **Knowledge exchange with experts, committing time to training.**
- **The preparation of a Long Term Forest Design Plan** guiding decision-making.
- **External funding** which has been used towards forest acquisition, construction of the haulage road and a variety of feasibility studies.
- **The partnership with UPM Tilhill Harvesting** has been essential in order to manage the harvest of the timber resource. As independent consultant to NWMCWC, UPM Tilhill Harvesting also developed a 20-year Forest Design Plan for which it consulted with SNH, Historic Scotland, SEPA and RSPB.
- **The establishment of a timber road**, which involved the construction of 4 bridges and 16.5 km of road, as well as upgrading to other sections. This has been made possible with help of:
 - FCS which extended their timber haul route into Crannich Wood, agreed right of access for timber extraction over its road network and provided finance through the Scottish Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (SSTTS)
 - Argyll and Bute Council, which permitted upgrading a section of public road to allow for timber transport
 - Neighbouring landowners who have permitted access (some only in return for a one-off fee with a total in kind value of c. £260,000).

Barriers and Challenges:

- **A lack of practical knowledge about forests and organisational/business challenges.** As a result, NWMCWC was not adequately prepared for taking on a forestry project of this magnitude with associated access problems.

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- **A limited sense of woodland ownership, and scepticism, by some members of the community** despite efforts to communicate on the decision-making process. |The number of negative community members is, however, relatively small and has not had a major impact on volunteer numbers.
- There has been **internal conflict over decision-making on tendering the contract for timber harvesting**. Some Directors argued that this timber contract should be awarded to local island contractors. Others felt this should be awarded to a mainland operator who offered best value (determined using a scoring method that allocated 70% to price and 30% to soft benefits such as local employment and quality of back up equipment). Disagreement on this issue led two Directors to resign from the Board. The group has responded to this by introducing a training session for Directors to increase awareness and understanding about the nature of their responsibilities.
- **A shortage of large scale long-term commitment** by volunteers, which has been attributed to the lengthy time-frame of forestry and volunteers not being able to see the positive impacts of their activities until several years later. Furthermore, the sheer scale of the task to bring this large area of woodland back into management was sometimes experienced as off-putting. However, NWMCWC currently has a group of very committed volunteers who continue to provide massive input. The group is also in the position that it can manage very pragmatically - if volunteer resources are unavailable and a project is important to the viability of the business, labour is hired externally.
- **Bureaucracy around legal matters and grant applications** has sometimes acted as a barrier to speedy progress on new projects. For example, due to circumstances beyond the control of NWMCWC the construction of the fixed pier intended for the transport of large quantities of saw logs had to be delayed for more than a year. Consent for the micro hydro scheme has been delayed due to bureaucracy as well. Income from projects such as these is vital towards covering staff wages and these delays therefore posed a significant threat to the activities of NWMCWC. The group also reported that some grants are very difficult to access by small groups due to bureaucratic barriers. Again, the group deals with this through searching for alternatives, which in most cases are found eventually.
- **The lack of commitment by the council to grit sections of the haulage road in winter**. In 2012, this led to the road being shut down for several weeks. Last winter, this has resulted in two incidents where vehicles left the public road. Timber haulage was stopped for one day. The group is unable to serve their woodchip customers during severe winter weather.
- Right of access on the haulage road has only been granted to transport with an agricultural or forestry related purpose. The **unauthorised use of the haulage road by vehicles not involved in forestry operations** has led to landowner to threaten with closing the road altogether, which is a threat to the timber business. NWMCWC has dealt with this issue

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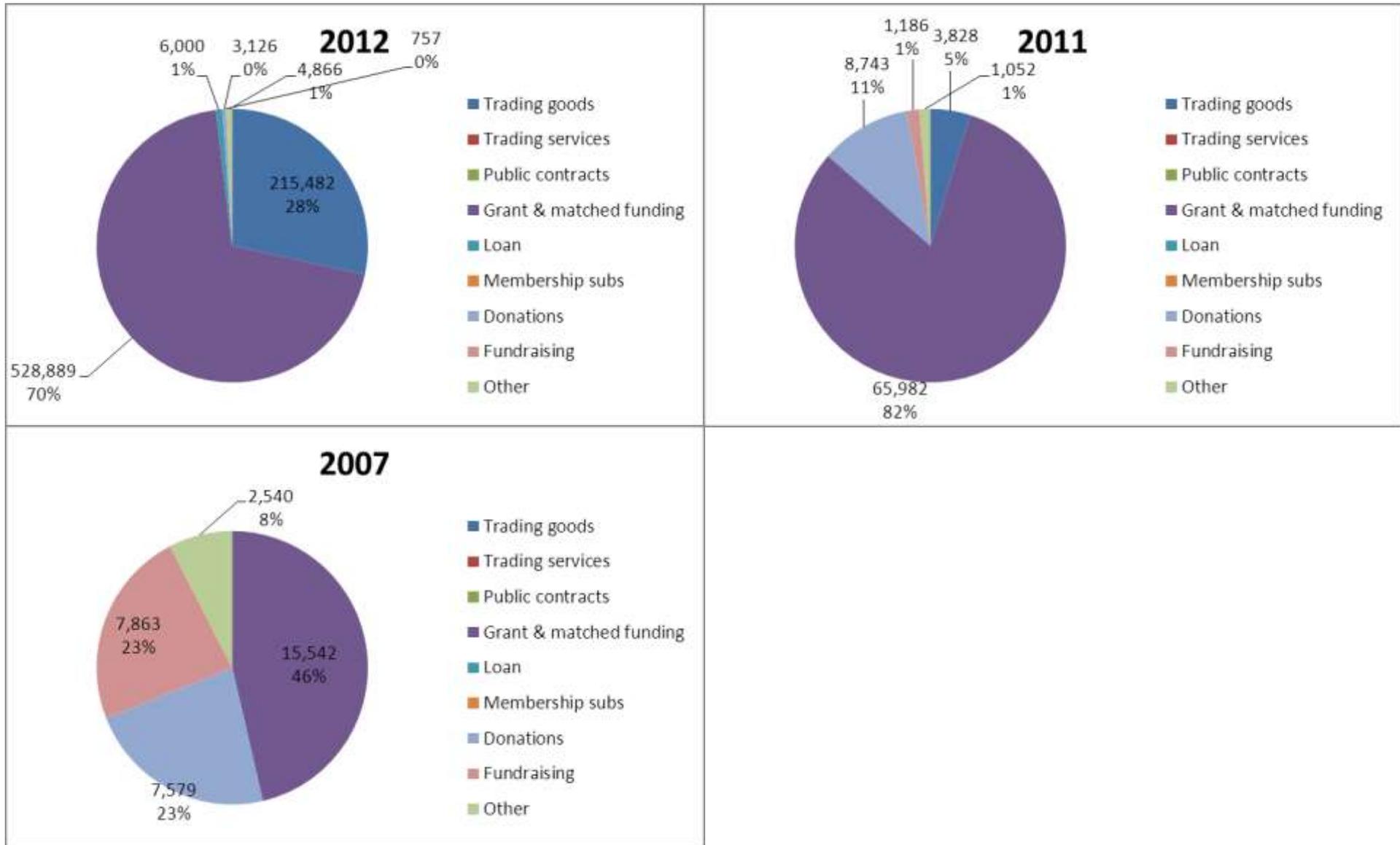
through locking the gates to the road at times of significant pressure with new padlocks. Pedestrians, cyclist and horse access is still granted via march gates.

3. Evolution of income streams

In the first two years since woodland acquisition, NWMWC was mainly dependent on grant income, fundraising and donations. The proportion of grant funding relative to other sources of income continuously rose before peaking in the years 2010-2011 when >80 percent of income comprised grant funding. These funds mainly served to fund the haulage road, staff salaries, overhead (e.g., office costs), training, and other expenses.

The absolute income from grant funding was highest in 2012 due to the SSTTS Road Grant (£512,330) being paid out. The relative contribution of grant income to the total revenues, however, diminished that year due to the first income generation from timber sales, which made up 28 percent of total revenues. In 2013, income from timber sales, firewood sales and the lease of forest crofts skyrocketed and, together, comprised 98 percent of revenue generation (note, this includes income from the subsidiary trading company). Income from grant funding plummeted both in absolute and relative terms, which marked the transition of the group to a self-supportive body.

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4. Woodland history and change: Benefits and impacts before group involvement

Before community acquisition, both Langamull and West Ardhru were managed as productive woodland by FCS. Given the lack of opportunities of transporting saw logs to the mainland after the forest reached maturity, FCS put the woodlands on the market. This, combined with the introduction of the NFLS, led to community acquisition of the woodlands.

Time Period	Owner/Manager	Objectives / Benefits (and evidence)	Major operations	Access and use rights
-1963	Local landowners	Agriculture and ancient woodland		
1963 - 2006	FCS	Productive woodland Recreation	Tree planting	Public right of way

5. Woodland history and change: Benefits and impacts since group involvement

The most notable changes to the woodlands since community acquisition have been logging of north Langamull, with other areas soon to follow, and the construction of a haulage road. The community has also been involved in the construction of a pontoon at Fishnish to transport saw logs to the mainland. A total of 120,000 tonnes of timber will be harvested by an external contractor.

In addition, NWMCWC has created nine forest crofts (covering a total of 32 ha). These crofts are currently all in tenure. Each of the crofters was required to prepare a development plan of their land to ensure that their activities are in agreement with the Forest Design Plan.

NWMCWC has developed their woodfuel business, partly through purchasing locally based woodchip supplier Crannich Woodfuel. As part of this, a firewood processor and other equipment and vehicles have been acquired and local employment has been provided.

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NWMCWC hosts Forest School activities by a local school and recently allowed the school with an area of land to be developed into a school orchard. The group also funded a deer fence to protect the saplings in this orchard.

The group has cleared windblown trees from paths and engaged in general path maintenance to allow for public access and recreation. It also upgraded and extended the access to the Kilvadie, which is an archaeologically significant village, to create a new circular walk with interpretative signage.

The group aims to increase biodiversity and supports conservation of threatened species. Under a voluntary agreement which NWMCWC initiated with the RSPB, 2.5 hectares of woodland in Langamull South has been excluded from felling to protect a current nest site of white-tailed eagles.

To support quality of life of the local community, NWMCWC organises a variety of events including Forest Fun Days with entertainment, demonstrations and refreshments, a Harvesting Demonstration, Bingo Nights etc..

Time Period	Owner/Manager	Objectives / Benefits (and evidence)	Major operations	Access and use rights
2006	NWMCWC (PRIVATE – OWNED)	Productive woodland and employment (contracts with Tilhill Harvesting and TSL, accounts) Providing local affordable housing (Contracts with forest crofts tenants) Forest School education (Weekly use by Dervaig Primary)	Logging, construction of new haulage road and permanent pontoon, chainsaw and other relevant training Creation of nine forest crofts Creation of school orchard, Forest School training of local	Land Reform Act, Right of access on timber haulage road (forestry-related transport only)

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		<p>Public access and recreation (anecdotal)</p> <p>Conservation (Forest Design Plan, agreement with RSPB to exclude a 2.5 ha stand from felling to protect a nest site)</p> <p>Quality of life (programme of events)</p>	<p>Headteacher</p> <p>Path construction, path clearance, fence maintenance, bridge construction, installed interpretative signage</p> <p>Protection of breeding site with white-tailed eagles</p>	
2006	NWMCW Trading Company (PRIVATE – OWNED)	Productive woodland and employment (accounts)	<p>Sale of fire logs, kindling and woodchip</p> <p>Purchase of Crannich Woodfuel</p>	N/A

6. Future Plans

To ensure the sustainability of the organisation, NWMCWC plans on implementing a micro-hydro scheme. A feasibility study has been conducted and a water extraction licence acquired. The group is currently in the process of gaining planning permission and a loan has been obtained from CARES.

Funds have also been acquired to construct a Forest Shed to support the activities of the woodfuel business.

NWMCWC is currently investigating the possibilities of creating a woodland burial site in north Langamull.

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The Company has 4.5 ha of land scheduled as a permitted development area for Housing under the Argyll and Bute Local Plan with a condition that it must contain at least 50 percent affordable housing provision. As part of the Rural Housing Scotland “Our Island Homes Design Competition”, NWMCWC is hoping to build five affordable rental houses and provide five affordable sites to allow self build.

NWMCWC hopes to further improve access by creating a Waterfall Walk. This could potentially be combined with access to the micro hydro. In addition, it considers options to improve signage and provide more interpretation panels, provide visitor facilities, introduce woodland play areas, introduce a sculpture trail and renovate Dervaig public toilets.

Furthermore, a plan to offer a limited number of Scavenger Licences in specified areas of the clearfelled forest is currently under consideration. This would allow wood scavenging for private purposes under strict regulations.

Finally, the clearfelled areas of the forest will be planted with a diversity of trees consisting of a higher proportion of broadleaves than presently is the case. This is to improve biodiversity and the amenity value of the forests.

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3. Engagement and impacts timeline

Year	Event	ENGAGEMENT	Reasons (Barriers and challenges)	Changes /Impacts and outcomes Social (evidence)	Changes /Impacts and outcomes Woodland (evidence)	Changes /Impacts and outcomes Financial /Economic (evidence)
2005	Woodland made surplus by FCS.	INFORMAL ENJOYMENT to GROUP FORMATION	Concern over future private ownership leading to loss of amenity. Shortage of affordable housing	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
2006	Woodland acquisition by NVMCWC	GROUP FORMATION to FULL MANAGEMENT	Community woodland purchase made possible by NFLS	Local employment (accounts)	Construction of timber road, path clearance	Access to grant funding to develop enterprise
2011	First income from trading activities	FULL MANAGEMENT to ENTERPRISE	To become self-supportive and create local employment	The lease of nine forest crofts providing affordable housing to local people	Construction of haulage road, logging, creation of forest crofts, creation of school orchard	Income from timber harvesting, woodfuel and lease of forest crofts (accounts)