

**Minutes of the
Rhu and Shandon Community Council
9th August 2023
Location: Rhu and Shandon Community Council**

IN ATTENDANCE:

RSCC:

GUESTS

John Mc Gall – Convenor	(JM)	None
Jean Cook - Secretary	(JC)	
Jim Duncan	(JD)	
Laura Freeland	(LF)	
Sally Grummit	(SG)	
Jeannette Loram	(JL)	
Alastair Moore	(AM)	

1. APOLOGIES:

Received from Thomas Baylem(TB), Arnold Bretman, Cllr Iain Paterson, Cllr Maurice Corry, Cllr Mark Irvine

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: JD Item 6a

3. GUEST REPORTS:

a: Report from Police Scotland.

Already Circulated. Three crimes in Rhu; Vandalism in Cumberland Road, enquiry complete, Misuse of drugs on Ferry Road, Police Warning and One male arrested for being in possession of a bladed weapon in Rhu.

b:HMNB Clyde

Commander Peter Noblest. Nothing to report apart from information that the new Captain of HMS Neptune is in post; Capt Elaine Boyd RN.

c: MDP Report by email from Drew Omand

- Roadworks on the A814 at HMNB Clyde will continue until December 2023. We do apologise for any inconvenience when entering or leaving the base especially at peak times. Traffic control will continue and MDP will attempt to alleviate any congestion.
- Community Police Drop in's have been introduced in previous months for local residents and base employees to discuss any issues/concerns they have. Police Scotland, Royal Navy Police and Ministry of Defence Police have worked together to increase community engagement.
- Police Scotland Youth Volunteers have continued to prosper through attending different events such as the Lomond Games and the King's Coronation in Edinburgh. PSYV aim to continue community engagement through events and initiatives. If any groups are looking for PSYV to help at their event in future, then please get in touch with PC Mark Toner of Police Scotland (mark.toner@scotland.police.uk) or PC Andrew Omand of the Ministry of Defence Police (andrew.omand100@mod.gov.uk).
- Midnight League has restarted for the summer which allows 12-18 year olds FREE football at Hermitage Academy. It takes place every Friday night and it is a great way to get youngsters engaging with officers and break barriers. It takes place between 8.30pm and 10pm to target hours of potentiality social behaviour which we want to reduce. Last one will be 11th August when the schools return.

Additionally, DO reported that the fly tipped rubbish outside the gates of St Andrew's House by the Peace Camp which has been growing since December last year will be removed on

Wednesday August 9th. There is a possibility that there is asbestos in the heap so specialists will be involved. .

It was reported at the meeting the specialist team had arrived, along with two skips, and have fenced off the area.

Since the tipping of wood on the road outside the gates of St Andrew's is a regular occurrence it was agreed that, in order to avoid blocking this entrance in the future, Argyll and Bute Council be asked to inform the Peace Camp that any future deliveries of wood should be made inside the Peace Camp fence. The letter should be copied to the MoD, as they can easily monitor this since, for security reasons, they turn round in the bus pull off beside the camp regularly throughout the day.

Post Meeting Note. No asbestos was discovered but the specialist team were present for two and a half days. This will not have been cheap and we understand was paid for by the MoD as the fly tipped heap was blocking the gate to St Andrew's.

Letter to A&B and MoD. Action JC

4. MINUTES OF APRIL 19TH 2023:

LF queried the accuracy of Item 7a. She wished it recorded that it had been agreed that she should draft a letter to Mike Page (MP) at Scottish Woodlands (SW), reminding him that SW had committed to holding a meeting for the community prior to the second phase of extraction. With this change, the accuracy of the minute was approved.

Proposed JL, Seconded AM.

Accepted unanimously

Post meeting note. LF sent her draft letter on June 22nd, when JM and JC were meeting with Gresham House. See the appendix to item 7. It was decided that the other two members of the Forestry group, LF and AM, should be informed of the content of that meeting before a letter was sent to MP. On 4th July, a letter was received from MP informing us that a PPG grant had been applied for and asking to start bringing in capping stones for the new road. A Forestry Group meeting took place on 6th July, when the proposed letter was discussed and extensively edited, as a result of new information both from AMcL and MP, prior to it being sent on 9th July. All the letters we have sent were circulated and are posted on our [website](#)

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA:

- The fence bordering the Bay has been repaired with new sections installed at the northern end. A thank-you letter has been written to Tom Murphy and this has been acknowledged.
- No progress reported on the items being progressed by CllrMC, namely the cables on the spit, Defibrillator signs and short term parking outside the Brae shop.
- No progress on Management Plan for Torr Farm. Two letters written to Mike Strachan of Scottish Forestry (SF). His reply to the first was that he was no longer involved. We replied expressing disappointment that he had not passed the request onto whoever was now handling this. This second letter was not copied to any of the management at SF. Since we have had no reply to this, it was agreed that the letter should be resent copied to Craig Armstrong Cameron Maxwell at SF and Jackie Baillie.

Resend letter. Action JC

- Quarry Knowe. .

Jan Crawford from Quarry Knowe said that virtually no progress has been made and a skip is now parked up there causing added chaos with the parking.

Post meeting reply from Alan Kennedy

“Further to the 2 meetings with ACHA I have yet to receive any formal response from their design manager. He did however state that this would take several months and that the majority of the work would take place outwith the Summer season.

It was agreed that there are several quick fixes that would form part of the future design of Quarry Knowe. This included the removal of the 3 cobbled areas which would be replaced with grass and maybe even a bench or two if the budget allowed. It was also agreed that the trees in the centre of Quarry Knowe would be removed at the residents request and replaced with something else. Yet to be decided. The car park was obviously a big talking point and it was agreed that the car park needs to be updated with correct lines. This area would also be sprayed with weedkiller on a more regular basis to prevent the regrowth of the weeds/trees. The brickwork and rendering work was also discussed but unaware as to what the plans are for these walls.

ACHA outlined that an expansion of the car park was not possible due to budget however the paving may be offered as an upgraded however this would come at a cost to homeowners”.

- JM wrote to Tom Murphy regarding the traffic hazard caused by the flower beds at the end of Pier Road. TM replied to say that he will investigate.

Post meeting Note. These beds have now been trimmed and JM has sent a thank-you letter on behalf of the Community Council to Tom Murphy which has been acknowledged..

- The Active Travel project held further consultations, attended by TB. The dedicated cycling lane through Shandon was welcomed. The two scheduled crossing places for the cycle path, between Hall Rd and Aros Road and at Maidstone Road, both operated by lights, were not thought ideal plus it is unclear how the proposal to move the bus stop south towards Maidstone Road will help, particularly as this has been moved north in the past two months. At the Maidstone Road junction this proposed bus stop movement will not help bus commuters to the base or the nursery.
- The Ways of Working Group will hold its first meeting on Thursday 24th August
- Aldownick Glen Farm. The company Aladdin Farm Ltd, Director Waheed Totakhyl is to be dissolved on 08/08/2023 via compulsory Strike off on 01/08/2023. There are still sheep on the land. David Kerr and Al Taghi have been informed and replies received from both.

6. PLANNING MATTERS:

- a. Duneira 23/00080/PP: Renewal of Planning permission for a change of use from dwelling house to Residential Training Centre. This is still listed as “Awaiting Decision” on the Planning website.

The recently appointed Enforcement Officer for Argyll and Bute confirmed that no action would be taken on the Enforcement Notice 22/00053/ENFOC until a decision is made on the planning application above.

Surprise was expressed at the latter, since Duneira is certainly not being used for residential purposes and is widely advertised and used for Short-Term Lets.

- b. Masterplan for proposed Clubhouse on the Marina. 23/00615/MPLAN. The Community Council submitted an Interim response to this application on June 6th and a final response following consultation with the community on July 26th. Both these were circulated prior to submission and are posted on the planning section of our website.

We have had two communications from CllrMC on Point 2 of our final response “We note the Roads Officer’s “refusal” of the Masterplan Application “. Cllr MC wanted it recorded that he had checked out with Senior Planning Officer at A&BC as to Raymond Kane's comments and “he has no place in refusal of the Master Plan and is not correct in what he said in the public domain. JD commented that Councillor Corry is an active member of

the RNCYC and as such this would surely present a conflict of interests in his capacity as Provost and Councillor.

- c. Application 21/02709/PP for the building of a house was approved subject to certain improvements being made to Ferry Road. The owner has appealed these conditions and DPEA, the Planning and Environmental Appeals had a site visit on Monday 31st July. A decision is expected in September:

7. Forestry Matters:

A separate document, Appendix to item 7, produced by JM, detailing the activities involving the forest group which have taken place since the last meeting, was circulated before the meeting, including, most importantly the information gleaned at our meeting on 22nd June, with Adam McLean (AMcL), Associate Director of Gresham House, whose Client, Sustainable Timber and Energy LP own Highlandman's and Torr as well as Letrault and Stuckenduff.

The forest road to access the new woodlands to be created at Letrault and Stuckenduff has been completed as far as the boundary with Letrault apart from the capping stones.

We received a letter on July 4th from MP of SW to say that a Project Grant has been submitted to fund the detailed exploration of the proposed new road from Highlandman's Wood to the A818. We replied, as explained in Item 4 above, reminding him of the commitments made by SW to hold a meeting for the whole community before the next phase of work in the forest began. A reply was received, correcting the tonnage given to us at our meeting with AMcL, but not mentioning the promised meeting. We replied and finally, following a phone call from AMcL to JM, on 27th July, MP offered 3 dates and offered to distribute a leaflet at the meeting. This was not as agreed at the oft quoted January 2019 meeting at Café Rhu and re-iterated at the meeting held on September 6th 2022. The letters we have sent and the document produced by JM for this meeting are all posted on our [website](#)

Following a discussion it was agreed the three dates, suggested by MP, do not give SW sufficient time to do as they agreed i.e. circulate a leaflet to all residents distributed as an insert in the monthly Community Advertiser. It was suggested that the earliest MP could arrange for a leaflet to be inserted in the Community Advertiser for the meeting that SW have agreed to organize, is the October edition. It was agreed that this information be sent to MP for his attention.

Additionally, it was agreed that we should hold a public information meeting for the community regarding timber transport and road safety as soon as practicably possible.

Letter to MP, Action JC

8. OTHER MATTERS

- a. **Boundary Changes.** . As agreed we objected to the boundary change which would split the current Helensburgh and Lomond constituency with Cardross and Helensburgh remaining with the renamed Dumbarton and Helensburgh constituency and the rest of Lomond North, Rhu and Shandon, Garelochhead, Arrochar, Tarbert and Ardlui, Rosneath and Clynder, Cove and Kilcreggan and Luss becoming part of Argyll and Bute. We have written to the five other affected Community Councils to ascertain the backing for a combined approach to the Boundary Commission.

We have only had a reply from Cove and Kilcreggan who agreed at a meeting held on 8th August that they would stick with their original decision that it is up to individuals and the CC would not take a stand. Reluctantly the CC agreed that we should take no further action

- b. **Safety on the A814 from Queen's Point to the Peace Camp.** There has been another near miss on this road. Safety on the stretch of road was discussed in detail with the

representatives of Police Scotland at our April meeting. We were asked by the Advertiser to comment and we reiterated what had been said at that meeting. The particular incident quoted in the paper happened at the Queen's Point turnoff, which, like all other turnoffs except the one to Ardchapel has no filter lane and this has no solid white lines to control overtaking. A spokesman for Argyll and Bute was quoted as saying that the council's accident data base no record of any incident within the past five years. JD suggested that the CC should write a letter to the Council asking what exactly would it take for the Council to acknowledge that this is a dangerous road". This was rejected and there were no other suggestions.

It was agreed that this is an unsafe road but apart from encouraging residents to report near misses and possibly publicise this at the forthcoming H&LCPG there were no suggestions.

c. Condition of the old road from Queen's Point to the Briars.

A letter was written to the Raymond Kane, Traffic and Development Officer for Argyll and Bute on April 13th. This multipurpose road fulfils none of its functions adequately. Elderly residents who want to walk to keep active cannot do so if it has been raining because the drainage is inadequate, and even when it is dry the potholes present a hazard. Most serious commuting cyclists will not use it because of potholes. At least one of the potholes presents a danger to drivers. In the past residents have taken their case to the Area committee. Another letter was written to Mr Kane by R&SCC on 31st July asking for confirmation that this road is on the list for the major upgrade it so obviously needs. So far there has been no reply. We had another complaint from two residents last week, asking for advice on how to pursue this. It was agreed that we should seek a reply from Raymond Kane as a first step.

Action JC

d. Threat to Green Belt and Public Access

The threat to the Green Belt was reported at the last meeting. Luss Estates hope to have Empress Field removed from the Green Belt in the next Local Development Plan i.e. LDP3. LDP2 has just been confirmed so the Green belt is safe for the present. JD strongly recommended that when the consultation process for LDP3 starts, the CC should lobby for the Empress Field to be re designated as an Open Space Protected Area (OSPA) as well as Green Belt. Also that the Rhu Bay OSPA should be extended to the low water mark.

We have had a request from Lorna Masterton (LM) to help collect evidence to create a public right of way on a path which is known locally as the gorse path. It runs from the northwest corner of Duchess Woods, to Glenoran Road. TB has been representing the CC in discussions with LM. To establish a right of way, long term use has to be established. LM has sent us a form which she hopes we will advertise. We have to decide if wish to support this by advertising on our facebook page and website.

After some difficulty a couple of R&SCC members not familiar with the area located this path. It is towards the top of Jubilee Field. There are sheep in the field and there are notices at each end, posted by Luss Estates, asking people not to use the path young stock are in the field.

It was agreed that the Community Council will not formally support this but encourage individuals to investigate and make their own decisions.

Inform LM Action JC

e. Battery Energy Storage (BESS) at Ardencapel Farm

A meeting was held on 12th July by the agent and the developer. The presenters were ill

prepared and justifiably given a hard time. BESS works by providing energy to the grid at times of high demand and low generation by renewable technologies. The grid does not have the capacity to hold all the energy which is generated, hence the battery storage. This BESS will occupy about 1.5 acres of land between Ardencaple farm and the Railway line. Another meeting will be held on 10th August with presentations at 4.30 and 6.30, and a final meeting will be held on 12th September. Interesting a significant issue with this is the use of residential roads for the transportation of the equipment needed to build the plant. This is a green field site and the justifiable question was asked as to why a brown field site could not be found.

f. **Beach Cleans**

Lynda Baynam organised the July Beach on July 22nd. We were supported by Plastic free Helensburgh. The next one will be on August 19th from 10 -11.30.

9. **CONSULTATIONS: DETAILS ON THE WEBSITE**

- a. **Effective Community Engagement in local development planning guidance Closes 13th September.** There is a 39 page document on the website, which is difficult reading.
- b. **What are your priorities for how we use council budget. Closing date 17th August 2023.** This is a simplistic budget simulator in which you can tell A&B where you would increase, maintain or reduce investment.

It was agreed that the CC would not, as a body, respond to either of these. .

10. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Outgoings since last meeting of just over £100 for material related to the consultations about the Marina Masterplan. The A&B annual grant of £667.80 has been deposited into the account.

11. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- a. To consider our response to the letter from a student from Edinburgh University who will be studying the relationship between the local communities and the nuclear submarine bases at Faslane and Coulport as part of an ethnographic film PhD study. His request has been circulated.

It was agreed that this request be advertised on our website and facebook page.

Action: JC and Susan Castle

- b. Garden flooding of a property in Rhu Ellen Cottages first raised in August last year is still unresolved. Both Cllrs MC and IP have been involved with this matter. Both have been contacted again to help resolve the issue.
- c. .As usual we have been asked to send a representative to the Clyde Local Liaison Committee meeting. This will be held on Friday 25th August at 9.30 am for 10.00.

This is a useful networking meeting. It was agreed that both JM and JC would attend if possible.

Action JC

12. **COUNCILLORS REPORTS:**

No councillors present and no reports received.

13. PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

None

14. MEMBERS REPORTS:

None

15. AOB: NONE

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Rhu and Shandon Community Centre on October 11th 2023 at 7pm

Appendix for item 7

R&SCC Forestry Report - 9th August 2023

The Forestry Group have compiled a list of actions that have taken place and information gleaned since our last meeting as compiled in chronological order;

Thursday 22 June 2023

Provost Maurice Corry facilitated a meeting at Helensburgh Civic Centre with Mr Adam McLean, Gresham House (GH) and R&SCC represented by the Convener and Secretary.

RSCC were advised GH has been served with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) which requires all infected larch trees to be removed from Highlandman & Torr Woods. Adam produced a Felling Amendment Map showing the main area where a significant number of larch trees, some 2,000 tonnes, to the south west side of Highlandman & Torr require felling. Maps showing the location of the infected larch, and the revised Felling Schedule are published on our [website...](#)

This requirement forces change to the previous planned felling cycle at Highlandman's Wood as the next coup must include the diseased Larch trees as a priority but will include all wind fall damaged trees in that area as they represent a loss to the company if not recovered in time. We also learned although the authorities give a little leeway; this requirement should be completed before the end of 2023.

Adam provided a written update of the current situation at Highlandman's and Torr Wood which is owned by Gresham House's client Sustainable Timber and Energy LP (STELP). It represents the current situation, expected timescales and possible pitfalls and reads as follows;

"Highlandman and Torr Wood is a commercial forest planted in the mid-1980s. Gresham House manages STELP which owns the forest and employs Scottish Woodlands as the managers of all forestry operations. The forest has an existing right of access through Torr Farm onto the public roads named Station and Pier Roads in Rhu. The public roads are acknowledged as being a 'Consultation Route' by A+B Council and Argyll Timber Transport Group. A Timber Transport Management Plan has been drawn up for the route. To date one timber harvesting operation has taken place in the forest which yielded c28, 500 tonnes of timber (over 1000 lorry loads) all of which came down Station and Pier Roads over a period of about 1.5 years. This operation was managed by Ridings sawmill at Cardross using an Argyll based timber transport business".

The CC clarified the original coup circa 28, 500 tonnes taken from Highlandman's Wood equated to 1,140 HGV loads and on the basis of what goes up must come down 2,280 HGV journeys. This was over a period of approximately 1 year from October 2018. Adam admitted this was an abnormally large size of coup and this situation was not acceptable and stressed this size of coup would not happen again.

"Over the next 15 years it is estimated a further 60,000 tonnes of timber will be harvested within the forest and all areas of harvested timber will be replanted so we can expect on-going timber harvesting but with gaps in production as we wait for timber to mature. Harvesting, after Highlandman's and Torr mature crops have been felled, is likely to occur between 2055 and 2075 and is expected to include timber produced from Letrault and Stuckenduff (a new woodland creation adjacent to Highlandman)".

The CC pointed out the public roads that form the haulage route are currently not suitable or safe as a timber extraction route and this harvesting projection plan, showing an overlap involving both woodland forests, would be completely untenable. Surely the most important thing is planning for the future and by implication finding an alternative extraction route is obviously the most sensible and responsible thing to do. Adam agreed and stressed that is what he is trying to do.

"It was identified several years ago that a route out of Highlandman Forest to the east may be desirable and would remove timber traffic on the roads through Rhu. It requires a right of access through neighbouring land owned by Luss Estates. At the time, GH was advised by Luss Estates that the tenant farmer would not allow access in any form and that the route was impossible.

Luss Estates got in touch with me in autumn 2022 to say that they thought there may be a way to allow a new road to be built across the land currently tenanted, although there was no certainty and it would require further legal work to ascertain this.

GH have developed indicative costing and had conversations with the Argyll Timber Transport liaison (Iain Catterwell) about such a development. To further explore the possibility and bottom out the legal situation we have concluded that we should apply for grant funding with the Strategic Timber Transport Plan Preparation Grant. That grant scheme has recently reopened for submissions and we plan to submit an application shortly, with support from Luss Estates.

Assuming that this progresses as planned, a period of time will follow to allow in-depth exploration of the route, costing, and legal possibilities. Following on from that a full Strategic Timber Transport Scheme grant application is planned to be submitted (next deadline spring 2024), which can offer money for capital investment in forest road building. There are a number of hurdles to cross to be successful. We believe the grant application would be viewed upon favourably, but that is not certain.

A route will only be built if; it is legally possible; a right of access can be agreed with Luss Estates/the tenant farmer and the net cost of the project to our client is financially justified. The financial test will consider the cost of Deed of Servitude, build costs, grant contributions, contributions from other parties (Community? Argyll& Bute Council?), additional cost to client vs the current existing haulage route, future road maintenance costs, on-going haulage costs/savings etc".

The CC asked if GH was looking for R&SCC to make a contribution and if not, exactly what sort of contribution GH was looking for. Adam suggested it could be something like A&BC building the junction required at the in-forest road and A811.

"Personally, I can't see the financials stacking up unless there is strong financial input through grants and other contributions, and Luss Estates are also reasonable with their expectations regarding the cost of the Deed of Servitude. Even then, our client is likely to have to pay significant costs for a new access into a forest which they already have a right of access for. It needs to be very carefully considered and justified as a result.

Notification of successful grant application would be in summer 2024, and from there it would take several months to procure for and then build the new route. Realistically, assuming everything goes to plan, it is prudent to expect that a new road will not be built until the end of 2024 at the earliest.

In the meantime, several operations are planned within the forests which are to be noted:

- Timber sale – which will include areas of infected larch which currently have a Statutory Plant Health Notice, as well as areas of wind damaged trees. It is estimated this will be c. 12,000 tonnes of timber or 480 lorry loads in and out of the forest. It is expected that this will commence later in the summer 2023 and continue until autumn 2023. A delay in starting may require part or the entire site being worked in spring 2024.*
- There is a new woodland creation scheme being progressed over the coming year at Letrault and Stuckenduff Farms to the north of Highlandman Wood which also has a right of access through Torr Farm. Machine and lorry movements required directly for the planting will be limited in number, however, to facilitate the planting site a new forest road is required to be built which requires c.2000t of stone brought in from local commercial quarries. It is expected that this will result in up to 80-100 lorry loads in and out of the forest.*

I hope this helps inform the Community Council which I believe are already aware of most of these points. I am aware that some of the information above may not be viewed too favourably by the Community Council, but we are exploring the alternatives. All going well, we will find a solution to the issue of timber haulage out of the forest and through Rhu.

In the meantime, I would request patience and an acknowledgement that this is a working forest doing plenty of good work in terms of local employment, carbon sequestration, providing recreation etc, all of which is to the benefit of the local population. I am happy to meet with you and/or the Community Council members as the plans above take shape".

The CC highlighted that when GH say “480 lorry loads **in and out** of the forest” this phraseology can give the wrong impression of the actual impact there is going to be on public roads. For clarification it was explained 12,000 tonnes does equate to 480 empty HGV journeys in and 480 HGV full lorry loads out; **a total impact of 960 HGV journeys on public roads**. Similarly with the claim 80-100 HGV lorry loads of aggregate in and out of the forest equates to **a total impact of 160 – 200 HGV journeys on public roads**. Therefore the full impact on Rhu’s community is really up to 1,160 HGV journeys on our minor public village roads in the coming 12 months; hence the reason for the genuine concern residents have about road congestion, obstruction and safety for all road users and the primary reason an alternative route is required.

Thursday 22 June 2023

Adam McLean GH sent this follow-up email;
Maurice, Jean, John

Thank you for facilitating our meeting today. It was good to meet you both Jean and John. By copy of this email you should now have my previous email to Maurice. Also attached is the most up to date felling phase plan map for the forest, which I understand you were previously promised, but was never sent. You are aware that this plan is already delayed and that the plan will likely be amended again in due course.

I understand your concerns regarding health and safety of members of the community during HGV movements up and down Pier and Station Roads. We discussed that going forward there needs to be specific focus on the communication of forestry operational plans specifically regarding HGV access. We are all agreed that the route is not ideal for HGV access, although as it currently stands this remains the only access route available for us.

You acknowledged that the problems are not limited to forestry use, but also general use of the roads in question. We will work with you in mitigating the concerns the community have regarding forestry access specifically. In the longer term there may be an alternative available as described below but that is not guaranteed. There are on-going operational requirements which will involve HGV forestry access via Rhu in the nearer term. I will ask Mike, who is copied here, to communicate as fully as possible about upcoming planned HGV movements and timings.

It is likely that stone deliveries are due in the short term and we agreed that a form of words and control measures will need to be agreed between ourselves regarding those activities. I wonder whether taking advantage of the school holidays may be a good time to proceed with this?

Beyond that, there is timber harvesting expected to deal with the diseased larch I described, which again will involve haulage out of the forest. We will keep you updated on our plans and the likely timings of that operation. As part of that there will need to be a review of the TTMP to ensure it is appropriate, and that whatever that entails is properly and rigorously controlled by Gresham House, Scottish Woodlands, and the timber purchaser.

I trust this is an accurate review of what we discussed. Look forward to further discussion and communication going forward.

*Best wishes,
Adam*

The e-mail activities from this date on are posted on our [website](#)

Thursday 27th July 2023 13:15 hrs

A telephone call was received by the Convener from Mr Adam McLean, GH with an ensuing discussion conducted on an informal basis. This is a summary of that discussion.

Adam said he was looking for a way forward and for things to progress but he was aware of various e-mails flying about including one from Iain Catterwell that appeared to come across negatively. He thought our meeting, arranged by Maurice Corry, had been very helpful and constructive.

He was informed R&SCC is merely looking for the commitments made by the timber industry parties at Café Rhu on 23rd January 2019 to be delivered, as they are pertinent to the next phase of timber

harvesting. It was mutually agreed that they should be fulfilled and the intended public meeting should go ahead.

It was explained the intention to hold this meeting on Wednesday 9th August coincided with our ordinary CC meeting. The timber haulage discussion would very likely dominate proceedings, preventing us completing our ordinary business and therefore become unworkable. Unfortunately this meeting will need re-arranging to a mutually acceptable date.

Adam stated that he supported having the meeting but given the time constraints it may not be possible for the meeting to take place before some haulage begins. He went on to explain GH has not yet worked out the exact timing of the Larch felling and this is now proving problematic because the deadline for removing this diseased timber is overdue. It should be carried out during this year (2023) and although the authorities allow a little leeway, there is not much time left to complete this before a 'winter break'. It was mutually agreed a winter break was a good idea in terms of road safety.

This operation would involve approximately 2,000 tons of Larch timber, some 80 loads which has to be removed before the 'winter break'. However although these numbers would normally indicated a 5/6 week timber haulage operation, GH don't have a contract arrangement in place for Larch timber purchase and therefore the period would probably be longer than that. GH would prefer if we could agree to the aggregates and the Larch haulage taking place.

It was mutually agreed it was self-evident as things stand, having been served with a lawful order to remove diseased Larch trees, GH have no option but to obey this order which inevitably involves timber haulage for that purpose. It was also good reason for the CC to remind the timber parties about their obligation in regard to the Café Rhu agreement.

Adam was made aware as a C.C. we must represent the views of our community who have maintained the use of Station and Pier road as a haulage extraction route without HGV's pass-through is completely unsuitable and unsafe. The CC also holds that view so in principle cannot condone any timber related HGV haulage on these roads - in the interest of road safety for all road users. However that does not mean we do not wish to engage in further meaningful dialog.

Adam stated he understood our position but the community must also realise the timber industry and GH do not need permission to use these roads for timber or aggregate haulage as things stand. He was made aware the CC are conscious that a process was carried out whereby these roads were designated as a Consultation Route with an obligatory TTMP; a voluntary agreement without legal status. The CC's view is this process, carried out behind closed doors without any proper communication and consultation, is therefore flawed.

In regard to the haulage of aggregate top coat for the new in-forest road, Adam was reminded at the September 2022 meeting his agent Mike Page said he intended to haul 1,050 tonnes in one week which equates to 52 HGV loads and 104 HGV journeys, well in excess of the TTMP's preconditions. Iain Catterwell also made the observation that clauses in the TTMP made it very unlikely the A&BC Roads Officer would agree to 52 HGV loads on this route in one week. Adam advised that Iain had since been in discussions with Mike and GH intend to follow the rules of a TTMP regarding haulage of aggregates.

Adam was also advised that the CC understand that although there can be no guarantees, we hope the new route proposals will come to fruition but recognise this process will take some time, certainly till after February/March 2024, the next window when STTS Grant application can be made. Adam reiterated there are no guarantees but agreed that is what he and Luss Estates are endeavouring to sort out and work towards.

Before concluding this call the main points under discussion were re-capped;

- GH having been required to harvest diseased Larch trees also need aggregate hauled to the hill to complete top dressing of the new in forest road project. The timing of the aggregate haulage operation will be separate from any timber haulage operation and to that end it would be extremely helpful if we could be given a copy of the proposed TTMP's for both operations. Adam said he could not see why this could not be arranged.
- Reiterated that the Cafe Rhu agreement should be fulfilled; having a public meeting, supplying a list of contact details and providing advanced information about operational timings and duration with such details to be sent to RSCC Secretary Jean Cook. Adam acknowledged this and will ensure dates are supplied for the meeting.