

## Communications with Scottish Forestry about creating an alternate extraction route to replace Pier and Station

October 25<sup>th</sup> Email from FB

to [Craig.Armstrong@forestry.gov.scot](mailto:Craig.Armstrong@forestry.gov.scot),  
Ian Catterwell ATTG  
cc.Secretary@rhuandshandoncommunity.org

Dear Craig

Further to our meeting in early September I have subsequently spoken with Patrick Colquhoun of Luss Estates regarding the track for the proposed windfarm that did not progress (due to proximity to Glasgow Airport) being built for use as a forestry track. The track and access splays onto the A818 were approved.

Luss Estates have no objection to this track being developed as a forestry track to service the Highlandmans and Torr and new Letrault and Stuckenduff plantations owned by Gresham House. Luss Estates have taken legal advice on this and their lawyer advises that theoretically the windfarm track could now be developed for forestry use.

Patrick Colquhoun also called Adam McLean at Gresham House to discuss the matter and Adam McLean said he would consider it. Adam did point out that they have an approved Timber Transport Route through Rhu Village and they had not considered this alternative route for about ten years (presumably from when the windfarm proposal was on the table). While it was disappointing to hear after so many years of representations from the Community Council that Gresham House have not even considered it, Adam did not rule it out and said it will be considered. This route would of course be much shorter and direct access on to the main road network and I guess it would not be restricted by loads per hour, school bus times etc that are required to try and reduce (unsuccessfully in our view) the impact on Rhu village. Considering the forestry will be harvested 'in perpetuity' it might even be to the financial benefit of Gresham House to have a more direct and dedicated forestry track.

When we met last month, Scottish Woodlands advised that they were waiting from approval from Scottish Forestry regarding an EIA for the new forestry roads for Letrault and Stuckenduff before they could start building them. Is there a chance that this confirmed information that the windfarm road route is available be a factor in determining and shaping this approval?

Luss Estates have advised Gresham House that they would of course have to bear all legal and construction costs and compensation to the Estate, and tenant farmer Mr Penrice. However, Luss Estates have no objection to the construction of the track and are willing to co-operate

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	<p>with Gresham House. I understand that the tenant farmer Mr Penrice might be resistant as he was apprehensive about the windfarm track. However, as I have said before I am sure sufficient recompense could resolve this.</p> <p>We agreed at our meeting that every endeavour would be made to resolve the community's legitimate concerns about timber haulage through Rhu Village. I feel that confirmation from the landowner that they have no objection to an already approved track and access point on to the main A818 being built and utilised for timber haulage is a major step forward.</p> <p>It really boils down to the will of the forestry industry – Scottish Forestry, Gresham House, Scottish Woodlands and the ATTG to take this forward and resolve this problem. I hope you will be able to persuade the relevant parties to now progress with serious efforts to develop this alternative route.</p>
<p><b>Reminder sent 6<sup>th</sup> December by FB</b></p> <p>To Craig.Armstrong@forestry.gov.scot" &lt;craig.armstrong@forestry.gov.scot&gt;, Doug.Howieson@forestry.gov.scot, "Mike.Strachan@forestry.gov.scot" &lt;mike.strachan@forestry.gov.scot&gt;, Roland.stiven@forestry.gov.scot, cameron.maxwell@forestry.gov.scot</p> <p>Cc: Jean Cook &lt;secretary@rhuandshandoncommunity.org&gt;, John McGall &lt;john.mcgall1@btinternet.com&gt;, "Baillie J (Jackie), MSP" &lt;jackie.baillie.msp@parliament.scot&gt;, Irvine, Mark" &lt;mark.irvine@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "Paterson, Iain Shonny" &lt;iainshonny.paterson@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "Corry, Maurice" &lt;maurice.corry@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "O'HARA, Brendan" &lt;brendan.ohara.mp@parliament.uk&gt;</p>	<p>Dear Craig</p> <p>You have not acknowledged the email below which was sent on 25 October 2022. Iain Catterwell of ATTG did acknowledge it.</p> <p>This is very disappointing having advised you that there is a viable alternative timber transport route available across Luss Estates land, and that they are open to negotiation with the forest owners Gresham House. You assured us at the meeting held on 6 September that every effort would be made to resolve the timber transport issues in Rhu.</p> <p>This email is now forwarded to the four other officials at Scottish Forestry who have spoken and corresponded with members of Rhu and Shandon Community Council and Rhu residents on the topic of the timber lorries going through Rhu Village. We hope somebody will respond.</p> <p>It is also copied to our Argyll and Bute Lomond North Councillors and our MSP Jackie Baillie, who is well aware of this issue, which has now been running for five years. Given how long Rhu and Shandon Community Council and residents of the village have been asking and arguing for the timber lorries to be removed from our narrow village roads I have also copied in our MP.</p>

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No further news has been forthcoming from Mike Page of Scottish Woodlands, or SF, regarding the proposed in-forest road building at Letrault and Stuckenduff that he hoped to start in late November once it had been approved by Scottish Forestry. As suggested in my email, as Scottish Forestry is the regulator and grants permission for new FGS plantations and need to consider how timber will be extracted this seems like an opportunity for SF to insist, with your regulatory powers, that a new timber transport route is developed. Argyll and Bute Council might have approved the use of Pier and Station Roads under a TTMP but at the same time they are refusing planning applications and change of use applications because the roads can't cope with additional traffic and Police Scotland have advised the road is dangerous.

We had a meeting on 6 September at which a resolution was agreed : **All representatives at this meeting RSCC, SF, SW and ATTG agree that RSCC and the local community have legitimate concerns with the current haulage route and every effort will be made to secure a new route that does not make use of village roads.**

RSCC have fulfilled our action point of discussing the matter of a new road with the landowner and have a positive response. Not only would we like to you to acknowledge this information we would like to you to act on it and 'make every effort to secure a new route'.

Scottish Forestry can surely be in no doubt given the outcry around the whole country that this huge increase in forestry plantation is causing local communities great concern about timber transport routes, amongst a whole host of other issues. No doubt all of these issues will be raised in the forthcoming review of the FGS, (assuming non forestry industry people can contribute) which has perhaps come about due to the importance the Minister (Mairi McAllan) places on community engagement, involvement and benefit. Rhu has been failed on all three and suffer an enormous disbenefit. Please will you take action to resolve the unacceptable timber transport issues in Rhu and ensure a new forest road is developed.

Yours sincerely  
Fiona Baker  
For Rhu and Shandon Community Council

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<p><b>Reply from Craig Callaghan 7<sup>th</sup> December</b> Cc to "Irvine, Mark" &lt;mark.irvine@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "Paterson, Iain Shonny" &lt;iainshonny.paterson@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "Corry, Maurice" &lt;maurice.corry@argyll-bute.gov.uk&gt;, "O'HARA, Brendan" &lt;brendan.ohara.mp@parliament.uk&gt;</p>	<p>Apologies for not replying to your email, I thought I had included you when I forwarded the information to Mike.</p> <p>I was pleased to see that Luss Estates were happy for the alternative route to be developed and asked Mike if he could take the idea forward.</p> <p>Mike contacted me last Wednesday to say that Scottish Woodlands have started work on this and he was hopeful that it could go ahead, they have started to put a plan preparation grant together for STTS funding for the work and Mike promised to keep me posted on progress.</p> <p>This is all quite positive and hopefully Scottish Woodlands and Luss Estates can negotiate a deal to progress the project. Mike did say that cost would likely be the deciding factor in whether or not the project could be achieved so I should mention this as management of expectation.</p> <p>Again, apologies for not forwarding this information sooner, It's been a busy week and I was hoping to get round to it today.</p> <p>Many thanks,</p>
<p><b>Communication from Mike Page Scottish Woodland</b> <b>8 December 2022 at 09:54:19 GMT</b> <b>To:</b> Fiona Baker &lt;<a href="mailto:fionabakerrhu@gmail.com">fionabakerrhu@gmail.com</a>&gt; <b>Cc:</b> Craig.Armstrong@forestry.gov.scot <b>Subject: RE: Rhu forestry road solution</b></p>	<p>Dear Fiona,</p> <p>Start delayed until late January due to contractor availability. I'll be in touch as soon as I have a firm date for moving stone and heavy plant onto the site.</p> <p>I've been trying to get in touch with A&amp;BC Planning Dept about Maaikes original Application for Prior Notification- this was us notifying the council that we planned to construct this road. R&amp;SCC objected to the application on 5<sup>th</sup> January, citing the issues with access that we've discussed. When I hear back from A&amp;BC can I take it that R&amp;SCC have lifted this objection?</p> <p>I'm hopeful about the alternative access but I also ought to sound a note of caution about the financing of this project- Gresham House will have to run the numbers and will have the final say, but be assured that I will make the case as strongly as I can to build this new infrastructure that bypasses Rhu.</p> <p>I'll let you know once I've heard back from the Council. Hope you are well</p>