

CCDC Newsletter, December 2005.

Trading Company News.

Coal.

The coal bags are disintegrating in the sunlight and this is causing problems for users. The supplier has said that the only way round this is to cover the bags. Walter has kindly donated a tarpaulin to prevent this happening again. Thanks to the people that turned up to help with clearing of the burst bags of coal at the Coal Righ. There are some very generously filled bags of coal and anthracite available so a good chance to get a bargain. There may be some dust and bits of old pallet in amongst it but the majority of each bag will be good coal.

Petrol pricing.

Due to an error on the SAGE computer programme, fuel bills that have been sent out were priced incorrectly. People who were paying on account were being charged 8p/litre more than if you paid on the day of purchase. If you want to discuss this come in and see us at the servicepoint.

There is a new delivery of petrol due so it may be the case that another price rise will be needed.

If you feel strongly about this or any other matter that affects the Development Company come along to the AGM and have your say.

Development Company News.

Croft purchase scheme.

This project is stalled at present due to legal questions. These questions concern the clawback to which Colonsay Estate is entitled under the Crofting legislation. The sale is being effected by a transfer from Colonsay Estate to Colonsay Community Development Company, as the nominee of Donald McNeill. Under the legislation the landlord is not entitled to any clawback of any future sale price if only the croft house site and garden ground are being purchased. In this case Colonsay Community Development Company are purchasing the croftland, and are obliged to sign a Standard Security in favour of Colonsay Estate covering a clawback over five years from the date of entry. The amount of the clawback is usually 50% of the "market value", i.e. the difference between the price originally received and the price/value on a sale/transfer within the five year period. There is some question as to the exact definition of market value of the land, which at today's values could mean Colonsay Community Development Company having to find upwards of £15,000.

Given the circumstances of this purchase we had hoped that Colonsay Estate would accept revisions to the Standard Security whereby the clawback would not become exercisable in the event of a crofter opting to purchase their house site and garden ground, as obviously only a nominal price would be paid. This would not have affected the Estate's rights in the event of a sale on the open market. Unfortunately it has only recently transpired that Colonsay Estate are not willing to accept this.

Our legal advisors have recently obtained an informal opinion from Professor Paisley of Aberdeen University who has confirmed that the Land Court could not vary the rights of the landlord. An independent consultant has been brought in to help facilitate the processes needed to bring this sale to a conclusion. He will present his findings to the Development Company by the end of January 2006.

Rhododendron Clearance Scheme.

Work has been progressing well with impressive amounts of work being done considering the density of the rhododendron being encountered at present. When sites were assessed it was impossible to accurately estimate the density of the plant in areas where access was impossible. In the past month, the height and thickness of the plants has amazed even the experts. Bob Black the forestry consultant employed by Colonsay Estate visited the island to organise the work plan for the next cutting period. Funding the project is always an issue and Andrew Abrahams has been working closely with Alex Howard to make sure the project continues. The next areas to be cleared come under the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme which offer higher levels of grant than the previous Woodland Grants scheme. The main issue is that before the grant can be paid out, the work needs to be completed in a particular compartment which creates a cash flow problem. Each compartment can cost upwards of £5,000 to clear depending on density.

Access Project.

Bracken has been sprayed and results will only be known next growing season. Low key markers are being investigated and it would be preferable if these could be produced locally on the island. If anyone has any suggestions please let us know.

Harbour Development.

At the recent IaaO committee meeting, Rhona Sutherland of AIE indicated that the feasibility study into the proposals that have been put forward will be undertaken before the end of the year. To remind everyone what they were here they are:

1. The positioning of moorings at Scalasaig harbour and at Queen's bay.
2. The possibility of concrete steps in the bay area in front of the shop to allow easier access for shopping. This will reduce the need for visitors by boat to use the pier and slipway which is already well utilised by local craft.
3. The provision of water and diesel.
4. Excavation of the inner harbour to provide additional moorings and berthing opportunities.
5. Improving access to boats berthed at the harbour wall through the provision of new access ladders.
6. Improving safety in the harbour area.
7. Contacting a civil engineer to carry out an appraisal of the proposed works.
8. Exploring the opportunity to create new breakwater(s) outside the inner harbour.

It should be noted that before any works could take place, the community would be fully consulted and balloted and only then, if there was a majority in favour of any proposed works would they take place.

SISU.

Just to remind everyone the SISU website can be accessed at:
<http://webnews.textalk.com/sisu/>

Land Reform.

Unfortunately the proposed information meeting on the Land Reform Act had to be cancelled again. This was reasons outwith our control and every effort is being made to re-arrange the meeting. In all probability it will need to take place once the ferry timetable has changed back to the summer sailings. This is unfortunate as it is important that people are as well informed as possible and any misconceptions can be dealt with. The Scottish Land Fund are sending out a questions and answers booklet which will be circulated round the community and this should help to give people a better understanding of the legislation.

Renewable Energy Project.

Minute of Three Islands meeting on joint working for renewable energy initiatives held on 31 august 2005 in Colonsay Village Hall.

PRESENT:

Eric Dodd	Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company (Chair)
Rhona Sutherland	AIE
Eleanor McNab	AIE
Louise Gregory	SNH
Robin Currie	Argyll & Bute Council
Eileen MacKenzie	IET
Richard Sutton	IET
Arthur Woodrow	IET
Andrew Waterworth	IET
Anne Clark	IET
John Potts	JDT
Elaine Campbell	JDT
Colin Campbell	JDT
Andrew McGregor	Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC)
Andrew Abrahams	CCDC
Chris Nisbet	CCDC/IAE
Christa Byrne	CCDC
Bob Pocklington	
Lucy Johnstone	
Margaret Kiernan	
Angela Skrimshire	

APOLOGIES:

Paul Phare	Alienergy
Steven McGingle	IET
David Taylor	IET
Sally Taylor	IET
Douglas Tott	IET
Hayley Rountree	IET
Ian Stuart	IET
Alan Blair	IET
Audrey Martin	Argyll & Bute Council

Members were welcomed to this first meeting aimed at exploring opportunities to work together as three islands committed to developing renewable energy sources for the benefit of all three communities. By way of introduction each member was asked to give an indication of what they would like to see develop from the meeting – expressing any particular interests.

1. **HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS COMMUNITY ENERGY COMPANY** – Eric Dodd gave the background to the formation of the new community energy company which is set up to assist communities to develop and own their own energy projects. The investment from HICEC is varied between grants, loans and equity to enable the projects to develop – stress is made upon funding projects that have income generation as a clear viable outcome. The website for the company outlines their role and investment policy. HIE is the sole member of the company but this is expected to change over the next 3 years when communities may wish to become members.
2. **GRID CAPACITY FOR JURA – ISLAY – COLONSAY** - Eric circulated a paper prepared by Colin Anderson that defines the capacity for new developments for the 3 islands. (paper attached). The only way to get access to this capacity is to have a project that needs a grid connection. Upgrade of the line in Argyll (Inverary – Sloy line) and looks to be moving forward – this will prove beneficial to us in increasing capacity. Making better use of hydrogen cells could be useful especially on Colonsay – i.e. Colonsay produces electricity it cannot feed into the grid and converts it to hydrogen and makes use of it for benefit of using electricity locally. PURE project on Unst is an example of a successful demonstration project in this way. – more joint working with islands looking at same projects would be good. A suggestion that Colonsay could have a number of 15kw wind turbines - Eric pointed out the cost implications of these small turbines and the difficulty they would have in funding them.

Lucy Johnstone enquired as to whether there was any point in creating something to export if no one wants it? – What is in this initiative for Colonsay – why would Jura and Islay want to work with what appears to be the *weakest link*.

Eric explained the importance of developing projects that aimed at viability but also involved the wider communities in a number of ways to conserve energy and to create green energy – much of the work will move toward increased community sustainability.

3. **WORKING TOGETHER** –
 - a. **Advantages** – better and easier for funders and agencies to work with one application instead of 3; more likelihood of projects going forward through joint working; not enough money for 3 separate bids for similar work; better opportunity for sharing of skills and resources; more political clout.
 - b. **ISSUES**: sorting out the mechanics of working together (legal structures); contracting for work to be done (competition for contracting); setting up structures for distribution of funds;
 - c. **FUNDING** - HICEC will support start up costs to pre-buying stages. There is a high level of intervention at start up stages.

AT THIS STAGE IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT THE THREE ISLAND WOULD SET THEMSELVES UP TO WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS.

4. SMALLER PROJECTS TO CONSIDER

- d. SOLAR** - Andrew Abrahams defined the potential for all three islands to work together to do a bulk-buy agreement to install solar panels on homes, halls, etc. The project would include training for a certified installer and negotiations for the best price for a bulk purchase order. Andrew suggested that getting the facts and figures presented to homeowners would be one way to market and promote on all three islands. People will need to see the facts to influence their decision to sign up to purchase. Needless to say community consultation on all three islands will need to be planned. At present there are no accredited installers in Argyll – so this would help to fill a gap. A similar exercise would be done for household wind turbines.
- e. EDUCATION** – There is a clear need to do some active work around getting more community involvement in learning about energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. More engagement with key agencies, planning officers, There is an opportunity to hold a conference that goes some way toward meeting these aims. The group has a key role in lobbying on small scale renewables, pressing to remove barriers (particularly planning) to increase use of small scale renewables.

Eric suggested that if the community felt the need, a course could be run on renewable energies and funded as a workshop. Members should consider that there is a lot of work to do to make people more aware of how much energy they are using on a day to day basis and pointing out how they can reduce and conserve energy usage. .

- f. FULL TIME DEVELOPMENT OFFICER** - it was clear that with the range of opportunities to be explored the group needs a full time worker to push the agenda forward and get some real project up and running.

5. BIGGER PROJECTS

- g. WOODFUEL** - agreed there is an opportunity to work together to explore the ways to develop a community business from woodfuel. Jura and Islay have both done some work on this and could share expertise to take it forward.
- h. HYDRO SCHEMES** - Islay has already done a feasibility study on potential sites for a hydro project with no strong recommendations coming from it. Jura has one small hydro project already and is likely to have most suitable sites to develop for the community.

- i. **HYDROGEN** - Eric suggested we should use experiences from PURE project on Unst to develop hydrogen project beyond what PURE has done. It was also felt important to find out from Andy Cruden whether Strathclyde University intends to continue its search for funding to do a hydrogen project on Islay using the wave device. Eric was clear that community needs to define a real use for the hydrogen – not just as demonstration project but income generation and community benefit.
- j. **TIDAL POWER** - Eric to get more information on how this source is developing and disseminate it to us. There are some very ideal areas for generating power from the heavy tides but the issues may be around capturing the power into the grid.
- k. **WIND POWER** – Islay has moved some way toward getting a wind cluster and should work toward re-opening the negotiations before other options for wind are considered.

6. ACTION POINTS

i. WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP PROJECTS

- i. Existing Islay wind project to be pursued by IET
- ii. Solar facts and figures to be done with plans for community consultation on all 3 islands – could do household wind turbines at same time.
- iii. Woodfuel has opportunity to be developed between Jura and Islay – this will take some time to work through as the supply chain needs to be secure and cost effective.
- iv. Amend Memo and Arts from IET to include all three islands.

m. ACTING TOGETHER AS A LOBBYING GROUP

- i. Break down barriers in planning process
- ii. Ensure best use of existing capital
- iii. Work out best methods for revenue sharing.

n. SMALL SCALE RENEWABLES

- i. Education – have a conference/workshops
- ii. Promote opportunities of scale – bulk buy, etc.

o. CREATION OF DEVELOPMENT POST -

- i. Define the work to be undertaken and sources of funds.
- ii. Consult with HICEC as they may have some things they would want to have included in the job description.

7. DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES ON ACTIONS

p. ISLAY ENERGY TRUST

- i. Amend Memo and Arts and company position to include Jura and Colonsay

- ii. Pursue the options for wind power on Islay
 - iii. Contact Wavengen to learn what plans they have for Islay;
 - iv. Work closely with JDT to map out the steps and partnerships needed to develop woodfuel project.
- q. COLONSAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
- i. Collect facts and figures to promote solar power project under bulk buy scheme and accredited installer training.
 - ii. Consider a similar approach to household wind turbines.
 - iii. Consult planners about any barriers to these developments.
- r. JURA DEVELOPMENT TRUST
- i. Work with SNH and explore potential hydro sites.
 - ii. Work with Islay on wood fuel project development
- s. JOINT TASKS (Anne, Chris and Elaine)
- i. Work on job description for development worker
 - ii. Develop plans for conference in Feb/March 2006
 - iii. Organise next meeting in November
 - iv. Agree communication tasks for community newspapers (Elaine and Chris)
 - v. Agree communication among members – e-mail group and keep folk up to date.
- t. HICEC – Eric to get tidal information disseminated.
- u. SNH – want to be kept informed – want to be part of solutions not problems.
- v. AIE – will consider support for development post and other activities – conference –
- w. Alienergy – will be available to advise and assist throughout the work of the group.

Colonsay Whisky.

Jean McAllister has designed a picture for the bottle and the latest mock up is shown here. The latest estimate for delivery is the 14th of December.



As it is a limited edition it will appeal to collectors and could potentially be worth buying to keep, although I'm sure most folk will buy to drink it. The pricing has still to be fixed.

Freight and Transport costs.

A number of replies have been received from the mailing list in the last newsletter. Most of the replies pass the buck to the door of the Scottish Executive and the level of charges for local island people is linked to the level of subsidy that is currently paid by the Scottish Executive to Cal Mac. The MEP, Elizabeth Atwool, recognises that other countries such as Sweden and Finland give free ferry travel to their island inhabitants and she is researching how other member states view this issue.

Dates for your diary.

Development Company AGM.

The AGM of the Company will be held on Saturday 10th December at 2.30pm. It is being held during the day to enable more people to attend. The Agenda will include the chairpersons report, viewing of the draft accounts for the Development and Trading Companies, the election and re-election of office bearers, Trading Company issues with coal and gas deliveries, petrol pricing, affordable housing provision on the island and Any other Business where people can discuss topics which they bring to the meeting.

If you wish to become a Director of the development Company, please can you fill in the following form and bring it to the AGM. If you will not be at the meeting you can still be put forward to become a Director so hand the form into the Service Point.

Colonsay Community Development Company

I am a member of and wish to become a Director of Colonsay Community Development Company.

Name:

Address:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

Please bring this form to the AGM of CCDC on Saturday 10 December at 2.30pm or hand it in to the ServicePoint before this date.