

Community Woodland Sub-Group – Update for the Applecross Forum – 23rd September 2019

Things have been moving along, although slower than we had previously thought due to Scottish Land Fund application deadlines.

We submitted an application to the Scottish Land Fund, which is to undertake a feasibility assessment for community ownership of the Torgarve woodland and to develop a business plan. Our application went in on 6th September and we should hear back by mid-October. The application included funding for:

- Feasibility study and development of a business plan - £6,900
- Archaeological investigation - £717
- Site and forest valuation - £1,000.80
- Pre-acquisition legal check on title - £960
- Community consultation and volunteer visit - £416 (this last one will be funded by ACC / Scottish Community Alliance)

The feasibility study will allow ACC and the Community Woodland Sub-Group to get as much information as possible about the Torgarve Plantation and gain expert advice on the long-term management options and whether to proceed with buying the area from the Applecross Trust. If we are successful in getting the funding, we shall start working with the feasibility study consultants (the winning tender was Community Woodlands Association) during November and finish by February 2020. The archaeological survey, valuation and legal check on the title will also all be undertaken over the winter and in early 2020.

The process proposed for undertaking the feasibility assessment and development of a business plan will include a number of site visits and meetings with the community, as well as wider stakeholders. We shall circulate the plan for these activities and put it up on notice boards around the community, if and when we hear that the funding has been secured.

Some members of the community woodland sub-group visited nearby Community Woodland groups (Kirkton in Lochcarron and Broadford on Skye), to learn more about what they are doing. More trips like this are planned as part of the feasibility study.

Otherwise the sub-group have continued to meet regularly and move forward these plans. (We shall bring a sign-up sheet to the Forum meeting for anyone interested in hearing more about the project).