

Ardross Community Woodland

16th January, 2008

Dear resident of Ardross,

First, we wish you and your family a very Happy New Year!

You will find enclosed a ballot paper with which we would like you to signal your views regarding community woodland in Ardross. We want you to be able to make informed choices, so we have supplied a summary of the background to each of the three ballot questions. As ever, we are keen to improve the focus of the project, so there is also space for you to note any comments, suggestions, or ideas.

We have tried to make the supporting information as complete and impartial as possible; however, we are not experts, and if there is anything else that you wish to know or discuss, can we direct you, in the first instance, to our website: <http://www.ArdrossCommunityWoodland.org>, where we recommend using either the 'guestbook' or 'feedback' facilities. By using these, you give us a bit more time to respond (and consult other sources, more knowledgeable than ourselves, as required) and others the chance both to join in and to see if their own queries are addressed. As you might expect, details of the project, copies of the growing number of documents we've produced, and links to related websites may also be found here. If you don't have access to the internet, please feel free to call Matt or Jeremy using the 'phone numbers below.

It has been noted that, whilst the scoring system developed by the consultants to assess the available Ardross woodland areas was systematic and objective, its application is somewhat subjective, with the result that if any of the thematic scores that contribute to each wood's overall score were altered by a couple of marks here and there, the actual ranking could be slightly different. With this in mind, we have asked you for your order of preference for the four top-ranked areas. Notwithstanding this, we would like to offer a specific recommendation, namely that purchase of Inchlumpie appears to be a particularly good first choice. In addition to being the top-scorer and the consultants' favourite option, we note the following points:

- it is the smallest of the top four, and provides a low-cost 'test-bed' for our capacity to create and successfully manage a community woodland;
- if, over the course of a few years of running the wood, it is found to be viable and sustainable, and if there is a demand for further development, then there is the opportunity to expand across the road into Tollie, either as a further purchase or in a co-management partnership with the Forestry Commission. Together, Inchlumpie and Tollie provide a unique range of habitats from riverside to hill-top, with Inchlumpie being easily accessible and compact, whilst Tollie is large enough to accommodate commercial-scale forestry, wildlife, and a wider range of recreational activities.

It is unfortunate that, like our initial questionnaire last year, this ballot coincides with what is for many people a busy and distracting season; however, we urge you to return your ballot paper as soon as is convenient, and at the latest, by mid-February.

With best wishes,

Matt Stevenson (Secretary, on behalf of the Ardross Community Woodland sub-committee)

Contacts:

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