

# RHU & SHANDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## **Objection to 20/02234/FGS and 20/02335/FGS from Rhu and Shandon Community Council.**

**The Community Council objects to the use of Pier and Station Road as a route for forestry traffic related to the above Woodland Developments**

- **Had Scottish Woodlands followed the CONFOR guidelines they would have conducted some form of consultation. Even though a local meeting would not have been possible because of Covid, they could at least have arranged a leaflet drop and tried to ascertain the view of the people most affected.**
- In April 2020, having experienced the traffic involved with the building of the forest roads and the logging in Highlandman's Forest, The Community Council made it clear to Scottish Woodlands that we would not support any further extractions using this route for existing and planned woodlands developments. The route has 3 distinct parts.
  1. Pier Road formally Ardenconnel Road, was initially a beech lined avenue providing access to Ardenconnel House, built 1830, its gates with elegant pillars were located at today's A814 junction; the initial section was and still is very steep.
  2. Station Road formally Torr Road from the Pier Road Junction to Lineside Walk, is very steep and narrow allowing no pass through over almost its whole length. There is a very tight turn at this junction
  3. Station Road from Lineside Walk up to Torr Farm. This was just a farm track until very recently.

No section of this road has foundations adequate for the movement of 32 ton, 2.9 m wide 8 wheelers carrying hardcore for the building of forestry roads or the 44 ton, 2.55m wide, 12 wheeled articulated logging wagons. Heavy duty rollers, industrial wacker plates, essentials to provide subgrade for roads designed to carry these weights, were not needed for the carriages which used these roads before the first car arrived in Rhu in 1910! The roads have no subgrade or subbase, just tarmac. The third part of the road in particular is full of potholes despite having been resurfaced last year. A definite sign that it has inadequate foundations.

Apart from the destabilising of the stone walls which surround many of the properties along this road which has already taken place, all the services; gas, electricity, water and sewage are under this road. Using this route in perpetuity, as is the plan, will most certainly result in damage to the infrastructure, and will destabilise even more of the listed walls.

- Safety is a main concern. School children are dropped off at the marina and have to use these roads. This route is a very popular route for walkers of all ages.

The excessively steep lower part of Pier Road has no footpath and the shared space, designated by white lines on the road switches from one side to the other. When pedestrians are in this shared space the edge

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of the road is a steep bank and there is no place to step aside from a vehicle encroaching in the shared space.

Large sections of these roads do not have footpaths and even when these exist, either their width or condition forces people with pushchairs, and older residents to walk on the roads. There are also several instances where the footpath switches sides; just another hazard!

The safety of car drivers is also a concern. Horror stories abound of meeting a logging truck in one of the sections of the road with no pass through. The lower part of Station Road is particularly dangerous.

Almost all the large properties which were built in Rhu before the Railway arrived in 1894 were surrounded by high stone walls and were accessed directly from Pier Road, albeit sometimes with long driveways. Many of these houses are still in existence, and some of the driveways have become side roads, but the stone walls remain. The latter contribute to the dangers motorists face; access and egress onto Pier and Station Road is difficult even without large forestry vehicles.

In response to these planning applications and the fact that Scottish Woodlands had not consulted residents who have to use Pier and Station Roads, the Community Council conducted its own survey. 79 of the respondees supported position taken by the Community Council in April that it could not support any Woodlands development which utilised Pier and Station Road as the Extraction Route, with only 3 against. The Community Council considers that these 79 should be considered as objections to the above Planning applications. After all, as it says in the Scheme "the general purpose of a community council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable."

*Jean Cook.*

Jean Cook  
Secretary, Rhu & Shandon Community Council

**Copied by email to:**

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