





16 October 2019

Donna Manson Chief Executive, Highland Council Council Headquarters Glenurquhart Road INVERNESS 1V3 5NX



**Dear Sirs** 

OBJECTION BY ARNAMURCHAN ESTATES LIMITED, LUNA LIMITED, WOODLAND RENEWABLES LIMITED AND THE ARDNAMURCHAN TRUST TO PROPOSED/CANDIDATE CORE PATH LO08.01C ARIVEGAIG TO GLENBORRODALE

Please find attached an objection on behalf of the above named companies to the proposed core path reference LO08.01C.

We are sending this to you so that you are aware of the concerns in relation to the proposed adoption of a clearly unsafe and unsuitable path, which would have a devastating effect on the local community and economy.



Frances Sim

Margaret Davidson, Leader of the Council and Allan Henderson Chair of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee

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### **OBJECTION**

### TO PROPOSED/CANDIDATE CORE PATH LO08.01C: ARIVEGAIG TO GLENBORRODALE

### Introduction

- 1. Ardnamurchan Estates Limited object to the proposed/candidate core path from Arivegaig to Glenborrodale (ref LO08.01C).
- 2. The estate occupies land through which the proposed core path runs and manages operations on that land.
- 3. The estate supports reasonable and responsible access. That is illustrated by the fact that while the estate (and its associated companies) own, occupy or manage approximately 27,318 acres of land on the Ardnamurchan peninsula, public access is restricted in only 27 of those acres (i.e. under 0.10%), for reasons falling within the exceptions to access provided for in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (including houses, buildings, gardens, farms and yards).
- 4. Before setting out the grounds of objection to the proposed core path, it may be helpful to, first, describe the route of the proposed core path as it passes through Glenborrodale.

### The proposed core path

- 5. The route of the proposed core path passes through a large timber-processing yard (containing buildings, plant and equipment) at Glenborrodale and then along a private road leading from the yard to the single track B8007 public road from Salen to Kilchoan. The yard has been used as a working yard for various purposes for over 30 years, with further buildings, plant and equipment having been added over time. The private road leading from the yard to the public road was created in 2011 for the purpose of allowing vehicles (in particular, heavy vehicles) to access the yard without going through the curtilage of residential buildings and other properties.
- The route of the proposed core path as it passes through Glenborrodale is shown on the plan ref L008.010C
- 7. Photographs are attached showing the yard, the buildings in and around the yard and the private road leading from the yard to the public road Appendix 1.

### **Grounds of objection**

- 8. The objection to the proposed core path is made on the following grounds:
  - (1) Health and safety.
  - (2) The effect of the proposal on the local community and economy.
  - (3) The proposal is unlawful as being contrary to the principles and provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
  - (4) The proposal proceeds on a misunderstanding of rights of way and the historical use of paths in the area.
  - (5) The proposed path is unnecessary (there being alternative routes available).
  - (6) The proposal is unlawful in that it would result in the Council breaching Convention rights.
  - (7) There has been no Habitat or Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken to assess the impact on protected wildlife, including nesting golden eagles etc., along the route of the proposed core path which additional usage would potentially disturb.
  - (8) There has been inadequate notification and consultation, against the background that there is little or no demand or support for the proposed core path locally.
- 9. Each of these grounds is considered in turn.

#### (1) Health and safety

- 10. The operations at the yard are more fully described in the attached paper Appendix 2.
- 11. Heavy vehicles transport timber and by-products to and from the yard and between buildings at the yard. These vehicles include large timber lorries, articulated lorries, trailers, commercial wood chippers, bulk tankers, telehandlers, tractors, forklift trucks and numerous ancillary vehicles and mobile equipment.
- 12. Examples of the type of vehicle that use the yard, and the private road leading from the yard to the public road, are shown in the attached photographs Appendix 3.
- 13. The operations at the yard, and the heavy vehicles that travel to and from the yard along the private road, create an obvious and serious risk to the safety of members of the public (including those with children and dogs). It is obviously unsafe and, indeed, irresponsible, to allow members of the public access to a working timber or farm yard and to encourage members of the

public to walk along a private road built specifically for and used by heavy vehicles. That is particularly so when one considers that, if the proposed core path is adopted, access may be taken by members of the public in all seasons, at any time of day or night, including periods of fading light or darkness and including when the surface of the road or yard is slippery as a result of rain, snow or ice.

- 14. In addition, the presence of members of the public (including children and dogs) at the timber yard, and along the private road from the yard to the public road, creates a risk to the health and safety of workers at the yard, and drivers of heavy vehicles, given that large vehicles may require to take sudden evasive action to avoid colliding with a member of the public (or their children or dogs).
- 15. Risk assessments require to be carried out of activities at work as a result of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and associated regulations. The risk assessment carried out for the timber yard is attached Appendix 4. That document sets out the risks that arise from operations at the timber yard and the controls that require to be put in place (including controlling public access to the yard), to avoid and reduce the risk of injury to employees, contractors and the general public. These controls are necessary in order to comply with the statutory duties under the 1974 Act. Not only would it be unsafe and irresponsible to allow the public access to the timber yard, allowing such access is likely constitute an offence under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
- 16. The Council's access officer, Mr Donald Kennedy, appears to accept that it would be unsafe for members of the public to access the yard. In the attached email dated 26 February 2019, Mr Kennedy states that he "cannot advocate members of the public taking access through the area between the sheds for reasons of health and safety" Appendix 5.
- 17. Given that the Council's own access officer cannot support the proposed core path due to safety concerns, it is submitted that the correct course of action is for the Council to remove the proposed core path immediately from the draft amended core path plan and that it would be improper for Council officers to seek members' approval for a proposed core path that they know to be unsafe and unsuitable for use by the public.

- 18. It is understood that in relation to another proposed core path, namely, LO15.02 (Knoydart Forest), the route of the proposed core path went through a timber yard and was dropped because of safety concerns. Equal treatment (and common sense) dictates that the same course of action should be adopted in relation to the proposed core path at Glenborrodale.
- 19. In summary, the health and safety issues that arise from the proposed core path render the proposal unsuitable with the result that it should not even be put to members for their consideration.

## (2) The proposed core path will have a devastating impact on the local community and economy

- 20. If the proposed core path is adopted, operations at the yard will require to cease given the serious safety concerns arising from members of the public having access to the yard (and the private road leading from the yard to the public road) and the risk of prosecution under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
- 21. Five people are employed at the yard, which rises to six, plus four local independent contractors on a weekly basis. These individuals would lose their jobs if the yard were to close. The loss of these jobs, in an economically fragile area, with few other employment opportunities, would be both devastating and inexcusable.
- 22. In addition, the closure of the yard would have a devastating effect on the wider local community and economy. That is more fully set out in the attached paper Appendix 2 and is summarised below.
- 23. Firstly, a by-product of the timber operations at the yard is the production of fuel which provides heating and hot water for approximately 36 properties in Ardnamurchan, including the local primary school and schoolhouse, the Kilchoan Hotel, ten staff properties, seven long-term lets, nine holiday houses, Ardnamurchan Bunkhouse, Mingary Castle and Glenborrodale Castle. That source of fuel will be lost if the proposed core path is approved and the operations at the yard require to cease.
- 24. Secondly, the yard produces and provides wood fuel to Ardnamurchan Distillery. There is no other local supply available and the cost of production would significantly increase by having to seek an alternative supply, the cost of which would significantly impact upon the business plan for the Distillery.

The Distillery's nine full time (and three part time) staff have been warned of the risk of redundancies if the fuel cost increases. In addition, the wood fuel supply agreement has a punitive failure to supply clause which, if invoked, would result in Woodland Renewables Limited (the operator of the yard) becoming insolvent.

- 25. Thirdly, the yard produces high quality animal feed. The pot ale from the Distillery is piped to the site where it is evaporated and processed into animal feed. That feed supply sustains livestock in West Arnamurchan, not only for the estate, but for crofters and other local farmers. Without this supply, feed for the winter months would require to be transported from Inverness (the closest depot), which is 130 miles each way, thereby adding to the cost and impacting upon the sustainability of the local farming community, which is already under considerable pressure.
- 26. Fourthly, if the yard were no longer able to take the Distillery's by-products that would, in turn, add significantly to the Distillery's operating costs, and challenge its long-term viability, in that the Distillery's by-products would require to be removed by at least one 25,000 litre tanker journey a day, along local roads and onwards to the central belt (there being nowhere identified in the Highlands that could take such by-products). In addition, the yard processes animal feed from draff collected from the Distillery. If the draff cannot be processed at the yard it would require to be exported, probably to Fort William, by heavy lorry, either daily or every second day, thereby considerably increasing the number of heavy lorries on the local roads.
- 27. Fifthly, the yard accepts spent lees from the Distillery, which is added to the evaporate from the pot ale, with the resulting mixture being chemically PH balanced/neutralised before being piped to reed beds. The reed beds filtrate and allow the by-product to be discharged into the river in accordance with a licence from SEPA. If the yard were no longer able to accept the Distillery's spent lees that would, again, cause significant problems for the Distillery.
- 28. The owners and occupiers of the yard have invested over £2m of private money to develop the infrastructure, buildings, plant, machinery and equipment at the site. In addition to which over £1m has been spent on upgrading and resurfacing existing forestry and farm roads to facilitate access to this yard. Such investment, and the resulting benefits to the local

- community and economy, ought to be encouraged, rather than being put at risk and brought to an end, by a core path which will bring little, if any, benefit to the local community and economy.
- 29. In considering the proposed core path, and its likely effect on the use of the land, and the resulting consequences for the local community and economy, the Council ought to have regard to the policies and objectives of its own development plan. These are set out in the Vision section of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan and include:
  - Promoting sustainable highland communities, including creating and maintaining sustainable communities and economies, and
  - Safeguarding the environment by encouraging renewable energy sources and sustainable waste management (HWLDP, paragraph 5).
- 30. There is a particular need to safeguard and promote communities and economies in fragile areas such as Ardnamurchan. The Review of Fragile Areas and Employment Action Areas in the Highland and Islands by Highland and Islands Enterprise, published in November 2014, assessed Ardnamurchan as having a fragility score of 10, with areas with a total score of 7 or higher being identified as fragile and in particular need of employment opportunities (HIE Review, pages 1 and 5).
- 31. In summary, the operations at the yard are an essential part of an existing sustainable and integrated local highland community and economy that will be destroyed, for no good reason, if the proposed core path is adopted and the yard closes. The proposed core path runs contrary to the Council's own policies and vision for the Highlands and will cause unnecessary and inexcusable economic and other hardship in a fragile area of the Highlands that should be supported rather than undermined.

# (3) The proposed core path is unlawful in that it is contrary to the principles and provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

- 32. The proposed core path is unlawful in that it proceeds upon a mistaken understanding of the relevant legislation.
- 33. When the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill was debated in the Scottish Parliament, the Minister for the Environment and Rural Development made it clear that there required to be a balance between access rights and the legitimate

interests of those who own and manage land. In particular, during a debate on 23 January 2003 the Minister stated: "From the outset, we have recognised that the exercise of access rights must respect the privacy of those who live in the countryside. In addition, there is a need to ensure that owners can continue to manage their land ... We have achieved a reasonable balance between the aspirations of the public for access to the countryside and the concerns of those who work there".

- 34. That balance between, on the one hand, access rights and, on the other, the need to respect the legitimate interests of those who own and work the land is reflected in the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In particular, and importantly, while the Act creates access rights (s.1), access rights are not unqualified and require to be exercised in a reasonable and responsible manner (s.2(1)). In particular, the Act provides that access rights will only be held to be exercised responsibly if they are exercised "so as not to cause unreasonable interference with any of the rights ... of any other person", including rights associated with the ownership of land (s.2(2)). The responsible exercise of access rights means the exercise of rights in such a way "which is lawful and reasonable and takes proper account of the interests of others and of the features of the land in respect of which the rights are exercised" (s.2(3)).
- 35. Section 6 of the Act contains specific examples of situations where the exercise of access rights is deemed not to be reasonable or responsible, with the result that access rights do not apply.
- 36. In particular, section 6 provides that access rights are not exercisable over land:
  - To the extent there is on it <u>a building or other structure or works</u>, <u>plant</u> or fixed machinery (s.6(1)(a)(i)).
  - Which forms the <u>curtilage of a building</u> which is not a house or a group of buildings (s.6(1)(b)(i)).
  - Which forms a <u>compound or other enclosure</u> containing a building or other structure or works, plant or fixed machinery (s.6(1)(b)(ii)).

- 37. The proposed core path is contrary to the 2003 Act in that it seeks to route a core path through the curtilages of buildings and through a working yard, all contrary to the exclusions contained in section 6 noted above.
- 38. The proposed core path is also contrary to one of the underlying principles of the 2003 Act that access rights must be exercised reasonably and responsibly, in a way that does not cause unreasonable interference with the rights of any other person, and which takes proper account of the interests of others and the features of the land (the features of the land including, in the present case, an operational timber yard) (s.3 of the 2003 Act).
- 39. Section 17 of the 2003 Act contains specific provisions in relation to core paths and provides that a local authority has a duty to draw up a plan for a system of paths (core paths) sufficient for the purpose of giving the public "reasonable" access throughout their area (s.17(1)). Again, however, it is clear from section 17 that access rights are not unqualified and that the aim of core paths is to provide "reasonable" (i.e. not unqualified) access.
- 40. Furthermore, it is a matter of reasonable implication that the provisions in the 2003 Act enabling a local authority to draw up a plan for core paths should be exercised in such a manner as to be consistent with the other provisions of the Act, including the underlying principle that access rights require to be exercised reasonably and responsibly, in a way that does not cause unreasonable interference with the rights of any other person. The proposed core path runs completely contrary to that important principle.
- 41. In addition, section 17(2) of the 2003 Act provides that a system of core paths may include (a) rights of way (established by or under any enactment or rule of law), (b) paths (provided by or under any enactment other than the 2003 Act), (c) paths which are delineated by a statutory path agreement, or (d) other routes, waterways or other means by which persons may cross land.
- 42. Importantly, the common feature of the types of path referred to in section 17(2) is that they are all examples of means by which the public have a <u>legal right</u> to cross land. In the case of the present proposed core path the public have no such legal right. In particular, for the reasons discussed below, there is no public right of way over the proposed core path or anywhere within the Glenborrodale area. Nor are there access rights (in terms of the 2003 Act) over

- the proposed core path given the exclusions to access rights in section 6 set out above.
- 43. In ignoring the fact that there is, at present, no legal right for members of the public to use the proposed core path, the proposed core path is fundamentally misconceived and would not withstand a legal challenge.
- 44. Further, and in any event, section 17(3) of the Act goes on to provide that, in drawing up the core path plan, the local authority shall have regard to:
  - (a) the likelihood that persons exercising rights of way and access rights will do so by using core paths;
  - (b) the desirability of encouraging such persons to use core paths, and
  - (c) the need to balance the exercise of those rights and the interests of the owner of the land in respect of which those rights are exercisable (s.17(3). NB This section also applies to any proposed amended core plans by virtue of s.20(7)).
- 45. The reference in section 17(3)(a) to "rights of way and access rights" is a further indication that core paths can only be created over existing rights of way or in relation to paths over which there are existing access rights.
- 46. Putting that fundamental objection to one side for present purposes, however, section 17(3)(b) of the 2003 Act requires a local authority, in drawing up a core path plan, to have regard to "the desirability of encouraging ... persons to use core paths". It is submitted that it is both irrational and dangerous for the Council to seek to "encourage" members of the public (including those with children and dogs) to use a path that is shared with heavy vehicles and which passes through an operational timber yard. Indeed, the only reasonable and responsible approach is to positively discourage the public from using such a path.
- 47. In addition, section 17(3)(c) of the 2003 Act requires a local authority to balance the exercise of "those rights" (again, being a reference to "rights of way and access rights", which do not apply in the present case) and the interests of the owner of the land in respect of which those rights are exercisable. Even if there are existing rights of way or access rights (which is denied) the Council has failed to carry out a proper balancing exercise in considering whether to propose the candidate core path.

- 48. For the reasons discussed above, if the proposed core path is adopted that will give rise to serious health and safety concerns which will, in turn, require the owner and occupier of the land to shut down operations at the yard. That will, in turn, give rise to significant and severe consequences for the owner, the occupier and the local community and economy. In these circumstances, any proper balancing exercise under section 17(3)(c) points overwhelmingly against the creation of the proposed core path and in favour of the continuation of the existing operations.
- 49. In addition, it is worth noting that the Council has powers under section 16 of the 2003 Act to acquire land (by agreement or compulsorily) to enable or facilitate access rights and has powers under sections 21 and 22 of the Act to enter into a path agreement or make a path order. If the Council wish to establish access rights over land that does not otherwise have access rights they should do so using these provisions, which would, in turn, require the payment of compensation and the assumption by the Council of maintenance obligations for the path. Instead, the Council seeks to circumvent these provisions by erroneously relying on the core path provisions in the 2003 Act to try and create a right of public access where otherwise there is none (and without accepting the corresponding obligations of compensation and maintenance that would otherwise arise).
- 50. In summary, the Council has erred in its interpretation and application of the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 in that:
  - There are no existing public rights of way or access rights over the proposed core path with the result that the present proposal is unlawful and would not withstand legal challenge.
  - The proposed core path is contrary to one of the fundamental principles of the Act, namely, that access rights require to be exercised reasonably and responsibly, in a way that does not cause unreasonable interference with the rights of any other person, and which takes proper account of the interests of others and the features of the land.
  - Any proper balancing exercise under section 17(3)(c) of the Act points overwhelmingly against the creation of the proposed core path and in favour of the continuation of the existing operations.

The Council is erroneously seeking to create access rights using the core path provisions of the 2003 Act rather than under sections 16, 21 or 22 (thereby avoiding its obligations of compensation and maintenance).

# (4) The proposal proceeds on the basis of a fundamental misunderstanding of the existence of rights of way and the historical use of paths in the area

- 51. In short, there is not, and never has been, a public right of way along the route of the proposed core path (nor is there any other public right of way between Arivegaig/Acharacle and Glenborrodale).
- 52. That is illustrated by the fact that early maps (sourced from the National Map Library of Scotland) do not show any paths from Acharacle to Glenborrodale. Reference is made, in that regard, to (1) the attached map of Argyllshire by George Langlands, 1771-1810 Appendix 6 and (2) to the attached extract from the Ordnance Survey, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, sheet 52, 1886 Appendix 7.
- 53. The current position (i.e. that there are no public rights of way from Acharacle to Glenborrodale) is illustrated by the attached extract from the publication by the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (the Society), "Scottish Hill Tracks". This book was published by the Society in 2011 and is the most recent edition of that publication. In short, while that publication shows a route (number 171) from Acharacle to Kilchoan (along the north coast of the Ardamurchan peninsula), it shows no route from Acharacle to Glenborrodale Appendix 8.
- 54. That position (of there being no route, path or right of way from Acharacle to Glenborrodale) is consistent with previous editions of the publication which, similarly, do not include or refer to any route or path (far less a public right of way) between Acharacle and Glenborrodale. Reference is made, in that regard, to (1) "Hill Paths in Scotland", Walter A. Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (published in 1926), (2) "Scottish Hill Tracks: Old Highways and Drove Roads", D.G. Moir, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (published in 1947), (3) "Scottish Hill Tracks: Old Highways and Drove Roads", D.G Moir, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (published in 1975) and (4) "Scottish Hill Tracks", Bennet, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (published in 1999).
- 55. To summarise, the current edition of the Society's main publication, "Scottish Hill Tracks" (and all previous editions, throughout the last century) contain no

reference whatsoever to any route or path between Acharacle or Glenborrodale. Had there been a route, path or public right of way (or even a claimed public right of way) between Acharacle and Glenborrodale, it is inconceivable that such a route would not have been shown or referred to in one or more of these publications. The fact that these publications contain no reference to any such route, path or public right of way between Acharacle and Glenborrodale is conclusive evidence that there is no public right of way between these two settlements.

- 56. It is not clear whether Council officers assert that there is a public right of way between Acharacle and Glenborrodale (and officers are called upon to make their position clear in that regard when reporting to members), but any such assertion (if made) would be a misguided attempt to "rewrite history" that is doomed to fail.
- 57. For completeness, it is also noted that the Society, on their website, are in the process of compiling a list of what they refer to as "heritage paths" (which appears to be a different list to the list of routes shown in their long-running and main publication, "Scottish Hill Tracks", noted above).
- 58. While the reasons, or evidence, upon which a "heritage path" is chosen are unclear, the Society, on its "heritage paths" website, has marked a line on a map to represent a "heritage path" between Acharacle and Glenborrodale. The "heritage path" identified by the Society (at least as it descends through Glenborrodale) is not shown on the current edition of the Ordinance Survey map (Landranger 40, 1:50 000 scale). In any event, the marking of a line on a map by the Society to represent a "heritage path" does not, of course, confer any legal status on that path or route. That is particularly so when, as noted above, the Society's main publication, "Scottish Hill Tracks" (and previous editions of the publication) contain no reference whatsoever to any path or route, far less a public right of way, between Acharacle and Glenborrodale.
- 59. It is not clear whether the Society seek to assert that the "heritage path" identified by them between Acharacle and Glenborrodale amounts to a public right of way. Any such assertion would, again, be doomed to failure. Quite apart from the fact that no such route has previously been noted by the Society in its publications, the route now identified by the Society as a "heritage path" does not meet the legal requirements for the creation of a public right of way.

- 60. In particular, for a public right of way to be created <u>all</u> of the following requirements must be met, namely:
  - (1) the route must connect two public places;
  - (2) the route must follow a more or less defined line;
  - (3) the route must have been used openly and peaceably by members of the public otherwise than with the permission of the landowner (i.e. the use must have been as of right and not of consent); and
  - (4) there must have been continuous use, without substantial and effective interruption, for 20 years or more.
- of an arbitrary line marked on a map Appendix 9. Whatever the reason for the route chosen by the Society for their "heritage path", it stops near a disused sheepfold in Glenborrodale, well short of the public road. While it is possible (without the point being conceded) that the "heritage path" marked by the Society may indicate a route formerly used by the estate to move farm animals around the Ardnamurchan peninsula (at a time when the peninsula was in single ownership), because the "heritage path" marked by the Society stops well short of the farm yard and the public road, the "heritage path" does not connect two public places and does not, therefore, satisfy one of the essential criteria for the creation of a public right of way.
- 62. In addition, there is a locked gate along the route of the "heritage path" (to the north of Glenborrodale Farm) which has been locked during living memory (and, certainly for over 20 years) which is another strong indication that any use of the "heritage path" has not been as of legal right but, rather, has been with the consent of the landowner, with the result that another of the essential criteria for the creation of a public right of way has not been met.
- 63. Furthermore, there is little or no evidence of the "heritage path" having been in continuous use by members of the public, without substantial and effective interruption, for 20 years or more (and, indeed, the presence of the long-standing locked gate is an indication that there has been no such use).
- 64. For all of these reasons, the "heritage path" identified by the Society has no legal status and falls well short of fulfilling the requirements of a public right of way.

- 65. In any event, it is important to note for present purposes that the route of the core path proposed by the Council does not follow the route of the "heritage path" chosen by the Society.
- 66. In particular, approximately 1 kilometre north of Glenborrodale (around grid reference 6085/6225) the core path proposed by the Council departs from the line of the "heritage path" chosen by the Society. At that point the proposed core path descends through west Glenborrodale, through the timber yard and then along the private road leading from the yard to the public road.
- 67. In contrast, the "heritage path" chosen by the Society descends through east Glenborrodale, before terminating near a disused sheep-fold. In short, and putting to one side the fact that the "heritage path" chosen by the Society has no legal status, the "heritage path" offers no support for the proposed core path because (at least as it descends through Glenborrodale) it follows a different route.
- 68. While the core path proposed by the Council ends at a public place (i.e. the B8007 public road from Salen to Kilchoan), the proposed core path does not, and cannot, meet the other requirements for a public right of way set out above. In particular, because the private road leading from the timber yard to the public road was only created (by the estate) in 2011, it has not been in continuous use for 20 years or more and cannot, therefore, be a public right of way.
- 69. In any event, there has been little public use of the private road leading to the timber yard and, what use there has been, has been with the consent of the landowner rather than as of right. That is illustrated by the fact that there has been a gate to the south of the timber yard which has been historically locked (i.e. for well over 20 years), which is a further indication that there is no public right of way over the route of the proposed core path.
- 70. For completeness, it is noted that the Council appear to place reliance on a planning application submitted in 2013 for the erection of a (further) shed at the yard (see attached letter dated 5 September 2019 from Nicole Wallace, Acting Head of Planning and Environment, Highland Council to Professor McVicar Appendix 10. The planning application form included the following "pro forma" question, namely: "Are you proposing any changes to public paths, public rights of way or affecting any public rights of access?", to which

the applicant, correctly, answered "No", on the basis that, for the reasons discussed above, there were, and are, no public paths, public rights of way or any public rights of access to or over the yard. Any attempt by the Council to try and argue otherwise, and to place any reliance on said planning application is, quite simply, incorrect and erroneous.

- 71. Local authorities have powers and duties to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction (a) public rights of way in their area and (b) any route by which access rights may reasonably be exercised (Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, s.46 and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, s.13). The fact that the Council have not sought to use these powers in relation to the route of the proposed core path (or, indeed, in relation to any other asserted route through Glenborrodale) is further indication that the Council recognise the difficulties in trying to assert that there is a public right of way through Glenborrodale and/or in trying to assert that there are unqualified access rights under the 2003 Act.
- 72. Finally, it is noted that the Council has previously given consideration to creating a core path through Glenborrodale. In particular, around 2007 the Council's proposal to create a core path between Acharacle and Glenborrodale was dropped after consultation, presumably because the Council recognised the difficulties created by there being no public right of way through Glenborrodale and that access rights are not unqualified. Nothing has changed in the meantime. The case for creating a core path at Glenborrodale is no stronger (and indeed, is weaker, given the investment and increased operations at the yard since 2007) with the result that the present core path proposal should also be refused.

#### 73. In summary:

- There is no public right of way from Acharacle to Glenborrodale.
- There are no access rights through the yard (given the statutory exceptions contained in section 6 of the 2003 Act).
- It is unreasonable and unlawful for the Council to seek to create a core path over a route over which there is no public right of access (i.e. a route that is not a public right of way and which does not have access rights under the 2003 Act).

### (5) The proposed core path is unnecessary

- 74. In any event, the proposed core path is unnecessary in that there are alternative routes that can be taken from Acharacle to Glenborrodale (and close to Glenborrodale), should the Council wish to designate such a route as a core path.
- 75. In particular, the Council also proposes a core path from Acharacle to Laga. That proposed core path (which, for the avoidance of doubt, is not objected to), if adopted, would create a core path from Acharacle to a point close to Glenborrodale (i.e. Laga) and does not give rise to any of the concerns set out in this objection.
- 76. In addition, it is understood that the RSPB have indicated to the Council that they would not object to a core path being created from their car park off the B8007 public road at the RSPB's Glenborrodale Nature Reserve to Acharacle. Such a path (while not presently proposed by the Council) would similarly avoid the concerns noted in this objection and would have the added benefit of off-road parking at the start/end of the path (in contrast with the current proposed core path to Glenborrodale, which has no off-road parking).
- 77. In short, the fact that there are alternative routes, which do not give rise to any of the concerns set out above, is another factor that strongly points away from adopting the present proposed core path and renders the proposed core path through Glenborrodale (and all the adverse consequences that would follow from its adoption) unnecessary.

### (6) The proposal would be unlawful as constituting a breach of Convention rights

- 78. The Council is a public authority and, as such, requires to act in a way that is compatible with rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (Human Rights Act 1998, s.6(1)).
- 79. Article 1 of the First Protocol to the ECHR (protection of property) states that: "Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest ...".

- 80. The estate is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of its possessions. These possessions include the right to carry out lawful activities on its land, including the operations at the timber yard.
- 81. At present, there is no right of public access over the yard because of the exceptions to the general right of access provided for by section 6 of the 2003 Act noted above.
- 82. If the proposed core path is adopted, however, the exceptions under section 6 will no longer apply and the public will have a right of access through the yard (s.7(1) of the 2003 Act). The effect of adopting the core path, therefore, will be that the estate will be deprived of its possessions, namely, the right to carry on lawful activities on its land (i.e. the various operations that take place at the timber yard) and, further, will be deprived of their legal right under section 6 of the 2003 Act to exclude the public from the yard, to enable those lawful activities to take place.
- 83. The deprivation of the right to carry on lawful activities at the yard (including the right to exclude the public from the yard to enable these activities to take place) is not in the public interest and is not subject to conditions provided by law. That it would not be in the public interest is clear from what is set out above in relation to the effect of the creation of the proposed core path, and the resulting closure of the yard, on the local community and economy. Furthermore, the route of the proposed core path currently has little, if any, usage by members of the public (and the Council acknowledge that "It is unlikely that a designation of a core path on its own will significantly increase user numbers on a particular route" Council's attached letter dated 10 July 2019) Appendix 10 with the result that any public interest or benefit in creating the proposed core path would be non-existent or negligible.
- 84. In addition, any deprivation of property requires to be proportionate i.e. the deprivation must be justified and must be to the minimum extent necessary to protect the public interest. It would clearly be disproportionate and unfair for the Council to cause operations at the yard to cease (with the knock on effect

- on the local community and community) for the slight, if any, benefit of creating a right of public access through the yard.
- 85. Furthermore, any deprivation of possessions by the State carries with it an entitlement to compensation and no compensation is offered by the Council for the losses suffered as a result of requiring to cease operations at the yard.
- 86. In these circumstances, it is submitted that the adoption of the core path, with the resulting serious impact on the yard and the local community and economy, is not in the public interest and would amount to a disproportionate and unlawful deprivation of the estate's possessions, in breach of the Council's duties under section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998.
  - (7) There has been no Habitat or Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken to assess the impact on protected wildlife, including nesting golden eagles etc., along the route of the proposed core path which additional usage would potentially disturb.
- 87. Golden eagles and other protected wildlife are present throughout the route of the proposed core path. There is a risk that additional usage along the route of the proposed core path may disturb such wildlife. The Council has certain legal obligations in that regard and has not undertaken a Habitat or Environmental Impact Assessment to assess the impact on such wildlife by encouraging greater access along the route of the proposed core path. The Council should not, and cannot, proceed with the proposal without undertaking such an assessment.
- 88. There has been inadequate notification and consultation, against the background that there is little or no demand or support for the proposed core path locally.
- 89. Finally, and in any event, there has been inadequate notification and consultation by the Council in relation to the proposed core path, against the background that there is little or no demand for the proposed core path locally.
- 90. Section 20B(1) of the 2003 Act provides that where a local authority consider that a core path plan should be amended, the local authority requires to serve a written notice on the owner and occupier of any land which is, as a result of the amendment of a plan, included in a plan for the first time (in order that the owner and occupier of the land may make objections and representations). In the case of the proposed core path, it is understood that there are owners and

- occupiers of the land that forms part of the proposed core path that have not been notified by the Council.
- 91. Further, and in any event, the Council has a statutory duty to consult persons representative of those who live, work, carry on business or engage in recreational activities on the land affected by the proposed amendment to the plan (2003 Act, s.20A(c)(ii)).
- 92. The Council has not adequately consulted such persons before proposing the present core path. Those who live, work, carry on business or engage in recreational activities on the land affected by the proposed core path are overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed core path. While it is not a substitute for a proper consultation exercise having been undertaken by the Council, a petition has been organised to allow local residents and others to express their views on the proposal. The petition is attached Appendix 11 which shows the strength of feeling within the larger community. Individual objections have also been made to the proposed core path (see e.g. the attached objections: (1) email dated 3.9.19 from Professor McVicar to the Council Appendix 12 and (2) email dated 1.10.19 from Fay Rowantree to the Council Appendix.
- 93. Had a proper consultation exercise been carried out by the Council (rather than private consultations with a very small number of recently arrived retired residents) before proposing the core path, the strength of local feeling would have become known at the outset and ought to have been an important factor for the Council to take into account in considering whether to formally propose the core path or not.
- 94. It is submitted that where there is little or no demand for a core path locally (other than by a very small minority of retired and recently arrived residents), and the proposal is likely to have a significantly detrimental effect on the local community and economy, such a proposal is likely to "do more harm than good" and should not be formally proposed.

### **Conclusion**

- 95. In summary, the proposed core path is objected to on the following grounds:
  - The proposal constitutes an obvious and serious danger to the health and safety of members of the public and those who work in and around the yard.

- The proposal will result in the closure of the yard and will have a devastating impact on the local community and economy.
- The proposal is contrary to the principles and provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- The proposal proceeds on a fundamental misunderstanding of the existence of public rights of way through Glenborrodale (there being none) and the historical use of paths in the area.
- The proposed core path is unnecessary as there are alternative routes available.
- The proposal is in breach of Convention rights.
- There has been no Habitat or Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken to assess the impact on protected wildlife.
- There has been inadequate notification and consultation, against the background that there is little or no demand or support for the path locally.
- 96. In conclusion, while any one of these grounds, is, in itself, a sufficient reason for not adopting the proposed core path, it is submitted that, taken together, they amount to an overwhelming case for not adopting the proposed core path and the Council is urged not to do so.







1. Community – the site is designed to process about 3500 tonnes of wood annually: 1,500t for the Distillery, 1,300t for the CHP system, and approximately 700t for the various biomass boilers, i.e. enough wood fuel to provide heating and domestic hot water to 15 private systems in West Ardnamurchan. These boilers include the one that provides the heat and hot water to the only primary school and to the sole hotel and bar in the area. In total, 36 properties: 7 long term lets, School/Schoolhouse, Klchoan Hotel, 10 staff properties, 9 holiday houses, Ardnamurchan Bunkhouse, Mingary Castle and Glenborrodale Castle. Firewood also produced for a third party local supplier and then sold on to individuals.

There is no alternative local solution or supplier. The cost of delivering wood fuel from the nearest supplier in near Fort William (50 mile journey each way, including a probable ferry journey) is prohibitive. Fuel poverty is a real risk; Closest wood chip processor is at Fassfern on the A830 near Fort William which is already at its intended maximum production and they have stated that they could not provide the approx. 3500 annual tonnes of wood chip that is needed for the Distillery, CHP and biomass boilers. Even if Fassfern could produce and deliver the woodchip at an affordable price this would add 150 x 40' lorry loads to the predominantly single track road from Fort William to Ardnamurchan.

2. The Ardnamurchan Distillery – the site produces and provides wood fuel to the distillery.

Again, there is no other local supply available and the cost of production would be significantly increased by having to seek an alternative. That cost would significantly impact on the business plan. See Fassfern comment at 1.

The distillery is a major employer in the area. Its 9 full time 3 part time staff have been warned by the site manager of possible redundancies if the fuel cost increases.

The wood fuel supply agreement has a punitive failure to supply clause. If that clause were invoked WRL would have to meet a substantial financial penalty, which would cause it to become insolvent and fail;

3. Pot Ale Evaporator – the site produces high quality animal feed.

There is a 2km pipe connecting the site to the Distillery. The pot ale from the distillery is pumped along the pipe, evaporated and processed into animal feed. This sustains the livestock in West Ardnamurchan - not only the estate but also crofters and other local farmers. Without this supply feed for the winter months will have to be transported from Inverness (the closest depot) - 130 miles each way, add to the cost and sustainability of the local farming community which is already under immense pressure.

The offtake agreement has a punitive failure to perform clause. If that clause were invoked WRL would have to meet a substantial financial penalty, which would cause the company to fail financially; failure of WRL to remove distillery by products (draff, pot ale and spent lees) would add significantly to the Distillery's operating costs and challenge its long term viability. Any alternative would add at least one 25,000 litre tanker journey per day to the local roads and onwards through the central belt and beyond as there is nowhere that has been identified in the highlands that could take the by-products.

4. Reed bed – the site provides a solution for the distillery to discharge its bi-products.

The spent lees from the distillery is pumped in a pipe running parallel to pot ale pipe. The evaporate from the pot ale evaporator is added to the spent lees and the whole is then chemically PH balanced/neutralised before being piped the reed beds. The reed bed then filtrates and allows the biproduct to be discharged to the river in accordance with a SEPA licence.

The offtake agreement has a punitive failure to perform clause. If that clause were invoked WRL would have to meet a substantial financial penalty, This would cause the company to fail.

5. Pelleting from draff – the site processes animal feed from the draff collected from the distillery. If this could not be processed locally it would need to be exported to, probably, Fort William which would again add substantial numbers of heavy lorries to the single track road. As the Distillery needs to have the draff removed daily or, at the most every second day the number of heavy lorries on the road would increase by at least 150.

The offtake agreement has a punitive failure to perform clause. If that clause were invoked WRL would have to meet a substantial financial penalty, which would cause the company to fail

6. A wood fuelled Combined Head and Power system installed on the site powers all the equipment on the site including the evaporator, the pelleting equipment, the reed bed and the wood fuel machinery. In addition, power not required for the above is used to produce algae which is designed to capture the CO2 that is produced as part of the distilling process, thereby reducing the CO2 emissions of that process

The algae is scheduled to be supplied to a third party at cost. The loss of this revenue would affect WRL and its viability.

Woodland Renewable Ltd employees – the site employs 5 people on site which will rise to 6 and 4 local independent contractors on a weekly basis.

The resident population of the area is 192 people according to the electoral roll. Any loss of employment either via WRL or the Distillery would drastically affect the area;

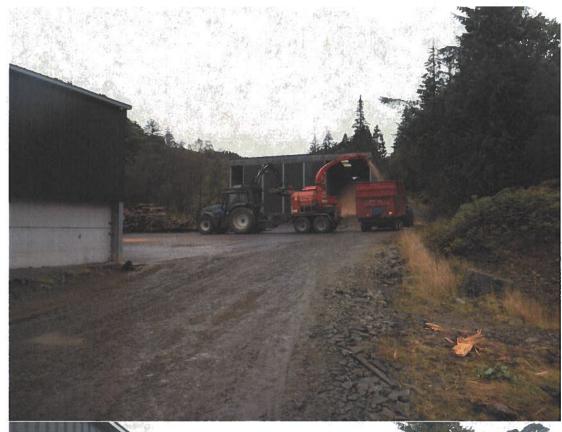
- 8. The owners and occupiers of the site have **invested** well in excess of £2,000,000 of private money to develop the infrastructure, buildings, plant, machinery and equipment at the site. This includes the road over which the core path is proposed in 2011. New forest/farm roads are about £50 per metre and regrading existing tracks anywhere between about £25 to 45 per metre.
- From both a practical and Health and Safety perspective, the site is operated daily and on a 24 hour basis and is visited by articulated lorries, trailers, tractors, tele-handlers, commercial wood chippers, fork lift trucks, bulk tankers and numerous ancillary vehicles and mobile equipment.
- 10. The site employs contractors to harvest and forward timber to roadside within the forest. These large vehicle movements take place on an irregular basis with the workers entering and leaving by 4x4 on a daily basis. Contractors are also presently employed to forward the logs from the felling areas to the

woodyard. This usually takes place 1 or 2 days a week; again on an irregular basis as vehicles are available to carry out the work. The 40' timber lorry will usually complete 6 to 8 return journeys a day and take a load of saw log to the BSW mill at FW on their homeward journey (contractor from Fort William). A local contractor is also employed to carry out the wood chipping; again he is on site at irregular hours one day a week. WR use a JCB Fastrac tractor and trailer carrying 40 cubic metres of woodchip to deliver woodchip to the Estates' biomass boilers and the Distillery. Inside the woodyard there are JCB Loadall (telehandler) and tractor movements loading vehicles, moving timber for processing and moving wood chip. A trailer load of barley draff is also processed on site daily through the summer period. A 10,000 litre slurry tanker is also used intermittently during pipe and tank cleaning and moved around the site by tractor.

11. The proposed core path is unsafe and unsuitable for access by the public. In assessing the risks that arise, and the liability of an occupier, one must have regard to the likelihood of both responsible access and irresponsible access (including access by children). Irresponsible adults (and children) risk endangering themselves and others by ignoring safe working areas/exclusion zones and entering sheds where machinery is in operation. It is impossible to operate a woodyard and its associated machinery and processes when irresponsible access takers have the right to transit the site. Woodyard equipment and processes use the track as part of their operations or exclusion zones/safe working areas — wood chipping is one example where the machine is on site for several hours often with only the contractor operating the machine being on site; this machine has a minimal 25 metre safe working area. The suggestion that a short path to the West of the sheds and East of the burn would allow access takers to avoid the woodyard is not physically possible due to space constraints between the burn and the buildings and ignores the fact that this path would still be inside the woodyard and brings irresponsible access takers within the fenced and gated boundary of the woodyard.





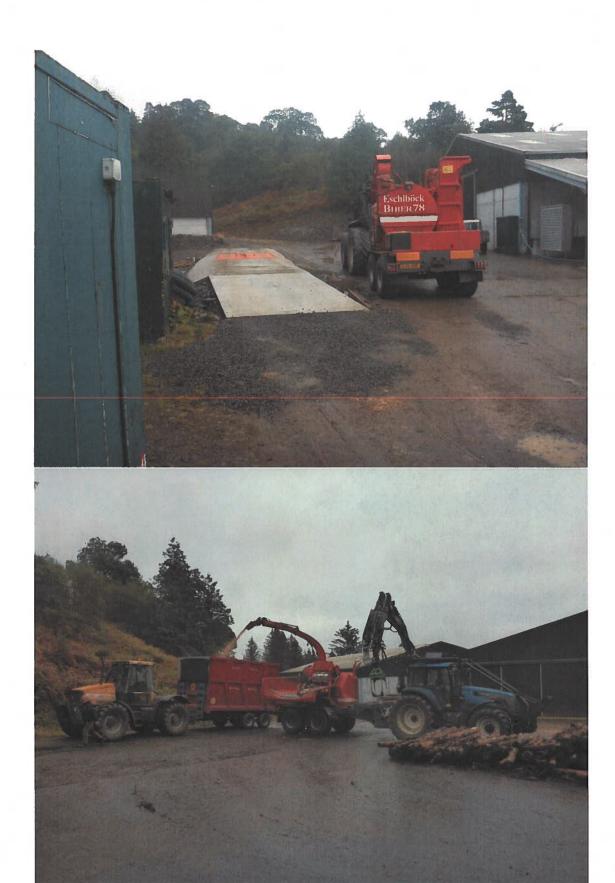


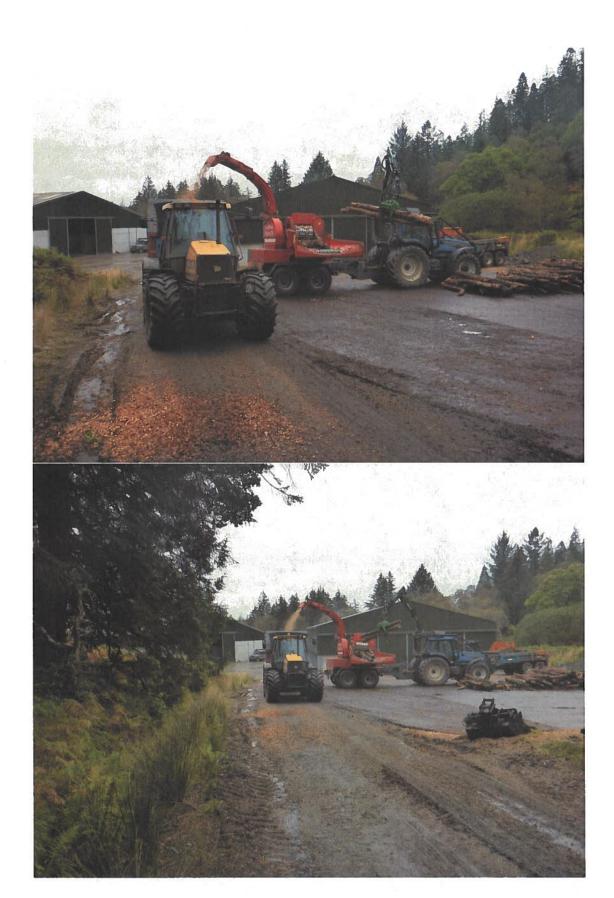
















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## Objection

RISK ASSESSMENT: ARDNAMURCHAN ESTATES LTD - WOODLAND RENEWABLES - GLENBORRODALE WOODYARD

Ser	Activity/Hazard	Associated Risks	Potential to cause harm	Controls in place	Actions required
5	Authorised access	Staff.			
		Slips, trips, falls	Гом	Staff wear correct footwear/PPE. Staff aware of surrounding/work areas. Staff ensure workplace kept tidy and do not create unexpected hazards for colleagues.	Staff inducted/briefed.
		Injury from vehicles or equipment or process.	High	Staff aware of vehicle movements and ongoing activities. Staff aware of exclusion areas around activities and need to contact operator before entering operating area. Only trained/competent staff operate equipment.	Staff briefed and aware of ongoing activities and actions required.  Staff trained or familiarised before operating equipment.
* * Del		Contractors	High	Staff and contractors aware of contractors being on site and activities being carried out.	Staff and contractors briefed. Contractors aware of safe working and exclusion areas.
		Visitors	Гом	All visitors report to Reception. Planned visitors to site follow an agreed programme of events and are escorted at all times. Unplanned visitors (customers) escorted whilst on site.	Planned visitors and staff briefed on programme. PPE worn where required. Staff briefed on management of unplanned visitors/customers.
7	Unauthorised access	Unauthorised person/persons	IK I		
- 24		Slips, trips, falls	Low	Workplace clear of hidden hazards. Main routes clear when equipment not in action other activities within sheds.	Unauthorised access denied. Staff briefed on dealing with unauthorised access.
16.2		Injury from vehicles or equipment	High	Locked gates on all tracks entering/egressing woodyard.	Staff and contractors briefed on dealing with unauthorised access.

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		Falls from heights, crushing.	High	Appropriate signage in place. Ladders and other equipment secured when not in use. Access to sheds secured when staff not on site.	Staff briefed on dealing with unauthorised access and securing site. CCTV installed for site and staff security.
		Deliberate damage to vehicles or equipment.	High	Vehicles and equipment secured when not in use. Daily maintenance/inspections prior to use to confirm serviceability. View CCTV when illegal access known or suspected.	Staff inducted/briefed.
		Safety of staff and/or contractors from verbal/physical assault/abuse	High	Locked gates and signage identifying woodyard as being a restricted area under Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Signage indicating CCTV and live monitoring.	Staff and contractors briefed on dealing with unauthorised access. Panic button and communication with CCTV monitor.
m	Noise	General area	Гом	Staff and contractors aware of activities and operations that require hearing PPE or their exclusion areas.	Staff and contractors briefed. Appropriate signage.
		Equipment/activity	High	Staff and contractors aware of equipment and/or activities generating noise levels requiring hearing protection.	Staff and contractors wear appropriate PPE. Appropriate signage.
4	Dust	General area	Low	Staff and contractors aware of equipment/activities that may generate dust/fine particles and the required exclusion area.	Staff and contractors wear appropriate PPE. Appropriate signage.
		Equipment/activity	High	Some processes generate dust or fine particles. Staff and contractors aware of equipment/activities and any required exclusion area. Dust extraction units fitted and used where appropriate.	Staff and contractors wear appropriate PPE. Appropriate signage.
'n	Manual Handling	Back and muscle/tendon injuries.	Low	Staff trained in manual handling and the use of simple handling equipment ie pallet trolley.	Staff inducted.
9	Tractors	Improper use	High	Staff familiarised with all prime movers and use of PTO.	Staff familiarised with equipment. Staff required to read and be familiar with HSE pamphlets on use of tractors, PTO and other

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					equipment attached or operated by/from the prime mover.
<b>~</b>	Telehandlers/MHE	Improper use	High	Only staff trained in the use of telehandlers or other mechanical handling equipment to operate this equipment.	Staff trained.
∞	Trailers and attachments	Improper use or maintenance	High	Staff familiarised with the routine maintenance and pre use inspection of trailers and tractor/telehandler attachments.	Staff familiarised.
6	Firewood Processor	Improper use or maintenance	High	Staff trained to operate and carry out maintenance and user repair. Processor maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.  Dust and fine particle extraction as part of	Staff trained. Operator wears appropriate PPE. Signage in place. Processor operated within designated location within shed.
				process.  Processor is electrically powered; lock on power source to isolate from accidental or unauthorised use.	1502 Form
10	Pelleting process (incl briquetting)	Improper use or maintenance	High	Staff trained to operate and carry out maintenance and user repair. Processor maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions. Dust and fine particle extraction as part of process. Processor is electrically powered; lock on power source to isolate from accidental or unauthorised use.	Staff trained.  Operator wears appropriate PPE. Signage in place. Processor operated within designated location designed to reduce exposure to moving parts.
11	Evaporator	Improper use or maintenance	Low	Staff trained to operate and carry out maintenance and user repair. Processor maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions. Servicing under contract.	Staff trained. Signage in place. Processor operated within designated location within shed.
12	Combined Heat and Power Plant	Improper use or maintenance, carbon monoxide/dioxide	High	Staff trained to operate and carry out maintenance and user repair. Gasifiers, generators and ancillary equipment maintained as per the manufacturer's instructions.	Staff trained and wear appropriate PPE including gas leakage/build up detectors. Signage in place. CHP operated within designated location within shed.

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Environmental – Chemicals –i Treatment of spent lees skin contact. and evaporate.	Chemicals -	Chemicals –inhalation, eye contact, skin contact.	High	Staff trained in operation and maintenance/inspection of equipment. All chemicals are safe when used in a proper manner and for the purpose designated.	Staff trained. Appropriate PPE worn and approved consumables used.  Output from reed bed monitored as per SEPA requirement. Clean water dousing point in shed. Hazmat folder in office. Appropriate storage when not in use.
Chainsaws and other cuts or other powered tools noise, dust/fu electric shock	Cuts or othe noise, dust/feetric shoc	Cuts or other wounding injuries, noise, dust/fumes/small particles, electric shock	High	Only trained staff to operate and maintain chainsaws and similar tools. Staff familiarised where no general training course is available. PPE and safe working practice identified. Annual portable appliance testing.	Staff trained/familiarised and use appropriate PPE.
Timber transport, Injury from la woodhandling and from logs dur stacking	Injury from la from logs dur stacking	Injury from large vehicles, crushing from logs during woodhandling and stacking	High	Staff and contractors aware of activities and exclusion areas. Timber stacked in designated areas.	Staff and contractors briefed.
Wood Chipping Injury from large vegations and an arrange of the particles.	Injury from la equipment, cr during woodh dust/fine part	Injury from large vehicles or equipment, crushing from logs during woodhandling, noise, dust/fine particles.	High	Staff and contractors aware of activities and exclusion areas. Chipping takes place in designated areas.	Staff and contractors briefed. Contractors wear appropriate PPE.
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From: Donald Kenned

Sent: 26 February 2019 10:45

To: Geoff Campbell
Cc: William Kelly

Subject: RE: Public access through Glenborrodale Farm

Dear Geoff,

I agree that it is unfortunate that this situation has been reached with Ardnamurchan Estate and I do understand your concerns.

In answer to your direct question, as there is a right of responsible public access over most land and inland water in Scotland this includes the hills above Glenborrodale and beyond. To the extent of my knowledge of the area all reasonable access routes have to pass through the immediate vicinity of the sheds. I hope to find a solution with Ardnamurchan Estate that manages the public through this area, although the Estate have recently threatened legal action.

Whilst I am of the view that general access rights remain since the building of the wood chip plant, until these issues are resolved I cannot advocate members of the public taking access through the area between the sheds for reasons of health and safety. I do not know the nature of the operations in and around the sheds but the safety of the public and the estate workers is paramount.

Kind regards,

**Donald Kennedy** 

Access Officer - Skve. Lochalsh and West Lochaber

From: Geoff Campbell

**Sent:** 25 February 2019 12:40

To: Donald Kennedy

**Cc:** Jessie Colquhoun; May McNicol; Pat MacPhail; Stewart Connor; Gill Calver; Stewart; Andrew Baxter - Member; Blair Allan - Member; Niall McLean - Member; Ian

Ramon - Member; Dave & Jenny Kime; William Kelly **Subject:** Public access through Glenborrodale Farm

Dear Donald Kennedy,

Many thanks for your time at the meeting on Monday 18th February 2019. I believe that it was helpful to all parties to hear the different views about access to the hills.

As a community we all want to work together for the common good so that the general public can enjoy the great outdoors and commercial enterprise can conduct its business.

Occasionally there are disagreements which cannot be resolved at a local level and it is important that the relevant authorities become involved to resolve these disagreements.

As was evident at the meeting on Monday, one such matter is the access past the green sheds and the wood chip plant in Glenborrodale Farm. Members of the public have expressed a view that the route is open to the public. Ardnamurchan Estate has stated that this route is not open to public access.

In a small rural community such as ours, everyone is closely connected. Almost everyone in the area either works for Ardnamurchan Estate or has friends or family who do. As such, conducting a debate within the community on the merits of the arguments can end up being damaging and divisive and can cause rifts that sometimes never heal.

While the interested local parties, the Highland Council and Ardnamurchan Estate work on a mutually acceptable alternative route, can you please confirm the current status of the route regarding public access. I have copied in William Kelly and would appreciate if you could communicate your answer directly to him and me. Our next community council meeting is on the 11th March and this will be on the agenda.

Kind regards,
Geoffrey Campbell
Chair, West Ardnamurchan Community Council

## **Carbon Copies**

William Kelly, Ardnamurchan Estate David Kime, local resident

West Ardnamurchan Community Council Members Gill Calver Jessie Colquhoun Stewart Connor Pat MacPhail May McNicol

Ward 21 Councillors Blair Allen Andrew Baxter Niall McLean Ian Ramon

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Mura h-eil na beachdan a tha air an cur an cèill sa phost-d seo a' buntainn ri gnothachas Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, 's ann leis an neach fhèin a chuir air falbh e a tha iad, is chan eil iad an-còmhnaidh a' riochdachadh beachdan na Comhairle, no buidhnean buntainneach, agus chan eil am post-d seo na phàirt de chunnradh sam bith mura h-eil sin air innse.

Listening \* Open \* Valuing \* Improving \* Supporting \* Partnering \*

Delivering

Eisteachd \* Fosgailte \* Luach \* Leasachadh \* Taic \* Com-pàirteachas \*

Lìbhrigeadh



