

Newborough Forest Redesign Consultation

TRANSCRIBED NOTES FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2004, 7- 9pm, LLANGEFNI SCHOOL

Introduction to the report

This report was produced by Lindsey Colbourne Associates (LCA), an independent organisation based in North Wales that specialises in independent consultation and partnership working. LCA have been brought in by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) to advise on, design and oversee the consultation process to ensure it is fair and that it genuinely informs decisions made relating to the Newborough Forest. Lindsey Colbourne facilitated the meeting on 20th September.

This report records word for word everything that was written on flip charts by facilitators, together with all the information given on feedback forms during and after the meeting. No editing has been done. Where writing could not be understood, we have used a ?. In addition, the report contains answers to the questions and concerns raised at the meeting.

The report consists of three sections:

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Questions raised at the meeting, with answers | page 3 |
| 1.1 What is driving change, what decisions have been made | |
| 1.2 Scope of the work and links to other initiatives | |
| 1.3 Decision making and staffing | |
| 1.4 Consultation and engagement | |
| 1.5 Specific issues in the area | |
| 2. Concerns raised at the meeting | page 11 |
| 2.1 About the consultation not making any difference | |
| 2.2 About the public meeting | |
| 2.3 About CCW/FCW's understanding and staffing | |
| 3. Suggestions , demands and requests raised at the meeting | page 14 |
| 3.1 About keeping things as they are | |
| 3.2 About the process of change | |
| 3.3 About the nature and type of forest and its uses | |
| 3.4 About dunes | |
| 3.5 About how to make decisions in the area | |
| 3.6 About staffing and expertise | |
| 3.7 Requests for information | |
| 3.8 About the science | |
| 3.9 About access | |
| 3.10 Other comments | |

What next?

There will be full and ongoing consultation, including the setting up of a Liaison Partnership representing the range of interests in the area.

A summary report pulling together the results of the drop-in sessions and public meetings has also been produced. It contains answers to other questions raised in the drop-in sessions between May and September, and the public meeting in Newborough in November.

All reports, together with any other updates, will be published on the website www.forestry.gov.uk/wales and placed in the information files provided in the post offices in Newborough, Dwyran, Llangaffo and Malltraeth.

Paper copies are available from Kath McNulty, Forestry Commission Wales, Social Forestry Team, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0PN, tel: 01286 871874, e-mail: kath.mcnulty@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. In addition, all those who have provided their contact details will be kept regularly informed of progress.

Terms and abbreviations

A number of abbreviations have been used in this report:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ACC/IoACC | Anglesey County Council/Isle of Anglesey County Council |
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| AWS | Anglesey Woodland Strategy |
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan |
| CCW | The countryside Council for Wales |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EGNI | Biofuel consultancy |
| FC or FCW | Forestry Commission Wales |
| FCS | Favourable Conservation Status |
| NNR | National Nature Reserve |
| SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| SSSI | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| WAG | Welsh Assembly Government |

1. Questions raised

[Note: These have been grouped under headings for ease of reference, by Lindsey Colbourne Associates]

1.1 Questions about what is driving change, and what decisions have already been made

With answers by CCW/FCW in italics

- ❑ Is there a proposal on the table? *No.*
- ❑ Can you put on a big screen what is being proposed for the area?
There is currently no proposal.
- ❑ Get the impression that CCW want the end of the forest driven by EEC grants?
There is no EU Grant driving this. CCW and FCW has a duty to work for the conservation of the dunes. This may involve changes to the forest. We recognise that the forest has a value too.
- ❑ Brief mention of the SAC designation – what does it mean and are CCW compelled to do something?
The Newborough Warren is part of the Abermenai to Aberffraw dunes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EU Habitats Directive to conserve the range of European species and wildlife habitats. FCW must carry out an assessment of the effect of its management of the SAC. If its plans would adversely affect the integrity of the SAC, implementation can only proceed for reasons of overriding public interest. In this event, compensatory measures could be required to ensure the integrity of the SAC.
- ❑ Does CCW face prosecution if people want to keep forest as it is?
No. The Forestry Commission is the competent authority in this case. It is answerable to the Welsh Assembly Government and it in turn to the UK government for the implementation of policy and law. In the final analysis, the member state (UK) is responsible to the EU and could be taken before the European Court for a failure to apply the law. However, this begs the question of what is required to address the conservation requirements of the dunes. There may be many ways of doing this. The "vision" was one suggestion. We must now explore other options as well.
- ❑ What are the implications if dunes not in favourable condition?
The legal implications rest on a failure to put in place appropriate mechanisms for the conservation of the dunes, not a failure to achieve favourable conservation status – which might be determined by factors beyond our control.
- ❑ What's guiding things in the short term until we have a new 10 years plan?
The former Forest Design Plan has lapsed. Forest maintenance operations (thinning, road maintenance, etc.) will continue, but no further clearfelling is expected.

- What are the key objectives hanging over from last plan?
None it's a fresh start
- What does SAC designation compel CCW to do?
To advise FCW and other government agencies. CCW is also the adviser to the Wales Assembly Government when it is required to report on the condition of the SAC.
- Were proposals actuated by anything from Europe? Or something else driving this – economics and other rewards?
FCW needs a management plan to guide operations in the forest. This must have regard to the conservation importance of the area. An indication of one way of addressing the conservation requirement of the dunes was set out in the vision statement. It is now withdrawn. New proposals will be driven by the Wales Woodland Strategy, other WAG and Anglesey strategies, UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and the conservation requirements of the dune SAC. Some of these may appear to conflict and the challenge will be to find a way through these contradictions.
- Does consultation have any meaning if cSAC is already on its way?
Yes. The SAC does not define how the conservation objective should be achieved. There may be several ways of doing it.
- What does Assembly want to do with the land?
The assembly has delegated its powers for management of the land to FCW
- Will WAG be guided by Europe?
WAG is guided by its Woodland Strategy (and other policy strategies) and by UK and EU law. Where conflicts arise, the options must be explored.
- The area is already designated cSAC – how does this constrain future FDP?
FCW must carry out an assessment of the effect of its plans on the SAC. If its plans would adversely affect the integrity of the SAC, implementation can only proceed for reasons of overriding public interest. In this event, compensatory measures could be required to ensure the integrity of the SAC.
- Does it mean that forest operations will stop since everything needs planning?
No, maintenance operations can be expected to continue for a time. However, greater development of the area – including improving the structure and composition of the forest, requires planning
- What's going to happen in the meantime to operations? *See above*
- What's going to happen in a year or two?
Hopefully, a plan can be agreed which addresses as many demands as possible.
- What happens to the car park charge. What is its stated purpose, is it true it is to deter visitors to the cSAC?
The car park charge isn't to deter visitors. Car park charges long predate the SAC designation and were introduced by FCW to pay for the road and other infrastructure and operations in the forest.

1.2 Questions about what will be considered to be within the scope of the work, and how it links to other initiatives

- ❑ Does economic benefits include recreation, car park fees? Yes
- ❑ Will there be continuous cover management?
That could be one of the options for the Forest Design Plan
- ❑ Information on press release in relation to log cabins – will this be considered?
That is a separate project which FCW is obliged to explore as part of its commitment to the WAG forest strategy.
- ❑ Does list of outputs include biodiversity and wildlife – should be raised in importance?
Yes these are the kinds of things to be included and are already high on the FCW agenda.
- ❑ As process is being driven by WAG agenda – does it also take into account other Assembly agendas e.g. Health and Social well-being?
Yes we are expected to help deliver outputs to address other WAG policies where possible and hope to work with others to help ensure it does.
- ❑ Rest of UK is committed to doing a health impact on proposals - effect of marsh?
As above, we think health is a very important consideration and we recognise the contribution that the area can make to people's physical and mental well-being. There is no statutory requirement for a health assessment. There is no proposal to create marsh. The possible increase in water table in the wet dune slacks is seasonal (winter) and would not enable mosquitoes to breed.
- ❑ How far will plan go to take into account rare and scarce plants – planning and operation?
Again, these will be considered and included in the options that we generate together. They will be an important factor in examining the environmental impact of any proposals.
- ❑ Why is it not written into contracts that the place is cleared up after operations? It's important to recycle any mess and not throw away.
All contracts have a "no litter" clause, so there should be no oil cans or such litter remaining. The remaining branches and leaves are left onsite to recycle nutrients
- ❑ Economic returns – how are they measured? Recreation / car park fees / wood.
Some economic returns are direct – such as the car park fees and wood sales. But many of the benefits are indirect through attracting tourists to spend on accommodation, food, etc and even through reduced health costs from healthier people. We will take advice on this from appropriate experts. There are also economic and environmental costs to consider. Should we be

encouraging visitors who demand better roads and consume fossil fuels to get there?

- ❑ Penlon Dunes – what’s happening there as we focus on forest?
The Warren is a National Nature Reserve and will continue as such.
- ❑ Effect on Malltraeth Marsh – any changes in forest?
Malltraeth Marsh largely lies behind Malltraeth Cob and is unlikely to be affected by the Forest Design Plan. Malltraeth sands (the Cefni estuary) is gradually silting up as a result of the construction of the Cob. Any impact of the Forest Design Plan on this can be examined when options are developed and evaluated
- ❑ Long term view – predictions difficult to make – how flexible can long-term plan be?
We can only work with the information currently available. A forest Design Plan is a 10 year plan based on a much longer vision. It is normally reviewed every 5 years, but as new information becomes available changes can be made as appropriate.
- ❑ Newborough is designated as area of outstanding natural beauty and ‘planning’ in the village is restricted, where are the IoACC planners tonight?
The County Council is a statutory consultee on the Forest Design Plan and can be expected to apply their planning policies (and AONB management plan policies) to the Forest Design Plan.
- ❑ Earlier in the year there was talk about an incinerator and a wood chipping machine to be erected in the Newborough area. Is this still under consideration? If so the noise and the fumes will not be wanted by the village down wind of Newborough.
This is a separate project which does not drive the Forest Design Plan, but could be influenced by the Plan. It is currently on hold.
- ❑ Will the role of the area as a Carbon sink be considered? – Global conservation.
Again, this can be considered in the development and evaluation of options.
- ❑ How will any plans fit in Anglesey’s Woodland Strategy e.g. can any felling be balanced against planting proposals elsewhere?
Anglesey’s woodland strategy will be taken into account in shaping options and their evaluation.

1.3 About decision making and staffing

- ❑ Who decides what happens to the forest? *FCW*
- ❑ Who is the owner of the land? *Welsh Assembly Government*
- ❑ Glad to hear the statement from the Chief Executive – why isn't the Assembly here to introduce the agenda rather than the statutory bodies?
FCW and CCW are the Assembly sponsored public bodies responsible for the management of the area.
- ❑ What is the standard procedure for changing FDP?
There is usually a 5-yearly review and a major revision every 10 years.
- ❑ Will AONB rules be applied?
Yes. All public bodies have a legal duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- ❑ ACC – committed to proper partnership – equal in planning process. Why is this process out of kilter with this?
We don't think it is. We are committed to a partnership approach with key interests through the Liaison Partnership, and to as wide as possible public consultation.
- ❑ Assembly to be here as part of discussion from the start – recommendations not decisions is what we have here?
The FCW and CCW are the Assembly sponsored public bodies responsible for the management of the area. Role of WAG also mentioned in About Consultation and engagement, below.
- ❑ What is the role of WAG and shouldn't they be there tonight? *See above*
- ❑ What will happen to Newborough forest and warren between now and winter 2006?
There will be on-going maintenance such as thinning and road maintenance.
- ❑ What change will FC rules force to happen?
We are sorry but we don't understand the question
- ❑ How can speakers come to this forum to answer questions and then admit they have not been to Newborough and forest or dunes?

Some of the speakers were present to find out more about Newborough from you as well as representing their organisation. They do not live on Anglesey and do not need to have been to Newborough to do this. When it comes to knowledge about Newborough they will rely on local staff
- ❑ I did not understand who the land lord is – if it is the Welsh Assembly then they decide, yes? They also have the grants for this work, yes?
WAG have delegated responsibility for management of the Forest to FCW which is funded by the Assembly.

1.4 About consultation and engagement

- How available will the report from today be? Should not just be via web. How will you make them widely available?
We want to make it as widely available as possible. It will be sent to all those who have given their address and is available to anyone interested. We will also put them on the web, post them or email (if requested). We have also placed information folders in all the post offices in Newborough, Dwyran, Llangaffo and Malltraeth. We are keen to hear of any other places the reports should be made available.
- On the basis of the presentation shouldn't the Community Council be part of the partnership in the centre of the process? They must be.
The Community Council are crucial to the process and we want them to be involved at the heart of shaping decisions (on the liaison group/partnership), but they are not the legally responsible body for the determination of the Forest design Plan.
- Why is it such a narrow partnership at centre?
FCW and CCW are the legally responsible bodies for the management of the forest and dunes. We think our labelling on the diagram may have been misleading. We will amend it to show clearly that FCW and CCW are the accountable bodies, and the liaison group will be a partnership of wider interests.
- Why were FC not consulting two years ago when they knew current plan was going to lapse?
FCW and CCW began discussion in 2000 on the plan, a year before it was due for renewal. In June 2003 a joint vision was agreed setting out the scope and scale of the task. A decision was taken to consult on that vision, rather than a blank sheet of paper. The vision has now been withdrawn.
- Why is it going to take 2 years to consult? Need a faster timetable.
Hopefully it will be.
- Two year time scale ridiculous. Do it as quickly as possible.
We will try, and welcome any advice on how to achieve that. Our initial reasoning for such a long timescale is set out in the papers handed out at the meeting, and available on request or via the website.
- How can we engage everyone in shorter timescale. See above
- It is true that John R and CCW didn't want any consultation from start?
No. John Ratcliffe took the outline of CCW thinking to the Community Council at least 2 years ago and presented more detail to the FCW's Newborough Environmental Panel and the IoACC's Environment Forum in late 2003.
- Who and when did the WAG consult with?
The Wales Assembly Government consults its statutory advisers, CCW and FCW on relevant issues. We are not aware of other consultation.

- What is the role of WAG now? Shouldn't they be here tonight?
The FCW and CCW are the Assembly sponsored public bodies responsible for the management of the area. Please also see other answers on this issue.

1.5 About specific issues in the area

- If demand of Corsian Pine falls, is the forest at Newborough still viable?
The present demand for timber from Newborough is good, FCW make a surplus from Newborough timber
- Is the land too acidic for anything else to grow here?
No. There is some shallow acidification of the soil under the conifers, which might alter the species there in the long run, but does not preclude a wide range of plants from growing.
- World Class Forestry Industry – does everyone know what this means?
Woodland industries contribute some £400 million a year to the Welsh economy. For the woodland owners, contractors, sawmills and joinery businesses to survive in what is a very competitive world timber market, they have to invest and develop in staff, equipment, the wood supply chain, product development and marketing. This requires effective business support, and forests across the sector.
- What would happen if we take 100 yard swath off front of dunes? Has it been tested yet?
Yes it has been tested– some areas of forest were removed (undermined) by the sea and some trees removed in a pre-emptive felling by FCW. The exposed conifers have been remarkably stable, though scorching by the full blast of salt wind has killed some on the leading edge. We will need to consider the creation of wind-stable edges for the future and "ramps" of scrub to shelter the larger trees from salt scorch. Conifer removal from dunes has been achieved at other places such as Whitford (Gower) and Ainsdale (Southport), resulting in rapid recovery of dune vegetation.
- At what age would windblow occur?
That's dependent on how we manage the forest. We would expect to see sporadic windblow throughout the forest in all age classes of trees.
- After the war, forest offered employment for 50 local people. *Noted. The establishment of the forest was a task of epic proportions. Modern forest operations are more mechanised and require a much smaller workforce.*
- How many red squirrels are there in Wales. At the first Wales red squirrel conference FCW stated that only 250 now remain. A total Welsh population would be 300 – 400. Do CCW accept this as accurate? Can CCW tell us what the minimum viable and sustainable population size would be in Newborough?
All estimates of red squirrel populations are based on samples and subject to the inevitable inaccuracies. There is no single definable figure for minimum

sustainable population size because the question carries various assumptions about the time period over which sustainability of a naturally fluctuating population is measured, about relative genetic isolation or manipulation and about the pressures which might impact on a population in a changing environment. CCW accepts that Newborough Forest can make a significant contribution to sustaining a population of red squirrels on Anglesey.

2. Concerns raised

[Note: These have been grouped under headings for ease of reference]

2.1 Concerns that decisions have been made, the diverse views and that the consultation won't have any influence

- I use the forest on a daily basis. I accept the forest has to be managed, plus I accept that forest has to be successful commercially. However it is a recreational environment which serves totally different requirements and any changes should take into account. Unfortunately I, like a lot of people, believe that all this public discussion is pure 'candy floss' and decisions will be made by Cardiff and Brussels and local peoples views will be discarded and ignored.

We have to address many desires, some may be conflicting, but it may be possible to do things in such a way as to avoid many conflicts. The way ahead is not predetermined and we need your help to find the best way.

- Would we be here at all if no EU Money was being offered as an incentive, to destroy a most beautiful area, a haven from the hustle and bustle of modern day life for both humans and wildlife alike. It seems that everything has a price, and we the local people pay the cost.

There is no EU money driving this project.

- Not asked if local people want ponies.

Until 1986 CCW (or its predecessor bodies) managed the dunes without grazing animals - and was criticised for the fact! Under that regime much of the dune grassland became very rank and overgrown. We now use ponies as cheap mowing machines and they have greatly increased the species diversity of the dune grassland - indeed Newborough Warren is of international repute for its use of this conservation management technique. Ponies are also used as "mowing machines" within the forest and have dramatically increased the numbers of some rare species there.

- You are talking about the ? and varied agenda of a community, you are never going to satisfy everyone's desires.

True, decisions will have to be made which do not meet everyone's desires, but we can try to understand, address and accommodate as many as possible by working together.

2.2 Concerns about the public meeting (on 20th Sept)

- I'd hoped to get more info on pros and cons of original plan / alternatives with some scientific info – but am none the wiser.

The vision has been withdrawn. We will now establish the options to move forward by working with the liaison partnership and as well as wider consultation eg through public meetings and discussion, task or working groups

- Never been to such a waffly meeting – just a discussion about discussion. We would also like to move forward to more substantive discussion about

issues and options. But first we need to establish how best to work with all the interests in the area. We would value your advice, involvement and patience.

- ❑ I gave up two hours of my life and feel cheated. I now know that consultation will take place but with who and about what I don't know. (see above)

2.3 Concerns about CCW/FCW's understanding and staffing

- ❑ The aerial photo 2000 of the forest is out of date and there has been more destruction of the forest since then.
That is the latest vertical aerial image available to us. It is intended to be only indicative of the situation.
- ❑ Who says the sand will create sand dunes?? Erosion is taking place, not deposition!! Look at the text book spit made by Longshore Drift!
Sand dunes move naturally by a gradual process of erosion and deposition. While there has been erosion in some parts there is accretion in others – for instance the dunes have grown out by 20 metres at the main car park in the last two years. One needs to take a long term view of changes to determine what is happening to the whole system.
- ❑ Removal of trees on windward edge will cause those originally in the lee of the wind to salt scorch, perish and fall. It is vital to keep the windward strip which is ramped in profile and offers protection.
In re-structuring the forest, the creation of a wind-firm boundary is likely to be a priority. The original windward strip has been removed by natural shoreline movement in many places and this is likely to continue so long as the forest is close to the beach.
- ❑ Lack of consistency between current warden and previous wardens. *It is impossible to comment on such a generalised charge. However, policies do change over the years as new information or new demands lead to new thinking. The forest was planted to stabilise the dunes and provide timber "pit props" for the mines. It now has many other purposes and this affects the approach to wardening. Our thinking on dune management has also changed – originally they were fenced off and "left to nature". Today we think that natural dunes would have had large grazing animals on them and try to emulate that effect.*
- ❑ The real concern of the community and of interested groups is whether they can really trust the CCW again in the context of Newborough. It is obvious that CCW and FCW wish to build bridges and credibility with the public, that however can only be achieved if there is a change in the frontline staff, who have been the architects of the original plan and all that it entailed. If those very people are again involved in the newly promised more inclusive process, then I am afraid, it will become an adversarial style operation and be non-productive. Cynically, people are suggesting that is precisely what CCW are hoping for, so that people will get fed up and drop off, leaving CCW to again have their own way!

CCW and FCW staff have a job to do and will be supported and guided by a Liaison Partnership. FCW will be responsible for the resulting Forest Design Plan which we hope will best meet the many outputs sought from the forest.

3. Suggestions, demands, requests

[Note: These have been grouped under headings for ease of reference]

3.1 About keeping things as they are

- ❑ The general feeling seems to be the desire to keep the forest and warren as they are known to us now. Not controversial full scale change.
The forest has changed radically over the past 50 years and will continue to change over the next even if we do nothing. The challenge is to manage and guide that change to meet multiple objectives.

3.2 About the process of change

- ❑ Keep it simple and you might get somewhere, gradual change, gradual thinning and replenishing the conifers we feel makes the forest what it is today.
The Forest Design Plan is a 10 year plan for a much longer vision.
- ❑ I walk in the forest four to five times a week and it gives me great pleasure. The wildlife is magnificent and increasing year on year. You must be very careful not to disturb the natural flow. I am very pleased that you have dropped the original scheme and have decided to consult with the people. Fifty years is nothing in the life of a new forest and the present method of thinning, clearing and replanting bit by bit seems to be the correct way to proceed. *Noted.*
- ❑ **?** forest dunes have maintained their **?**, will forest operators destroy them?
The forest has "frozen" the original pattern of dunes. But without the power of the wind in the forest to blow sand (up-slope) then they will very gradually erode over the years. Forestry operations are one of the factors contributing to this gradual process.
- ❑ Must consider impact on all rare / scarce natural / local species.
These will be considered during the development and evaluation of options.

3.3 About the nature and type of forest ... and its uses

- ❑ Should like continuous cover of mixed woodland and bridle ways continued with parking for horse boxes.
These can be considered during the development and evaluation of options.
- ❑ Keep forest and plant new trees for your next crop.
This, or natural regeneration, can be considered during the development and evaluation of options.
- ❑ Use the windward Corsican Pine as a shelter belt to replant Scots Pine for the red squirrels! *These can be considered during the development and evaluation of options.*
- ❑ Forget commercial forestry in Newborough – stick to management and regeneration of the present type of forest and its present relation with the warren, the beach and Llanddwyn Island.

Management of the forest is not cost-free. The present forest was planted for commercial reasons – where other factors take precedence over commercial production other forest types (such as mixed woodland) might be more appropriate. The WAG policy is to produce an income from timber sales wherever this is appropriate and helps supply the Welsh timber industry.

- ❑ No money in timber – switch focus to amenity value of trees? – conservation. *Sale of timber from Newborough will realise a surplus of approx £5 per tonne. This is one of the objectives of the WAG Forestry Strategy*
- ❑ Under plant with Scots Pine – for introduced red squirrels! *This can be considered during the development and evaluation of options.*
- ❑ Sea level is rising! Trees offer a natural barrage. *We think the evidence of the last few years at Newborough is that they do not. The waves have swept the trees away. Natural dunes however can re-build in a season and create a renewable and sustainable "soft" defence against the sea.*
- ❑ No money in timber so focus should be on amenity. This is one of several objectives for the forest. Biggest raven roost in Europe! *Again this can be considered during the development and evaluation of options. The RSPB have and will be consulted in the process.*
- ❑ Sculpture Park – why can't we have one? *You already have one in the Penlon car park ! Again this can be considered during the development and evaluation of options.*
- ❑ Public amenity and biodiversity more important due to lower worth of soft wood – carbon sink / environment cost of felling. *Biodiversity and amenity are key objectives. The carbon sink contribution of the forest can be examined when a plan is clearer.*
- ❑ Why not local contractors? Why not more added value – processing or use of the timber? *We do use local contractors, timber is sent to the nearest Mill (Mid Wales)*
- ❑ How will you be taking into consideration the requirements of the red squirrel that is currently being reintroduced into the forest? As this is a legally protected species (that is also well loved by the public) I would not like to see their habitat becoming fragmented, preventing them from using the forest efficiently, and I would like to see disturbance in the forest kept to a minimum. *We are keen for the needs of the Anglesey red squirrel population to be taken into account. They will be a factor in planning the future structure and composition of the forest. By planning operations, timing and zoning and designing a continuity of tree cover and connections we may be able to enhance the value of the forest for the squirrels.*

3.4 About dunes

- Close neighbours feel very vulnerable – want more dunes.
Restoring dunes in some areas may be considered among the options, though we think they would be most unlikely to be the vast mobile dunes of former times. The shelter afforded by the forest to walkers and to adjacent properties is recognised.
- Remember the sand dunes before the forest and would like to see more of them.
The dunes before the forest was planted were very open and mobile. Any restored dunes are unlikely to be the same, due to the increased tendency to vegetate and stabilise.
- Please don't give us more dunes, the strong weather / high winds we have experienced lately emphasise the need to keep the cover of the trees to ensure locals have somewhere to walk / get exercise which on an Island with poor health, should be high on the agenda.
We recognise the strong desire for sheltered walking space and need to address this in developing and evaluating options. The forest is to be designated Access Land, enshrining public access rights on that land, and there are also several long routes across the open dunes.

3.5 Advice on how to make decisions about the area

- Final draft design plan should be put to general vote.
We hope that as far as possible recommendations are made by consensus rather than voting. The final decision on the Forest Design Plan is taken by the Forestry Commission, which, as WAG's delegated agent for the forest and as the competent authority is legally responsible for the consequences.
- You really need to put forward your proposals as was evidenced tonight because without some steering and topics for discussion we / the community will speculate / digress from the issue and really not know what issue we are discussing.
We have learned that putting forward even illustrative proposals may be taken as a sign that we have made up our minds. The Liaison Partnership will be tasked with defining the issues and considering the options for the Forest Design Plan.
- You are the highly paid experts in the environmental / social / economical fields. You should be 'selling' your ideas for what is best scientifically for the site, but remember keep it simple, keep it gradual, evidence the benefit to the community. Hope you get your act together soon as I suspect if this process takes 2 years there will be much apathy and interest will wane.
See above. FCW and CCW "experts" will be involved in the process of developing and evaluating the options and recommending the most appropriate way forward. But there are other 'experts' out there too – experts in the local community, in history, the environment, economics. We want to engage as many as possible in shaping the way forward.

- There was much emphasis from the floor on the interest of the community of Newborough – quite ?, but Newborough forest is a greater asset than ?to commercial and local community – it is an asset for the whole Island and for Wales – and ? interests must not dictate its future.
We will seek a wide range of views, local, national and sectoral.
- Any consultation should listen carefully to the people of Newborough – the village people.
The people of Newborough must be central to the debate. We are keen to hear the voice of the village alongside that of the wider (national and international) community, and welcome suggestions on how to make sure the local voice is heard and covers the range of interests in the area.
- Responsibilities of Assembly to the electorate – they are reviewed every 4 years – plans need to be longer term – regardless of who is on power – wider vision.
The Forest Design Plan will be a 10 year plan addressing a much longer vision.
- Ponies are great – especially galloping over the dunes.
We consider them to be our "green" mowing machines.
- Perhaps liaison groups could consider a session on ecology / management of sand dunes.
This is exactly the kind of thing that the Liaison Partnership will need to consider. They will decide what issues to consider as part of the Forest Design Plan and it will be an opportunity for all parties to explain their thinking.
- Please keep on consulting us but I fear I have little faith, only got to see Llanddwyn Island as to what can happen – with the Forestry roads like a racing track
We hope that by working together we can achieve the most favourable outcome for all.

3.6 About staffing and expertise

- I would strongly recommend that CCW & FC start afresh in the Newborough area (indeed in Anglesey generally) with a new approach and with entirely new faces in their front line personnel.
FCW and CCW staff know the area and the issues. We are often criticised for changing staff every couple of years – there is value in continuity and experience. Additional and new staff resources may be used in the future..?
- Please make sure your 'management' visit the site ASAP.
They do - often on bicycles!

3.7 Requests for information

- ❑ Make current FDP available.
It is available on request from FCW - see contacts at the beginning of the report
- ❑ Put a message board on the web site so that all points can be aired and maybe answered by the people who are pushing this thing forward.
We hope that suggestions like this will be considered by the Liaison Partnership.
- ❑ The accounts for the forest should be available. – What is the income and costs of proposed forest plans?
All plans – when we have one- will be costed
- ❑ It would be useful if the public know what the CCW / FCWs plans were so that we could give useful feedback. If there is no plan (or 'vision') we don't know where to start and it is difficult to provide useful feedback.
The Liaison Partnership will be asked to focus on the issues raised by the public consultations and examine options for a way forward.
- ❑ The fact that Dr Miller wrote to the Commissioner means that the EU is involved. This being the case, then an MP and AM should be forthcoming with details of how the EU is involved. This is linked to a query I had on your first letter and also the fact that statutory requirements are not being complied with – how not?
The involvement of the EU is generally through the member state, not directly. It is not clear what statutory requirement the question refers to.

3.8 About the science

- ❑ Research into the supposed hydrological affects of Corsican Pine, research indicates that ?? Pine evaporates timber ? less water than Scots Pine or B.L. in summer.
All forest intercepts and transpires more water than short vegetation. Evergreen conifer forest generally transpires more water than broadleaves. The interception of rainwater by evergreens is a particular aspect of note. The specific impact of any particular area of trees on a specific area of dunes may be difficult to determine, but the principle is quite clear- the forest has lowered the water table.
- ❑ The ARS project claims the Pentraeth forest squirrels are genetically distinct from those on the rest of GB. If that is so, it is stupidity to introduce Cumbrian reds into Newborough forest. These must be removed before they have a chance to interbreed with the native Anglesey population.
There is concern that the Pentraeth red squirrels are so genetically impoverished (due to the very low numbers that the population reached in the late 1990s) that they may be ill equipped to face the environmental challenges of the future. A sustainable red squirrel population probably requires greater genetic diversity. ARSP has decided to establish a population that is fit for the future – whatever it may bring.

3.9 About access

- ❑ Access arrangements – should be given full consideration. *We agree*
- ❑ Protect forest trails – in supp. Selection near Llanddwyn. This is an asset!

3.10 Other comments

- ❑ Congratulations on the meeting. I have no quarrel with the forestry people having walked and lived in Pentraeth my family owning part of Clwyth mountain – we hated the planting, but forestry people have always been polite, helpful and I am sure they were sad at the new policies – contractors, not planting etc. I knew a lot of forestry people having lived in west ? in forest. I am worried about the management. You can't get to the dunes without going through the forestry. I am afraid its CCW I find impossible to talk to – they know my views on how we were not consulted on Penlon – I have not forgiven them, telling me in 2001 that Ragwort was not poison to animals ie ponies. PenLon is now for scientists only a few – its barren – how can they say the flowers are wonderful? The path has now gone – we as tax payers who would like to enjoy it – well its barren land – what a ?. I would think Wardens Reg ? and Tony Bennett would turn in their graves – fenced off that is why I worry ? the forestry area – wonderful red squirrels. Do not want ponies by the ? the ? ? ponies on the ?lands. Thank God there are still sand dunes on private land – how that man could say we must keep them for children to play on – go to Ilgy? See no sand dunes at all (caravan parks), 40 years ago they were magic. I used to see heaps – sometimes 18 different – birds on Penlon in one day. I am lucky now. I saw hardly any sky larks, no part??.

Although many opposed the original planting, people have come to appreciate the forest as it has developed and changed. We hope to work with you and others interested in the area to find out how the area could be maximised for social, environmental and economic purposes. Access to the dunes is available from Penlon and Braint car parks and on 3 public rights of way across the warren. CCW consults the Community Council on its operations at Penlon and elsewhere on the reserve. Ragwort is poisonous to stock but is avoided by them in the field unless it is cut or supplied in hay (where they cannot detect it). CCW has not suffered any losses of livestock due to ragwort, but follows the code of conduct to control its spread. Research shows that the diversity of flowering plants in the dune grassland has tripled in many places since grazing was restored. Former Nature Conservancy warden Reg (Arthur) is still very much alive and well! Many of the fences on the dunes have been removed in recent years following the end of the grazing trials. We would like to remove more but need to control livestock. The sand dunes at Treath Lligwy are in private ownership, badly eroded and covered in car parks. Newborough remains one of the strongholds for breeding skylark on Anglesey.

- I would like to point out that the vast majority of the people who attended the public meeting at Llangefni were outsiders and not Newborough residents. Opponents of your scheme boast an 8,000 signature petition but I would like to point out that the collectors of signatures cast their net far and wide. The petition was floated around the Conwy Council offices in Colwyn Bay and holiday makers were also entrapped. One person from Stoke-on-Trent admitted that he had signed the petition but had never been to the forest or the beach. I have also been informed that even children were signing the petition at one post office. The CCW and FCW should listen more to what the residents of Newborough have to say and especially to the older generation, who like myself, remember the Warren before afforestation. I enclose a letter which I hope will be published in one of the local newspapers together with some old photographs. (born and brought up in Newborough and now living in Felinheli).

We are committed to taking all points of view on board, but are particularly concerned to hear the local viewpoint and value the experience of the older generation who have seen the landscape change before. We would like to put the article on the website if the author agrees to it.

- Although the case for preserving and enhancing the dunes habitat of Newborough Warren was well presented at the meeting on September 20th, it doesn't alter the fact that it is the forests and woodlands that are of overriding importance now that our planet is under such threat. Most of the devastating disasters occurring world-wide are basically due to deforestation. Mankind's demand for energy has led to the depletion of the carbon storehouses (fuel resources) of the Earth and the return of the carbon to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, resulting in the catastrophic "Greenhouse Effect" which now confronts us. As far as I can see, wood is the only carbon energy resource that can possibly be renewed – the planting of more and more trees is surely the only way that CO₂ can be actually reduced in the atmosphere. Only if wood or its products (especially paper) are burnt is the carbon released as gas (CO₂) – the rotting of wood (or its products) adds humus to the soil. Then the carbon is retained in an organic state due to the dynamic cycles operating naturally and responsible for maintaining the fertility of the soil. The debris left when trees are thinned or fall should be left to decay, not carted off and burnt. This is true of all vegetation. The increased instability of the world climate is almost certainly due to the progressive destruction of the green mantle that once enveloped most of the Earth's surface, especially the equatorial rain forests. The canopy provided by trees has a stabilising effect re extremes of temperature, wind, rain, etc. and gives shelter and protection to all life in the vicinity. Trees also prevent erosion. What other ecosystem offers such security, tranquillity, and above all stability? The future of life on Earth depends on preserving natural wilderness of every kind appropriate to the habitat but especially forests and woodlands now that global warming is definitely occurring. So there can be no acceptable reason for destroying any part of Newborough Forest; every effort should be made to manage it in the most sustainable and environmentally friendly way possible. Even though it is far too late for local efforts to offset

global problems, at least a protest can be offered against "civilisation" lurching relentlessly towards dereliction, and it does give satisfaction to a community to know they are doing the right thing. The proposal to improve access and recreation opportunities in the area could be disastrous unless sufficient wardens and rangers are employed to control human behaviour (re litter, vandalism, etc). Economic returns should surely not play any part in the argument when considering such important environmental issues.
