

Newborough Forest Redesign Consultation

TRANSCRIBED NOTES FROM THE PUBLIC MEETING, 8th November 2004, 7- 9pm, NEWBOROUGH 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 8th November.

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.

What next?

A summary report pulling together the results of the drop-in sessions and public meetings has also been produced. This includes answers to the questions raised in the drop in sessions between May and September, and those raised at the Llangefni public meeting. The next step is the setting up of a Liaison Partnership representing the range of interests in the area.

All reports, together with any other updates, will be published on the website www.forestry.gov.uk/wales. Folders containing all reports and updates have also been placed in the Post Offices in Newborough, Dwyran, Llangaffo and Malltraeth.

In addition, all those who have provided their contact details will be kept regularly informed of progress or you may request a copy from Kath McNulty, Social Forestry Team, Forestry Commission Wales, Gwydyr Uchaf, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0PN, Tel: 01286 871874 or kath.mcnulty@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

Index

Questions and concerns raised, together <i>with answers</i> :	Page
1. Communication and involvement	3
2. How and where decisions are going to be made	4
3. Liaison Partnership	6
4. Access, the barrier, rights of way	6
5. The woodland	7
6. Squirrels	8
7. Other	8

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
FCW	Forestry Commission Wales
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
NNR	National Nature Reserve
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Site of Scientific Interest
WAG	Welsh Assembly government

Questions and concerns raised, together with answers

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

1. Questions and concerns about communication and involvement

With answers by CCW/FCW in italics

- Communications already broken down – e.g. people did not know about tonight.
We are committed to improving communications, but need your help to make sure they work. Invitation letters were sent to all 1500 names on electoral register... there was a delay with 100 letters. A local newsletter carried notice of the meeting in a recent issue. We apologise if you did not receive a letter. 113 booked for tonight. Newsletter is available in post office & chip shop & library... everywhere! How can we improve our communications? Please let us know, and spread the word.
- Your overarching principles include involving public – could you specify what involvement means?
We would like involvement to mean more than just consultation – so we want to work with interested people in actually working up options and evaluating them, rather than just consulting them on a proposal. Our plans are set out in the paper we presented to the public meeting. This is available on request from FCW or via our website
- Please give examples of difficult problems that need to be addressed.
Difficult problems may include things like the possible conflict between access on foot and access on horseback, where opinion is divided, or there is no single objective 'one best way' of doing things. Many have been identified through the public consultation.
- Not enough representation of people from Newborough here – implications for decisions this evening.
We want people and their views to influence the decision-making in the area, but this will take time. We are not deciding anything tonight, but giving people an opportunity to state their needs and aspirations and listening to them to try and find a way forward.
- Concern that nothing has changed since Llangefni public meeting. I.e. just more of the same.
This meeting was specifically designed for Rhosyr ward and people of Newborough in response to a request from the Community Council. It is designed to be the same as the Llangefni meeting, but has taken on board some of the comments about the evening.
- Lack of younger people (under 40s) at meeting. How do we involve them?
We would value any suggestions about this.
- What do our local school children want to change / leave the same with regards to "their" forest? – They are the future.
We hope that the views of young people will be actively sought throughout

the engagement process. We welcome any advice on how best to go about this.

- ❑ How much money has the consultation process cost to date, and how much is it expected to cost before it ends?
To date: Cash approx £25,000 staff time approx 3 man years, before it ends perhaps around 6 man years cash £50,000
- ❑ Have all the colleges/schools/organisations who use the forest and / or the beach been sent a questionnaire for their views?
No. As above, we very much hope this will be addressed.
- ❑ Could a daytime meeting be arranged in Newborough? – many interested parties have young children (and no babysitters for evenings) and would certainly attend – as would other folk.
Of course, if day time meetings are better, they could be arranged.

2. Questions and concerns about how and where decisions are going to be made.

- ❑ Do FCW / CCW meet together, or do they work separately + liaise afterwards?
CCW / FCW meet regularly. The Liaison Partnership and task and project groups will ensure that as many interests as possible are able to meet.
- ❑ What happens if opinion of Newborough people is in conflict with opinion in Brussels?
We will have to take account of the Special Area of Conservation's guidance on nature conservation interests but also the Aarhus convention in terms of consulting people. This means keeping site in good condition for nature conservation interest in cooperation with local people.
- ❑ Does the cSAC impose any legal restrictions on how the forest is managed? If so, what are these?
See the answer to the previous question
- ❑ The Newborough Redesign Process has been set "in the context of the SW Anglesey cSAC", yet the consultation does not allow the public to comment on the cSAC itself. Why are the public not allowed to determine the wider cSAC?
The Special Area of Conservation was recommended by CCW to WAG, on the basis of an evaluation of its scientific importance in 1995, and modified in 2000 along with about 85 other SACs throughout Wales covering nearly 600,000 hectares. Most of these were on existing Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Although there is no legal obligation to do so, CCW consulted owners and occupiers of the land and local authorities at that time. There was no requirement, mechanism (or resources) for wider consultation.
- ❑ Why do CCW keep avoiding giving a straight answer about the legal restrictions that the cSAC has on the forest design process?!
We are not trying to avoid giving a straight answer. The SAC imposes an obligation on the Government to put in place appropriate mechanisms to

manage the dune features of the SAC and to assess plans and projects for their possible impact on those features. It does not impose an answer or a particular way of doing it. There may be many ways to achieve an acceptable solution.

- Is SAC "favourable status" a specific requirement for every part of every SAC or is it a general status for a particular "SAC type", in other words that on average these SAC habitat types meet "favourable status"? "Favourable status" needs to be defined. At the moment it is unclear and confused.

There is much debate about the meaning of "favourable conservation status" in government too! The law states that the conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as "favourable" when: its natural range and areas, if covers within that range are stable or increasing; the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future and; the conservation status of its typical species is favourable. That in turn means that population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long term basis as a viable component of its natural habitat and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future and there is and will probably continue to be a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long term basis. So "Favourable Conservation Status" is a combination of ensuring that the habitat or species is in good condition, that the future management of the habitat or species is secure and that the factors or processes that determine its long term functioning are operational. Translating that into practical plans is not an easy process. However, dune ecologists lay much emphasis on ensuring that the underlying processes of this dynamic environment are functional so that it can respond to a changing coastal environment. That means considering the physics, chemistry, geology and hydrology of the environment as well as its biology! The condition of SAC features are assessed individually on each SAC.

- Need to clarify role of Newborough Environmental Forum vis-à-vis this process. *This long established group advises Forestry Commission Wales on day to day management issues. Although there are no plans for clear-felling, ongoing thinning must go on, until new plan is in place. Minutes of Newborough Environmental Forum meeting are available on the website and in the folders in the local post offices. We will keep local people updated on any day to day management work through notices posted locally before work commences.*

3. Questions and concerns about the liaison partnership

- Liaison partnership – can it mean individuals instead of organisations?
Yes, absolutely. It needs to cover the whole range of interests in the area, many of which are not covered by organisations. The first job of the Liaison Partnership will be to work out how best to do this, who else needs to be on it, and how to keep it to a manageable number. We envisage that lots of others could be involved in the Working and Task groups on particular issues, which will do most of the work.
- Has anyone been invited onto the liaison group already?
No one invited yet onto partnership. Some requests received – only acknowledged to date – including one from youth representative. Please include any suggestions on your feedback forms.
- Can there be a local referendum / democratic process?
The Partnership will need to consider the best way of ensuring that all voices are heard and understood, and where possible, how to get decisions that everyone can live with. However, the decision on the Forest Design Plan is the legal responsibility of FCW.
- There needs to be a mechanism for direct input of views, i.e. not via representatives.
We agree. Again, we hope the Partnership will consider things like this.
- Please convene a meeting between CCW, FCW and the Community Council to address the major issue of representation for the Liaison Partnership – soon!
We are very keen to gather views on how membership of the Liaison Partnership can cover the range of interests in the area. We will be inviting people to an initial meeting of possible members of the Liaison Partnership in January/February 2005. At that meeting issues of representation will be discussed in full. We would be very happy to discuss the proposals with the community council before that time.

4. Questions and concerns about access, the barrier, rights of way

- Share of money should have gone to village from barrier fees (went to marram grass project)
The Liaison Partnership may look at the barrier revenue situation.
- Barrier in wrong place.
Liaison Partnership needs to look at future of barrier. Carrying capacity of road issue would also need to be considered.
- Want all bridleways, especially old postal road, and other rights of way, clear. I.e. not blocked off.
Chris has investigated the problem of blocked bridleways. It has been unblocked for the last 18 months. However there are no statutory "bridleways" at Newborough. However, there are public rights of way and

Enclosure Act awards which must be kept open and we will ensure that this is done.

- ❑ Only 10km bridleway on Anglesey. Access to these must be maintained open. Legal requirement.
See answer above
- ❑ Need to look at parking charge agreement between FCW and Community Council
This can be discussed between the FCW and Community Council
- ❑ Disabled people want a sea view too!! From "their" picnic area there is no view of the sea whatsoever. Would it be possible to issue "short term" passes / keys to the residents' car park? Disabled holiday makers have said, to me, on many occasions that because they cannot walk to the sea (or their wheelchairs are unable to reach it) they are disappointed that they are "excluded".
This will need to be discussed and agreed with the Community Council via the liaison partnership
- ❑ Why are there no tickets issued at the "gate"?
It is a matter of cost

5. Questions and concerns about the woodland

- ❑ What scope is there for woodland to be established on the open Warren?
Some woodland is developing in landward areas of the dunes towards the Braint estuary. This issue could be re-examined in the future, but must not infringe on the conservation of valued dune habitat.
- ❑ How much of the woodland could be managed under continuous cover and how much is unsuitable?
In reality all of Newborough could be managed under a continuous cover system of some description, and will be an option for the liaison group to consider.
- ❑ With climate change and the ozone layer, what effect does cutting the trees or not cutting the trees have on the village of Newborough, Pen Lon, Dwyran and Malltraeth long term?
We will examine this when options have been defined, both for the local community and for the global carbon budget. Current indications are that we should be examining the carbon sequestration capacity of soils at least as much as the forests. The capacity of dunes and forest to withstand changes along the coastline due to climate change will also need to be addressed.
- ❑ Obviously the mature trees in the forest will have to be cut down for many years to come. Is there a sale for this timber now and in the foreseeable future?
There is a market and will be for the foreseeable future for pine from Newborough

6. Questions and concerns about squirrels

- ❑ Why will CCW not allow Menter Môn to release “Welsh” genetic types of red squirrel into Newborough? Can this position be reviewed?
The reintroduction programme at Newborough is intended to establish a genetically diverse red squirrel population. Research commissioned by Menter Môn recommends only limited input of genetic material sourced from the Pentraeth population following the establishment of a genetically diverse population at Newborough. There is also a need to demonstrate that removing animals from Pentraeth or other populations would not imperil that population and this has not been done. The position can be reviewed in the future as the situation develops.
- ❑ CCW support, and fund, grey squirrel control in Newborough Forest but they do not actively support or fund the reintroduction of native red squirrels. Why is this? Or has this position changed?
CCW considers that the primary need of the Anglesey red squirrel is for a grey squirrel-free environment and that its limited resources should be focussed on that target.
- ❑ Could we be kept updated as to the “Red Squirrel Project” in the forest, please? This is so important.
This is a matter for the Anglesey Red Squirrel Project to determine, but we hope that through the Liaison Partnership and more regular communications, this kind of information sharing will be much easier.

7. Other questions, concerns and comments

- ❑ Will the forest overall still have a financial target to reach – made up of what? Car park revenue?
FC does not calculate surplus income from individual forests
- ❑ Who owns the land?
Land is owned by WAG. The land was originally purchased by the state and vested in the office of the Secretary of State for Wales. These holdings are now under the jurisdiction of the Welsh Assembly Government. None of the forest is registered as Common Land, though there are long established rights and privileges, including enclosure act awards for access routes to the local community.
- ❑ Local knowledge crucial for wardening jobs in the forest – FCW or CCW. Knowing the people, not just the science.
We agree that knowing the people and the science is essential and we value the retention of local staff on the job.
- ❑ Jobs for local people must be considered central.
The objective of this project is designing and managing the Newborough Forest area to maximise its environmental, economic and social value. And specifically to consider the forest design plan. This must have regard to the Assembly and Ynys Môn economic strategies. Local people have a natural advantage in the local job market if they have the qualifications and knowledge.

- Perhaps FCW/CCW could liaise with the Newborough Community Council about having a notice board at the crossroads in the village?
We could do this. This may be an example of one of the actions that could be taken quickly, while the longer term development of options is underway.
- We have heard a lot of talk about Newborough Forest but as usual the CCW shy away from mentioning the Warren a.k.a. the farm?
We are always willing to talk about the Warren. However, this process is currently trying to achieve a Forest Design Plan and some focus on this issue is required if we are to achieve an output.
- Ragwort has really taken hold in some areas – especially on the beach near Llanddwyn – this should be got rid of if possible.
Ragwort is pulled annually from Newborough Forest although we may miss a few. Both pulling and chemical spot treatment is used in the open Warren.
- The people of Newborough are now getting rather fed up with all these drop in sessions and meetings, it is all very repetitive. By now you should have gathered all the information you need. We feel that too much attention is given to people living outside the village, and English people who have moved to the village to live. When acres of trees were clear felled no one ever complained!!!! Forestry needs to be cleared soon, not 2007, before it is over run with brambles and Cotoneaster. At the moment there are wild plants and flowers, fighting for space. If something is not done soon, some of them will be lost. Please could you plant more deciduous trees, forestry too monotonous now. The older inhabitants of Newborough would not mind if all the trees were felled, and the area returned to its natural and original state. You are the so called experts – so get on with it. You cannot please all of the people all the time. Trees, stumps and wires need to be cleared off the beach NOW, some of them have been there for years and no one seems to care. It is a disgrace.
We also wish to proceed, but also to gain as much agreement as possible from the local community and to benefit from the ideas and experience therein. The Cotoneaster may well be a problem species in the forest of the future if it is not controlled.
- Thank you for being so generous with the time that you assigned to discuss the recommendations in relation to the future of the Warren. I felt that the standard of display was striking, and to me useful to put the ideas forward. As is common knowledge, my family was not in favour of changing the look of the sand dunes – the unique naturalness of the sand dunes and the natural wildness of the sand dunes they walked over continually to and from Llanddwyn was a treasure and indeed, although they weren't the land owners, they considered the sand dunes as part of their heritage. But the forest appeared and the look of the sand dunes changed. To us the third generation from grandmother's time in Llanddwyn, the change was gradual, and although remembering the walk over the Allt Fawr to Llanddwyn (every week more often in the summer,) the forest became something that we had to "travel" through if we were to

reach "home". It was only recently I realised that I avoided the forest as much as possible – not intentionally – but as a result of ??????? in my soul. I must admit that the "road" is convenient but losing the "journey" has also been of great sadness. Walking through the forest wouldn't be the same at all! Here is the history , heritage and perhaps my quiet sympathy and the pain of my ancestors due to establishing the forest in the first place. Naturally the immigrants feel differently. They don't have the experience of "cleanliness and wildness that has been" and they are now trying to ensure what they see as their heritage" A big problem! It is necessary to move forward and clear the mess from the forest that has fallen near the coast – dangerous and untidy. Also you must all be wise and careful because of "the very special vineyard given under your care". You are managing one of the most beautiful places in Britain, and you can't afford to walk untidily and listen to individual voices full of misapprehension and selfishness. The effect of your planning will be seen in future years to come and we only hope that the generations, children of my children will admire their heritage and thank us for our devotion towards them, to ensure that things are "good" this time. Thank you all for your patience and courtesy. This has somehow softened the blow. Ironic isn't it!

Thank you for your patience in listening to our ideas and explaining yours. We hope that any changes in the future will not be traumatic but will enhance the sense of wildness that we all feel about this special place.
