

Ulva Meeting with Bell Ingram

	Moray Finch - General Manager of the Mull and Iona Community Trust
	Sandy Brunton – Director of the Mull and Iona Community Trust
Attendees	Colin Morrison - North West Mull Community Woodland Company Chairman
	John Addy - North West Mull Community Woodland Company Director
	Ran Morgan – Knight Frank
	Paul Nicholl – Bell Ingram
Date	05 June 2017, 4.30pm
Location	Bell Ingram, Oban

The conversation between all parties was open and convivial, if not that enlightening.

It was understood that the constituted community body would be either MICT or NWMCWC or a combination of both. They confirmed that there was strong intention within the community bodies to purchase Ulva, although this hadn't been discussed out with the immediate directors of the community bodies themselves. Both community bodies admitted that at this stage this was an emotional desire to purchase, rather than a decision based on any sound financial credentials.

RM asked what the desire to purchase Ulva was based on and the response from Sandy Brunton was that North West Mull is a particularly fragile area in terms of depopulation and they were keen to encourage repopulation. A community purchase of the Island of Ulva may help this. RM then asked what their business case was based on and how they foresaw sustainable development. Again, none of them had appeared to have thought this through and the idea of resurrecting the oyster farm was muted.

Colin Morrison asked how far the intended sale had progressed. RM said that all the marketing was prepared and that the sale was already in the private market and it was anticipated that an open market launch would occur within the next month. The community bodies would far prefer a private negotiated purchase rather than going through the formal registering process.

PN and RM were then pressed to give a price which we declined but intimated that this might be available in the coming fortnight.

Colin Morrison asked to see the estate accounts. RM explained that this really wasn't appropriate because their budget should be based on what they plan to do with the island in the future not looking in the rear view mirror so to speak. They clearly have no grasp at all as to what it would cost to run the island and PN volunteered that there is current shortfall of about £100,000 which surprised them.

PN and RM stressed that JH wished to sell the island for the highest possible price and did not wish to exclude anyone from the sale. We stressed that JH was happy to continue a dialogue with the community but that the dialogue would be running alongside a dialogue with other private individuals. Again, PN and RM were pressed for the accounts and whilst we promised nothing, we did offer to assist to an extent with basic costs and current income.

The community bodies were grateful to have been given a month's notice before open marketing and to be able to report back to their governing bodies to discuss what to do next: how to prepare for a purchase, prepare a business case and think about funding. It was clear to PN and RM that none of this thus far had taken place. RM and PM said that they were happy to keep an open dialogue with them and encourage them to do the same.

The meeting finished at 5.30pm.