

HERE WE ARE, CAIRNDOW

HIE funded acquisition of Ballure Wood (September 2014)



WHAT

Grant towards purchase of Ballure Wood for community benefit

HOW HIE HELPED

Acquisition funding: £125,000

- Contributed to the total costs of acquisition and associated legal and business planning costs.

Officer support:

- To complete the acquisition in a compressed timescale as the property was on the open market.
- To assist the client in presenting a robust business case.

OUTCOME

The community was empowered to take ownership of the local woodland, expanding their existing woodfuel enterprise and providing an opportunity for further development of a house site included in the area purchased.



BACKGROUND

Here We Are is based in Cairndow, Argyll and delivers a range of community development projects in the area. It acts as an umbrella organisation with various income generating subsidiaries relating to tourism, exhibitions and renewable energy which contribute to the delivery of local economic and social benefit.

They had been seeking an opportunity to acquire woodland in the area to expand their successful woodfuel enterprise and reduce operating costs through owning their own timber resource. The Ballure Wood came on the market, comprising 37ha of woodland and a housing plot with planning permission, and Here We Are began a rapid, high-level assessment of the viability of taking on ownership.

PROJECT DETAILS

Acquisition of the woodland provides Here We Are with their own local, sustainable source of timber to increase the efficiency of the woodfuel business by reducing their expenditure on buying in timber. There is a growing market demand for woodchip which makes this a viable prospect for the group and in time may also support the employment of one FTE post. Owning the woodland will also allow them to generate social impacts by providing training and volunteering opportunities and improving public access to the woods.

Part of the woodland will be used to create an affordable house plot, helping to meet local demand. This represents an additional income generating activity, with the proceeds to be re-invested in the development and management of the wood.

Following the acquisition of Ballure Wood in October 2014, Here We Are continued to work on plans for development of the woodland and the affordable house plot. This included more detailed business planning to ensure that the projects are taken forward in a sustainable and robust way.

HIE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT

We worked intensively with Here We Are to enable them to carry out a high level appraisal of the business opportunity of the woodland, and subsequently to submit an offer to purchase the woodland. HIE had previously contributed to the costs of the woodland valuation. We also provided assistance in developing the brief for a full business plan to be carried out soon after taking on ownership and referred the group to the Scottish Government's Strengthening Communities Programme for the revenue funding.

OUTCOMES

HIE support helped to:

- Empower the local community to take on ownership of the local woodland for their own benefit.
- Increase the resilience of the community through generating additional income, employment and housing opportunities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Contact

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