



[www.lowcarboncairngorms.org](http://www.lowcarboncairngorms.org)



---

## **Setting up and running a successful community woodfuel enterprise**

**Saturday May 1<sup>st</sup> 2010**

**Laggan Forest Trust, Laggan, by Newtonmore**

**Venue** – Pony tacking shed, Wolftrax mountain bike centre, Laggan, by Newtonmore

### ***The Clim-ATIC project***

The EU funded Clim-ATIC project ([www.clim-atic.org](http://www.clim-atic.org)) is supporting communities across Northern Europe to undertake practical adaptation activities in response to projected impacts of climate change. The project is carrying out a wide range of activities across a number of themes including tourism, energy, flooding and transport. It is working with the Cairngorms National Park Authority to implement a number of adaptation projects in the Park, one of which is a series of wood fuel training, promotional and awareness-raising events, and the setting up of a community log supply chain. Increasing the capacity of a region or a community to effectively use locally sourced renewable fuels, such as wood, is a smart adaptation when faced with possible future energy distribution and supply vulnerabilities.

The project will work alongside other ongoing woodfuel initiatives taking place in the Cairngorms National Park which will ensure a legacy of ongoing support and advice after the Clim-ATIC project is finished. In addition the Clim-ATIC project activities will be an integrated part of the Cairngorms National Park Woodfuel Action Plan, which will ensure complementarity with other woodfuel-related activities in the region.

Project contact: Clive Bowman, [clive.bowman@perth.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:clive.bowman@perth.uhi.ac.uk)

Low Carbon Cairngorms contact: Fiona Chalmers, Cairngorms National Park Authority  
[fionachalmers@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:fionachalmers@cairngorms.co.uk)

*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

---

## I. Programme

9.30 – 10.00	Tea, coffee & registration
10.00 – 10.05	Welcome and housekeeping – Laggan Forest Trust
10.05 – 10.20	Introduction to community woodfuel enterprises – Jake Willis
10.20 – 10.40	How to get into the woodfuel market - Doreen McIntyre
10.40 – 11.00	Woodfuel enterprise scenarios and options – Grant Holroyd
11.00 – 11.20	Break out session – group working led by speakers/facilitators
11.20 – 11.40	Tea & coffee break
11.40 – 12.00	Processing and burning technologies for logs, chip and pellets – Jake Willis
12.00 – 12.20	Grants, support and advice for getting set up – Amanda Calvert
12.20 – 12.40	Break out session – group working led by speakers/facilitators
12.40 – 13.30	Lunch – <u>Wood-fired mobile pizza oven!</u>
13.30 – 15.00	Forest management and woodfuel processing site visit, Strathmashie Forest
15.00 – 15.20	Tea & Coffee
15.20 – 16.00	Getting started workshop: resource assessment, business planning, market research...
16.00	Depart



*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

---

## 2. Results of group discussions

### 2.1. Funding, advice and training

- Social enterprise funding available through FirstPort and social enterprise training through the Social Enterprise Academy, e.g. free courses on getting set up.
- How to make contact with firewood producers? Highland Birchwoods, Community Woodlands Association and several websites in Amanda's presentation have contacts.

### 2.2. Sourcing and processing

- Speak to local woodland owners, Forestry Commission Scotland, buy it as a by-product of bigger harvesting operations. Source from local community woodlands. Approach tree surgeons to off-load 'waste wood'.
- Issue of local politics affecting sourcing of wood.
- On the island of Raasay, Forestry Commission Scotland donated 300m<sup>3</sup> of unsaleable small roundwood to the community to support a community enterprise.
- It is important to have chainsaw training to be able to cross-cut logs and get insurance.
- Issue of local scavengers not paying for their wood.
- In urban areas, landfill tax for wood disposal makes it more economic for councils and tree surgeons to give it away to a firewood processor.
- Stirling Council sold their firewood processor because, like John Muir Trust on Skye, they found it takes up a lot of staff time.
- Firewood processing can create jobs.
- Borders Council is looking at ways of using woodlands more productively.
- Forestry Commission in Scotland, England and Wales is looking at Short Rotation Forestry (different from Short Rotation Coppice), examining the environmental impact e.g. birch grown on a 20-yr cycle or as a nurse crop for timber species.
- Potential increased use of farm woodlands for woodfuel.
- Consider alder, oak, gean, ash.
- Potential for coppicing.
- Important to process and season as much as possible before delivering to the customer.
- Is there scope for community groups to share processing machinery through the CWA?

### 2.3. Marketing, pricing, profitability

- Are suppliers measuring what they sell? Do you know how to measure? Need to be clear about what we are using as our measure and units.
- One group estimated that solid cubic metre (i.e. 100% wood) converts to 1.7-1.9 cubic metres loose in a trailer (i.e. 40-50% of the space is occupied by air). In a stack of softwood roundwood logs, this figure is 1.3-1.4 cubic metres (i.e. about 30% of the space is occupied by air).
- Suppliers are often inconsistent, you get a mixture which can be quite wet.
- Well dried hardwood is best.
- Builders bags would be a good start (note – must be vented if wood is to spend any time in the bag). Various options involving vented bags or tatty boxes.
- Is there a market for wet/green logs?
- Margins are clearly small in the firewood log industry.
- Is working with hardwoods profitable? It is maybe 3x more labour intensive due to harvesting and extraction, and uneven nature of the material for feeding through processors.
- Woodchip markets at the community scale face a chicken-and-egg dilemma: they require one or two medium-to-large installations before investment in woodchipping equipment is viable for a local contractor, but businesses and estate houses will not invest without a tried and tested supply chain.
- Issue of customers not understanding what they are getting.



*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

### 3. List of participants

	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	Jane Begg	Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council
2	Pauline Cropper	Bridge of Cally
3	Pat Lee	Alyth
4	Catriona Ross	Muir of Ord
5	David Westgarth	Raasay House Community Company
6	Donald McPhillimy	Wooplaw Community Woodland
7	Graham Hodgson	Alloa
8	Henry Ross	Dall Community Association
9	Doreen Ross	Dall Community Association
10	David McGown	The Auchencairn Initiative
11	Jenny Sowter	The Auchencairn Initiative
12	Jennifer Stephenson	Kingsburgh Forest Trust
13	Neal Stephenson	Kingsburgh Forest Trust
14	Mick Read	Canonbie
15	Chris Marsh	Sleat Community Trust
16	Mike Wilson	Avoch
17	Drew Love-Jones	Broadford
18	Douglas Brown	Perth
19	Donnie MacLeod	Raasay House Community Company
20	Tony Pinner	Forres
21	Berni Jones	Kingussie
22	Viv	Laggan Forest Trust
23	Jim	Laggan Forest Trust
24	Jake Willis	Community Woodlands Association
25	Grant Holroyd	Knoydart Forest Trust
26	Amanda Calvert	Highland Birchwoods & Laggan Forest Trust
27	Doreen McIntyre	Perthshire
28	Fiona Chalmers	Cairngorms National Park Authority
29	Jim Watt	Caledonian Forestry Services, Auchterarder
30	Dougie Beattie	Farm Forestry Equipment, Ardersier

Note: CWA members in green

*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

#### 4. Feedback

	CWA	Transition towns	LFT	Low carbon Cairngorms	JMT	HIE-CLU
How did you hear about this event	6	1	3	3	1	1

	V Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	V Good
Location	0	0	2	12	4
Organisation	0	0	0	10	8
Catering	0	0	1	7	10
Facilities	0	0	2	13	3

Did the event deliver your expectations	Yes	Partly	No
	15	2	0

#### How could this be rectified

Time spent on topics, more time on case studies would have been beneficial	1
Tended to be 'one size fits all' - panel discussion to hear participants' situations	1

#### Why did you take part / what benefits did you gain

New producer so event was ideal for networking	7
Learn more about firewood sector	3
In depth understanding of implications of getting involved in firewood supply	3
Thinking about starting a local woodfuel initiative	9
Investigate business potential for a community woodland initiative	1
Meeting people/consultants who have practical experience and can help	1
Awareness of options, grants, technologies	2
Realistic price for logs and cost of time & labour	2
Inspired by Hill Holt Wood to develop projects in Stirling-Clacks woodlands	1
Clarification on RHI	1
Increased confidence to deal with customer objections to a necessary price increase	1
Allow me to extend the product range	1
Makes you realise you're not alone	1
Developing business plan for community woodland buy-out through NFLS	1
Enthusiasm and inspiration	1
Understanding of the marketplace	1

*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

<b>What will you do with the experience/skills gained</b>	3
Business development / business plan	2
Processing firewood for own use	1
Chop more wood	4
Pass info onto woodland group/comm council	1
Undertake education and awareness-raising about woodfuel	1
Develop community woodland projects	1
Need to make contact with Alloa-based people to set up enterprise	1
Press Council to support wood stoves & boilers in Council houses	

**Would you recommend such an event to others**

Yes	No
11	0

<b>If yes, why do feel it would be beneficial</b>	3
Networking	1
Seeing first hand how it works	1
Can't have too much information	1
Better decision making at community level	2
Great source of info and expertise	1
Good practical starting point	1
Up-to-date info on technologies	1

**If no, what reasons would you give**

<b>What should Clim-atic, CNPA and the CWA do next in relation to</b>	3
Site visits	1
Experts to visit us to help us progress our project	1
Update attendees on any businesses developed following these events	1
More info on sustainable forest management	2
Continue to run similar events	1
Support community woodland groups	1
More case studies on enterprises, machine reviews, recommendations	1
Explore community woodland groups sharing robust equipment	1
Address the issue of woodstoves vs open fires	

*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*

<b>Other comments</b>	1
Most informative - thanks	1
Appreciate your efforts in putting this on	1
Thank you	1
Excellent day - very useful	1
A very useful day	1



*This event was funded by the Clim-Atic Project, the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Laggan Forest Trust, the Robertson Trust, the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Community Woodlands Association.*