

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 05 December 2019 16:18  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Highlandman's wood, Rhu, Argyll and Bute

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[REDACTED]  
**Senior Operations Manager**  
Scottish Forestry  
Perth & Argyll Conservancy  
Upper Battleby | Redgorton | Perth | PH1 3EN  
**Office:** [REDACTED]  
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*Please note I work Monday to Thursday*

[Website: forestry.gov.scot](http://forestry.gov.scot)  
[Twitter: @scotforestry](https://twitter.com/scotforestry)



Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation.

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 11 September 2019 18:50  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestry.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: Highlandman's wood, Rhu, Argyll and Bute

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your response and clarifying the appropriate channels that these concerns should be addressed by.

I understand that as Scottish Forestry do not employ a dedicated archaeologist it is the responsibility of the Woodland Manager for the area, in this case [REDACTED] who is copied in, to address them.

Rhu and Shandon Community Council will await his response.

Thank you for your assistance.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Tel. [REDACTED]  
Mobile [REDACTED]

On 11 Sep 2019, at 15:48, <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
<[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

I work for [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) – we are the Scottish Government agency responsible for managing Scotland’s national forests and land.

It would not be appropriate for me to offer advice in regard to private sector forestry operations, or comment upon grants and regulatory casework managed by [Scottish Forestry](#).

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | **Archaeologist**

Forestry and Land Scotland, Head Office, 1 Highlander Way, Inverness, IV2 7GB  
t: [REDACTED] | m: [REDACTED] | e: [REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot

<image001.png>

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 09 September 2019 11:47  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestryandland.gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Highlandman's wood, Rhu, Argyll and Bute

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Sun, 8 Sep 2019 at 23:09  
**Subject:** Highlandman's wood, Rhu, Argyll and Bute

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestry.gsi.gov.uk>  
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@forestry.gov.scot>

Dear [REDACTED]

**Highlandman's Wood, Rhu – damage to historic environment assets.**

I write wearing my Rhu and Shandon Community Councillor hat, I am tasked by the CC as the main monitor and liaison person for the felling of Torr and Highlandman's Wood above Rhu, which is managed by Scottish Woodlands.

It has been a painful process all round for the community and the CC, largely centred on the unsuitability of the roads through the village for timber lorries, compounded by the lack of community engagement or regard for local concerns.

I attach three documents. The scoping report for the felling operation by Scottish Woodlands and Constraints and Opportunities map indicating the approach to the historic environment and the letter sent by the CC, when we were first notified about the felling, identifying issues we felt would need to be addressed.

The former two documents are obviously a tick box exercise saying all the right things about how the operation would be conducted – we wish the pertinent guidelines were being adhered to. The CC letter was followed by a meeting with [REDACTED] of Scottish Woodlands in September 2017 which concluded with a promised community information and consultation event to take place in Spring 2018. It never happened. The road construction commenced in March 2018 and within a week we had to ask for silt traps to be installed as the burn through the village was thick with silt and for lorry movements to avoid school bus times (we have no pavements at the bus stop areas). This has sadly turned out to be pretty indicative of the whole operation and the blocked and flooding burns over-topping their banks, backed-up culverts and absence of silt traps has now been reported directly to SEPA.

However, respect for the historic environment is a matter we hope you will be able to advise Scottish Woodlands on. In the CC letter of March 2017 we advised them that Highlandman's Road, a Core Path, is of local historical interest. We also advised them about the 1732 designed landscape and that banks and walls associated with it should be respected. Both have been damaged and Scottish Woodlands are dismissive of the notification and advise they do not intend to undertake any repairs.

I attach one photograph, this is the boundary of the 1732 Barony of Malligs, between Highlandman's and Drumfad Woods on the marked up OS map in the attached letter. It really does not matter how old the drystone wall is, smashing through walls with heavy machinery without making good the damaged ends is not good practice. Likewise the drystone wall that runs alongside Highlandman's Road (drove and coffin road) where the timber is loaded on to the lorries has had several logs dropped on it and is damaged. It was not in perfect condition before the timber operations started but we think the forestry operators should repair the new damage they have caused.

Rhu and Shandon CC would be grateful if you could advise Scottish Woodlands what the UK Forestry Standard 2017 advice and guidelines cited below actually mean in practice. The CC have made every effort to engage with and represent the concerns of the residents we are elected to represent to Scottish Woodlands but feel we are continually rebuffed with a patronising attitude that the public know nothing and they are the experts. It is clear to the CC that Scottish Forestry needs to advise Scottish Woodlands directly as to their responsibilities and implementing standard guidelines and codes of good practice.

They have consistently ignored the input of the CC and local residents and we would be grateful if Scottish Forestry could take steps to ensure an improvement in their practice overall and if you could advise them directly that it would be appropriate for them to repair the damaged walls and historic paths.

I have copied Tom Davies in as we understand he is the overall operations manager. He is aware of residents' concerns and has also been copied in to correspondence by our Councillor who asked Scottish Woodlands on 13 August 2019 to halt the timber operations until the road transport issues (identified as dangerous by Police Scotland) have been resolved. This copy is just so he knows historic environment and water course protection issues are also not up to the standards we expect based on Forestry Scotland's published policies and guidelines.

Kind regards

██████████

██████████

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tel [Redacted]

Mobile [Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] [mailto:[Redacted]]  
**Sent:** 06 May 2019 15:48  
**To:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]@scottishwoodlands.co.uk>; [Redacted]  
<[Redacted]>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]>  
**Cc:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]>  
<convener@rhuandshandoncommunity.org>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Highlandman's wood

Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your response and my apologies for taking a while to get back to you.

We note your comments in general.

We are disappointed to hear that there are no plans to reinstate the drystone walls. Highlandman's Road is a drove road and coffin road of some antiquity. It crosses up to the designed Boucher landscape (1732) at the sign posted path to Glen Fruin that is currently inaccessible. The drystone wall that has been smashed down is evidence of late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape improvement and management and close to the medieval boundary of the Ardenconnel and Mallig estates which lies at the east side of the felling area. I have not yet inspected that for damage. You were advised of these historic features of cultural value, and asked to avoid and protect them, in the Community Council's initial response letter of 22 March 2017. It is getting rather tedious to have to keep bringing matters to your attention that the CC advised you of before you even started the felling operation.

We don't think the felling contractors should be 'going out of their way' to avoid and protect the veteran Beech trees, it should be standard good practice.

Regarding how forestry operations should be undertaken with regard to the historic environment I refer you to the UK Forestry Standard (2017) advice and guidelines and have pasted in a few extracts below. There are also a number of useful FCS documents on

managing forestry and the historic environment you may wish to review.  
<https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/historic-environment>

If you require further advice on respecting and protecting the historic environment I am sure the FCS Archaeologist [REDACTED] would be pleased to advise you.

## **UK Forestry Standard 2017**

### **6.3 Historic Environment pages 79 to 95**

It is important that all significant heritage features, and not just designated ones, are protected and that consideration is given to the preservation and enhancement of cultural and historic landscapes.

#### Historic landscape character

1 Forests should be designed and managed to take account of the historical character and cultural values of the landscape.

#### Historic features

The primary responsibility for land managers in relation to historic features is to ensure they are conserved and not accidentally or unknowingly damaged. This will involve an appropriate evaluation of the site, and an assessment of features of importance – whether scheduled or not.....Historic features are not confined to archaeological remains and include a range of features of local significance, for example earth banks and veteran trees.

#### UKFS Guidelines on Historic environment

##### Evidence of the historic environment

7 Include long-established boundaries, banks and veteran trees as historic environment features to be protected.

24 Where operations are a necessity near vulnerable historical features, take precautions to avoid damage and take particular care with felling and extraction.

You make no reference to the information leaflet for local residents. The CC asked for this in March 2017, over two years ago, and it was agreed at our meeting on 23 January that you would prepare a leaflet. I attach the notes we sent you on 25 January 2019 outlining the kind of information we would like to see in the leaflet.

Overall, from a community perspective, the management and delivery of this felling operation is not as good as we think it should be. It took a great deal of effort to get the TTMP school exclusion times amended and whilst the community is pleased that the revised times are being adhered to the whole business has resulted, the CC are advised, in complaints to the local government ombudsman from several residents. It gives me no pleasure to report that as the CC worked hard to try and diffuse and improve matters. At the commencement of the operations the CC had to complain about the lack of silt traps and silt entering the watercourses and now historic environment features are being damaged without any regard to their significance and by general carelessness. The timber extraction team (Scottish Woodlands, ATG, Coille and Ridings) have advised us on several occasions that you are all very experienced and are working to the highest professional standards but here I am again as the appointed CC monitor having to point out yet another operational failing.

We look forward to your revised response with regard to reinstatement and repair of the drystone walls and historic paths and delivery of the information leaflet to be delivered to every resident in Rhu.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

For Rhu and Shandon Community Council

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tel [Redacted]

Mobile [Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] [mailto:[Redacted]@scottishwoodlands.co.uk]

**Sent:** 16 April 2019 14:54

**To:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]>; [Redacted]

<[Redacted]>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]>

**Cc:** [Redacted] <[Redacted]>; [Redacted] <convener@rhuandshandoncommunity.org>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]>

**Subject:** RE: Highlandman's wood

Good afternoon [Redacted]

Thanks for your email with regards the ongoing harvesting at Highlandman, while I appreciate the comments on the 'in wood' operations, and I am happy for you and any others to contact me with questions, comments etc. regarding this, we are in the middle of the harvesting work and as such tracks may be closed from time to time and walkers will need to

divert from time to time. Following completion the harvesting brash will be removed and at that point we will review the condition of the path and repair if required.

On signage, we are having an issue with this and as you mention the signs were in the burn, as members of the public are continually removing and/or breaking these and the contractors and having to replace these every week. I realise there are individuals who will never be happy these operations are underway and feel they can remove these signs however they are there for health and safety reasons. The main issue being that it won't be the person who removes them that may get hurt, it's the next person. Not sure what can be done about this but I am considering a camera trap at points to find the culprit as it is continual.

I note your comment on the harvesting and having carried out a number of these operations over the years I have come across contractors who have a disregard for standing trees, archaeology etc. and will pay little attention to these while undergoing their work. I am happy however that this is not the case on site and the contractor has gone out of his way to ensure the protection of trees, such as the beech standing trees, and I can assure you we do keep an eye on these to ensure any damage is kept to a minimum. There is however no plan to reinstate features, such as the dykes, on completion.

In terms of the restocking, we expect harvesting to be complete at some point in the summer with restocking works being carried out from September onwards with a view to complete by April 2020 at the latest. The site will take time to 'green up' again but as this is a commercial forest, this is part and parcel of the rotation, and it will not take long for the trees to come back up again.

I hope this covers your point raised below but do let me know if you have further questions.

Kind regards,

██████████

**From:** ██████████ <██████████>  
**Sent:** 14 April 2019 22:41  
**To:** ██████████ <██████████@scottishwoodlands.co.uk>; ██████████  
<██████████>; ██████████ <██████████>  
**Cc:** ██████████ <██████████>; ██████████  
<convener@rhuandshandoncommunity.org>; ██████████ <██████████>  
**Subject:** Highlandman's wood



Dear All

Further to my message of earlier today I have been for a walk up the hill. I note the electricity warning poles have been reinstated already. The nice new signs however are now dumped in the Ardencaple burn at the top of the hill.

I walked along to the end of the track to follow the sign posted route to Glen Fruin and found this path has been obliterated and is covered in brash. Is this going to be reinstated and if so when?

As this route is now unusable I took the path on the W side of the wall up through the ancient beech trees. This path has been blocked in two places by fallen conifers, presumably fallen because they now have no shelter as the rest of the forest has been felled. Please could this be remedied. I was also disappointed to see the drystone wall was smashed through by heavy plant rather than being taken down and a proper access point inserted. It is good historic environment practice to retain drystone walls and the appropriate thing is to rebuild the broken ends to create a proper terminus and ensure they do not continue to collapse. I hope this work will be undertaken.

We would also be pleased to know how you propose to manage the felling of the pockets of commercial forestry that are adjacent to the ancient beech trees and regenerating area of native species. I noted that one conifer has been felled very close to the southermost of the ancient beech trees. These ancient trees and the more recently planted natives are precious and we trust great care will be taken to ensure the commercial felling does not damage them.

Finally please could you update us on the replanting proposals? We expressed concern at being left with a wasteland of brash and stumps, which is indeed what we have at the moment. [REDACTED] advised before the work started that the area would be replanted immediately after the felling, can you provide a timetable for this please.

Many thanks

Regards

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tel [Redacted]

Mobile [Redacted]

[Redacted] | Senior Forest Manager

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