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| Picture 139  Slate consultation 3rd and 4th September 2021 | Slate Q&A  A record of the questions put by some concerned Luing homeowners at the Small Slate Extraction consultation Saturday 4th September 2021 with answers in as much detail is available from the Isle of Luing Community Trust |

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## EXTRACTION

It is our understanding that contractors will be used to extract the slate.

***Proposal is to use contractors for initial work to remove the material on top of the stone we need to gain access to. This requires specialist experience and accreditation. The working of the extracted blocks and the craft work to make roofing slate would be undertaken by the two crafters employed by the Trust.***

* How often will extraction be performed?

***It is proposed in our feasibility study to be up to four times a year, once the initial preparation work to make the quarry face safe has been completed. Our aim is to do three of these during the low season. This level of operations is estimated to be sufficient to generate 210 tonnes of roofing slate per year and there are no plans to expand beyond that level.***

* What type of equipment will be used? Will the ferry be able to bring this over?

***Initial preparation may require large equipment which would be barged if required. This would a one-time activity during low season/winter months.***

***For normal operations a normal sized excavator, a lifting machine such as a fork lift/loader and possibly two small flatbeds or dump trucks. All suitable for the small scale of the proposed operations and our ferry.***

* What mechanism of extraction will be undertaken; blasting, laser, other?

***Some blasting, drilling and diamond wire saw cutting. This will be periodic (see previous answer) and would deliver a large block of stone sufficient to supply the workshop for many weeks of slate manufacture. The movement of material to the workshop and spoil to the beach will be by tipper trailer and tractor.***

* Will this increase the traffic going through the village?

***Traffic would route along the shore and out along the main road past number 10 but there would be no quarry traffic through any other parts of the village. With one or two vehicle movements a week (4 tonnes) of finished slates, using suitable vehicle and quarry staff possibly driving to work, there would be a minimal increase in traffic. For perspective the bin lorry runs this route 43 times a year and the coal delivery truck 26 time a year. A tractor/trailer method or a small flatbed are envisaged. The number and type of journeys would also a condition by planning permission and controlled by IoLCT to ensure compliance. Transit by sea is also being investigated. There will hopefully be welcomed increased traffic from tourists and visitors as they travel to the island to see the slate being made or come for craft training, work experience, geological tourism or educational reasons. This would help increase revenue for the shop, the Atlantic Islands centre and those operating rental properties/caravans/lodges.***

## NOISE

* Will the equipment used for slate extraction be high precision with high frequency noise?

***Equipment used outside the building will include an excavator, flatbed transport, drill and/or hydraulic splitter. Noise will be reduced as much as possible by use of 5m high earth bunds (walls) and white noise emitters on vehicles. Inside the workshop it is planned to use a guillotine and saw. Most preparation of roofing slate will be by hand and the building will be insulated for heat, sound and with dust filtration to protect crafters and ensure dust does not leave the building.***

* What are the anticipated noise levels and ground-borne vibration?

***These questions will be answered in the next set of reports including a geotechnical survey. They are also governed by the planning process and would be answered in detail before an application could be submitted.***

* How will the noise levels be monitored during the slate extraction?

***Noise levels would be measured and monitored using industry standard methods/recommendations from Environmental Health. We plan to measure current noise levels over a period to deliver a baseline level***

* Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that regulations regarding noise are adhered to; the Trust, the HES, the contractors?

***Conditions imposed through planning permission will be enforced by Env Health in A&B Council. The employees of the Trust (direct and contracted) are responsible and the Trust Board are accountable for compliance.***

* What will be the hours of daily activity within the quarry?

***Proposal is 9 to 5 Mon – Fri although that would be subject to planning permission. The IoLCT as owner would have overall control of operational times within prescribed limits.***

## POLLUTION

Silica particles are a component of slate. Silica in dust circulating in air is a known cause of lung complaints, silicosis, asthma, COPD etc. in quarry workers and also has an impact on air quality and health for those living nearby.

* How would the safety of this for local inhabitant be assessed and tested **before** work commenced?

***The safety of local inhabitants is paramount in our proposals. We intend to set up dust monitors to measure the current levels of dust generated by wind and by road traffic as a baseline. The levels of dust from a quarry operation would be set and strictly controlled by regulations and planning requirements. Please see next question.***

* What are the anticipated levels of dust pollution that slate extraction will cause?

***This will be answered in detail in any planning application and levels are controlled by regulations. A guide to regulations can be found here*** [https://www.gov.scot/publications/blasting-surface-mineral/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/blasting-surface-mineral/%2520)

* What are the anticipated levels of dust pollution that slate dressing will cause?

***Slate dressing would take place indoors and be carried out using filtered extraction so no dust leaves the building. Inside the building Operatives would wear protective headgear such as ‘airstream’ helmets to protect from exposure to dust.***

* What are the plans to improve the track to the quarry (running north from Scaraben) to reduce dust pollution?

***There is an existing issue with dust pollution on the untreated track and we include a plan to tarmac the road access to the quarry and a parking/turning area.***

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Quarries Regulations 1999 states:

Quarrying remains one of the most dangerous industries to work in, since 2000 over 3500 workers have suffered an injury reportable to HSE, 31 of those being fatal.

No one can work in a quarry unless they are competent (or they are under the supervision of a competent person), using a definition based on knowledge, experience, training and other qualities related to the job they are to do.

The Quarry Regulations also require the operator to demonstrate this competence. The regulations apply not only to the quarry site but also to anyone in the management structure for that site.

* As the re-opening of the quarry appears to be a collaboration of different parties, who has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the strict Health and Safety procedures are adhered to.

***The operation of the quarry would be the responsibility of the Trust. The Trust would have to establish an operating model that achieved its legal and statutory obligations.***

* As the Trust is currently run by volunteer directors, what steps will be taken to ensure that the correct management structure remains in place when new directors take office.

***There are key undertakings around accountability of directors of a Trust and we will need a robust succession plan to ensure safe and successful long-term continuity.***

* What measures would be taken to protect individuals using roads in and around quarry access?

***There is only one access road to the quarry and same safety precautions apply as they do now for bin lorry, coal lorry, delivery vehicles and tourist vehicles. Access to quarry area itself would be controlled as per regulations. A detailed Safety Plan would be developed as part of the more detailed business case.***

* What will be the mechanism for quarry workers alerting the site managers to any imminent health and safety issues arising daily; lack of mobile signal, managers or directors not always contactable etc?

***That is defined in the H&S regulations and a compliant process would be established and operated.***

* If blasting is to take place, how will the explosives be transported to the site? The roads to the ferry are very narrow as are the island roads. Does the ferry have to have a licence or special measures to transport explosives?

***Transport of explosives would only be undertaken by accredited people in a safe manner following all the regulations for transporting dangerous goods. Just as when transporting fuel by tankers onto the island an operator must have the requisite licences, Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) etc. This would be answered in more detail before any planning application.***

## LAND MOVEMENT

There was a significant landfall just south of the quarry around 4 years ago. Just to the north of the quarry there was a rockfall 18 months ago which completely blocked the path. In addition, the structure within the quarry continues to fall regularly, easily seen by those of us who walk along the shore regularly.

* The cliff above No’s 28, 29, 31, 32 and 33 Cullipool Village has many cracks in it, which are easily seen by the naked eye from ground level. What measures will be put in place to ensure that slate extraction will not have an impact on this already unstable cliff?
* The landfall from 4 years ago to the south of the quarry is very finely balanced. Stones regularly slide down the hillside and it is probably only a matter of time before a further large landslide takes place. What are the plans to make this safe prior to quarrying?

***No quarrying would commence until the site was safe to operate. Making the site safe would be part of the capital investment needed prior to operation. In addition, we have undertaken to carry out a geotechnical survey from the area adjacent to 28, 29, 31, 32 and 33 Cullipool all the way round to the shore line cliffs should the proposal progress to the point where this is appropriate.***

* Visitors to the island are regularly seen climbing the waste piles adjacent to the quarry or walking within the quarry itself. Are there plans to make the site safe irrespective of whether the community supports the re-opening of the quarry?

***If the Trust does not progress with the slate enterprise, then the issue of making the quarry safe can be explored by the community with the landowner.***

***Geo-tourism is of growing interest. Laroch Quarry at Ballachulish has been made safe, with pathways and interpretation panels.***

## TRAFFIC

We understand that the extraction of slate will result in one lorry load a week being brought through the village.

* What size of vehicle will be used to move the slate?

***To be confirmed but would be subject to conditions imposed by Roads Authority however we are planning on four tonnes each journey.***

* Will additional vehicles be required to bring equipment to the ferry for extraction, lifting etc?

***All proposed vehicles could travel on the ferry. If anything larger was required it would be barged directly to the quarry by sea.***

* What type of vehicles are being proposed; electric/environmentally friendly?

***In line with the Trust aim for net zero the most environmentally friendly solution would be found, however, that is some time away and we would look at the technology available then.***

## PROJECT

It is our understanding that HES approached the Trust with a view to using Luing slate on historic buildings. Previous plans for slate extraction or breeze block building have been deemed not viable on financial grounds.

* Is there a business plan available for the project?

***A Feasibility study has been done. A detailed business plan has to be developed as next stage subject to further technical reports and environmental guidance.***

* How much would need to be spent to prove that the slate is of sufficient quality to meet the needs of HES?

***We don’t know. The test extraction could be as simple as core drills. This would not impact the existing quarry.***

* If the slate is not viable, how much would need to be spent to leave the quarry in a safe condition that would not put lives or homes at risk.

***There is no existing plan to make the redundant quarry safe and that would be the remit of the landowner.***

* If the slate proves to be of good quality, how long is the anticipated lifespan of the quarrying.

***The planning assumption is 20 – 50 years.***

* How many jobs will this project create?

***Initially two crafters with additional post after 18 months. In addition, a project manager and admin assistant role giving a total of five.***

What are the plans for any income generated from the quarry? How will this benefit the house owners/residents of Cullipool village?

***The income would be available for IoLCT to use in line with their charitable objectives. The plan assumes that island property owners could access products for maintenance and repair at reduced cost. In addition, the road, shoreline and quarry environment could be enhanced using material and funding from the enterprise. There is an opportunity to investigate ideas such as low carbon district heating for the villages, craft and art enterprises, community transport and expanded tourism. With a reliable revenue stream, we could fund (on an ongoing basis) initiatives that have the support of the community without relying on the uncertainty of grant applications.***

* Is the £100k revenue stream quoted profit after paying for use of the land, contractors, salaries, training, qualifications etc.

***Yes, and of course, this would be subject to more detailed business planning***

## IMPACT

The re-opening of the quarry will, of course, have an impact on the residents of Cullipool village. In particular:

* The track along the shore from Scaraben to the quarry is continually eroding. One area is very narrow. What are the plans to strengthen/reinforce this road prior to any work commencing on the quarry?

***The proposal for slate extraction is directly linked as it could provide rock and funding to repair the breaches in the coast on an ongoing basis, as shore protection is not a one-off event***

* There is no power available in the quarry site. What are the plans to introduce it and from which direction?

***It is not anticipated that grid connection will be required. We will investigate the use of green energy using either wind or solar power to charge batteries for use in the building. A small backup generator is expected to be required for safety but is not expected to be used in normal operation.***

* Are there any plans to use solar or wind power within the quarry site?

***See previous answer***

* There is a potential risk of property prices falling within the village if the project is to go ahead. What compensation would be available to householders from the project?

***This question presupposes that the enterprise would have a negative impact on house prices where in fact there is a more immediate risk of house prices being impacted by further coastal erosion and flooding in the lower part of the village.***

***The use of material and funding from a slate enterprise could help mitigate erosion and reduce the flooding risk for the village.***

***The protection of the shore will require quarrying (somewhere) and the most cost effective and environmentally friendly way to protect the shoreline is by using our own rock. This has the elegance of using local materials that comprise the existing beach configuration and nature, so minimal visual impact and intrusion.***

***We undertook to carry out an expert led technical survey of the shore the outcome of which will be shared with the community.***

* The road past the quarry is used daily by villagers and visitors alike. What amenities will be introduced by the project to make up for loss of access to the shore and the walk to Port Mary?

***The plan does not impact or restrict access via the shore path. The quarry would be access restricted but leave access along the shore although that route is now becoming dangerous and can no longer be described as a shore walk.***

* Visitors to the islands are regularly heard to say “What a beautiful place. How lucky you are to live here”. What are the plans to minimalise the visual impact of the quarry workings to encourage tourists to still visit Luing and enjoy the beauty of the island (and spend money at the AIC)?

***The quarry in Cullipool is a very interesting feature but also a dangerous one. Planning requirements would be that the quarry would have been made safe and landscaped. This would be done in consultation with the community as part of the plan.***

* In the Island News (Issue 22) distributed by the Trust the following question was posed:

“Does the community agree that re-opening of slate extraction has benefits which outweigh any potential environmental impacts such as noise and dust.” As we all know environmental impact is at the forefront of plans by local, national and international governments and public groups. Villagers who were here when the quarry was still operating describe very dusty conditions. Families of quarry workers have suffered from dust induced disease. How does the Trust measure that potential dust and noise is outweighed by financial gain?

***It is not a simple measure of environmental impact versus financial gain and the proposal has many more factors included. The quarries operated for 200 years and even in the 1960s when they closed Cullipool quarry it was a significantly larger scale than is proposed now. Additionally, they did not operate under the strict controls that apply today (please see page 4).***

***The village is an active place and there is noise from bin lorries, coal lorries, oil tankers, delivery vans, tourist vehicles, light aircraft and helicopters. There is noise from grass strimmers and mowers and building work, renovating buildings, birds, animals and the sea. There is also a current problem with dust as vehicles travel the track to and from the quarry (not associated in any way with quarrying) and around to the lower village producing large clouds of dust.***

***Addressing environmental impact is ‘at the forefront of plans’ and is*** ***something we all need to be part of and take action on across the whole range of our activities; transport, heating, coastal erosion, waste disposal/recycling, wildlife.***

***The profit from the proposal would give the community the capability to invest in our island and environment with the freedom to act as we choose, without total reliance on securing grant funding (if available).***

* Otters are frequently seen close to the quarry. Bats fly around at dusk close to the quarry. Has consideration been made of the wildlife around the quarry?

***The natural environment is a key consideration for the proposal. A full ecological and environmental impact assessment would be undertaken before any planning application was submitted, with reports carried out by independent experts and available to all. Details of EIA process here*** <https://www.gov.scot/policies/environmental-assessment/environmental-impact-assessment-eia/>

## GOING FORWARD

On arrival at the ferry visitors and residents are greeted by a sign from the Trust stating that Luing is “a place to think, a place to be”. The peace and tranquility of the island is a selling point when encouraging people to visit the island or buy a home here. Serious consideration needs to be given to the impact of the quarry on the environment and the safety for visitors and residents.

***Peace and tranquility are a factor in attracting people however Luing is a very active island, with the farm activities, animals, new building, new woodland, new glamping pods, sailing, canoeing etc. Cullipool is a village has quite a lot going on, and no-one (visitors, holiday home owners, residents) wants to be in a place where nothing happens. Visitors come to Luing because there are activities and places to visit. Many visitors and residents find the old slate quarries interesting and impressive; it’s a unique part of Luing.***

***Small scale slate production and the re-engineering of the quarry could offer increased visitor numbers as geo-tourism is a growing area of business. Trips to see slate production, geological tours and use of slate for artistic purposes could be offered to enhance our attraction as a visitor destination.***

***A part of the Trust objectives is to deliver sustainable development of the island and the Trust board have been working to address the key concerns raised by islanders; depopulation, jobs, business opportunities, transport improvements and coastal erosion.***

***Luing is suffering depopulation, we have recently mothballed the school and social groups such as first responders, and social committee can no longer function. The problems faced by the island now and in the future include loss of vital services as current volunteers retire, insufficient able-bodied people to run services and further loss of community activities.***

***This proposal is about making Luing a place where people of all ages live and work and where children grow up. As a community we need to find a balance across the full range of social, cultural, environmental and economic issues or there is a high risk that we will stagnate and decline.***

* How will the views of the home owners/residents of Luing, and those in Cullipool, be measured by the Trust? This must be done on an impartial basis to ensure everyone is able to put forward their views without fear of reprisals from others in the community.

***The views of all individuals willing to share their opinion are being sought and considered. The consultation in 2020, the open two-day consultation on 3rd and 4th September 2021 and the open viewing and drop in at the AIC in the two weeks following are examples. This set of questions is one way to capture views and give as another opportunity to provide as much information as we have at present about the proposal. In addition, all residents in Cullipool are being individually contacted to gain their views. Once we have completed speaking with people and heard as many views as possible we will report back to the community.***

* There are many second homes on the island and many of these home owners have not been given a copy of the recent issues of island news outlining the quarry plans. Why have these homes been missed?

***The Trust endeavours to reach as many people as it can with its newsletter and electronic communications to deliver information and updates. In addition, the Luing Newsletter has carried articles about the proposal.***

***Every home that has a post-box and a resident gets a paper copy of the newsletter and the noticeboards on the island have messages pinned on them at the same time. Everyone that has registered for the Community Council e-mail was e-mailed by the Community Council and informed of the need to apply to receive those emails, if they wished to receive email from the Trust. If you have applied to the Trust, you can receive these emails. In addition, information about meetings and updates was on the Luing community noticeboard on Facebook.***

***During conversations with non-resident second home owners, it became clear that there are different ways that they seek to keep up to date with island news; asking neighbours who are resident, using Facebook, applying to receive Trust emails and looking on the local noticeboards when they visit the island. Owners of properties who are not resident need to find a way that suits them to get information.***

***We recognised that we needed a dedicated channel so we have created a Facebook site specifically for Community Trust news so that people can access information remotely.*** [https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=isle%20of%20luing%20community%20trust](https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=isle%2520of%2520luing%2520community%2520trust)

* Is this event part of a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) for planning?

***No. Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) is a requirement of a National or Major development only. This proposal is a Local development and there is no statutory requirement for a PAQ. The Trust have, however, a policy of open consultation with our community and the survey in 2020, the newsletters and the two-day consultation*** ***event are part of that. The plan also includes further ongoing consultation and information sharing as outlined in our timetable shared at the event.***

***The planning application process can be found here - Scottish Government Website:*** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guide-planning-system-scotland/>

***Planning Aid Scotland:*** www.pas.org.uk

* Once a PAC has been undertaken, is it true that the applicant, i.e. the Trust, can go ahead with a planning application notice regardless of the outcome of the consultation or the feelings of the community?

***See previous question.***

* Can we agree a timetable for the Trust and other parties to inform residents of their plans, preferably before they are put in place?

***The proposed timetable was shared as part of consultation and is shown below.***

## Appendix A

