

# ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTE OF MEETING WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2009 IN ARDGAY HALL

### Present:

Tony Gibbs (Chair)

Jamie Burgess

Doreen Gibbs (Minute Secretary)

Alan Lawrence

Derek Matheson

David Ross

David Hannah (Vice-Chair)

Liz Cormack

Brigitte Geddes

William Maclaren

Phil Olson

Marion Turner

### 1. **Welcome**

The Chairperson Tony Gibbs welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He went on to mention comments made by Alistair Dodds, the Chief Executive Officer of the Highland Council., At the meeting of the Ward Forum in Tongue on 30 May 2009; he spoke about the Scottish Government having to make £500m of efficiency savings which comes down to £8m for the Highland Council this year, and which will continue to get worse. This will have a huge impact on service provision. Capital support from the Scottish Government will be reduced by 50% and priorities will be stretched but Council Tax will not be raised.

A card produced by pupils from Gledfield Primary School thanking the Committee for a grant towards the purchase of Smart Boards was received and duly admired.

**Apologies** were received from Iain Shand and Councillor Robbie Rowantree.

### 2. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009.**

The minutes presented were read and approved. Proposed by Phil Olson, seconded by Marion Turner.

### 3. **Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting**

#### **Footbridges**

Phil Olson reported that he had spoken to Matt Dent (HC Access Officer) about the problems relating to the Brae and Croick Footbridges but his response was not encouraging. Lack of finance and unknown ownership are the main problems. Concern was raised about the safety factor of the bridges. It was felt that the Highland Council should be responsible for the Health and Safety of persons using the bridges, and the lack of signs warning of unsafe structures was unacceptable.

Phil Olson suggested that perhaps an article in the Northern Times or our Newsletter asking for any information about the bridges, their history and their present use, and any ideas how we address the problem of unsafe footbridges would be helpful. A query was raised are the Bridges a core path?

#### **Website**

Good progress has been made, although it is still early days. There are some issues still to be sorted mainly relating to corrections, and inputting of information. It was noted that members could access the site via the address –[www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk](http://www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk). Phil Olson will confer with David Hannah about input of information to and from the Newsletter.

#### **Bus Shelter**

The Committee was informed that at the time of the meeting the Shelter was still not on-site. It has since been learned that the Shelter is ready but cannot be installed until manual staff are available to carry out the work.

### **Forestry Commission**

Brigitte Geddes felt that the site for sale by the Forestry Commission is not viable, and Gearchoille Wood Group is not interested. Phil Olson agreed that the access is awkward and the obstacles are possibly too great. It was agreed we would wait for a reply to our letter to the Forestry Commission.

### **Old Town Road- Forestry Lorries**

Tony Gibbs referred to correspondence received from John Clark (copies previously circulated to members). The Committee felt that the tone of the letter was not helpful but we have to accept that it is probably in the interest of the local residents that the pole should stay.

#### **4. Secretary's Report**

As Iain Shand was not at the meeting due to ill health, no report was available.

#### **5. Acting Treasurer's Report**

No report available.

##### **Post of Treasurer**

Alan Lawrence indicated that he might be interested in taking on the post of Treasurer, subject to advice and help from Hilda Buchanan and if he feels he is able to manage the work. [Action: AL](#)

#### **6. Kyle of Sutherland Initiative**

No meeting since last report.

Tony Gibbs remarked that he had been very impressed with the Business Plans presented at the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June. The three projects presented were briefly outlined; Brigitte Geddes spoke about her provisional plan for a Kyle of Sutherland Biosphere Reserve. Jamie Burgess outlined his plan for the need to uplift the centre of Ardgay Village starting with a possible development of the Lady Ross site. David Hannah spoke about the Community Transport Initiative and hoped that Sheila Fletcher will be able to come and speak at our next Community Council meeting. He also mentioned that the Bradbury Centre, Bonar Bridge, were looking for a grant to obtain their own vehicle to transport people to and from the centre, maybe this is an area where resources could be pooled.

#### **7. Wind Farms**

##### **i) Beinn Tharsuinn**

An application has been received from Creich, Croick and Kincardine Day Care Association for a grant of £800 towards the employment of a gardener. It was suggested that following on from a plan presented by Russell Taylor (Creich CC), which raised a proposal for co-operation between Ardgay & Bonar, for the maintenance and upkeep of the flower tubs in both villages; that an investigation should be made to see if a gardener could be employed to work at the Bradbury Centre and manage all the flower tubs. Both Community Councils through a grant application to the Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund could help fund this post. It was agreed that Tony Gibbs and David Hannah would arrange to visit the Bradbury Centre to discuss this further.

##### **ii) Achany**

There seems to be limited development of the site at this time.

The Induction meeting for panel members was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June. Marion Turner briefly outlined the outcome of discussions, which explored areas that might warrant attention, skills and work, community needs, cash investment. More inductions will be held as per the published timetable.

With the agreement of the Council the-

iii) Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the meeting by Tony Gibbs. **And also the**

iv) Terms of Reference were signed at the meeting by Tony Gibbs.

#### **8. Newsletter**

The Summer Edition (No 4) is ready to go to print, and will be ready for delivery in the next few weeks.

#### **9. Ward Forum**

a) Tony Gibbs spoke on items arising from the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May in Tongue.

The Forum themes were the new Business Gateway, Highland Council Corporate Services and Tecs Service. David Knight is the Regional Development Officer, Business Gateway, a Government scheme funded the

Highland Council and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Business Gateway offers advice on a wide range of subjects including Marketing and Business Plans as well as bringing in specialist advisors when necessary. Highland Corporate Services – Alistair Dodds the Chief Executive of Highland Council spoke of the serious outlook in the world economy and the impact this will have on public sector budgets and service provision. TEC Services – Stuart Bell outlined the services covered by TEC's such as road services, refuse, trading standards, environmental health, housing grants, cemeteries and burials, play areas, public toilets and dog control. He also pointed out that efficiency savings need to be made where possible. A paper from SEPA about the registration of septic tanks or small sewage treatment works for £1 was discussed at the Forum. Advice about this can be obtained from SEPA contact Tel No. 01349 862021.

b) Next Meeting of the Ward Forum – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at 11.00am in Ardgay Hall.

As Ardgay CC will be hosting this meeting, arrangements need to be made:-

David Hannah will check the booking of the Hall.

Action DH

Liz Cormack to see if the Craft Shop, Bonar Bridge can arrange manage the refreshments. Action LC

**10. Model Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils and Code of Conduct for Community Councillors.**

Copies of papers received on this matter have previously been circulated, and this will be an item for discussion at the next Ward Forum. Phil Olson stressed the importance of keeping on top of this matter, which could have a significant effect on the future of local Community Councils.

**11. Any other competent business**

Brigitte Geddes said that there are problems with a gate at Kincardine Cemetery, which is not shutting properly.

Action BG

David Ross was concerned about the damage to the grass verge at Mid-Gruinards.

Action DR

Tony Gibbs suggested that where members see that there is an obvious need for repairs/maintenance etc. they should feel free to inform the appropriate department/officer at Highland Council via email with a copy to Tony Gibbs (Chairperson), this may expedite a repair or response throughout the summer recess, instead of waiting until the Council meets again in September. Action all members

Doreen Gibbs asked about the traffic survey on Manse Road, which was supposed to be carried out this summer.

Action TG to write to G.Farlow

Liz Cormack mentioned the state of the Community Garden next to the Culrain Village Hall, which needs to be regularly maintained. Tony Gibbs said he would speak to the Chairman of the Hall Committee about applying for a grant for the maintenance of the garden and repairs to the Hall following the recent fire.

Action: TG

David Ross mentioned that there may a possibility of Salt Bins being available for placement at certain locations.

Action: DR

It was also noted that residents in Culrain village have now been issued with Blue Recycle Bins, which GREAN collect/empty every week. A most welcome new development.

Phil Olson spoke about a potential initiative for environment and outdoor activity development for South Sutherland. The Council gave wide support for the concept and agreed that Mr. Bruce Walker of Scottish Woodlands be invited to speak to the Community Council and other interested parties about a similar project proposed in another area.

Action: PO

A meeting of the Sutherland Summit will be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in Lairg.

**12. Date and Time of Next Meeting.**

**Wednesday 2nd September 2009 at 7.00pm. In Ardgay Village Hall**

Please note that the venue is changed from that arranged at the meeting. as we may now have a Guest Speaker attend. Details to be confirmed.