

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTE OF MEETING WEDNESDAY 7th APRIL 2010 IN ARDGAY HALL

Present:

David Hannah (Chair)
Doreen Gibbs (Secretary)
Liz Cormack
David Laver

Tony Gibbs (Vice-Chair)
Jamie Burgess
Brigitte Geddes

In Attendance: Councillor Robbie Rowantree and Andy MacKay Ward Manager
Member of the Public: Bill Stobo

- 1. Welcome** The Chairperson David Hannah opened the meeting with a welcome to Members and visitors.
- 2. Apologies**
Received from Marion Turner, Phil Olson and Alan Lawrence
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2010**
The minutes were approved. Proposed by Tony Gibbs and seconded by Jamie Burgess.
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes**
Ward Forum held on 27th March 2010 in Lairg.
A brief outline was given by Robbie Rowan tree on the matters discussed relating to various Budget implications for the Highland Council.
Proposals have been agreed for consultation with the public over options to identify major savings in 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Council has identified £12 million of savings in 2010/11 and £11 million of savings in 2011/12 and 2012/13. This still leaves a gap of £36 million.
It is intended that consultations will be carried out with the general public in the Highlands, specific interest groups, Council Suppliers and third sector organisations, local communities, council staff, trade unions other public sector bodies in the Highlands. Budget proposal documents and questionnaires have been produced for circulation, and community councils are invited to discuss them at their meetings. Completed question forms can be submitted collectively or individually. The forms are accessible on the HC website..
It is intended that the Council will complete the consultation by the end of June and confirm savings in the autumn.

Citizens Panel

The creation of the Citizens Panel of more than 2,000 residents should be completed by the end of March and one of their first duties will be to assist with the budget consultation.

5. **Secretary's Report**

The Secretary reported that letters were sent to Highland Council (Roads Department) and Scotrail thanking them for their hard work in keeping the roads and station platform areas clear during the recent bad weather. Appreciative replies have been received from both organisations. A request has been made to the Highland Council Licensing Department to be kept informed of future License applications affecting the Ardgay District.

Following a meeting with Mr Allan Summers, of the Highland Council Roads and Community Works Dept. and Mr O'Neill of Manse Road, Ardgay, a letter has been received indicating that the TECS Committee has now approved an assessment criteria to be used by the Roads Safety Team in Inverness HQ to prioritise implementation of 20mph speed limits. An assessment of Manse Road, Ardgay has been requested against these criteria. We will be advised if any new speed limit proposal can be implemented.

A letter was sent to support in principle the re-establishing of a self sustaining population of Wild Salmon in the Upper Tributaries of the River Shin. As requested by the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust (Minute 10. March 2010). To date no reply has been received.

An MOD exercise notification to take place between 12 -30 April. It was suggested that we should write to the MOD to emphasise our concerns about excessive low flying and the effect it has on farm livestock and vulnerable people. Action: Sec

Review of Community Council – Second Phase 1st April – 30th June 2010.

Papers have been received on the progress of the Review (a copy was available for members to read). The documentation is available electronically and can be accessed on the Council's website.

Community Council Boundaries – Representations received appeared uncontroversial or received local consensus and it was recommended that these become proposed boundary amendments. In the absence of clear local consensus in favour of change it was recommended that the status quo should remain pending further local discussions.

Draft Community Council Scheme – This is the primary focus of the review's second phase of Consultation, a new draft Community Council Scheme and associated documentation.

The Highland Council's website, has a facility to submit comments electronically and also a discussion forum to leave comments.

.The closing date to make submissions is Wednesday 30th June 2010.

Action: For discussion at a future meeting.

6. **Toilets**

The Ardgay Public Toilets were opened from 1st April, and will remain open until mid November.

Flower Tubs

Jeannie Sparling has once again kindly agreed to look after the Flower Tubs in Ardgay Village. We will however, need to replace some of the existing tubs before they can be planted up for the summer. It was agreed that a budget of £200 will be available for the purchase of plants and compost, in addition, five new tubs can be purchased.

7. **Alladale Wilderness Reserve.**

A request has been received from, Mr Jeremy Usher Smith representing the Alladale Wilderness Reserve, to come and speak to the community council on the Zoo Licence proposal. This has been arranged for the next meeting on Wednesday 12th May.

8. Any other competent business

Tony Gibbs presented a report from Phil Olson on the Community Website. (see copy of report in Appendix 1 page 4)

The Committee were advised that Mr Ian Matheson, a long serving Post Man in the District is due to retire in April. It was agreed that a public collection should be made, and to mark the occasion a presentation evening will be held in Ardgay Hall, (date to be arranged). A budget of £150 for evening was agreed. **Action: Liz Cormack will organise and co-ordinate.**

It was noted that we have been remiss in marking the retirement of Mr Sandy McAughtrie from the position of Watch Manager of the Bonar Bridge Fire Station. It was agreed that Liz Cormack will purchase garden vouchers to the value of £50, to be presented to him in due course.

It was agreed that the new Minister, Rev Anthony Jones, should be invited to meet Council Members at a future Council meeting. **Action: Sec**

9. Date and Time of the next meeting.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 12th May 2010 in Ardgay Village Hall, at 7.00pm. **(Please note that this meeting will be held on the second Wednesday in the Month not the first Wednesday)**

There being no further business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

**** see over page 4 for appendix 1.**

Appendix 1. Community Website Report April 2010

The A & D CC web site received its first visitor on 6th July 2009.
There have been 510 visits through 31st March.
That represented 279 individually recognised different visitors.
They opened 2,633 pages,
and viewed 5.16 pages per visit,
spending 4.22 minutes on the site at each visit.
Ineffective visits were 19% of the total (they only opened one page and left).

The most opened pages were:

811 - The Main Page

382 - Minutes & Agenda

204 - Members

103 - Newsletters

85 - Projects we are discussing

80 - Local links

70 - Local events

67 - Projects & issues

Other pages were opened fewer times.

Searches from Google predominated using one or another form of 'ardgay', 'community council' or some derivative wording.

Several local web sites directed visitors to our site; highland.gov and gearchoillecommunitywood.org predominated.

Possibly the pages mostly visited (the first four above) represented success in providing what people wanted to see. If these pages are in fact called successful there may still be room to improve them. Very little direct communication with the public has been carried out to determine if these areas of the web site really are satisfying a demand.

There are a few poorly developed areas of the web site, which should be improved or dropped - Projects and Issues, Links, and Events are not well developed. There is scope to improve these with input from CC members and feedback from local organisations as to what should be published and in assembling the correct information. It would not be difficult to improve these areas given guidance and input as to what was wanted.

CC members may wish to similarly request improvements in other areas. Any feedback would be welcome.

Phil Olson. April 2010.