

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING—MONDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2011—ARDGAY HALL

Present: David Hannah (Chair), Doreen Gibbs (Secretary), Alan Lawrence (Treasurer), Derek Matheson, Phil Olson, Marion Turner, David Laver, Liz Cormack, Peter Armstrong, Cllr Linda Munro, Cllr George Farlow, PC Joanne Hogg, Lynsey Mailer (Kyle of Sutherland Development Service). Six members of the public also attended the meeting.

1. Welcome. David Hannah opened the meeting with a welcome to those present.

2. Apologies had been received from David Ross.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 Dec 2010 were approved as presented.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Core Paths There had still been no formal response from Highland Council to our request to have a right of way reinstated between Ardgay Hill and the Lady Ross car park area. Matt Dent has passed the matter to John Clark for information.

Christmas Lights Thanks were expressed to the local Fire & Rescue Service crew who had put up the lights again this year, and to Derek Matheson and son for erecting the Christmas tree.

5. Secretary's Report

The secretary had written in response to the 3rd phase consultation on Community Councils. Her letter had been acknowledged but there had been no further response to the questions raised. Cllr Farlow presented maps showing the proposed changes to parish boundaries and explained the rationale for the changes, to which there were no objections.

A letter had been received from Mr Jonny Shaw, Amat, seeking the community council's support for a scheme to remove a barrier to salmon migration created in the 1940s by the construction of a hydroelectric abstraction point at a dam in Glen Beag, River Carron. Mr Shaw asked if we could confirm our support by email to the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust. It was agreed to support the initiative in the interests of conserving local salmon stocks.

6. Wind Farm update

Braemore Several members of the public had attended the meeting to express their opposition to the development of a 27 turbine windfarm at Braemore, and to urge the community council to make a formal objection to the planning application. Amongst the concerns expressed were the number and size of the turbines proposed in an area which already had its fair share of windfarms, the fact that any employment generated would only be short term, and the proximity of turbines to residential property. Several members proceeded to voice their own opposition to the development on the grounds of its impact on the environment, wildlife, landscape and quality of life, and after discussion it was agreed unanimously to object to the application.

Coire na Cloiche The secretary read a letter sent by Henrik F. Christensen, agent of RockbySea (Scotland) Ltd. who would be submitting a planning application in June this year.

Sallachy Members had seen copies of a scoping report for the Sallachy proposal (30 turbine windfarm adjacent to Loch Shin). Some felt that it had been poorly researched. David Hannah said the developers had planned to meet with community council chairs last December, but this had been cancelled owing to the weather. An environmental assessment is still to be produced, followed by formal consultations later in the year.

Moray Off-shore Windfarms Marion Turner noted that a Highland Council working group, ostensibly set up to discuss offshore developments, had also been discussing models for the distribution of *onshore* benefit funding. Cllr Munro said she understood there would be no retrospective clawback of community benefit funding, but agreed that we should write to Isobel McCallum, chair of the Community Benefit Working Group, and Michael Foxley to ask why there was no Sutherland member on the working group, and why the affected communities themselves were not being consulted.

Marion to write to Cllr McCallum

There followed a discussion as to whether the increasing number of wind farm development applications required a more cooperative strategy on the part of local communities. It was agreed that the idea of a Sutherland ward forum to discuss policy on wind farms should be investigated. Cllr Munro said she would take this idea forward.

7. Police report

PC Hogg said she understood timber lorries were continuing to use the Struie road despite a prohibition. She said the police had not themselves witnessed any contraventions. It was pointed out that at a previous meeting, the Highland Councillor present had stated that a number of lorries had been stopped in the first days of the prohibition order. Marion asked if the police could issue renewed guidance to the public as to the details needed to report any contraventions –

registration nos., time, place, etc. David Hannah said he had received no response to emails he had forwarded to Northern Constabulary from local residents concerned about the speed of lorries in built-up/residential areas. PC Hogg said she would inquire into this, and suggested that the preferred local contact for community council communications with the police was Sgt Gary Cameron at Lairg Police Station. Cllr Munro felt that Northern Constabulary might want to report on the issues raised to the next Ward Forum, as well as responding to the community council.

8. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Account £1419.25, with £25 outstanding. Projects Account £3806.44, with £5.06 outstanding.
Toilet Account £9.58

9. Development Service Update

The Chairman welcomed Lynsey Mailer, who has recently been awarded a contract to provide a development support service for the communities of Creich and Ardgay. Lynsey introduced herself to the meeting, and explained that she will be spending her first few months meeting all the groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in local development, looking for ideas and opinions and identifying the range of funding sources and programmes which may be available for projects. She plans to spend two days a week (Tue & Thu) in an office leased from Key Commercial Services in Bonar Bridge. Anyone with an interest in or ideas about local development is welcome to contact her at the office or by email at lynseymailer@gmail.com. A new website is being developed for the service. Cllr Munro invited Lynsey to attend the next local Ward Forum to publicise the new service.

10. Grant applications to Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Ltd

Gledfield School had applied for a total of £1100 for the purchase of educational resources including a mathematics software package and a printed/online newspaper subscription. Jackie Sutherland of Gledfield School Parent Teacher Association, who was present at the meeting, explained that Highland Council had no obligation to provide these materials. After discussion it was agreed that the community council should contribute £200 from its own funds, with the balance of £900 to be requested from the Beinn Tharsuinn community benefit fund.

11. Mobile reception in Kyle of Sutherland area

Marion Turner had been approached by a member of the business community about mobile phone reception in the area which was generally poor and sometimes non-existent. Members expressed their agreement, and Marion was asked to write on our behalf to Ofcom to highlight the issue and seek an improved service.

12. Gearrhoille Community Wood Item carried over till next meeting.

13. Timber lorries

Marion Turner had received complaints from the public about these lorries and agreed to clarify the exact procedure for making a complaint either to the Highland Council or the Police (see item 7).

14. Tribute to the late Stephen Mouat

At the request of Liz Cormack, the Chairman proposed the establishment of a fund in memory of Stephen Mouat, who had been instrumental over many years in making and ultimately winning the case for the new Migdale Hospital. It was agreed that a suitable memorial should be located at the site of the new hospital when building was completed. The community councils in Lairg, Creich and Ardgay would be asked for financial contributions, and public collections organised in the three communities.

15. Any other competent business

Struie tree risk Residents had expressed concern about the potential hazard of weather-damaged trees falling on the Struie road. Cllr Munro said she would raise the issue with the Council.

New Migdale Members had been invited to take a tour of the hospital construction site. Five members wanted to accept the offer, and would visit the hospital on 18 February.

Bus contract Service details had been submitted of the only tender for the new local bus service contract starting 1 January 2012.

Ward Forum The next Ward Forum would be at the Melvich Hotel on the 26 February.

Spring newsletter The Chair wished to remind everyone that the deadline for submissions to the Spring newsletter was **1 March 2011**

Meeting ended at 9.32pm. Next meeting Mon 14 March at 7pm.