

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING—MONDAY 11 APRIL 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 George Farlow.
Rhonwen Copley (Gearrchoille Community Wood), PC Katy Hunter (Northern Constabulary), Jeannie Sparling.

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

2. Apologies were received from William MacLaren and Cllr Linda Munro.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 14 Mar 2011 were approved after clarification of amendments.

4. Police Report PC Katy Hunter reported that there had been only two significant incidents in the past month, both involving road traffic. One lorry driver had been cautioned on the Struie road. The road was due to be closed for repairs from 11-20 April.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

Right of Way Marion had met with Matt Dent of Highland Council onsite to discuss the issue of a blocked right way from Ardgay Hill. Mr Dent believes that any documentary record of this route held by Highland Council must have been either lost or destroyed. Marion agreed with Mr Dent that when any planning approval for the Lady Ross site was sought we could apply to have the informal path at the rear of the property linking Ardgay Hill to Struie Place formalised.

Ward forum Marion noted that the discussion topic for the forthcoming ward forum in Lairg (28 May), which she had understood was to be windfarms in general, was now being advertised simply as community benefit. She said she had written to Cllr Linda Munro to suggest inviting planning officials and others involved in windfarm development decisions to explain how much influence local views could have on decisions. Cllr Munro had referred the request to ward manager Andy Mackay.

6. Chairman's Report

At the AGM preceding the meeting, Doreen Gibbs had resigned from the position of secretary. The Chairman thanked her for all her work on behalf of the community. Doreen has kindly agreed to remain on the community council as Vice Chair until the new elections in November.

After long service, Davy Ross had resigned his membership of the community council. Members expressed their sincere thanks for his contribution.

7. Secretary's Report

Doreen Gibbs had been contacted by the developers behind the Glenmorie wind farm proposal, who would like to exhibit their plans at Ardgay Hall.

8. Treasurer's Report

<u>Treasurers account</u>	Current cleared balance £932.27	Outstanding liabilities £159.94
<u>Projects account</u>	Current cleared balance £3316.38	Outstanding liabilities £565
<u>Toilets account</u>	Current cleared balance £9.58	

9. Kyle of Sutherland Development Service

Lynsey Mailer had presented a report to the steering group for the Development Service.

Pete Campbell, David Knight, Rory Waugh, Claire Bruce and Marion Turner had been appointed first directors of the proposed development trust for Creich and Ardgay.

10. Wind Farm update

Coire Na Cloiche Doreen Gibbs noted that only Ardgay, Edderton and Ardross communities appeared to be eligible for benefit payments in respect of this development. She has already contacted the other councils to discuss taking a coordinated approach to any negotiations. It was agreed not to express any view as to the desirability of the development at this stage.

Rosehall The next meeting of the Rosehall Windfarm liaison group was due to be held in May. It was felt this would be an opportunity to raise the question of community benefit.

Phil Olson noted that a recent community benefit agreement for a windfarm near Tomatin had been set at a level of £4000 p/Mw generated, pointing out that agreements in our own area were being made at a level closer to £2000 p/Mw. David Hannah had spoken to the Scottish Communities Foundation about the possibility of identifying a "communities champion" to coordinate our response to the impact of wind farm development. They had suggested approaching the Sutherland Partnership about this. The Partnership has recently appointed a new development officer.

11. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Benefit Applications

Gearrchoille Community Woods Association The Association had applied for a grant of £3209 for access, events, signage and running costs. The application was unanimously approved.

Doreen Gibbs had consulted Highland Council as to whether the GCWA could be covered by the community council's own public liability insurance. She had been advised that this would only be possible if the GCWA reverted to unconstituted status. Cllr Farlow said he was surprised by this.....

Dornoch Firth Group – Bridge Project The Group had applied for a grant of £1400 to support a programme of activities for children and young people in the first week of August 2011, which would be open to residents of Bonar Bridge, Rosehall, Invershin, Ardgay and Edderton. Whilst it was agreed that this project was a welcome and important contribution to our communities, it was not possible to approve the application as presented. This was because (i) the application failed to specify how much money was being requested from individual community councils and (ii) the stated aims of the project included "... (enabling) the church to look outwards..." . Under the terms of the Beinn Tharsuinn Board's constitution, it was unable to authorise funding for religious purposes. It was therefore agreed to remit the application to the Dornoch Firth Group with advice on possible resubmission.

12. Oakwood Place-Ardgay Hill Footpath

Doreen Gibbs had been informed by Matt Dent that the work required to complete the footpath would cost £1200. It was agreed to seek a grant of £800 from the Rosehall windfarm community projects fund, and the balance remaining through the ward discretionary budget. Doreen Gibbs and Marion Turner would submit applications for these funds on our behalf.

13. Stephen Mouat Memorial Fund

David Walker (Lairg CC) had explained that £127 remained from the Migdale campaign fund. This would be put together with a £100 donation from each community council and the proceeds of a local collection. Donations could also be requested through the Northern Times. Marion had written to Georgia Haire of NHS Highland to keep her informed, and had suggested a meeting with her when the collection was complete. The move to the new hospital was scheduled for the 30 June 2011.

14. Carbisdale Closure

Keith Legge, Chief Executive of the Scottish Youth Hostels Association, would be attending our next meeting on 9 May 2011 to talk about the closure of Carbisdale Castle for repairs following winter damage. Given the economic significance of the closure for local businesses, an invitation has been extended to neighbouring communities to attend the meeting.

15. Members' responsibilities

Marion Turner proposed asking individual community councillors to 'specialise' in particular areas – such as windfarms, planning/environment, social events, health, education, etc so that work could be shared out equitably. It was noted that this system had worked well in the past. It was agreed to return to the subject at the next meeting.

16. Any other competent business

The Chairman informed members that the mileage rate applicable to community council travel expenses had been increased to 45p per mile.

Doreen Gibbs, who is stepping down as secretary, said there may soon be a need to obtain a new filing cabinet to accommodate community council documents. Phil Olsson wondered how documentation such as minutes and correspondence were being stored at present. He suggested that a portable external hard drive would be the best way of storing/backing up data. It was agreed that Phil should order this item on our behalf. Marion Turner offered to help identify and discard any printed materials we no longer needed to keep. Doreen Gibbs and Peter Armstrong, who was to take over the role of secretary, would help with this.

The secretary wanted to thank Jeannie Sparling once again for her work preparing flower tubs for the village.

Jeannie Sparling asked whether members were aware of the recent GREAN initiative to investigate local interest in a local composting scheme and allotments. She said an approach had been made some years ago to the Council with a view to creating local allotments, but that little progress had been made at the time. She wondered if the GREAN project might be an opportunity to revive this ambition. It was agreed to place the issue on the agenda for the next community council meeting.

Jeannie Sparling was asked if she would agree to being co-opted on to the community council and accepted.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm. Next meeting will be on Mon 9th May at 7pm.