

# ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING—MONDAY 11 JULY 2011—ARDGAY HALL

*Present:* David Hannah (Chair), Doreen Gibbs (Vice-Chair), Alan Lawrence (Treasurer), David Laver, Jeannie Sparling, Peter Armstrong (Secretary), Cllr Linda Munro. *Members of the public:* Carole Shaw (Gledfield Primary School Parent Council)

**1 Welcome** The Chairman opened the meeting with a welcome to those present.

**2. Guest speaker** Sheena MacLeod, General Manager of the North Highland Community Health Partnership had come to the meeting to talk about current directions in health care provision in our area. Difficulties included the increasingly elderly population and the increasing costs of health care. The partnership, which was responsible for hospital, GP and community health services in Caithness and Sutherland, had to prioritise within a budget falling by £20 million in each of the next five years. They were having to investigate more cost-effective ways of delivering services, which might include sub-contracting to providers better placed to meet local needs. The use of telecare for routine health checks was being developed. A shared care bed had been trialled in Melvich using GP and community services to deliver hospital type care without the need for transfer to Inverness. Efforts were also being made to establish consistent and efficient pathways for patients with any particular health issue. She was delighted with the new hospital at Migdale.

Ms MacLeod went on to look at what money was currently spent on within the CHP - there was an ongoing issue with GP over-prescribing, though the current pharmacist was attempting to address this by encouraging GPs to look at the cost-effectiveness of what they were prescribing. Another issue was the way older people in particular often ended up taking a cocktail of medication, some unnecessary, some counterproductive. New software was being trialled which would flag up prescription issues of this kind. Ms MacLeod answered questions from members on a variety of issues – the idea of an annual health and treatment review for all patients would not be accepted by GPs without additional payments: there were no local specialist children's or maternity services because of low population density: there would be no emergency, x ray or out of hours service at Migdale because there was no attending GP: since there were no Southern Cross care homes in the area, the only effect on local care homes would be due to any relocation of residents required.

David Hannah felt there had been little sense of a community partnership in our area, with local GPs showing little interest in working with the community. He asked how local people could support the efforts to improve local health care. He felt this would be a good time to seek community support given the high level of interest generated by the opening of the new hospital in June. Ms MacLeod suggested a body like the Patient Council at Caithness General Hospital might be a good way to have a say on local health care issues.

**3 Apologies** were received from Marion Turner, Phil Olson, Derek Matheson, Liz Cormack and William MacLaren.

**4 Minutes of the last meeting** held on 13 June 2011 were approved.

### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

*Carbisdale Castle closure* There were still no signs informing visitors of the closure of the castle for repairs. The closure was now due to last till early in 2012. David Hannah would raise the issue at AGM of the SYHA in September.

*KOSDT meeting* Over fifty people had attended the first public meeting of the new development trust, where Lynsey Mailer had outlined a five year plan for local development.

*Gledfield Primary funding request* Carole Shaw of Gledfield Primary School Parent Council had come to the meeting to present a request for support from the community council's projects fund for a programme of school trips costing £700. She was also seeking help with replacing football goalposts which had been damaged by being borrowed by older children for use in a field opposite the school. Jeannie Sparling pointed out that local teenagers had already spoken with KoSDT about the possibility of a joint project with the school to develop an all-weather pitch adjacent to the school which pupils would have exclusive use of during the school day. The Chairman proposed that the community council contribute a sum of £350 to the costs of the school trip programme, suggesting that the plans for football facilities be referred to Lynsey Mailer. This proposal was approved by members. Cllr Munro said she would try to find the balance of the costs from the ward discretionary fund.

**6. Chairman's Report** No additional items.

### **7. Secretary's Report/Correspondence**

The *Association of Scottish Community Councils* was to be disbanded following withdrawal of its Scottish Government funding. In view of the new community council elections in November it was felt this might be a good time to look at different ways of working together with other community councils in the area, and perhaps consider a local association or federation to address shared issues such as windfarm developments.

*Funding request* The owners of Ardgay Garage had written to ask for financial support from the community council in erecting a fence round their property at the former filling station adjacent to their garage. They felt a fence around the site would enhance the appearance of the village and be to the benefit of the community in general. After discussion it was agreed that while it was important to support new development initiatives, it would be inappropriate for the community

council to fund private developments of this kind. A similar application had been declined by the Beinn Tharsuinn Trust because it had not come from a community group. It was agreed that the application should be referred to the new Development Trust.

*Ardgay Hill-Oakwood Footpath* Balnagowan Estate had written to confirm their agreement to this construction project, though they would be unable to provide any public liability cover for the work. The estate have already agreed to donate construction materials to the project, which it is hoped will be carried out by Technical Services.

*BT Adopt a Kiosk scheme* BT had confirmed that three red phone boxes in our area were now available for “adoption” at a cost of £1 each. It would be the community’s responsibility to maintain and clean the boxes. For more information about the scheme and to see how communities elsewhere have used their kiosks, go to [http://www.payphones.bt.com/adopt\\_a\\_kiosk](http://www.payphones.bt.com/adopt_a_kiosk). The community council agreed to purchase the three kiosks.

#### **8. Treasurer’s Update**

<u>Treasurer’s account</u>	Current cleared balance	£2208	Outstanding liabilities	£0
<u>Projects account</u>	Current cleared balance	£2957.30	Outstanding liabilities	£245.50
<u>Toilets account</u>	Current cleared balance	£82.65		

Last year the Highland Council grant of £1500 for the public toilet running costs was received in July.

#### **9. KOSDT update**

No update.

#### **10. Windfarms update**

Braemore Objectors were seeking funding for an independent noise level assessment.

**11. Awards from windfarms** A sum of £800 had been received by the community council from the Community Fund for Rosehall Wind Farm towards the completion of the Ardgay Hill-Oakwood footpath. The sponsor had asked for a photograph of the finished project. Jeannie Sparling asked whether all the windfarm benefit funds used the same funding criteria, since there seemed to be inconsistencies in what was approved by different funds. Cllr Munro confirmed that each of the wind farm developers had their own independent scheme with specific rules.

**12. Review of community council financial arrangements** Highland Council had revised the basis on which grants to community councils were calculated. Alan Lawrence reported that as a result, our own community council funding for the current year was down by £375 from last year’s level. He pointed out that this funding was purely to cover administration costs. David Hannah asked Cllr Munro how this cut had been justified by the Council. She pointed out that all three ward councillors had voted against the change.

**13. Members roles** Discussion of this topic was deferred until the next meeting.

#### **14. AOCB**

*Election arrangements* Highland Council had published some details of the arrangements concerning new community council elections on 16 November. It was noted that it was still unclear where to obtain nomination papers for the election. There was discussion of the need to promote the elections locally to encourage participation. It was suggested that there should be liaison with local secondary schools, particularly given the lowering of the voting/standing rights to the age of 16.

*Ardgay public toilets* Jeannie Sparling said that the flooring paint applied by Council in toilets last year had immediately started to lift. The painter had left spare paint, which Jeannie had used, but paint was still not adhering properly to the surface, making the toilets look shabby. David Hannah said he had some spare paint which could be tried – if this failed to last, it may be time to consider tiling.

*Planning application* David Laver asked whether the community council could submit a planning application for new signage on behalf of Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society to take advantage of lower costs. This proposal was approved.

*Newsletter deadline* The next community council newsletter would be issued on 12 September, with the deadline for submission of items for inclusion being 16 September.

**The meeting ended at 9.15pm. Next meeting will be at 7pm on Mon 11th September.**