

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING—MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2011—ARDGAY HALL

Present David Hannah (Chair), Marion Turner, Alan Lawrence (Treasurer), Phil Olson, David Laver, Peter Armstrong (Secretary), Liz Cormack, Cllr Linda Munro.

- 1. Welcome** The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome to those present.
- 2. Apologies** none received.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting** held on 10 Oct 2011 were approved with amendments.
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes**

Lady Ross The secretary had written to KPMG to raise concerns about the condition of the property which KPMG were now holding in sequestration, highlighting the recent removal of slates from the roof of the barn building. KPMG had written back with an assurance that any legally required actions would be taken. Following an approach from Ardgay Hall Committee, the exposed roofing of the barn had been temporarily covered with plastic sheeting. Members felt it was important that the missing slates be restored to the building as a matter of urgency to prevent deterioration of the building and possible danger to the public. Cllr Munro said she would raise the issue with the local police, who had apparently witnessed and intervened to stop the removal of the slates.

Local postbox relocation The secretary had written to Royal Mail requesting a site meeting to discuss alternative sites for the local postbox. It was hoped that this would take place within the following week.

Standing water Highland Council had again been unable to promise any imminent action on this problem. Doreen Gibbs suggested writing to Scotrail about the water at Culrain Station affecting access to trains. The Chair suggested we also contact SEPA on the grounds that the stagnant water may pose a health risk to local residents.

Ardgay Hill-Oakwood Footpath A response was still awaited from Highland Council giving a right of way to access over their land at Oakwood Place. Cllr Munro was liaising with Marion to seek a resolution of the obstacles to this project.

5. Correspondence

A letter had been received from Rhonwen Copley in her capacity as a director of Gearrchoille Community Wood (see 7)

A letter had been received from Jeannie Sparling raising three issues

(i) the existing flower tubs in the village needed replacement with 8 new half-barrels. The community council had already agreed to purchase these. Marion Turner would look into a source.

(ii) a concern that lorries transporting fish through the village had been emptying water in the Lady Ross car park. It was agreed to ask Jeannie to take company and registration details of any drivers seen doing this so that an official complaint could be made.

(iii) Lastly, Jeannie had expressed her surprise to see Council workers weeding pavements in the village. She felt this was work that could be done by people on community service orders or those looking for work. It was felt, however, that either of these options would be complicated by the requirement for supervision.

An email had been received from Irene MacLeod inviting the participation of local groups in the proposed *Homecoming 2014* events.

Sustainable Schools Review Highland Council had invited the CC to participate in a consultation about the future of local schools. Briefing documents had been received on the 29 Oct with an invitation to attend a meeting on the 2 Nov. No member had been able to attend the meeting. Disappointment was expressed about the short notice given and a lack of clarity in the information provided. It was also unclear why the consultation was being carried out at this time and with such apparent haste. It was agreed that the secretary should write to Highland Council to express the community council's disappointment with a lack of cooperation on this and other issues.

6. Treasurer's Update

Treasurer's account the current cleared balance stood at £2144.08.

Projects account the current cleared balance stood at £4052.70.

Toilets account the current cleared balance stood at £826.65, (cheque outstanding for £159.00)

A donation of £10 from a Culrain resident towards the costs of the CC Newsletter had been received last month but omitted from the accounts. A further £2.00 donation had been received by one of the distribution team,

7. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Benefit applications

There had been one new application for support from the fund. The **Friends of Migdale** had submitted an application for £500 from each of the three local community councils as part-funding for their garden project at the new Migdale hospital. The group had already presented detailed plans for this project at our October meeting, and funding was now approved.

A decision on two further applications had been deferred at the last meeting. **Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust** had submitted an application to part-fund improvements to a property belonging to the owners of Ardgay Garage. This application was now approved on the grounds that the work would improve the appearance of the village. An undertaking had also been given by the applicants that the site would be made available for community events.

A decision on an application from **Laig Learning Centre** seeking part-funding for a new management post had also been deferred pending assurances that the services offered by the Centre would be accessible to residents of Ardgay. It was

noted that the Centre was to hold an information session at Bonar Bridge Hall on 19 November, and members were urged to attend this event with a view to informing a decision on this application.

A letter had been received from a director of Gearrchoille Woodland Community Association objecting to a request for evidence of how a grant made through the Beinn Tharsuinn scheme had been spent. The same request had been made to recent recipients of the grants in a letter sent by community councillor Phil Olson in his role as a director of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Limited. Phil Olson hoped to have an early opportunity to attend a meeting of the GCWA to discuss the issue and clear up any misunderstandings.

8. Windfarms update

Glenmorie The planning application for a 43 turbine development at Glenmorie had just been submitted to the Scottish Government. The community council had received copies of the summary Environmental Statement. It was noted that the proposal included provision of aviation lights owing to its location on a route used by low-flying military aircraft. Marion Turner would draft a response to the proposal on our behalf, and would liaise with Cllrs Linda Munro and Deirdre MacKay (East Sutherland and Edderton ward).

Rosehall The next meeting of the Rosehall Liaison Group was due to take place on 16 November. Doreen Gibbs would attend the meeting on our behalf.

Achany David Hannah and Marion Turner had attended a review meeting of the local advisory panel for Achany Windfarm, which had been well attended. Both felt that the constructive and consensual approach adopted in this development under the auspices of the Scottish Communities Foundation was a useful model for future community liaison on projects.

Sallachy A planned meeting between the developers and CC representatives had not taken place.

Wind farm mapping Marion Turner showed members maps obtained following a request to Highland Council's planning department showing the location of all existing and proposed wind farm developments. The maps were felt to be a useful resource to inform our response to future development proposals, though they did not give any impression of the physical extent and boundaries of the wind farm sites.

9. KOSDT update Lynsey Burns had prepared a digest of her activities up to October. These included work on a variety of project ideas, promotion of local jobs through an apprenticeship scheme, the development of a logo and branding strategy for the Kyle of Sutherland, and the creation of a new website for the Trust.

10. Ward Forum The next ward forum was now scheduled for Jan 29 at 11am in Lairg. As previously noted, this will be focused on housing issues –how existing resources are managed, the basis of the allocation points system, grants and benefits available, etc, and will have input from Council staff, who will also be on hand for private enquiries. Cllr Munro suggested that specific requests for information on housing issues could be passed to the ward Manager (and copied to herself) in advance of the meeting so that Council staff came with the relevant facts to hand.

11. AOCB

Community Care The secretary said he had read Cllr Munro's recent article about the future of care in the community with interest, and asked if she could briefly summarise the issues involved. It appeared that the major problem was a lack of flexibility in providing services at local level. Cllr Munro felt that a community managed service would be best placed to meet the needs of local people.

Christmas trees Liz Cormack reported that this year's Christmas trees for Ardgay and Culrain had been ordered.

Community Newsletter David Hannah asked the treasurer if he could prepare a statement of the finances of the newsletter to date. Marion Turner would submit an article on timber lorries for the forthcoming issue.

Remembrance Day David Hannah said the events planned for Remembrance Sunday had been very successful. The police had effectively controlled traffic to allow the service at the war memorial, which was followed by a service at the local church and an exhibition by schoolchildren at Ardgay Hall, where refreshments were served. He wanted to thank Liz Cormack for laying the wreath on behalf of the community council. It was agreed that a donation of £50 would be made from funds to cover the cost of the wreath and a contribution to the British Legion.

Phone Boxes BT had confirmed the transfer of two phone booths to the community through the Adopt a Kiosk scheme. The booths were located in the centre of the village outside *Byeways* and beside the Old Schoolhouse at Achnahanat.

Carbisdale Castle It had been reported in the Northern Times that the castle would now be reopening for business in July 2012. The Chairman noted that despite being a member of the SYHA Council he himself had received no communication about the new re-opening date.

12. Chairman's report As this was the last meeting of the present community council, David Hannah thanked members for their support. He suggested that in future the role of minute secretary be put out to tender to allow the secretary more time for other responsibilities.

13. Meeting to establish new Community Council Ward Manager Andy Mackay had agreed that the inaugural meeting of the new community council would take place at the usual time for meetings on the 12 December 2011. Highland Council staff and at least one Councillor would attend to moderate the proceedings. All members of the new community council would be notified in writing of these arrangements.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm. First meeting of the new community council will be at **7pm on Mon 12 December.**