

# Ardgay & District Community Council

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Hall

**Present: Elected members:** David Hannah, Chair (DH), Peter Armstrong, Secretary (PA), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), Phil Olson (PO), Marion Turner (MT), Betty Wright (BW), Bob Sendall (BS)

**Also present:** Highland Councillor Linda Munro

**Members of the public:** Neil McInnes, Russell Taylor, Angela Marwick, Willie McLaren

**Minutes Secretary:** Mary Goulder (MG)

**Apologies:** David Laver (DL)

**Items 1/2/3. Welcome/Apologies/(see above)/Police report.** Chair David Hannah welcomed everyone to the meeting. No Police representative was present to make a report.

**Item 4. Minutes of February meeting.** The minutes from 13<sup>th</sup> February were accepted as a true and accurate record; proposed: Alan Lawrence; seconded: Peter Armstrong.

**Item 5. Matters arising from February minutes. (1) Station road junction.** David Laver was commended on an excellent report following meeting with Highland Council. Now awaiting a written report with proposals/suggestions from HC. A public meeting should be called thereafter to gauge local opinion on possible road system changes; the railway company must be on board and co-operative if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

**(2) Signatories.** Alan has this in hand. **AL Action.** **(3) Phone boxes.** BW has checked out the one at Amatnataua at the junction of the Amat/Croick road and found it in good condition though needs exterior repainting; all agreed this should be in Post Box Red. BW volunteered to keep an eye on the box through the summer. AL will do the same for the box at Achnahane. The interior lighting appears to be working in both boxes. **(4) Logo for Minutes.** Peter, Marion and Phil continue to work on this. **PA Action.** **(5) Highland Council training.** PO and MT reported after attending the session in Dingwall with DL and PA. Around eighty Community Councillors from the region attended. Various areas of CC responsibilities were covered. Community Councils are **\*\*advised deemed\*\*** to have no assets. Community Councillors carry liability both jointly and severally – indemnity insurance should be considered. The advice given regarding the duties of Treasurer would indicate that all is in order with Ardgay & District CC. The CC should be registered under the Data Protection Act; PA will follow this up. **PA Action.** The distinction was clarified that CC meetings are meetings 'held in public' where the public may attend but only speak with the approval of the Chair, not 'public meetings' where anyone present is free to speak. CC members must declare an interest at any time it is relevant to discussion, and refrain from voting on such issues. Office bearers should be as in place here. Employing secretarial help is approved. The CC is a statutory consultee on all matters of Planning and Licensing though members do not remember being consulted by the Licensing Authority at any time in the past. Cllr Munro outlined the wide range of licences covered by HC, including taxi drivers, window cleaners and others, in addition to the more obvious licensed premises. She will endeavour to obtain information with regard to such premises within this area. Feedback on training discussions indicated that not enough information is available with regard to how CCs carry out their responsibilities, who they liaise with, etc. Cllr Munro offered to try to arrange a visit to Drummie during which a few CC members could meet with department heads in a bid to forge communication channels. A more locally situated training session would also be appreciated. It was felt that direction regularly comes from HC but there is little opportunity to feedback. **(6) Flower tubs.** MT is still hopeful of locating tubs for the coming season. Jeanie Sparling is keen to have floral displays in the village and on the station platform. **(7) Dounreay.** BW has much information following online research. It appears that approximately fifty shipments of radioactive material, roughly one per month, will pass through this area between later this year and 2016, though no actual dates are available. The question was raised as to whether any community benefit should be paid to the areas this transport travels through. Cllr Munro will find out who should be contacted on this and ask appropriately. **LM Action.**

**Item 6. Correspondence.** PA listed incoming communications. John Clark has advised that the **leak at the toilets** has been fixed. The water is not yet turned on; floor painting could go ahead. Jeanie Sparling will be advised. No reply as yet from KPMG regarding **The Lady Ross**. Natasha Rai will attend the April meeting with regard to the **\*\*Glenmorrie Coire-na-Cloiche\*\*** windfarm development. PA will ascertain just what she intends to discuss. Information received regarding the Planning application for the **Dalnessie** development. No reply so far from TECS regarding the **icy patches** on the road to Edderton. The Chair read out a letter from the Lord Lieutenant asking for

funds towards a **flag-raising and reception to be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> June** to mark Armed Forces Week, and the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. £400 was suggested as the donation. The Secretary will write to ask how many ex-service personnel are expected to attend from this area and does the money cover their transport between Ardgay/Drummuie and Brora and the reception costs. £200 was approved, subject to clarification of use. **PA Action.** Information received from Scottish Gas regarding **free loft insulation**. This will be included in the next newsletter. DH will attend the upcoming **Scottish Community Councils Conference**. Items are once again requested for the **KOSDT online calendar of events**. Details should be sent to Lynsey Burns **\*\*at <http://www.kyleofsutherland.com/index.php>\*\***.

**Item 7. Treasurer's report.** Alan Lawrence gave the following report: Treasurer's Account: cleared balance stands at £1830.26 with outstanding open cheques for £83.20. Projects Account: £4,384.68 with one outstanding cheque for £415.00. Recent deposits have been made of £140.00 and outstanding cheques add up to £148.35. Toilets Account: £7.65. Following the recent HC 'training' session, PO expressed concern that HC will be taking a closer look at CC accounts, possibly with a view to decreasing their grants to those with funds on hand. Cllr Munro advised that a new Council will be in place following the elections in May and that that body will be required to make savings of £40m over the next three years. CCs should be ready to sustain cuts in budget. As an aside AL as Treasurer, noted that to date the management of the grant payments by HC has been largely unprofessional and haphazard. Discussion suggested the opening of a long term endowment fund with Community Benefit income to safeguard such money for future use. Various options were brought forward. A public meeting should be held to bring the idea to the larger public awareness. Any such fund would be kept separate from CC accounts and must be transparent in its administration. A community shop venture was also put forward as an idea for positive use of windfarm money and local involvement.

**Item 8. Community Benefit Conference/workshop – feedback.** Again PO and MT attended on behalf of the CC. Highland Council's pan-Highland plan was outlined (details available on HC website). Local feeling **\*\*that the developers,\*\*** while often agreeing in principal to the suggested £5,000 per installed megawatt payment, **\*\*is that we\*\*** would prefer to deal directly with **\*\*developers local representatives\*\*** than join the HC scheme. MT warned that local relationships with developers who opt to go with HC would disappear, **\*\*leaving CCs with no bargaining powers isolating CCs from decision making\*\***. The possibility of employing an energy advisor should be considered; someone who would take control of CC dealings with what could become an unwieldy number of developers. Cllr Munro advised she is due to meet with SSE on the 13<sup>th</sup> March and will feedback the outcome of her discussions. **LM Action.**

**Item 9. Offshore renewables community benefit funding.** This item was on the agenda due to a forum being held in Brora on 13<sup>th</sup> March. Rural coastal areas could be eligible for funds from Crown Estates monies. More information is understood to be available online.

**Item 10. Ardgay Hill/Oakwood Place path.** MT has had a meeting with Core Path Officer Matt Dent who advises a simple local approach to the problem rather than protracted dealings with HC. He suggests a local group from the area could distribute hardcore, which the CC could purchase, onto the problem areas. Egg-box style matting could be laid where the grass crossing area is wearing. The matter should be passed back to those who raised it to help organise the actions. An item will be placed in the next newsletter suggesting a community clean-up day, of which this project could be a part. **PA/DH Action. Alladale 'keep out' signs.** Matt Dent confirmed that these should now be removed; he will follow this up, as will BW for CC. **BW Action. Tuiteam bridge.** Still a problem as confusion remains as to ownership. HC's stand is that 'no land changed hands when the bridge was built' therefore its maintenance responsibility lies with the landowners. Apparently Historic Scotland, in charge of listed buildings, does not know who owns it. BS was advised to talk to Sheila Tomalty, Building Standards Officer, in the next instance. **BS Action. Core Paths.** The next tranche of Core Path funding is due. It is hoped that the path and bridge at **Bad Voon** will be restored. **\*\*PO/MT Action\*\*** The step which was at the end of the footbridge by the **Invershin barrier** was removed as a safety issue. Matt Dent will contact **Gledfield Estate** regarding the problem with the gate. MT will remind him. **MT Action.** Matt is aware of the mess created by works carried out by SSE. He is sending out maps of the local Core Paths. It was suggested that the signage on the **forest track at Cornhill** might carry the KOSDT logo.

**Item 11. Beinn Tharsuinn funding applications.** General discussion took place regarding two applications 1 - Gledfield Primary School Parent Council Fundraising Group. Fears raised that the community benefit might be being

used to fund services which should be/were previously funded by Highland Council. Also that no up to date quotes were submitted. 2 – Gearrhoille Community Wood, Ardgay. DH and BW both declared an interest being on the board of the applying group. The application was deemed to have been very well presented with good back up material although unfortunately not all CC members had received the email circulation of it. Further discussion on both applications was then deferred to a private meeting at the end of the evening.

**Item 12. Windfarms update. Coire na Cloiche.** Situated between Beinn Tharsuinn and Glenmorie windfarms with thirteen turbines, mostly visible from Bonar Bridge. Access will be off the Struie at Altnamain. Proposal does not mention aviation lights ~~\*\*or community benefit\*\*~~. It makes the statement that 'the Community Council did not object' to the development which is inaccurate as in fact the CC did not submit any comment at all. MT and PA will check on previous correspondence to clarify. Concern raised over drainage which could also infringe on the fish farm operations. Deadline for response is 9<sup>th</sup> April. Secretary will write to list these three points of concern, aviation lights, drainage and ~~\*\*community benefit cumulative effect\*\*~~ and note the disagreement with the 'no objection' statement after checking. **MT/PA Action.** David Hannah apologised to the meeting as he had to leave at this stage and passed the Chair to Marion Turner. (9.30pm.) As more and more developments come on stream, a method of confirming public opinion must be found. Holding a public meeting each time would not be viable but perhaps the first half hour of the regular monthly meeting could be designated as open to public debate ~~\*\*on windfarm development as a public meeting\*\*~~ ~~\*\*and the relevant community benefit arrangements\*\*~~. ~~\*\*For consideration for future meetings.\*\*~~

**Glenmorie:** developers have stated they will pay £5,000 per installed megawatt as community benefit. **Achany:** next meeting is on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Rosehall:** liaison group is winding up; turbines are being installed. **Dalnessie:** proposals now published. **Sallachy and Glencassley:** nothing further at this time. AL reported he had attended the anti-windfarm rally in Inverness recently and was disappointed that only eighty (approximately) people turned out.

**Item 13. KOSDT.** Monthly update has been received.

**Item 14. AOCB.** (1) Willie McLaren brought three items for the attention/action of the CC. **Trees on the railway bank** on both sides of the bridge at the foot of Manse Road need to be cut back now to avoid foliage obliterating sightlines. Secretary will advise ~~\*\*HC ScotRail\*\*~~. **PA Action.** **Bramble bushes on Manse Road** were not cut back last year and now need pruning again. Willie was asked to pass this request to John Clark, HC Bonar Bridge. Willie also commended the new **'Smiley Face' sign** being operated by Creich CC and suggested that Ardgay CC do the same. Russell Taylor (Treasurer Creich CC) gave the costs to Creich for the sign as being £3,500 to buy and a further £1,200 to construct the trailer. Their sign also requires battery charging every two days which he deals with, along with regularly moving the sign around the parish. Agreed that this could be discussed at a future meeting – **agenda item?** (2) **Toilets.** Expected opening at Easter. (3) Willie has heard that a **new water supply** is to be connected in May/June – some local households have been so advised by Scottish Water. No-one else aware of this. (4) Angela mentioned the traffic lights at Ardronie Wood and fears that the land is being undermined. The Secretary will pass concerns to Campbell Stewart, HC TECS. **PA Action.** (5) **Gledfield school.** Angela expressed thanks, in advance, for whatever award would be forthcoming from the Beinn Tharsuinn fund. (6) **Highland Council.** Cllr Munro advised that prior to the elections in May, Councillors are now in 'purdah'; while still functioning as a working council, restrictions are placed on actions of Councillors as they await the outcome of the election. She plans to attend the April meeting of the CC, regardless of her own outcome, and will bring Ward Manager Andy Mackay to ensure continuity for ongoing issues.

**Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Hall.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm.