

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 9th July 2012 at 7pm in Culrain Hall

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

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

Members of the public: Liz Cormack (LC), Ian Worthy (9pm)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Apologies: Betty Wright (BW), David Laver (DL)



Item 1. Welcome/ How should the community use wind farm benefit funds? The first half hour of the meeting was designated for a public discussion regarding the best community uses of the income generated by the present and proposed windfarms. Sadly, in spite of public notices being displayed to invite attendance, only one member of the public was present at the meeting. The CC members discussed the initiatives currently in place, including the Apprenticeship Scheme which is receiving acclaim outwith the area, support of the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and the Youth Group. The main thrust of the discussion remained as how to engage the community to bring forward and see through their ideas and wishes to improve the district. The proposed 'Open Shop' week – covered later at agenda Item 10 – could be repeated at intervals if it proved successful in reaching local residents and initiating conversations with the wider population. Large amounts of money will be paid into the community benefit accounts as future developments come into being; it is essential that this money is used widely to the benefit and with approval of the local community. The opportunity to create a long-lasting and worthwhile legacy to the area cannot be too highly stressed and involvement of as much of the community as possible must be encouraged.

Item 2. Apologies. As above.

Item 3. Police report. No Police representative present and no report submitted. MG contacted PC Hunter last month with regard to the lack of Police liaison and was advised that the comments had been passed to a higher officer. No further reply has been received.

Item 4. Highland Councillor report. Cllr Farlow reported that Highland Council is currently on summer recess till August. He feels that the newly elected Council is instituting many changes for the better within the structure of its groups and committees. The remit for the new local area committee for Caithness and Sutherland is now available on the HC website. It seems that the meetings will be held in Thurso at North Highland College and all sixteen councillors will attend, including the three from this Ward. GF hopes to establish a regular surgery in Ardgay after the summer. The new Adult & Child Services committee appears to be making progress. The issue of transportation for children to secondary schools outwith their catchment area remains a difficult one but HC is committed to maintaining the stance that parents should support the local schools whenever possible and accept that transportation becomes their own responsibility when they chose to send their children elsewhere.

Item 5. Minutes of last meeting. The Minutes of the June meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record; proposed by Alan Lawrence, seconded by Marion Turner.

Item 6. Matters arising. (1) Christmas lights. DH reported that HC has installed the sockets outside the school. Discussions are now ongoing between Robbie Gunn, HC Lighting Engineer and Paul Whittock in Ardgay regarding the coming festive season's lights. **(2) Multi-member Highland Council Wards in Sutherland.** The draft letter, prepared by PO, is now ready to send to an agreed list of recipients. The aim of the letter is to highlight the difficulties encountered in the quality of service due to the large areas Councillors are expected to cover. A move to smaller, single member wards would help to lessen these difficulties. PO and the Secretary will now see to the circulating of the letter. **PO/PA Action. (3) Traffic lights at Ardronie.** No change has taken place, no work begun and the road surface is continuing to deteriorate. Secretary will urge the issue again and Cllr Farlow will continue to push for action by TECS. **PA/GF Action. (4) Recycling point.** No further action by HC has been noticed.

Item 7. Correspondence. (1) Licensing. Letter received advising that Highland Council are to review the current operating hours for premises licensed under Late Hours Catering. A response from the CC is requested. Secretary will reply stating that the CC should be consulted on all license issues and in time to make comment on applications.

PA/Action. (2) Culrain Hall. Letter from Culrain Hall Committee seeking a donation towards children's prizes in the upcoming Fun Day on 14th July. The committee is hoping to encourage more use of the village hall; the Fun Day is the first event working towards this aim. A £50 donation was approved. **AL Action.** The Hall Committee was

encouraged to make such applications further in advance in future, to specify the value of the prizes or the project, and to consider applying for community benefit funding. Liz Cormack was asked if she could make enquiries in Culrain to find someone willing to become the Culrain representative to the Community Council as currently there is no such link. **(3) Chemist application.** Secretary will reply supporting the application by Gareth Dixon of Mitchell's Chemist for inclusion on the Pharmaceutical list with the intention of opening a new dispensing chemists in Bonar Bridge at the old paper shop premises. **PA Action.** **(4) Letter to The Northern Times.** There were two parts to the letter from Mr Neil McInnes published in the paper last week. With regard to the complaint made by Mr McInnes that a Community Councillor was taking his picture recently in Bonar Bridge, the following statement was issued: "The opening accusation in the letter is very far from true. While out borrowing books from the library the CC member had observed two loaded timber lorries coming down the Lairg Road. This is contrary to the agreement with the Highland Council which states that they should never be travelling loaded within 20 minutes of each other. Because this results in damage to the roads the CC member was, in fact, getting organised to snap the photos of the next two to appear with a view to making a report to the Highland Council as we are constantly being advised to do. The CC member was actually taking time out of a trip to the library to do something constructive on behalf of the community." Cllr Farlow will speak to TECS with regard to log lorries flaunting the recommended twenty minute time lapse between lorries and urging the reinforcement of this with the haulage companies. **GF Action.** With regard to the second part of Mr McInnes' letter each item received individual attention. (i) 40 mph speed limit on the road between Ardgay and Bonar Bridge. This has been discussed in the past with Highland Council. The CC has been advised that such a limit will not be considered as it is deemed impossible to Police it effectively. (ii) Struie Place pavement. Although not raised directly to the CC, Cllr Farlow is aware of the problem and it has been passed to John Clark, TECs officer in Bonar for action. (iii) Parking for coaches. The picnic area at South Bonar is not a coach park and could only be made into one by removal of many of the features which make it an attractive picnic spot. Both Ardgay and Creich CCs are aware of parking issues in the villages; finding a suitable area for a coach park would be very difficult, especially with access to shops and businesses, but it was agreed that further discussion between the two CCs should be instigated. (iv) Drainage at the Bonar Bridge football pitch. Again this is an issue that has been much discussed in the past. The club has received full support from the CC, especially through awards from the Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit Fund. It is understood that discussions are ongoing with Highland Council seeking a solution to the long running drainage problems. Having considered all points from Mr McInnes' letter it was felt that minuting the discussions at this open meeting was sufficient response and no further reply was necessary. Disappointment was registered that Mr McInnes had taken the step of writing to the paper without first approaching the Community Council directly.

Item 8. Windfarms update. Rosehall. Nothing new. **Achany.** Next panel meeting in August. **Sallachy.** It is hoped that an agreement will be signed soon with regard to the Community Benefit agreement. Admirable work has been carried out on this by all three local Community Councils. **Glenmorrie.** An addendum to the EIA has been prepared by the developers; Secretary will re-submit CC letter with comments. **PA Action.** **Dalnessie.** Nothing new at this time. **Coire na Cloiche.** A meeting suggested for September/October to include the developer and Creich, Ardross and Edderton CC representatives to discuss Community Benefit arrangements.

David Hannah and Marion Turner will continue to work as the A&DCC community benefit negotiators. It was suggested that perhaps Betty Wright or David Laver could take over dealing with new planning applications for windfarms as they come in to the CC. MT agreed to circulate a basic spreadsheet which would provide information on all current and proposed windfarms within the CC area. **MT Action.**

Item 9. Treasurer's report. The Treasurer's Account balance stands at £965.91 with outstanding liabilities of £84.30; Project Account at £2,783.39 with outstanding payments of £543.20 and the Toilets Account at £299.65. The summer newsletter cost £450, a £100 donation was made to the Flag Raising Ceremony at Drummuie and £50 was donated to Frances Hull towards Jamboree attendance. This year's Highland Council grant has not yet been received in spite of the audited accounts being submitted to the Ward Manager in April and the AGM minutes supplied in June.

Item 10. Open Shop Week. It had been decided to hold the Open Shop Week during the first week in August but it has now transpired that the village hall will be closed for around a month for important survey work to be carried out. After some discussion it was agreed that the gazebo will be used instead of the hall with the benefit that it can be moved around the village in the hope of reaching out to more people. This will now be done over August 1st, 2nd and 3rd with the gazebo in Carron Place on the morning of Wednesday 1st, in Oakwood Place on the morning of Thursday 2nd and in Struie Place on the morning of Friday 3rd. It is hoped that enough CC members and volunteers will be

available to visit the houses in each area to encourage residents to come to the gazebo or to give opinions and comments at home if housebound. Also the gazebo will be erected every afternoon on the green in the centre of the village. If this liaison exercise proves successful it can be repeated at a later time when the hall is once more available. PA will circulate information and arrange publicity. Cllr Farlow expressed his, and his colleagues' support for the venture. He will talk to Cllrs Munro and Morrison and make arrangements to attend when possible. **PA/GF Action.**

Item 11. Newsletter/ distribution. 350 copies of the newsletter should cover the full distribution; the next edition is due in September. New printers' costs this time are £450 against £415 for the spring issue. Ales Community will be contacted for a quote for a black and white edition. The format could be amended with regard to the unchanging local information which could be issued annually in a pull-out section. Another cost saving could be to reduce the number of editions per year from four to three. Discussion point for next meeting. **Agenda item.**

Item 12. Any other competent business. **a. Street signs.** General opinion indicated that windfarm money could be used to provide new signs where required. These could clearly indicate the Ardgay boundaries and perhaps also carry the Kyle of Sutherland logo. **b. Red phone boxes.** Paint has been ordered and will be delivered to volunteers on arrival. **c. Setting up A&DCC company.** Discussions will be instigated with Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. **d. Community Right to Buy.** Nothing further at this time. **e. Royal Garden Party.** Thanks to invitations from Creich and Kincardine Branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland, Liz Cormack, Gillian Glennie, and Alan and Marion Lawrence attended the Garden Party at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh which, on a warm and dry day, they thoroughly enjoyed. **f. GREAN.** A letter will be sent expressing the loss of the excellent kerbside collection recycling service. **PA Action.** **g. Flooding at Culrain.** The flooding on the main road at the junction beside the hall was still visible tonight. LC requested that something be done to solve the problem. This has been passed to TECS on several occasions. Cllr Farlow and the Secretary will both bring it to the attention of Simon Young, HC Chief Engineer once again. **GF/PA Action.**

Item 13. Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Monday 10th September 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Community Hall. PA will book the hall. **PA Action.** MG advised that she will not be available to take the Minutes that night (a substitute Minute Taker for that evening should be investigated for that evening – any volunteers from the community?). A vote of thanks was recorded to Culrain Village Hall Committee for the use of their hall this evening.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.