

# ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 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), David Laver (DL)

**Also present:** Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

**Invited guest:** Andrea Madden, Community Development Officer, NHS

**Members of the public:** Theresa Langley (TL)

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

**Apologies:** None received



**Item 1. Welcome/Andrea Madden, NHS Community Development Officer.** DH opened the meeting at 7pm and asked Andrea to address the meeting.

Andrea, based in Tongue, is one of three Community Development Officers who have been in post for two years. These posts were created to support the implementation of the Joint Community Care Plan which amalgamated the NHS care service with Highland Council's Social Work Department, primarily but not exclusively working with the elderly in Sutherland where there are more over 75s living than 0-15 year olds. Andrea's remit is mainly to look at how to work with the changes in the services following the restructuring and how to translate ideas into sustainable services through discussions with the community, to build community activities and social groups and help the older age group to become more involved not only in their own local areas but in the wider catchment. Ascertaining the demand can be difficult; one method employed is for Andrea to visit established local groups. Demographic statistics are also helpful, knowing how many over 65s or over 75s there are in any given area then finding ways to reach out to them. It is perhaps little known that Eden Court has outreach workers who aim to assist with difficulties experienced by people wishing to attend events there. Andrea was able to cite successes in Tongue and Bonar Bridge (Bradbury Centre) where better use is being made of the available facilities with more integrated activities being offered. The 'Falls Clinic' running in Invergordon works at the 'high end' of care delivery but a new resource has started in the Bradbury Centre using the 'Otago' exercise programme which was developed in New Zealand. In any given year, 50% of over 80s will sustain a fall, with falls and their subsequent complications being the leading cause of deaths in the elderly; ambulance call outs are higher for falls than for heart conditions, often not for actual treatment but to lift the victim from the floor. The Otago programme not only aims to improve balance, co-ordination and confidence but also teaches how to get up from a fall and how to 'talk' someone back up without the helper actually having to lift him/her. It is hoped to expand the availability of these classes throughout Sutherland, but once learned Otago can be carried out at home by the individual. The Development Officer can also assist with maximising income by applying for entitlements. Great help is needed to combat fuel poverty. The Highland Public Health report of 2011 gives an interesting comparison of living and providing quality of life costs between city/urban dwelling and village/remote settings – costs are higher in the latter. Discussion covered the constantly shifting 'placing' of Ardgay depending on which authority/group is concerned, often confused between Sutherland or Ross-shire. Under the new Joint Community Care Plan there are four areas with Ardgay falling into the north group dealing with Caithness and Sutherland. The mid area takes in both East and Wester Ross. Area Manager for the north is Bob Silverwood with Ross MacKenzie as District Manager. DH invited Andrea to submit a piece for the A&DCC newsletter which she hopes to do for the spring edition. With the warm thanks of the CC members, Andrea left at 7.50pm. A brief discussion followed on the difficulties which arise from the area boundaries which have been moved several times over the years. The river catchment area would be the obvious boundary to use.

**Item 2. Apologies.** As above.

**Item 3. Police report.** No Police representative present and no report submitted. As the Minutes from Creich CC are now circulated at least one level of report is received but this might not reflect a true picture for Ardgay. Even an emailed report would be welcome.

**Item 4. Minutes of last meeting.** The Minutes of the October meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record; proposed by Marion Turner; seconded by Peter Armstrong.

**Item 5. Matters arising. (1) Service bus to Asda/Tain swimming pool.** Madeods now operate a service. Once received, the timetable will be published in the newsletter. Secretary will contact Madeods. **PA Action. (2) Clach**

**Eiteag repair.** Great appreciation was shown to Alan Lawrence for dealing with the repair. The idea was put forward to foster a 'local myth' about the stone which would intrigue visitors' imaginations! There is no tourist booklet for the Ardgay area in spite of the many local places of interest. The Goat Wife's cottage and Croick Church were both mentioned. A clearances interpretation centre in the village would be a great boon; perhaps the 'Heritage' groups could take this idea forward. **(3) Local facilities for glass recycling.** Cllr Farlow advised the Secretary to contact Colin Clark of HC Environmental Services. **(PA Action)** **(4) Rail services – improving station and rail services.** Secretary continues in correspondence with ScotRail. It was noted there is now an electronic sign board in Tain station as well as at Lairg. PA wondered if anything might be done with the old platform toilet building – perhaps the building could be brought up to standard for a disabled toilet to be installed. **(5) Christmas lights.** Paul Whittock is ready to set up lights at the appropriate time. **(6) Public toilets.** Highland Council has now closed the facility for the season. Jeanie Sparling was thanked for her excellent cleaning and maintenance there throughout the summer. Cllr Farlow suggested that instead of tiling the floor, a form of composite flooring might be more appropriate, long lasting and easier to clean. An application to the Ward Discretionary Fund could meet with a favourable response especially if match funded. Quotes for purchase and laying of such flooring will be acquired for submission. The CC could appoint its choice of contractor. **DH Action.** **(7) Council house painting/maintenance.** Any tenant who considers their house is in need of such repair should take a letter, indicating the work required, to the Service Point, keeping a copy for their own records. **(8) Ronnie MacNeill retirement.** This item was picked up from the Creich CC minutes. A&DCC will be happy to liaise with Sandy Chalmers when he gets in touch. The question was asked if Ronnie's retirement is only from the school bus runs or if he is also giving up the taxi service, but no-one was aware of his decision. **(9) Creich minutes.** Members wished to record that they welcome and appreciate the sharing of minutes between the two CCs. The system in Creich of 'area representatives' is admired and it was pondered that various areas within A&DCC could also be represented to this CC in the same way. **(10) Culrain flooding.** Cllr Farlow has been told that the source of the flooding cannot be identified. Springs are suspected as the cause. Members insist that a simple drain/culvert is all that is required as the downward slope of the ground would then take the water directly to the nearby pond, approximately 50ft below. Long-standing damage to the Culrain railway bridge was also highlighted. **GF Action.**

**Item 6. Correspondence.** **(1) Ward boundaries.** Secretary has received a reply from Natasha Griffiths indicating no review is anticipated. PO will draft a response. **PO Action.** **(2) Red telephone boxes.** A journalist has asked the CC for information as to its use of the telephone boxes it now owns. This is to be used in an article on the subject. **(3) Scottish Rights of Way Society.** Their annual report has been received. Agreed that the CC should maintain its membership. Treasurer to make subscription payment when due. **AL Action.**

**Item 7. Oakwood Place/Ardgay Hill footpath.** Mrs Copley was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to ill health. DL assured the meeting that she is aware that the CC cannot take on the public liability involved in the project. The CC does hold £800 for the specific purpose of improving the condition of the footpath. If a local group can form to deal with the work, this matter can be speedily resolved.

**Item 8. Windfarms update.** The former Achary Panel, now renamed as the Kyle of Sutherland Panel will hold its next meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Anyone seeking the list of current and proposed windfarms in the area should refer to the A&DCC newsletter, visit the A&DCC website or go to the Service Point.

**Item 9. KOSDT update.** Lynsey Burns will be leaving her post at the end of the year. Funding will be sought to maintain the Development Officer post for the next two years. Free Hall slots are available at present. The Saturday film club for primary aged children in Ardgay and Bonar Bridge started last week. In an attempt to find out what time is most suitable, this week's club will meet on Friday night. Anyone wishing more information should contact Elissa Stevens. The Development Plan has been completed as has the new funding application. The Migdale Archaeology Project is taking shape. New local notice boards should be placed soon. The large Kyle of Sutherland signs will require Planning permission for which an application is being prepared. Although changes will occur due to the change of Development Officer, MT indicated that the record shows a long list of beneficiaries and projects achieved in the past two years, many more than in similar areas in other parts of the country. She accepted that more publicity covering the activities of the Trust is important and steps are being taken to ensure it. Local groups should be encouraged to make more use of the Trust which exists to assist and support them in seeking funding, setting up and operating. The Trust can be contacted through the office of Key Commercial Services in Bonar Bridge, by phone on 01863 766908, by email on [development@kyleofsutherland.co.uk](mailto:development@kyleofsutherland.co.uk) and online at [www.kyleofsutherland.co.uk](http://www.kyleofsutherland.co.uk)

**Item 10. Treasurer's report.** The Treasurer's Account balance stands at £1743.90 with outstanding liabilities of £355.08; Projects Account at £3949.51 with no outstanding cheques. The Toilets Account stands at £1043.65 after receipt of the Highland Council grant via the Projects Account in early October. There is one outstanding cheque for £189.00 and one more payment of £189.00 due to be paid this month after which the bulk of the balance will be transferred to the Projects Account. The Newsletter remains £55 in arrears to the Projects account. It was agreed that an application should be made to the Rosehall Windfarm community benefit for funding for the Newsletter. **DH Action.**

**Item 11. Items from Creich CC.** See mentions in Item 5 above.

**Item 12. Open Shop Week.** PA and BW have had discussions with Andrea Madden seeking advice on how best to reach out to the community. Targeting small groups is thought to be more successful than trying to reach everyone at once. Further preparatory work should be carried out through the winter with a view to launching this initiative in the spring. A new section of the website could be dedicated to this, perhaps running a blog. Facebook and Twitter should also be used. Questionnaires should be made relevant to whichever age group they are directed. A further meeting to discuss the next step will be arranged with all CC members invited to attend.

**Item 13. Any other competent business.** **a. Remembrance Day.** Votes of thanks were recorded for Mary Stobo and also Steve Copley who laid the wreath on behalf of the Community Council. Fifteen people attended the ceremony. **b. Core Path access/dog waste.** This problem is ongoing with a local landowner still denying access to the Core Path for fear of contamination by dog waste. Cllr Farlow urged to have Matt Dent resolve the issue and liaise with the landowner. **GF Action.** **c. Tuiteam bridge.** Cllr Farlow asked to make urgent enquires with HC to deal with this long running closure which affects the residents of Strathoykel particularly during times of flood and winter weather. **d. Highland Councillors ward meetings.** Cllrs Farlow, Munro and Morrison will be holding a meeting in Ardgay on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to which CC members are invited, allowing the opportunity for them to meet Hugh Morrison. This meeting is not open to the public. **e. Scottish Water.** MT wishes to establish the up to date position with regard to new water connections for both business and residential properties. A year or more ago Scottish Water advised that new connections could not be guaranteed – it is important to find out if this situation has been resolved. Secretary will write to Scottish Water. **PA Action.** **f. Shrubbery at station.** This is now overgrown and needs to be removed. John Clark of Highland Council will be advised. **DH Action.** **g. Review of Beinn Tharsuinn Fund guidelines.** Held over until Bob Sendall is fit to return to the CC. Good wishes for his recovery were noted once again. **h. Retirement of local electrician.** It is understood that the area will soon be without a resident electrician. **i. Community Interest Company.** With several possibilities arising in the near future, members should be sought to form CICs with a view to establishing new operating groups in readiness. **j. Recycled laptop and b/w printer.** Doreen Gibbs found these and they are now available for community use. PA will take them meantime. **k. Highland Council Essential Guide to Benefits, Money Advice, Energy Advice and Other Entitlements.** This booklet is available at the Service Point and is recommended to everyone who could benefit from the information.

**Item 14. Beinn Tharsuinn funding applications (private session).** There were no applications to be discussed.

**Item 15. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Community Hall. PA will book the hall. **PA Action.**

Meeting closed at 10pm.