

## ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7pm in Ardgay Hall



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

**Also present:** Sgt George Ewing, Police Scotland (at 7.45pm)

**Members of the public:** Teresa Langley (TL), Willie McLaren (VM), Stuart McCarroll (SMC), Patricia Hannah (PH)

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

**Apologies:** Peter Armstrong, Secretary (PA) George Farlow (Highland Councillor)

**Item 1. Welcome – A Trust Fund for Ardgay? (Open Discussion).** David Hannah as Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which began with an open public discussion in an attempt to ascertain local opinions as to whether an endowment trust fund should be set up using some of the income from local windfarms. The aim of such a trust would be to provide community funds in the future when the regular income stream from windfarms ceases. It had been hoped there would be a larger number of members of the public present to enable the CC to gauge public opinion. MT outlined the process of setting up an endowment trust fund using Foundation Scotland as the administrator. £25,000 is the minimum required to start the fund. If it is decided to go ahead the CC would begin by setting aside £5,000 per year, when possible, from the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Benefit until the initial start-up amount is reached. The capital is retained in the trust for long term investment with the dividend being re-invested or utilised as preferred. It was made clear that the CC is not in a position to operate the trust fund and a management committee made up of members of the public would need to be established. Foundation Scotland would take a one-off payment of £500, thereafter a service charge is levied, based on the value of the trust; the bigger the trust the lower the service charge. A trust of up to £150,000 would incur a 0.3% charge. The initial period for a trust is three years minimum after which the management committee would be free to make any changes deemed necessary. Six monthly statements would be issued by Foundation Scotland; it states it would aim to achieve a 6% interest rate on the investment. Currently FS manages £12m in endowment trusts. It employs professional investment advisors to develop the investment strategies. It is a charity and therefore attracts certain tax benefits to the endowment funds. Windfarm developers are in agreement with such funds being set up and currently both Creich CC and Lairg CC are investigating the possibilities with Creich already ring-fencing £5,000 a year from their Beinn Tharsuinn income to build up the initial £25,000. A&DCC would begin in the same manner setting aside funds from their Beinn Tharsuinn income with other community benefit income streams being tapped into as appropriate at a later stage. It was stated that funding good social projects might be better use of the monies owing to the low interest rates currently available. Project examples might be buying a share in a windfarm or buying a local property to be rented out. Interested and committed people are required to take forward whatever ideas are selected. SMC expressed concern regarding the safety of the investments, would they be guaranteed? The CC would require the investments to be ethical. After half an hour's discussion it was agreed by all to begin the ring-fencing of £5,000 per year within the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund, proposed by David Laver and seconded by Marion Turner. The Chair will advise Phil Tomalin, Company Secretary, of the CC decision. **DH Action.**

**Item 2/3. Apologies/Police report.** Apologies as above. Sgt George Ewing arrived at 7.45pm advising that there was nothing of note to report from the Police. A complaint has been received by the CC from Steven Menzies at Gledfield regarding log lorries travelling at high speed from the Culrain direction into the village. CC concern was expressed once again about speeding at all times and in all areas of the village. Sgt Ewing stated that the Police are trying to target school areas locally and in particular at times when pupils are out on the roads around the schools. Lack of manpower makes a high level of policing unachievable. He suggested the use of speed monitor tubes which can be placed across the roads, results from which could be used to establish the traffic pattern and level of speeding incidents. Cllr Farlow may have contact information to source the tubes, if not Sgt Ewing can supply this to the CC. Issues of noisy exhausts, and 'one headlight only' vehicles were highlighted also. With thanks from the CC, Sgt Ewing left at 7.55pm. **GF Action.**

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

**Item 5. Matters arising. (1) Royal Mail pillar box.** MT has had discussions with Greg Donaldson urging a solution be found promptly to the lack of post box provision in the village.

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He intends to designate the moving of the box as an 'emergency' and is awaiting a date from the engineers department which has to assess the chosen site for underground pipes/cables etc. As the existing box was apparently closed due to the icy conditions underfoot, MT suggested that it could be reopened meantime providing that such a move would not hinder the re-siting plans. DH recorded his opinion that the closure of the pillar box had been handled badly from the start, with no advance warning of closure or reason given. **(2) Ronnie MacNeill's retirement.** The collection is ongoing in the shops in Bonar Bridge. No date yet given for the presentation. **(3) Toilets.** The new flooring has been laid but the contractors will return to do some final tidying up. The facility was opened for the season on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. **(4) Scottish Water.** In the absence of the Secretary it is not know if any reply has been received from the Ombudsman. **(5) Ardgay Hill/Oakwood Place footpaths.** Mrs Copley replied to the CC's letter last month. With neither Secretary or Cllr Farlow present no further information is available. It was stressed once again that the way forward is for a residents group to take on the path project. £800 remains available towards costs. **(6) Street lighting reduction.** Cllr Farlow was due to report to the CC on this issue. Hold over till next month. **GF Action.**

**Item 6. Correspondence.** **(i) George Pickett** has written with suggestions for possible use of community benefit. The first would be a scheme to help fund driving lessons and in particular Passplus for the younger local residents with regard to extending job opportunities. This idea will be passed to KOSDT as a project it could manage with funding applied for by the CC from the Beinn Tharsuinn community benefit. A scheme to provide an energy subsidy for each household was also suggested. DH advised that consideration has been given to a single payment plan to cover the standing charge on electricity bills. This would benefit all users while not specifically encouraging energy use. The scheme could be run through KOSDT or any other organisation. An Energy Club could be established along the lines of the existing Oil club. DH will find out more about the Oil Club, and also reply to George Pickett thanking him for his suggestions. **DH Action.** **(ii) Newsletter.** A note received from Davie Ross reducing the number of newsletters required for his delivery run from 16 to 12 as some people on his route had asked him not to deliver again. Alan Brown has written stating he no longer needs a paper copy as he accesses the newsletter online. He suggests that a list could be drawn up of residents who will read issues online thus saving the number of printed copies required. SMC pointed out that readership of each copy can be much higher than simply one individual. Providing only online availability, even though requested by a household, could reduce the amount of people actually reading that newsletter. An item could be placed in the next issue asking people to indicate which method they would prefer with email addresses requested from those who wish to utilise the online facility. An email list could be established which could be used to issue reminders of dates of upcoming CC meetings, providing the agenda, etc. DH will reply to both correspondents and place items in the next newsletter. **DH Action.** **(iii) East Sutherland Community Care Forum.** Barbara Watson from Lairg has written inviting an Ardgay representative to join the Forum. DH has suggested this to Teresa Langley who will consider it and advise DH in due course. **TL/DH Action.** **(iv) Bonar Bridge Hall Committee.** A letter of thanks from the Hall Committee has been received in respect of the recent Beinn Tharsuinn award which has helped with the running of the P6/7 activities.

**Item 7. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update.** Nothing new at this time.

**Item 8. Windfarms update. Glenmorie/Coire na Cloiche.** CC representatives DH and MT have been meeting with the other four CCs concerned to discuss future community benefits should these developments proceed. The aim would be for payments to be made direct to relevant CCs and not through the setting up of another panel. **Dalchork.** Discussions and planning at a very early stage. A liaison group is proposed working with A&DCC, Lairg and Creich CCs. **Sallachy.** Requests from WKN and the Estate for the CC to issue letters of support/neutrality in respect of the proposed windfarms were discussed with the outcome being that the Chair will refer the writers to the CC's previous correspondence and statements. No further letters will be issued. **DH Action.** **Achany.** Next meeting is on April 29<sup>th</sup>. **Foundation Scotland.** Next meeting 30<sup>th</sup> April. **Future panels.** PO encouraged local people to become involved with future panel work to administer community benefit funds; a company limited by guarantee could be a way to do this. **Windfarms – General** – DH emphasised that whilst MT and DH attended the inter community council discussions on the proposals and resultant community benefit they did not make committed decisions without the agreement of the whole CC.

**Item 9. Planning/Licensing applications.** None relevant.

**Item 10. Treasurer's report.** The Treasurer's Account balance stands at £1186.63 with one outstanding cheque for £73.30. Projects Account at £3538.66 with an outstanding cheque for £940 for the toilet flooring. The Toilets Account stands at £5.65. £660 will be transferred back to this account to cover the early cleaning costs this season. Martin

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Calder will be asked to audit the 2012/13 accounts in time for the AGM in June. A donation of £60 will be given to the charity of Martin's choice in recognition of his work.

**Item 11. Councillor's report.** No report available this month.

**Item 12. Any other competent business.** Jeanie Sparling to be asked if she would like any more tubs to put more floral displays around the village. SMC has some barrels he could supply if so.

**Item 13. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm in Ardgay Public Hall. PA will book the hall. **PA Action.**

**Item 17. Beinn Tharsuinn funding applications (private session).** There was one application to be discussed, from the Lairg Learning Centre. Decision was deferred for one month during which further information will be requested from the applicants. **PO Action.**

Meeting closed at 9.00pm.