

## ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013 in Ardgay Hall, immediately following the Annual General Meeting



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

**Also present:** Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), PC Ian Gollan at 7.15pm

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

**Apologies:** None

**Item 1/2. Welcome/Apologies** (see above). Chair David Hannah continued the evening's business welcoming everyone to the monthly meeting immediately after the close of the AGM.

**Item 3. Police report.** PC Gollan arrived at 7.15pm at which time the AGM was interrupted to allow him to make his report. No incidents of note reported, only one possible fuel theft. Security measures such as motion sensor lighting, and lockable tank coverings were recommended. Also a 'level' alarm which can be fitted in tanks to trigger if oil level suddenly drops as it would when being stolen. The public should also be on the alert with regard to small tools thefts from sheds and building sites. Asked about the vandalism and removal of signs regarding dog waste in Gearrhoille Wood it seems there is little can be done by the Police but the Dog Warden should be made aware of the problem and of the ongoing fouling issues. Speed checks will continue at the school when possible. PC Gollan left at 7.25pm.

**Item 4. Minutes of May meeting.** The Minutes from the May meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Marion Turner; seconded: Bob Sendall.

**Item 5. Matters arising not on the agenda. (1) Royal mail pillar box.** MT has left messages for Greg Donaldson seeking the date for the moving of the box but with no response. TL will continue to pursue this. **TL Action.** **(2) Toilets.** The flooring contractor has indicated work is expected to be carried out tomorrow. Jeannie Sparling has been advised. **(3) Newsletter.** The summer edition is printed and will now be distributed. No distributor currently covers the South side of Strathcarron; DH and BW will discuss possible arrangements. **DH/BW Action.**

**Item 6. Correspondence.** As Acting Secretary, MT has sent out correspondence to Mrs Copley, Creich Community Council, Dornoch Academy, Clean up Scotland, KPMG; Beinn Tharsuinn grant award letters to Ardgay Public Hall and Lairg Learning Centre were sent by the Chair. Incoming mail included documents regarding Consultation of National Planning, Consultation on Managing Obstructions within the Adopted Road, Highland Council's weekly planning applications list, Fair Trade in Highland (BW took this to follow up), Energy Consent Unit re Glenmorrie windfarm proposal, Scottish Water, Care & Learning Support Services, this latter seeking funds and will be advised to make application to the appropriate Community Benefit Fund. DH reported the award from SSE & EoN Windfarm Community fund of £5,000 split over three years to support ongoing production of the CC newsletter. Logos for each awarding body are now displayed on the back page. Secretary will reply to Energy Consent Unit asking to be kept up to date with the Glenmorrie proposals. **BW/TL Action.** Correspondence matters will now be handled by TL.

**Item 7. Loss of Falls of Shin Visitor Centre.** The CC has written to Balnagown Estate offering support. KoSDT is co-ordinating moves by local interests and those further afield in the hope of securing some temporary arrangements. The erection of portaloos at the site is essential. Tour buses are now stopping in Ardgay to allow clients to make use of the toilet facilities here. This has had no detrimental effect on the upkeep of the facility but this will be monitored with a view to ordering sufficient essential supplies from HC. Cllr Farlow agreed that it would be an excellent goodwill gesture by Highland Council should it decide to place toilet facilities at Shin Falls. All agreed that health issues could well arise if no facilities are provided. MT recorded the CC's shock at the loss of yet another major tourist attraction in the area, this bringing the number to four in recent months, Shin Falls, Carbisdale Castle, The Lady Ross and the Alladale Estate outlet. GF suggested liaising with Peter Guthrie at HIE to ensure it is aware of the amount of local feeling. He will also speak to Mr Guthrie. **GF Action.**

**Item 8. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. (MT)** Helen Houston's short contract ends in August. To date she has worked hard liaising with many local groups, co-ordinating local efforts and responses following the fire at Shin Falls, and seeking funding to continue the Development Officer post.

**Item 9. Windfarms update.** Nothing new this month. Interesting to note that the Scottish Government turned down the proposal for a windfarm at Dunbeath in spite of no objections being raised by Highland Council.

Minutes approved 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013

**Item 10. Report from Access Forum.** PO attended his first meeting in May as an individual resident but is happy to represent the CC. He is still finding out about how the Forum works. Core footpaths are a consideration for concern; an exercise is currently underway to re-map all such paths. There is no obligation on anyone to maintain these paths. Tuiteam Bridge was discussed at the meeting but no progress made due to there still being no-one taking responsibility for it. There may come a time when both Sutherland and Caithness Access Forums merge.

**Item 11. Planning and licensing applications.** None relevant.

**Item 12. THC Licensing Consultation.** The current consultation on licensing regulations was discussed although it has little bearing on A&DCC there being only one licensed premises in the area. One proposal is that after 9pm drinks should only be served in plastic glasses. It was thought that this would prove unworkable in the main, though it has some credence in the case of night clubs, events, etc. Noise and nuisance issues are covered in the consultation but again there is little relevance here. Secretary will reply accordingly. **TL Action.**

**Item 13. THC Consultation on Advertising on Roads and Pavements.** This issue is particular to Dornoch and Dingwall in the main though it is agreed that 'A' boards can cause obstructions on pavements leading to pedestrians, push chair and wheelchair users being forced onto the roadways. Legislation already exists to cover these eventualities. Members feel that such local issues should be dealt with as they arise. Advertising in roadside verges for local events in rural areas should be allowed to continue as now with action only taken if nuisance levels were reached. Overbearing legislation could cause economic constraints in rural areas and it was felt that no further regulation should be imposed. Secretary to reply to this effect. **TL Action.**

**Item 14. Treasurer's report. (AL)** The Treasurer's Account cleared balance stands at £1097.33 with outstanding cheques totalling £198.10. The Projects Account balance is £1948.66 with outstanding cheques of £85.67. The Toilets Account cleared balance is £665.65 with two outstanding cheques totalling £387.00.

**Item 15. Councillor's report. (GF)** Recent publication in the press has shown that the three Highland Councillors in Ward 1 have the highest expenses claims. As they also have the largest area by far and are required to make frequent journeys to Inverness, CC members felt that comparisons are unfair and implied criticism is not valid. Road chipping work is ongoing. Failure to remove road works signs is a constant source of irritation to road users though it is understood that periodically HC employees are assigned to collection duties. Discussions continue with regard to the best improvement measures for the road collapse at Ardchronie. Mr Waite has not yet managed to visit the Ardgay Hill footpath but hopes to do so soon. Drainage problems throughout the area are being addressed during the summer months. Kessock Bridge is expected to re-open next week. The second phase of improvements will be carried out next year during February to June.

**Item 16. AOCB. (i)** Views/visibility. PO has posted an article on the CC website regarding steps taken in Norway to promote visitor access to viewpoints in areas of specific scenic beauty/interest. Lay-bys and parking areas are placed at such sites and have been proven to increase visitor numbers and spending in local areas. £500,000 is to be earmarked for such a plan in Scotland. Landowners should be encouraged to release roadside lands to Highland Council which in turn should seize the opportunity to enhance the visitor experience throughout the region. (ii) A copy of the CC's agreement with regard to the Coire na Cloiche windfarm community benefit was placed on file.

**Item 17. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held in Culrain Village Hall on Monday July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. MT will book the hall. **MT Action.**

Public meeting closed at 9.08pm.

**Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm applications.** Discussed at private session after the meeting, it was agreed to make an application from the Community Council to the fund for £2,000 which could be set aside as an Environment Improvement Fund from which amounts will be drawn for small scale projects such as the floral displays, etc. The award, approved in principal last month, of £700 to share costs of the cycle ramp improvements at Invershin viaduct would also be taken from this. The fund will be kept within the Project Account with a separate audit trail maintained.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.