

# ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7pm

**Present: Elected members:** David Hannah, Chair (DH), Teresa Langley, Secretary (TL), Marion Turner (MT), Betty Wright (BW), David Laver (DL), Bob Sendall (BS)

**Also present:** Vicky Whittock, Holly Slater, Adam Wardrop, Brian Bilborough, PC Angus Morrison (7.30pm)

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

**Apologies:** Phil Olson (PO), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

**Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies** (see above). Chair David Hannah opened the evening welcoming everyone before inviting Brian Bilborough to address the meeting. Mr Bilborough wished to advise the Community Council of his recent tribulations following the disappearance of his motor bike from the access track through the E.oN Rosehall Windfarm. In brief, Mr Bilborough had ridden his off-road bike at the start of a fishing expedition, up the track which leads through the windfarm. Although all visitors to the site are requested to stop and register at a control point, he had failed to do so, carrying on past the cabin, in which he could see several people, before parking his bike by the side of the track in full view beside turbine 15 and proceeding on foot to the hill loch. On his return some time later he discovered his bike had been removed. He walked to the control point but no staff were present and there was no trace of his bike. After walking back to his car he left a note on the main gate concerning the incident and giving his contact information. The following morning he returned to the site but no staff were present. Thinking his bike might have been taken to the Police station, Mr Bilborough went to Lairg but no-one there had any knowledge of it. He has made several attempts to contact E.oN hoping to retrieve his bike, or claim compensation for it, but to date has received no reply to his letters or phone messages. The Police have noted the report of a stolen/missing bike but after brief investigations with E.oN it appears there is little further they can do. Mr Bilborough plans to write to his MP, MSP and perhaps the local press to express his anger at E.oN for failing to help solve his problem. He left at 7.15pm.

The Chair then invited Vicky Whittock to address the meeting. Although staying for the entire meeting, Vicky's main reason for attending was to introduce Holly Salter and Adam Wardrop to the CC. They will be running the new café/shop which is soon to open beside the new bike shop at Ardgay Garage. Building and preparations are going well and it is hoped that the facility will be open within the next few weeks. The team is already in contact with Business Gateway and the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust but any further assistance with seeking funding would be welcome. Holly and Adam also stayed for the rest of the meeting.

**Item 3. Police report.** PC Angus Morrison arrived at 7.30pm He reported on the single car accident which took place at Kincardine last night, other than that the only incidents to mention were a few calls on animal related matters. He gave out a few questionnaires regarding local Police services/representation which will be completed and returned to the Bonar Bridge Police station. From the CC the only highlighted issues remain speeding in the village and the ongoing problems with log lorries not only speeding but driving fully laden in convoy, ignoring the recommendation for a twenty minute gap between them. The 20mph speed limit sign on the approach to the village from Culrain is badly sighted, presumably trying to cover two different roads at the junction. It is almost impossible to tell when it is flashing. A request was made that this sign should be moved and that a second one be erected to properly control the junction. This should be brought to the attention of Highland Council for action. **GF Action.** Parking in Bonar Bridge at the new burger van seems to be causing obstruction problems especially with more than one early morning log lorry stopping at the same time. Asked if, as happens elsewhere in the south, there was any possibility of members of the public being trained to use speed detector guns to record and pass on information to the Police, PC Morrison felt that this would be very unlikely in this area due to lack of funds. He left the meeting at 7.45pm.

**Item 4. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising (not on the agenda).** The Minutes from the September meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Marion Turner; seconded by Bob Sendall. **(1) Ardgay Station anniversary.** Secretary states this is to be a winter project for Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Trust and Friends of the Far North Line. She hopes to have more information soon. **(2) Tenants association.** A 'walk around' Ardgay and Bonar Bridge is proposed for next week to take note of repair issues such as damaged pavements, kerbs, etc. A notice is on display in the village with further information. **(3) Energy Savings Trust.** BW advised she attended a most interesting event in Inverness at which there was much information available regarding energy saving advice for heating and insulation, grants, etc. The overall feeling of those attending was that the issues are too great to be left at an Ad Hoc

state and should be receiving far greater attention from local and national government. The excellent speaker that day would be willing to come to a CC meeting to give a brief presentation. MT mentioned that KoSDT had applied to the Climate Challenge Fund for funds to support a local survey/assessment of needs but was asked to resubmit the application. BW will check with Helen Houston. **BW Action. (4) Overgrown trees/bushes at railway bridge.** Under the impression that this was in hand, Secretary will chase this up with Network Rail. **TL Action. (5) Notice boards at new cycle shop/café/shop.** MT advised that Planning approval has been received.

**Item 5. Village Clean Up Day.** Now planned for Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November – volunteer helpers welcome. BW will co-ordinate the day, acquiring kits, organising people and routes. Start time will be 10am in the centre of the village with circular routes working outwards. DH has approached the school and the Boys Brigade both of which may be able to supply young people to assist. Working with the teachers and children at the school, a competition for best clean-up, most rubbish collected, etc might be arranged. **BW Action.**

**Item 6. Highland Road Safety Seminar.** This will be held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 12.30pm in THC HQ in Inverness. BW agreed to attend. **BW Action.**

**Item 7. North West & Central Ward Forum.** To be held in Lairg on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October. DL and TL plan to attend. The topic of the day being the Police and Fire Services, the CC representatives will try to state the need for more obvious Police presence and make clear the local feeling that there is little point in reporting minor incidents as there are not enough Police personnel to attend, thereby giving the statistics an inaccurate picture of local crime/issues. **DL/TL Action.**

**Item 8. Secretary's report. (TL)** Nothing of note.

**Item 9. Treasurer's report. (AL)** No report this month due to Treasurer's absence on holiday.

**Item 10. Correspondence.** Incoming mail included (i) Ardgay Public Hall Committee has submitted invoices with regard to expenditure utilising their Windfarm Community Benefit award. (ii) Documentation received regarding Police Scotland's Public Counter Service Provision/Traffic Warden review. (iii) SSE advises of its Energy Advice Tour event in Golspie on 17<sup>th</sup> October at 12.30pm. Posters have been displayed. (iv) Royal British Legion Creich & Kincardine Branch has written giving details of this year's Remembrance Day service and wreath-laying in Kincardine. In the absence of any other volunteer, DH offered to undertake this task. **DH Action.** (v) SRRC. Paul Whittock submitted a brief report on and invoices from their recent successful event which was assisted by Windfarm Community Benefit. The winter indoor season will continue in the Bonar Bridge Hall unless a time slot becomes available in Ardgay. (vi) NHS Scotland advise that 'flu vaccine is now available through local doctors' surgeries.

**Item 11. Cycle ramp at Invershin.** In his report Cllr Farlow stated that the requested information from the fabricators of the ramp has only recently been received by Highland Council. The information was required for insurance purposes. He awaits word on how the matter progresses. It is understood that Creich CC will discuss this item at its meeting tomorrow evening. DL stressed the importance of clarifying all legal aspects of fitting the ramp, approval, structural assessments, liability, etc.

**Item 12. Falls of Shin update.** Cllr Farlow advised that no money has yet been found to make toilet provision at the site. The road signs are still causing embarrassment and he has written to Visit Scotland asking if they can address the problem with the Balnagown Estate.

**Item 13. Core Path – Ardgay Hill.** This long running matter is no longer a CC issue. The CC was approached by a member of the public who was concerned that a well-established path, a Core Path, had been fenced over and access altered. The CC raised this with the Access Officer on behalf of the individual thus fulfilling its remit to represent the views of the public to the relevant authorities. The CC considers that resolving the matter now lies with THC in line with its responsibilities detailed in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1 Access Rights, Chapter 5 Local Authority Functions: Access and other rights. This matter will now be removed from the agenda. **TL Action.**

**Item 14. Windfarms update. Braemore.** Letter received from Wind Prospect Developments indicating a further reduction in the number of turbines, to eighteen, which they feel has greatly reduced the visual impact. The offer to send a representative to a CC meeting was accepted and BW will invite the company to attend the November meeting at 7pm. **BW Action. Coire na Cloiche.** Meeting with Halls Committees is being arranged. **Glenmorrie.** The Public Local Inquiry will be held in Ardross on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Item 15. Update of Easter Fearn Proposed Development.** DH/MT will contact the developer regarding possible community benefit to Ardgay. **DH/MT Action.**

**Item 16. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update.** The AGM will be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm in the Bonar Bridge Hall.

**Item 17. Highland Councillor's report.** Cllr Farlow is currently on holiday. His written report is available on request. It covers several items discussed elsewhere in these Minutes as well as Ardgay Public Hall Committee Funding, Community Account Management, Planning, Environment & Development Service, Historic Scotland, Renewable Energy, TECS and Waste Management: Recycling. With regard to the traffic lights at Arddronie the HC engineers confirm that the A836 is not in danger of collapse. A number of trees on the road embankment had been blown overtaking down a section of the embankment. The road is not significantly undermined though the safety fence was damaged. Network Rail has now removed the tree stumps and rebuilt the embankment but the location of the verge and embankment make it difficult to reinstate the safety fence satisfactorily. Negotiations are ongoing with Network Rail and the landowners.

**Item 18. Any other competent business. (1) Old Migdale Hospital.** BW spotted a small item in the Northern Times with the new owner seeking the community's views as to what should be done with the building. It was agreed that it should provide a range of accommodation. **(2) Broadband speed.** BW has been informed that she cannot expect any improvement in her Broadband speed due to the incapacity of her local telephone exchange. She may contact Community Broadband Scotland. **(3) Newsletter deliveries.** DH announced that two new delivery volunteers have come forward to help with the south side of Strathcarron. Members will get together and clarify routes using a map which DL offered to provide. **DL Action.**

**Item 20. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm in Ardgay Public Hall. MT submitted her apologies for that meeting as she will attend the KoSDT AGM on the same evening.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**Item 21. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm grant applications (private session)**

There were no applications to discuss this month, therefore no separate minute is provided.

Meeting closed 8.50pm.