

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 11th November 2013 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7pm

Present: Elected & co-opted members: David Hannah, Chair (DH), Teresa Langley, Secretary (TL), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), Betty Wright (BW), Bob Sendall (BS)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Andy Wright, Michael Baird, Willie MacLaren

Invited guests: Richard Fisher, Project Manager, and Karen Thorburn both of Wind Prospect Developments Ltd

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Apologies: Phil Olson (PO), Marion Turner (MT)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (see above). Chair David Hannah opened the evening welcoming everyone and opening the meeting with a moment's silence in respect of Remembrance Day and also Tony Gibbs, past Chair of Ardgay & District Community Council who died in September.

Invited guest presentation. Richard Fisher gave a brief summary of the amendments to the Planning application for the proposed Braemore windfarm development. This outlined a smaller, redesigned development and as such will now be submitted to the Scottish Government. Reduction in the number of turbines to eighteen is thought by the company to be sufficient to greatly reduce the visual impact which was a major objection to the original plans. Detailed plans and Environmental Assessment information were available and copies will be accessible at the local library. Copies were left with CC members. The greatest visual impact will be noted from Achnahane. The turbines will be 126m to tip, the size determined by the surrounding forestry heights. Blades will be 90m in diameter. The application will be submitted on Friday 15th November with a consultation period open until 21st December. None of the changes will have a significant effect on the ornithology/etc survey. Chair impressed upon Richard Fisher the essential setting up of a local liaison group as soon as possible to ease communication/allow discussion. A liaison group should be established before Planning application is made. Asked about the nearest dwelling to a turbine, Richard stated Middle Hill, a holiday home, will be the closest. Noise surveys have been carried out but he was unable to discuss results with regard to frequency issues. Richard confirmed that the Forestry Commission is the landowner involved. There being no further questions, Richard and Karen left the meeting at 7.25pm as did Andy Wright and Michael Baird.

Item 3. Police report. PC Ian Gollan arrived at 8.05pm at which point the meeting was interrupted to take his report. In the last calendar month there have been five incidents of disorderly conduct, five domestics, three missing persons (all later traced), two breaches of the peace, three assaults and seven fixed penalty notices issued. Trouble flared after the Halloween Dance in Bonar Bridge with youths from Brora involved. Speed checks have been carried out at the primary schools of Edderton, Gledfield, Bonar Bridge and Lairg which have resulted in some offenders being identified. Winter safe driving instructions should be printed in the upcoming CC newsletter, warning of icy roads, condition of tyres, lights, etc. PC Gollan was asked if there was anything the community could do to help the Police, keep the CC informed, and left at 8.15pm.

Item 4. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising. The Minutes from the October meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record with one amendment deleting the reference to contact from The Friends of the Far North Line. Proposed: Betty Wright; seconded by Teresa Langley. **(1) Tenants and Residents association.** A 'walk around' Ardgay and Bonar Bridge has taken place but no report is available. It was confirmed that the group represents home owners as well as tenants of THC. **(2) Energy Savings Trust.** KoSDT has resubmitted an application to the Climate Challenge Fund for funds to support a local survey/assessment of need. **(3) Overgrown trees/bushes at railway bridge.** Some of the trees have been cut back but some left as they provide a sound baffle. **(4) Road Safety Seminar.** BW might not be able to attend on 22nd November. **(5) North West & Central Ward Forum.** David Laver attended on behalf of CC but not present tonight to make report. It is understood that the most significant factor appeared to be the reduction of services by Police. There was little opportunity for liaison or discussion. **(6) Core Paths – Ardgay Hill.** Cllr Farlow indicated that this issue is now subject to the Core Path Review and has been referred to the Sutherland Access Forum which is the statutory body dealing with such matters. Its next meeting will be held in February 2014. Compliance with the Land Reform Act will be ensured. **(7) Old Migdale Building.** BW made enquires but has received no responses. **(8) Broadband.** Jessica Mills of Community Broadband Scotland will attend the December CC meeting. **(9) 20mph limit at primary school.** CCs agreed that two signs are required, one on each road, 30m back from the junction. The present flashing sign cannot easily be seen when approaching from Culrain. **GF Action.**

Item 5. Village Clean Up Day. Turnout of only twelve helpers of all ages was lower than hoped but six bags of rubbish were collected and BW was thanked for co-ordinating the event. It is hoped to run another in the spring at which time the Head Teacher hopes to be able to involve the Gledfield school children and teachers. A broken pane of glass at 'small child height' at The Lady Ross was noted.

Item 6. North West & Central Ward Forum. See Item 4 (5).

Item 7. Secretary's report. (TL) Secretary remains without a working computer. AL agreed to collect repaired laptop in Forres this week; cost of repair £20. A new computer is essential and TL will seek quotes for what is required and bring to December meeting. **TL Action.**

Item 8. Treasurer's report. (AL) Treasurer's account stands at £1502.80 with an outstanding cheque of £53.80. The Projects Account balance is £5234.02 which includes £1666.67 received from Foundation Scotland in September – first tranche of Newsletter funding. Toilets account balance is £192.65 with one outstanding cheque for £189.00. The Highland Council grant which supports the upkeep of the toilets has not been paid despite correspondence between Treasurer and THC. Cllr Farlow will follow this up. **GF Action.**

Item 9. Correspondence. Incoming mail included (i) Information regarding THC training sessions for CCs. Nearest is on 27th November in Lairg. DH and possibly BW hope to attend the Dingwall session on 25th November. (2) Licensing application for Highland Stores/café, Ardgay. (3) Scottish Rights of Way Society AGM notification for 23rd November in Perth. (4) Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan – available to view on THC website. (5) Notification of THC Quality Awards, none of those listed by the CC were selected – full list on THC website (6) Closing date for Community Empowerment consultation is 21st January. (7) VG-ES are providing Finance & Governance Training in Brora on 6th December – details VG-ES website. (8) SNH evening reception invitation to Bradbury Centre 4th December, to enable dialogue and sharing of ideas. (9) VG-ES AGM will be on November 22nd with John Swinney in attendance. DH will remain the CC representative to VG-ES. (10) Favourable comments on planning applications. BW will write to Planning with regard to CC appreciation of enterprising applications which are to the benefit of the community. **BW Action.**

Item 10. Cycle ramp at Invershin. Meeting held last week. Ramp fabricator has provided details to Simon Young, Chief Engineer, THC. Awaiting permissions and reports on loading etc. CC approves costs, in principal, subject to risk assessments.

Item 11. Falls of Shin update. Falls of Shin updates have caused some confusion in the community. Balnagown Estate has issued a press release in the NT indicating its proposal to seek an extensive consultation with the local community and statutory bodies to identify a viable solution for the site. The Estate also announced its ambitions in a separate note to CCs their plans to develop their leisure and tourism facilities nearer to the Estate office.

Item 12. Windfarms update. Braemore. See Invited guest presentation above. **SSE & E.ON Community Benefits Panel** (formerly Achany). The next meeting will be held on 16th December. **Glenmorrie.** Public Local Inquiry began in October.

Item 13. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. AGM being held tonight.

Item 14. Highland Councillor's report. Cllr Farlow reported he has recently been in Brussels seeking European Funding for the Highlands. It is expected that the area will receive the same amount as in the 2007-2013 period but it will be spread over more programmes. Horizon 2020 is a new venture which may be of benefit; more details as they are available.

Item 15. Any other competent business. (1) Braemore. BW wondered if the objections previously submitted by the CC were sufficient or if further objection should be lodged. Cllr Farlow understands that THC has already objected and the Scottish Government Consents Unit asked the company to resubmit its application. He supported the suggestion that local liaison groups should be established at scoping stage. **(2) VG-ES membership subscription.** Covered in DH expenses form; DH will make payment to VG-ES this week. **(3) Queen's Royal Baton.** Nominations for baton bearers are requested. Item will be covered in next Newsletter.

Item 16. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 9th December at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall.
Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Item 17. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm grant applications (private session)

One application resulted in the award of £2,000 to the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust to help establish its Graduate Placement Programme.

Meeting closed 8.50pm.

