

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 10th February 2014 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7pm

Present: Elected & co-opted members: David Hannah, Chair (DH), Teresa Langley, Secretary (TL), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), David Laver (DL), Phil Olson (PO), Marion Turner (MT)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Colin Mitchell (CM), William MacLaren, Peter Monaghan, Jocky Hewitt, PC Alex Smyth

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Apologies: Betty Wright (BW)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (see above). Chair DH opened the evening welcoming everyone after the festive season break.

Non-agenda item. The Lady Ross. Colin Mitchell updated the meeting on the current position with The Lady Ross which is once again in his possession. He is seeking ideas for the best use of the site and is willing to consider it for development in some way which will benefit the community. He has been told by THC that there is no demand for housing, though affordable housing is one option. Placed at the centre of the village the site has strategic possibilities and CM is interested to know how the community would like to see it developed. Various possibilities could be considered including a public parking area (there is none in the village), Post Office, some housing, a backpackers hostel, shop, pub/café. He does not anticipate any Planning difficulties although there is no permission on the site at present. It was agreed that the school bus drop off point should remain on site if possible. CM is currently having the site valued. Contractors should be onsite this week to tidy up the barn roof and surrounding area. The CC expressed thanks to CM for advising the community and for seeking suggestions for the development of the site. A previous survey to establish the public wish to enact a Community Right to Buy did not raise enough support, but this may be different in the new circumstances. CM left at 7.15pm.

Item 3. Police report. PC Smyth arrived at 7.30pm. He offered apologies for the sporadic attendance in recent months owing to the restructuring of the force, but indicated that the area remains relatively crime free with only one logged incident in the last month. Comparing statistics shows that incidents are down on the same period last year. He was unable to state what will happen with local Police stations and agreed to pass on the request for a regular time slot when people could expect to find an officer at Bonar Bridge. The ongoing points regarding speeding, especially within the 20mph zone at the school, loaded log lorries driving in convoy, jumping of the red light at Ardchronie were passed to PC Smyth. Asked about response times, he advised that all calls are graded for importance although this does not prove too practical in this area. He stressed the importance of good relations between the force and the public and reminded the meeting of the Crimestoppers and 101 contact systems. 'Farmwatch' also proves a very good tool in monitoring such a rural area. With thanks from the CC, PC Smyth left at 7.50pm.

Item 4/5. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising. The Minutes from the December meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Teresa Langley; seconded Alan Lawrence. **(1) Broadband provision.** Cllr Farlow indicated that the announcement regarding the BT rollout of fast Broadband has been brought forward to Wednesday 12th February. It was stated that some areas have had less than satisfactory outcomes when dealing with Community Broadband Scotland with projects proving far more expensive than anticipated. For full discussion at March meeting.

Agenda Item.

Item 6. Cycle ramp – Invershin. DH referred to correspondence with the Chair of Creich CC; Creich CC is looking for a contribution from A&DCC towards the cost of the ramp which has been made. Matt Dent, THC Access Officer, has been appointed as contact for this project and appears to have support for it although Health & Safety issues remain. THC will not go ahead without accurate drawings. A&DCC, having already agreed in principal to support Creich CC's proposal for the ramp is now in the same position but is restricted by lack of necessary consents such as H&S issues and permissions which must be resolved before it is prepared to share costs. Secretary to email Matt Dent accordingly. **TL**

Action.

Item 7. Correspondence. Incoming mail included an **invitation to the Youth & Community Hub for 13th February** at 7.30pm when the architect will be present to discuss plans and survey results. DH and MT hope to attend. DH presented a long list of correspondence received over the last two months. With regard to **training courses being run by VG-ES** it was pointed out that they are invariably held in Brora. **Flower tubs.** More tubs are being sought for this purpose. Jeannie Sparling to be asked if she is willing to continue her work with the village floral displays. **DH Action. Tenants &**

Residents Group is proving very useful and establishing good communication with THC. Information could also be placed on the CC website if passed to PO.

Item 8. Treasurer's report. (AL) Treasurer's account stands at £1319.45 with outstanding cheques of £66.00. The Projects Account balance is £5220.19 with outstanding cheques amounting to £91.40. The Toilets Account has a current balance of £3.65.

Item 9. Secretary's report (TL). TL will submit an application on behalf of the CC to the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund for office equipment to be used by CC. **TL Action.** She continues to use the Library facility for some CC copying/printing. A previous reference to the Heritage Society being interested in maintaining floral displays at the station platform was checked but the KOSHS was not aware of any involvement. No reply has yet been received from Friends of the Far North Line regarding their possible help. The question of reimbursement for those floral costs was raised by the Treasurer. DH to consult with Jeannie Sparling to see who paid for them before.

Item 10. Windfarms. Achary. At a recent meeting the Panel discussed options with regard to the Kyle of Sutherland Apprenticeship scheme which is reaching the end of its current funding. Consideration is being given to widening the scheme to work with Gordonbush which could release new funds. The SSE & E.ON Fund Framework has been reviewed and the CC will receive updated information with the request for approval.

Item 11. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update. Report from the Development Office indicated fifteen ongoing projects with which the Trust is involved. It is hoped to improve the 'back office' services to offer these facilities to the public. The result of the application to the Big Lottery Fund to enable the community buy out of the Bonar Bridge Post Office is expected soon. The Trust anticipates four new jobs will be created in the coming months, all based in the Trust offices. 40th Bridge Celebrations continue including a project to create three fabric panels depicting the three bridges which have been over the Kyle; the panels perhaps to be located at Migdale Hospital when completed. Working with the Trust, the Heritage Society is planning an activities day in June which will be a WW1 commemorative day involving the local schools and youth groups among others.

Item 12. Highland Councillor's report. The first stage of work on the CASPLAN (Caithness & Sutherland Local Plan) has been completed with reporting on suggested sites now being carried out. Later stages cover the draft plan being put to THC Area Committee, the full THC and eventually to Scottish Government. The consultation stage will be held in due course, locally probably in Lairg. It is felt that with 151 CCs in the Highland Region it is no longer possible to consult on an individual basis with each one. THC has fewer resources than previously available for such consultations.

Item 13. Newsletter. DH advised that he is standing down as Editor of the newsletter; the spring edition will be his last. The CC is looking for someone in Ardgay to take on the position. The newsletter is currently half way through the windfarm grant which helps to cover advertising and costs. A vote of appreciation for his very good work with the newsletter was made by CC members.

Item 14. Any other competent business. (1) Parking in Ardgay. DH wondered if THC might have some land which could be made available for a public car park; the only parking currently is all on privately owned land. TL suggested that the roadside bank which runs along the main road in front of Oakwood Place could be cut back with the land recovered being resurfaced and marked for parking. Cllr Farlow agreed to look into the feasibility of this and also to look at using the central area of Carron Place. **GF Action.** It was agreed that a central drop off point for the school buses must be maintained; this presently is on the ground in front of The Lady Ross.

(2) Public opinion regarding a community buy out of The Lady Ross should be sought and a letter urgently seeking this will be included in the next issue of the newsletter (3rd March). Mr Mitchell could be asked to provide a letter indicating his wishes to see the site used for community benefit. It might prove possible for the community to buy part of the site leaving the rest to be sold for other types of development. Secretary to seek further information from HIE Assets Management with regard to Community Right to Buy and access to the Scottish Land Fund. **TL Action.** **(3) Oakwood Place steps.** The dimensions of the steps are uneven leading to H&S problems. Recent falls by members of the public indicate the need for the handrail to be extended. This could be resolved if the proposed parking area is formed and an appropriate disabled ramp replaces the steps. TECS to be advised. **TL Action.**

Item 15. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 10th March 2014 at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall. DH submitted his apologies; TL will take the Chair.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm and was followed by a private session to discuss applications to the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. The outcome of discussions is noted below.

Item 16. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm grant applications (private session)

Application by the Bradbury Centre for help with architect's fees for an extension was approved with an award of £1080.

Application by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust for help in purchasing a new photocopier/printer was approved with an award of £1080.

Application by Dornoch Firth Group will be held over pending further information from the group.

Application from Gearrhoille Community Wood will be considered at the March meeting.

Discussion regarding the Endowment Fund to be an agenda item in March. **Agenda item.**

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.