

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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

Present: Elected & co-opted members: Teresa Langley, Secretary & Acting Chair (TL), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), David Laver (DL), Phil Olson (PO), Marion Turner (MT), Betty Wright (BW), Bob Sendall (BS)

Also present: William MacLaren, Peter Monaghan, Jocky Hewitt

Apologies: David Hannah, Chair (DH), Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Items 1/2/3. Welcome/Apologies (see above)/Police report. Acting Chair Teresa Langley opened the evening welcoming everyone. There was no Police representative present.

Item 4/5. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising. The Minutes from the February meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Marion Turner; seconded Phil Olson. **(1) Plans for Youth Group site development.** MT & DH attended the recent viewing of the architect's designs for the use of the site owned and operated by the Kyle of Sutherland Youth Development Group. The question was asked as to why no local architect was used; use of local contractors should be strongly encouraged. The new structure will be one and a half storeys in height and will fill the available space with various uses possible within the building. The Youth Group will need to be off-site for a nine month construction period. It was suggested that pre-fabricated sections could be built off-site and transported there for construction into the building. As the funding to cover the architect's fees came from the SSE & E.ON Community Fund (Acharn) it is expected that the use of local architect and contractors would have been recommended. **(2) Oakwood Place steps.** This issue is being passed to THC Housing Dept by their TECS office in Bonar Bridge.

Item 6. Broadband update. A letter will be sent to John Thurso, MP, asking him to ascertain from BT/Openreach that the Craigs equipment is being used to full capacity. Recent press release by HIE gave no new information. Next announcement due in April. **BW Action.**

Item 7. Safer Routes to School. Cllr Linda Munro will be asked to help with a request to re-site the 30mph signs to extend the speed limited area to include the KOSYDG grounds. The Safer Routes to School programme might be a source of funding for this improvement project which could include road crossing provision near the school. **MT/TL Action.** Cllr Farlow has indicated that 20mph orders are underway in various locations throughout the region.

Item 8. Secretary's report (TL). All incoming relevant emails have been circulated to members. Nothing further to add.

Item 9. Treasurer's report (AL). The cleared balance on the Treasurer's account stands at £1253.45 with one outstanding cheque for £70.80. The Projects account balance is £5092.79 and the Toilets account balance is £3.65. Thanks have been received from the RBLs and the Veterans Flag Raising Ceremony for the recent CC donations.

Item 10. Correspondence. Items received included the newsletter from the Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society and Natural Scotland which contained Local Energy Scotland leaflets. With regard to Clean up Scotland, BW will liaise with Gledfield School to select a date for a local clean-up day.

Item 11. Invershin cycle ramp. Matt Dent, Sutherland Access Officer, has been appointed by THC to oversee this project. THC engineers will produce 'as installed' drawings and it is hoped that the ramp will be in situ at the start of the coming tourist season. Only one design change was deemed necessary. THC's main concern is with corrosion issues and as a result a steel strip will be clamped to the viaduct so that no welding or drilling is required. All legislation covering stair widths, treads, sizes etc will be complied with to the full satisfaction of THC. THC will be fully responsible for the ramp. PO, and Sandy Chalmers of Creich CC, will be advised of the start date for the installation which is expected to take only a few weeks to complete.

Item 12. Endowment Fund with Creich CC. A&DCC's own endowment fund is running and can be added to at any time. The next tranche of funding from Beinn Tharsuinn is due in April. Nothing further can be done with regard to a joint fund until talks are held between the two CCs. **Agenda item.**

Item 13. The Lady Ross. An enclosure has been drafted for the A&DCC newsletter to advise the residents of Ardgay of the change to the situation at The Lady Ross, indicating that Mr Colin Mitchell has regained control of the building and that he is open to discussions with regard to its future. A lengthy discussion concluded with the decision to hold a public meeting in early April, date to be confirmed. This will take the form of an organised meeting, chaired and minuted, in the Ardgay Public Hall, at which it is hoped that the residents' wishes will be made clear with any appropriate follow-up

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action being set in place. Availability of the hall will be checked after which CC members will agree the most suitable date for the meeting; possibly a Monday evening after a shortened badminton session if that organiser is agreeable. An advertisement will be placed in the Northern Times a week prior to the meeting, giving basic details of its purpose. Mr Mitchell should be kept informed. **TL Action.**

Item 14. Windfarms. Apprenticeship scheme. It was reported that discussions with SSE and Gordonbush windfarm regarding a joint scheme have closed at this time. In the draft minutes from the recent Creich CC meeting it was noted that the CC intended to ask THC for a policy statement with regard to the siting of windfarms close to private residences. Clarification should be sought with regard to approved distances. This CC will write in support of the question and request similar guidance. **TL Action.**

Item 15. Newsletter. DH has indicated he is standing down as Editor with the spring edition being his last. With no commitment, BW has offered to hold talks with DH to try to find a way to keep the newsletter in production. Volunteers to work on the newsletter are urgently sought. **BWDH Action.**

Item 16. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update. (MT) The Trust's successful application to the Land Fund has secured the Bonar Bridge Post Office building to continue to operate as a traditional Post Office. Royal Mail will appoint a new Postmaster; the Trust will rent out the building for this purpose. The attached house will be refurbished as accommodation to be made available for rent. Land at the side and rear of the building can be developed and it is hoped to hold consultations with the community to assess ideas. The Climate Challenge Fund projects will start at the end of March and will include the provision of energy advice, support, energy savings options, etc. The project will be taken to the local schools and also covers issues such as food waste, growing and sourcing local foods. The 40th Bridge celebrations continue with many events planned. Details on noticeboards locally, in the press and on social network sites. Back office services are being built up and are now available.

Item 17. Highland Councillor's report. See at Item 7 with regard to the 20mph limit signs.

Item 18. Any other competent business. (1) Tourist information at cycle café. CC agreed to support the café owners in acquiring a stock of tourist information leaflets to be made available at the counter. The café is more than the fifteen miles distance from the nearest tourist information point, which, it is understood, is the relevant regulation. The CC will write to Visit Scotland in support of the availability of information at the café. **TL Action. (2) Telephone scams.** Several recent incidents of scammers attempting to access banking information by phone were noted. The public should be vigilant and on no account should banking/debit or credit card information ever be given over the phone. After receiving such a call it is important not to use the same telephone for some time as the scammers can still be on the line and can access any information from a future call. **(3) CC monthly meetings.** Brought to members' attention by the intimation by MG that she will not be available for two meetings later in the year, the number of meetings per year came up for discussion. The requirement is for a minimum of six meetings per year. This should be an agenda item at the AGM in June but members are encouraged to liaise by email in the meantime to gauge opinions. **(4) Letter from Chair Kilmuir & Logie Easter CC.** This letter highlights the lack of consultation between THC and CCs throughout the region, and in fact, the apparent disregard by THC of any CC opinions put forward. This CC will respond in support of Mr Boocock's effort to improve the situation. The CC will also write to THC stressing the unacceptable lack of consultation with regard to Service Point closures, as with many other issues and stating that often when consultation/notification is given the timescales do not allow for the monthly (or less often) schedules of CCs. **TL Action.**

Item 19. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 14th April 2014 at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm 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 20. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm grant applications (private session)

Application by Dornoch Firth Group was rejected.

Application from Gearrhoille Community Wood was approved in principal for the sum of £976, pending submission of all invoices relevant to previous awards.

Application by Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society was approved for the sum of £1,000 with the Society urged to apply to other local sources within the area.

Application by Ardgay & District Community Council approved for the sum of £650 for essential office equipment.

This meeting closed at 9.40pm.