

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 14th April 2014 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7pm

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

Also present for the public meeting: Colin Mitchell and 19 members of the public

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

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (see above) Acting Chair Marion Turner opened the evening welcoming everyone, in particular those members of the public attending the public meeting. The first part of the evening was scheduled as a public meeting to assess the community interest in the future of The Lady Ross site in the middle of the village. Mr Mitchell had advised the Community Council in February of his intention to sell the site and enquired of the CC if it could establish if there was a wish within the community to do something with it. Purchase of the site could be open to the community if it so wished. The purpose of the public meeting was to establish (1) if there is a wish within the community to purchase the site and (2) if so, are there people willing to form a group to take the project forward. Rules and duties laid down for Community Councils preclude the owning of assets, the role being one of liaison and consultation on behalf of the community. Several ideas for use of the site were put forward from the floor, e.g. a hostel/hotel, housing, car parking, gardens, low-key accommodation for cyclists/walkers. The Lady Ross is a good brand name and should not be lost. Money is available from The Land Fund for such community projects. Procedure for applying would encompass consultation with the community, project building and creation of a business plan which would show sustainability for the future and projected costs. The Land Fund would also expect a successful end to the project – it does not provide funding for 'land banking'. Examples of other successful community buy-outs were given such as those in Assynt and Glasgow. Another idea was that housing could be built with the revenue derived from those house sales being re-invested in wider projects on the site. It was understood that 'community capacity' is perhaps already stretched and that even those interested in seeing successful regeneration of the site may not have the time to become fully involved. Such community projects would take a lot of time, effort and commitment with the time factor possibly being significant should Mr Mitchell seek to resolve the issue sooner rather than later. Mr Mitchell indicated that in the past discussions with THC Planning Department have been positive and it is unlikely that any reasonable project would hit problems in this regard. All main services are already on the site. Two or three people would be needed to lead a small group to take the next steps. When put to the assembled residents, 3.6% of the aged 16+ resident population, no-one was willing to commit at this stage. Having called the public meeting and brought the issue to forefront of public awareness, the CC will now step back leaving the way clear for those in the community who may wish to take ideas forward. Any relevant comments/ideas will be posted on the CC website. The public meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Item 3. Newsletter – presentation by Sylvia Muras. Following the announcement that DH is stepping down from editorship of the newsletter and the call for volunteers to take on its production, the CC was approached by Sylvia who is a journalist with some twelve years' experience, originally from Spain but now living locally. As a freelance graphic designer, Sylvia has many ideas for a new look for the newsletter and produced a specimen copy for consideration by the CC. She would hope to include a wider range of topics and advertising with the increased advertising revenue helping to meet the production costs. Funding is in place at the moment but the budget is very tight, with no reimbursement to the editor. In principal CC members were excited by Sylvia's ideas and it was agreed that a meeting should be held with the editor, BW (who had expressed an interest in helping to keep a newsletter in circulation) and Sylvia prior to the next CC meeting at which further discussions can take place. **DH/BW Action.**

Item 4. Police report. There was no Police representative in attendance and no report received.

Item 5/6. Minutes of last meeting/Matters arising. The Minutes from the March meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Phil Olson; seconded Bob Sendall. **(1) Broadband.** A report of the recent Ward Forum held in Edderton was published in the Northern Times but it was felt that this did not give any indication of progress for the local exchanges. A map showing the planned timetable for the rollout of Next Generation Broadband is available on the HIE website: <http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/digital-highlands-and-islands/next-generation-broadband/when-and-where.html> It was noted that this map has not changed in the past year. **(2) Meeting schedule.**

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The meeting schedule will be discussed more fully next month but at this stage it was agreed that there will be no meeting held in November this year. **Agenda item/TL Action.**

Item 7. Voluntary Groups awards- nominations. The deadline for nominations is 12th May. Nominations were put forward for Donald Simmonds for his work with the Boys Brigade, and George Ross for his long term service in running the badminton club. **TL Action.**

Item 8. Community Council AGM. The AGM will be held in June. Secretary will check the required timeframe for advertising the AGM. DH has given prior notice that he will be stepping down as Chair; he will be asked to indicate if he is also stepping away from any of the other duties he currently performs on behalf of the CC. **TL Action.**

Item 9. Secretary's report (TL). Nil of note.

Item 10. Treasurer's report (AL). The cleared balance on the Treasurer's account stands at £1182.65. The Projects account balance is £5762.79 and the Toilets account balance is £3.65. The £650 award from the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Company has been received to cover the purchase of a new computer; a cheque has been raised to cover this cost.

Item 11. Correspondence. Nil of note.

Item 12. Windfarms. Sallachy. Developers and CC representatives are due to meet next week. **Achary Panel.** The next meeting is in June with the deadline for applications for grants being the end of April. **Braemore.** Planning application delayed pending further noise and bird surveys.

Item 13. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update. (MT) A recent photography day was very successful; a day of celebrations is planned for 17th May commemorating the 40th year of the present bridge. A 'Bake a Bridge' competition will be held as will an evening family ceilidh. The Bonar Bridge Post Office is now owned by the Trust; Mr Calder is continuing as Postmaster meantime. The post of Project Officer to co-ordinate the Post Office project will be advertised. Details of the 'Greening Kyle' and 'Freecycle' group are on the Trust's website at www.kyleofsutherland.co.uk/the-trust The development of the back-office/support services is continuing.

Item 14. Highland Councillor's report. No report available due to holidays.

Item 15. Any other competent business. (1) Liaison between THC and CCs. Highlighted in the local paper recently the poor communication between these two bodies continues to cause concern. Also the apparent lack of influence on THC departments by elected councillors is very worrying. **(2) Floral tubs/ toilet block maintenance.** Jeannie Sparling has intimated that she will cease her work with the flower tubs at the end of this season but that she will continue supervising the toilets for one more year. Secretary is seeking clarification. The floor of the toilet block has been sealed. **TL Action.** **(3) Litter pick.** BW will liaise with the head-teacher at Gledfield School to arrange a date and discuss details. **BW Action.**

Item 16. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 12th May 2014 at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm 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 Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust for funding towards initial work at the Bonar Bridge Post Office house was deferred pending receipt of a further breakdown of costs.

Application by Ardgay Public Hall for £2,000 to cover costs incurred in its Community Continuity Project was approved.

This meeting closed at 9.25pm.