

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 30th June 2014 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7.40pm

Present: Elected & co-opted members: David Hannah, Chair (DH), Marion Turner, Vice Chair (MT), Secretary (TL), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), Phil Olson (PO), Betty Wright (BW), Bob Sendall (BS), Sylvia Muras (SM)

Also present: Jocky Hewitt (JH), David Langley (DL), Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

Police Scotland: No representative

Apologies: None received

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Items 1/2/3. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair DH opened the regular monthly meeting immediately following the conclusion of the AGM (see separate Minutes). He advised that notification has been received stating that David Laver is standing down from the CC with immediate effect. In the absence of any Police representation, GF advised the CC that THC has voted against the move to arm Police officers in the Highlands. A further meeting is to take place in August. He confirmed that only specialist trained officers would be armed and only when the need arises.

Non-agenda item 1. Floral displays. JH reported that he is now looking after ten flower tubs in the village; these will require around sixty plants to be effective. Cllr Farlow generously offered to supply plants (mixed annuals) which he will deliver direct to JH. **GF Action.** DH will speak to Paul Whittock at Ardgay Garage seeking permission for JH to fill the water barrel there. JH was thanked by the CC for taking on this local responsibility. It is understood that Carol Laver is taking care of the floral displays at the station. This kind offer of service to the community is much appreciated.

Non-agenda item 2. School speed warning sign. DL brought to the attention of GF that the THC flashing warning speed sign was erected on his property without any consultation or permission. He wished the sign removed as quickly as possible. The CC also has been seeking its re-siting as the sign is irrelevant in its current position. The 30mph sign should also be moved to a more appropriate spot. GF advised that the Traffic Order which covered the erecting of the school speed warning sign will need to be repealed and a new one issued. He was asked to set these steps in motion, with DL requesting a report in writing by September. **GF Action.**

Item 4/5. Minutes of May meeting/matters arising. The Minutes of the May meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by Marion Turner; seconded by Bob Sendall. **(1) Rat problem.** An Environmental Health officer has visited Mrs Ross's home but could find no evidence of rats. Unfortunately he called when Mr Ross (Mrs Ross' son and the original complainant) was not at home. The officer has been asked to re-schedule a visit when Mr Ross will be available. Other sightings of vermin have been reported with the rats presumably coming along the railway tracks. Environmental Health Department should be made aware. **Agenda item (2) Litter pick.** BW advised that the recent Litter Pick on 19th May was very successful with the station area being the only area in particular need of attention. The work of the school children, parents and teachers was much appreciated. See A&DCC newsletter for full report.

Item 6. Invershin viaduct cycle ramp update. It is understood that THC Road Safety Team is liaising with Network Rail and that Matt Dent, Core Paths Officer, is co-ordinating the project. **Agenda item.**

Item 7. MOU – Foundation Scotland. Recent amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding between the CC and Foundation Scotland regarding the administration of the SSE & E.ON Community Panel (Achany) were approved. DH signed the approval forms which will be returned to Foundation Scotland.

Item 8. Path maintenance – Action Day. Mrs Copley had suggested to the CC that an Open Day under the 'Paths for All' scheme might be organised to repair local Core Paths and to provide maintenance training for local residents. Secretary will suggest to Mrs Copley that she contact 'Paths for All' directly, reminding her that funds for this purpose are still available through the CC. **TL Action.**

Item 9. Correspondence. (TL/DH) (1) Scottish Rights of Way notification of renewal of subscription received. Members agreed to continue. **TL/AL Action.** (2) Basketball stands. The stands in place beside the Public Hall will need to be removed to allow solar panels to be fitted to the roof of the building. (3) Community assets register. This suggestion came from the Achany Panel but it was felt it would be difficult to implement and control. However groups who have received funding for purchase of assets which might be used by others could be asked to allow this if it was so stated in the award conditions. (4) Carbisdale Castle. SYHA CEO Keith Legge has written advising that the Castle will be put on the open market for sale due to the organisation's lack of funds to carry out the necessary repairs. Recent partial

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refurbishment and ongoing running costs, coupled with previous expenditure and the extensive funds necessary to complete refurbishment, make it financially unsustainable for the SYHA to operate the building as a youth hostel. (5) Ramp at Oakwood Place. A request was made for a ramp to be installed at the steps to Oakwood Place opposite the café. Many elderly residents use this access and steps can prove difficult. **GF Action.** (6) Village Network. The next meeting will be held in Dornoch Social Club on August 20th. The question was posed, "What is the Community Panel?" as it appears to be a different body from the Citizens' Panel. GF will find out. **GF Action.** (7) Sutherland Access Forum. PO advised that the Forum is seeking local views regarding unmanned railway crossings. Contact/information available via the website: www.sutherlandaccesspanel.org.uk (8) Safe route to school. The pathway between the farm and the church is blocked by overgrown vegetation. DH will report this to TECS in Bonar Bridge. **DH Action.** GF advised that the Safe Route to School plan is written by the Head Teacher and submitted to THC.

Item 10. Treasurer's report. (AL) The cleared balance on the Treasurer's account stands at £953.25 with cheques to the value of £89.30 issued this month. The Projects account balance is £3,512.67. The Toilets account balance is currently £1,145.65 with a cheque for £189 issued this month. The newsletter was £877.03 in credit at the end of the financial year and with £65 advertising revenue so far unpaid. DH will follow up on this. **DH Action.** Martin and Doris Calder audited the annual CC accounts and requested that the donation in recompense for their services should be made to Nelson's Journey, a charity which supports bereaved children and young people throughout Norfolk. The payment of £50 was approved. **AL Action.**

Item 11. Secretary's report. (TL) An invitation to attend tonight's meeting was sent to Hayley Bangs of the Kyle of Sutherland Youth Development Group to discuss the letter of support from the CC being sought by the group with regard to their 'hub' development. No reply has been received from Ms Bangs.

Item 12. Newsletter. (SM) SM was warmly congratulated on the success of her first issue as Editor; feedback has been very positive. For the cover subject of the September issue SM is considering contrasting the handling of the two main local tourism issues, Falls of Shin and Carbisdale Castle. She would seek to interview personnel involved with each facility and would discuss their actions and support for the community. An item containing information for visitors to the area may be added to the next issue. Editorial expenses which will need to be recompensed will be for ink supplies and a percentage of the Adobe licence fee. **SWAL Action.**

Item 13. Windfarms. Sallachy. An update has been received indicating the Community Liaison Forum was held in April and that SNH's Wild Land Map 2014 has also been published. WKN agrees with the Scottish Planning Policy that the areas of wild land can accommodate a wind proposal if it is appropriately sited. The Sallachy site has existing development, hydro infrastructure, access roads and plantation woodland which lead WKN to believe it is well placed for a renewable energy project. THC has raised no objection. **Caplich.** Talks have taken place between the developers and the CCs locally with regard to the MOU. BS stated that local feeling, especially in Rosehall, is very much against this development expecting it will cause immense problems, not least in the feeding out of the energy to Invershin. This ill feeling might be somewhat ameliorated if the developer was to support the installation of fibre optic cabling to improve Broadband locally. BS stated that in signing up to the MOU, the CC is seen by the public to be approving the development. Clarification was given that signing the MOU in no way gives such approval, but it secures community benefit arrangements should the windfarm go ahead. Secretary will advise THC Planning Department that the CC is interested in this project to ensure all documents and information are circulated to the CC. **TL Action.** It was suggested that BS could draft out a document indicating what the local expectations are. **BS Action.** The option for a community buy-in might be a possibility. **SSE & E.ON Panel.** As no other nominations have been received, BW and Rosie Baxter are duly re-elected to serve as CC representatives for Ardgay and Creich as before. **Croick.** A planning application has been made for two turbines at Croick. The CC will seek to establish discussions regarding community benefit.

MT/BWDH Action.

Item 14. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust update. (MT) No report received as yet from the Development Officer. Work is progressing with the refurbishment of the Post Office house and it is hoped it will be ready to lease out by around October. Greening Kyle project is offering free household surveys of energy efficiency accompanied by advice and support. Contact should be to the project at the Trust office in Bonar Bridge or via the website: www.kyleofsutherland.co.uk/greening-kyle The Trust recently made a successful bid to the Achany Panel for funds to secure the Development Officer post for the next two years.

Item 15. Highland Councillor's report. THC Budget Consultations are being held throughout the region. These are geared to identifying a saving over £63m over the next 3 – 4 years; £24m has been saved through actions so far. Various methods and actions are being considered. THC aims to maximise its services and will consider various funding

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sources such as the European Regional Development Fund and Social Fund, Leader, etc. THC is looking at ways to improve its computer system. The Land Reform Review Group is carrying out a huge amount of work regarding Community Right to Buy legislation in hopes of securing better land management and keep resources in the country. Asked if developers who cancel their programmes can seek financial compensation with regard to PLI costs, GF advised this can be possible if an application refusal is later deemed unfair and then overturned.

Item 16. Any other competent business. (1) Resignation of David Laver. A vote of thanks to David Laver was recorded, for his service to the CC during his time as an elected member. **(2) New chemist shop opening.** It was noted that the new chemist shop will open for business in Bonar Bridge tomorrow. **(3) Meeting schedule.** Discussion covered the meeting schedule for the rest of 2014 and for 2015. 2014 will see meetings held on the second Monday of July, September, October and December. (No meetings in August or November). Meetings in 2015 will be held in February, March, May, June, July, September and November. (No meetings in January, April, August, October or December.)

Item 17 Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday 14th July 2014 at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall. Members of the public are most welcome to attend. Apologies given in advance by GF and TL.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm and was followed by a private session to discuss applications to the Beinn nan Oihgrean Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. The outcome of discussions is noted below.

Item 15. Beinn nan Oihgrean Windfarm grant applications (private session)

Application by Kyle of Sutherland Development Youth Development Group for £150 towards costs of running the Kyle of Sutherland Get Active Challenge was approved.

Application by Gledfield Primary School Parent Council for £200 towards costs incurred by its activity programme was approved.

This meeting closed at 9.40pm.