

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 8th December 2014 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7.00pm

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

Police Scotland: PC Angus Morrison

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Angela Marwick (AM) & Alison Scott (AS) of Tain Royal Academy Parent Council

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (none). Chair DH welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the year and invited the Tain Royal Academy Parent Council representatives to address the meeting.

Non-agenda item. AM & AS wished to present information relevant to an upcoming application to the Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit Fund to be of assistance to the CC when the application is discussed in due course. The Parent Council plans to introduce an extra-curricular football activity to be tutored by 'Do Soccer', an organisation which already provides football coaching in many primary schools in the area. At present the after school hours football is coached by volunteers but this presents many difficulties in scheduling, etc. Figures for the tutor costs will be broken down on the application, which will be made to all the CCs from whose areas children attend TRA. The transportation issues will be addressed by parents. The scheme involves fitness training as well as football skills. Advice on how to make the best application was given as were details of a number of other possible funding sources. At the end of this discussion AM and AS chose to stay on for more of the meeting.

Item 3. Police report. PC Morrison was warmly thanked for attending. His report included the only three incidents noted in the last month, one domestic, one assault and one speeding penalty. PC Morrison will look back with regard to the previous couple of months when a report has not been received and will forward relevant details to the Secretary. In particular he will check up on the vandalism which led to the early evening closure of the toilets at South Bonar. He will also check if there was any follow up on the dangerous dogs issue highlighted in September. Flooding at Culrain junction and also at the top of Ardgay Hill was mentioned as it was felt that THC is not taking appropriate action. Cllr Farlow will also check this issue. **GF Action.**

Item 4/5. Minutes of October meeting/matters arising. The Minutes of the October meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by Phil Olson; seconded by Teresa Langley. **(1) Newsletter.** SM advised that having produced the agreed three issues at the agreed price of £380 each time, KoSDT has now revised its costings and future issues would cost £600. SM has sought quotes from various printers from a wide area. The Editor has accepted the best quote. After discussion it was reluctantly agreed that the printing should be carried out by the firm submitting the best cheapest quote as the CC has an obligation to provide the newsletter free to residents as part of its current funding allocation. If there is no local printing facility which can meet that price it has to be the best financial option. Recipients of the newsletter should be encouraged to subscribe and pay a regular donation which would reflect the production costs of £1.25 per issue. Advertising revenue is increasing with more being sought. GF will encourage his fellow councillors to increase their advertising in the newsletter. SM will advise KoSDT and Revolution of the decision. **GF/SM Action. (2)**

Invershin cycle ramp. Matt Dent advised PO, and SC of Creich CC, that the ramp would be in place by Christmas and that no further difficulties were envisaged following some agreed minor modifications. **(3) Ardchronie traffic lights.** GF has raised the matter again with Graham MacKenzie of THC, particularly in relation to the high cost of maintaining the lights in situ; CC has received no reply to its letter after 2 months. It is understood that the lights have recently been serviced which appears to indicate that they will remain in situ for some time to come. This issue should now be a priority having been running for three and a half years. **(4) Grass verges.** In order to provide Safer Routes to School where no pavements exist, the grass verges must be cut back to allow children to walk on them and stay off the roads. The stretch from Old Kincardine Church to Ardgay was particularly mentioned in this regard. **GF Action. (5)**

Struie/Strathroy bridge. Some whins have been cut back on one of the approaches to the bridge but the sightlines remain obscured on the other. An icy strip of untreated road at the top of Struie Hill was mentioned as being 'the worst bit of road between here and Aberdeen.' **(6) Footpath sign.** No signpost is in place to indicate the footpath at the top of Struie Hill leading to the mast. **GF Action.**

Minutes approved 09/02/2015

Items 6/7. Core Path Plan Review/CASPLAN. These two issues overlap in areas of concern. Core Path Plan changes proposed by THC have a closing date for comments of 27th March 2015. A public event in Lairg tomorrow will address both the Core Path Plan and the CASPLAN. Some CC members hope to attend if possible. Deadline for comments on the CASPLAN is 31st January. All felt that the Ardgay and Kyle of Sutherland area has been ignored by the plan. TL has a hard copy of the plan. BS called for the Tuiteam bridge and its approaches to be classed as a Core Path which would ensure its re-opening and maintenance. As a traditional route linking Strathoykel and the opposite side of the Oykel valley it has been used for centuries to access the cemetery, schools, etc. Especially at times of flooding it becomes an essential access/exit link for residents. CC members will put this suggestion to the Review.

Item 8. Budget cuts. GF advised that THC cuts are not expected to be too severe in 2015-16, but that in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 huge cuts will be required to stay level with inflation. A vacancy management programme is in place whereby vacancies are not filled whenever it is possible to leave empty. There is strong support to make no cuts in education although this is the highest spending sector of public services. THC provides 25 hours a week of teaching, higher than elsewhere. The Council Tax freeze is a Scottish Government issue, prominent in the SNP manifesto but after seven years questions are being asked as to its feasibility.

Item 9. Beauly-Loch Buidhe Overhead Reinforcement Project. PO advised that the SSE planned route for new pylons from Culrain eastward could see a line of extra-large pylons taken through the centre of the village. Two pylon lines are currently operating, the line of smaller pylons will be removed when the upgrading is completed. The public should be encouraged to request SSE to take its line out to the new Dounreay line where both requirements can be handled. The project is due to complete in 2019; the option to comment is available now. Details on SSE website are scant. It was agreed that CC should write to SSE regarding the positioning of the pylons. **MT/TL Action.** AM & AS left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Item 10. Correspondence. All relevant correspondence has been forwarded to CC members prior to the meeting. (1) A thank you card has been received from KoSDT with regard to the BTWF award for Learning and Development. (2) Forestry Commission has advised it cannot supply and deliver Christmas trees this year. Volunteers have come forward and trees will be in place. (3) Apology received from Rev Anthony Jones with regard to the lack of Church representation at the service of Remembrance at the Ardgay War Memorial. He had misunderstood the arrangements and guarantees in future. (4) KoSDT advise that a new postmaster/postmistress is being sought for the Bonar Bridge PO with Mrs Calder taking on the post on a short term contract only. The Trust is also helping the Ardgay Public Hall Committee with reorganisation plans. Membership of the Trust is free and new members are encouraged. (5) The new Cinema Club will hold its next showing on 12th December at 7.30pm in Bonar Bridge Hall. (6) CC members approved the sharing of draft Minutes with Creich and Lairg CCs.

Item 11. Treasurer's report. (AL) The cleared balance of the Treasurer's account is £686.35. There are no outstanding liabilities with this year's Highland Council grant of £978.16 waiting to be transferred from the Projects accounts. The Project account stands at £9042.81. Cheque for £978.16 has been raised for the Treasurer's account. The £1500 toilet grant covers a loan to the Toilet account less £20. The Toilets account cleared balance is £200.65 with one outstanding cheque for £189.00. THC grants were paid in October without the need to resubmit to the approved format following representations made by AL and MT. It was agreed that discussion of finances should be on the next agenda in February, 2015.

Item 12. Secretary's report. (TL) Removal of speed limit signs. Following discussion at July CC meeting, resident David Langley has had no response from Cllr Farlow on this issue. A phone call to THC on 9th October received the promise of a response within 10 days but no such response received. Representation to John Clark, TECS Bonar Bridge, resulted in redirection to Graham MacKenzie and Hugh Lynch, Lighting Foreman. Mr Langley was recommended to write to CEO of THC, Steve Barron, giving full details and stating his complete dissatisfaction. **TL Action.**

Item 13. Windfarms. Achany. The Panel will meet next on 15th December; this will be an awards meeting. **Beinn nan Oighrean.** Agreed to refer to this development from now on as Rock-by-Sea as it is known elsewhere to save confusion. **Caplich.** The developer has set up a log/fuel subsidy scheme for those in fuel poverty: £20 per month subsidy for logs or £250 towards insulation costs. **Croick.** It is understood that this application has been withdrawn at present. **Glen Cassley/Sallachy.** Both awaiting Scottish Government decisions. DH was questioned regarding a letter of support for Sallachy submitted on behalf of the CC. The CC stand of remaining neutral on development proposals was re-affirmed and DH apologised to the CC. **Airdens.** Not currently on CC list but should be added as it is understood to be at the scoping stage. **TL Action. Glenmorie.** Expected to go to judicial review in the second quarter of 2015.

Item 14. Community at Heart – ref village tubs. SSE will do work with village tubs if certain questions are answered e.g. how many working days are anticipated, etc. It was suggested that barrels can still be obtained from the Dalmore distillery which would negate the requirement for mending with only painting and weather proofing needed. BW will investigate and report back to CC then Secretary can liaise with SSE. **BW/TL Action.**

Item 15. Highland Councillor's report. In addition to contributions made elsewhere in the course of the meeting, GF reported that work is ongoing with regard to the provision of high speed Broadband to rural areas. Difficulties arising with wayleave rental agreements. He will continue to report relevant information. As he was driving to Wick tonight for a meeting there at 9am tomorrow, GF left the meeting at 8.25pm.

Item 16. Any other competent business. (1) Gearrchoille Community Wood Ardgay (GWCA). Reference in the newsletter to this perhaps becoming a Special Landscape Area was questioned and will now be discussed by the GWCA at their next meeting. (2) Safer Routes to School. A petition had been handed to the CC Secretary by Gledfield Parent Council. Following discussion TL will write to Cllr Linda Munro – the THC children's Champion, asking her to consult with Kirsten McNeill, Gledfield Head Teacher as this issue has to be addressed by her, in hopes of progressing the upgrades needed. TL will also register CC support for the renewed plan. **TL Action.** (3) It was confirmed that Jeanie Sparling will continue with the maintenance of the Ardgay toilets. (4) Culrain meeting. It was agreed to hold the CC meeting of 11th May 2015 in Culrain, subject to the availability of the hall. (5) Payment of £26 and a donation taking this up to £50 was approved for the poppy wreath laid at the recent Remembrance service. **AL Action.**

Item 17. Date of next meeting. There being no meeting in January the next meeting will be held on Monday 9th February at 7pm in Ardgay Public Hall.

There was one application to the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund discussed at private session after the main meeting with the resulting award of £50 being made to the Friends of Sutherland Veterans Group.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.