

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 14th September 2015 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)

Apologies: Silvia Muras (SM)

Police Scotland: PC Angus Morrison (PCAM)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Lesley Pope (LP), Sheila Lall (SL)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (as above). Chair DH welcomed everyone, thanking Lesley and Sheila for their attendance and noting that there will be no meeting in October making this the penultimate meeting prior to the election on 18th November.

Item 3. Minutes of last meeting. The minutes of the August meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed: Marion Turner; seconded: Teresa Langley.

Item 4. Matters arising:

- (a) Invershin Cycle ramp. (PO) CC has been informed that the ramp is due for painting this week with installation scheduled for next week.
- (b) Safer routes to school/grass verges. Thanks to THC were noted as the verges between Ardgay village and the school have been cut. GF advised that it is a statutory of THC to make one cut per year and the lines of sight must be maintained on all roads. He was asked if residents could be paid by THC to cut verges by their own properties; he will enquire regarding insurance cover, the need to register, etc. It was felt that cuts in THC services encourage reductions in other essential services, such as banking, with the resulting erosion of communities. THC should work with, for example Bank of Scotland, RBS, etc, to find ways to combine service provision while reducing costs. GF agreed to take comments and complaints to THC.
- (c) Bonar Bridge Service Point. The reduction of service should be referred to the Audit & Scrutinising Committee due to many inaccuracies in the information gathering process.
- (d) Oakwood Place Core Path. Nothing heard.
- (e) Village Flower Tubs. THC grant of £100 from Ward Discretionary Budget received.
- (f) Carbisdale Castle. Nothing heard.

Item 5. Police report. PC Morrison's report indicated three reports of disorder, three domestic disturbances, two road accidents, one fire and twelve road traffic offences (this figure included within the Bonar Bridge area). CC requested more statistical information with a breakdown of the figures presented each month. Parking at the main road junction and at the Post Office in Bonar Bridge was highlighted as causing obstructions and danger. Many new skid marks evident on the Struie road suggesting misuse. **PCAM Action.**

Item 6. Newsletter. Congratulations were recorded to Silvia on the birth of her son. The slight delay in editorial work will still allow for the publication of the next issue only slightly behind schedule.

Item 7. Secretary's report/Correspondence. Letter of thanks received from Gledfield Primary School Parent Council for the recent Rock by Sea award.

Item 8. Treasurer's report. (AL) As stated above £100 received from THC Ward Discretionary Budget re flower tubs. Current cleared balance is £12,383.95 which includes recent receipt of £2,500 from Beinn nan Oighrean windfarm (Rock by Sea). Current restricted fund balances were given as Toilet Cleaning - £1168.00 (deficit); Beinn Tharsuinn Community Projects - £168.19; Newsletter - £1781.55; Rock by Sea Community Benefit - £10,225.00; E.ON Path Fund - £800.

Item 9. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust report. (MT) Application made via THC to Scottish Government Regeneration Fund re development of Ardgay centre. Stage 1 approved and KoSDT has been invited to submit application to Stage 2. Brief outline of how this stage was reached was given indicating that the opportunity to apply to this fund gave a limited timescale in which to work. Keep Active Together team running various activities in the local village halls, some better attended than others. Greening Kyle working on a 'Getting Ready for Winter' programme. With like-minded groups exerting pressure on Scottish Government to reduce fuel poverty in rural and island areas.

Item 10. Highland Council. (GF) Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee Meeting on 16th September will discuss a police report into the issues of road safety and also domestic abuse. This will be the last meeting of the Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee. In future Sutherland will meet as a committee which it is hoped will be webcast in the usual way. Planning Committee due to report on 15th September regarding major developments such as windfarms, housing etc. GF has met with John Clark TECS regarding the works due at Ardchronie traffic lights. Highland Wide Local Development Plan has been issued with a deadline of 18th December for comments. Concern expressed that the new NC500 publicity does little for anywhere in the hinterland; this should be expanded to encourage users to break off the main route. The NC500 website includes attractions, accommodation and catering in central Sutherland so there is scope for inclusion for anyone who makes the effort. It was stated that many of the single track roads are unfit to take present levels of traffic let alone an increase. Those on the Torridon, Shieldaig and Bealach na Ba routes were mentioned as being below standard. Unrepaired restraint barriers reported at Culrain bridge and on the A839 near Achuirgill. Street lighting has been on all day between Ardgay and Gledfield ever since being changed to LEDs due to recent power cuts affecting timing, but should be reported to Service Point.

Item 11. Windfarms. Braemore – going to PLI 28th September. **Achany.** Business review meeting held on 7th September. **Sallachy.** Awaiting Scottish Government decision; may not go ahead if rejected. **Croick.** Application withdrawn. **Strathirry.** Will be visible in parts of A&DCC area; CC will be involved in community benefit discussions. In a general point BW reminded the meeting that it is important to remember that many good projects have been supported by windfarm community benefit monies. CC restated its neutral stance on windfarms thus avoiding difficult conflict situations while distributing community benefit as fairly as possible.

Item 12. Arrangements for Beinn Tharsuinn awards. Discussed at private session after this meeting.

Item 13. AOCB. (a) Bank of Scotland, Bonar Bridge. Opening hours will be reduced on 7th December to 10.00 - 15.00 hours on Tuesdays only. CC will send a letter to BoS opposing this move. **MT Action.**

(b) Winter gritting programme. GF will take back to THC the comments that no further reduction in gritting can be allowed to avoid creating significant dangers. GF confirmed that the two gritters now in place will cover the same area as previously covered by three machines. **GF Action.**

(c) Community Council elections. Many emails received with information regarding the procedures prior to the election on November 18th. Nomination forms are now available to download from THC website but cannot be submitted until 22nd September with a deadline of 6th October. Depending on what changes of personnel may occur current bank signatories must remain contactable until the situation is clear.

(d) City/ Region Bid. MT put forward a two point plan: the train system needs to be made reliable which requires more loops on the rail system to improve services and punctuality. A minimum of two more loops is needed and would make a significant difference to timings. Park and Ride/Park and Share car parks and bus stops should be created to counter the lack of bus services into Inverness. Clashmore, Skiach and Nigg were stated as obvious sites. Integrated timetables on bus and rail services should be produced and made viable. **GF Action.**

(e) Wifi in Ardgay Public Hall. This would greatly improve use of the hall in many circumstances and a request for it should be submitted to the Hall Committee's AGM in October. **BW Action.**

(f) Refugee situation. Best local action meantime is to donate money to Blythswood which is working in this field. THC website has further information.

(g) Resignation of Secretary. TL advised that as of this meeting she is standing down from the CC. The post of Secretary will be filled until the November election by MT. TL was warmly thanked for her many good initiatives while in the post after stepping into the breach left by the unexpected death of Peter Armstrong. The new systems are easy to use and have put the secretary's work onto a professional footing. CC members expressed their gratitude to TL for her conscientious work and wished her well on standing down.

(h) MacLeans/Rutherford yard – currently not functioning, could perhaps be rented to the community. GF will establish ownership and enquire. **GF Action.**

(i) New bus routes starting on 3rd October including Inverness/Durness taking in Ardgay and Lairg. Timetables available on Traveline website. New time tables should be provided in all bus shelters locally once the new contract is awarded in January.

(j) Recent roadshow about the Community Empowerment Act (July 2016) was attended by twenty people of whom only four were volunteers.

(k) Application to join Highland Third Sector Interface approved. **DH Action.**

(l) Police consultation will take place in Lairg on 30th October 10.45- 3pm.

Minutes approved 09/11/2015

Item 15. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held in the Ardgay Public Hall at 7pm on Monday 9th November 2015. There will be no meeting in October.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit awards.

At the private meeting following the regular monthly meeting Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust was awarded £2,000 towards the costs of their work on the Ardgay Regeneration Project. The application by Tain Tennis Club was re-visited by request but was rejected due to there being no tangible benefit to the Ardgay community. The application by Gledfield Primary School Parent Council for funds towards running a community family ceilidh in November received an award of £462.