

ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 9th November 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), Phil Olson (PO), Betty Wright (BW), Silvia Muras (SM) Bob Sendall (BS)

Apologies: All present

Police Scotland: PC Steve Mackenzie (PCSM)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Teresa Langley (TL), Lesley Pope (LP), Sheila Lall (SL), Santiago Mackenzie (SMJnr)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (as above). Chair DH welcomed everyone and moved swiftly to the agenda.

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

Item 4. Matters arising:

- (a) Invershin Cycle ramp. (PO) The news was received with great delight that the cycle ramp is at last installed. Creich CC is arranging a memorial plaque in respect for the work done on this project and others by the late Sandy Chalmers.
- (b) Bank of Scotland, Bonar Bridge. The CC has already written to the Bank to register dismay at the proposed reduction of hours at the local branch. Any further comments should be emailed to MT who will compose another letter of complaint. All individuals, groups and businesses are encouraged to write to oppose the cuts in service. AL stated that the job of Treasurer for the CC, and all other groups, will be nigh on impossible to conduct without the provision of the local branch. GF is liaising with Dr Paul Monaghan, MP, who is dealing with Bank officials at a high level. **All/GF Action.**
- (c) THC Highland-wide Development Plan is now out for consultation with a deadline of 8th December for online comments. It is felt that Central Sutherland is ignored in the plan, an omission which should be addressed. CC members should send their opinions to MT by the end of the week to allow her to compile a CC statement to submit online. **All/MT Action.**
- (d) Grass verges/Safer routes to School. Although some routes have had verges cut many have not including the transport lines. The Kincardine to Ardgay route for secondary school pupils remains a serious danger. GF agreed to speak with TECS to urge cutting for safety reasons throughout the area. **GF Action.**
- (e) Carbisdale. BW reminded CCs that in their documents presented at the Braemore PLI the Carbisdale Castle Group indicated that the sale was expected to go through in mid-November. The CC has not been advised by either sellers or developers of any progress; at no point have the developers ever approached the CC directly.
- (f) Wi-Fi for Ardgay Public Hall. Provision of a Wi-fi hotspot would be of great benefit to hall users. It is understood to be difficult to provide as there is no landline. Bonar Bridge Hall Committee should be asked how they provide a hotspot, which is well used, and at what cost. **BW Action.**

Item 5. Police report. PC Mackenzie's report had no serious issues. Reports since the last CC meeting included five speeding, one no MOT and one of poaching. Asked about parking issues in Bonar the CC was encouraged to report these to the Road Traffic Department. An item could be included in the next issue of the CC newsletter with relevant parking information and also any advice from Police Scotland regarding safe road use through the winter. Incidents of motorcycles roaring through the area, particularly on the various straight road sections were passed to PCSM. These are of nuisance value but also dangerous and law-breaking. **PCSM Action.** Chair thanked Police Scotland for its attendance at the Remembrance Service at the Ardgay War Memorial on Sunday 8th November. PCSM left at 7.35pm.

Item 6. Newsletter. Deadline for the next issue is 25th November. Already several items of local interest have been identified for articles, including the Ardgay Regeneration Project, the Invershin Cycle Ramp, Bank of Scotland Bonar Bridge proposed reduction of hours, domestic violence, phone and internet scams. The monitoring report for Foundation Scotland (E.ON Rosehall) is now due. SM and AL will work on this and submit. **SM/AL Action.**

Item 7. Secretary's report/Correspondence. (MT) A list of incoming correspondence by both email and post was given which included advice of THC payment, Bank of Scotland reply (standard to all), Gledfield Head Teacher, THC Highland-wide Development Plan, Scotways receipt for payment (passed to Treasurer), many communications from VG-

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ES, and a request from Matt Dent for the £800 currently held by CC for Core Path work – this will continue to be held by the CC until appropriate work is carried out. THC advised it is taking over the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement powers from Police Scotland in April 2016. Fountains Forestry invited the CC to participate in a scoping exercise regarding the Clais Mor Forest Long Term Forest Plan. BW advised that Forestry Commission Scotland is holding a consultation regarding its management plan for Central Sutherland on 12th November in Bonar Bridge, 18th November in Lairg. Letter received from the Boundaries Commission indicates no changes here. It was agreed that the Chair would respond to a request for support from Assynt CC regarding changes to the Patient Transport Scheme. Guidelines are currently unclear. GF suggested that a Ward Forum should be called to deal with this issue. DH will write to Assynt CC.

DH/GF Action. Friends of Sutherland Veterans are fundraising for their flag-raising event next June and wrote seeking an interest. DH declared his interest. A donation of £50 was approved. **AL Action.**

Item 8. Treasurer's report. (AL) In his last report as Treasurer AL produced an enhanced report to show current CC position. Cleared balance at start of November was £14,880.89. Cheques have been written to the value of £1716 with a further £150 (approx.) outgoings expected before this CC goes into abeyance at 11.59hrs on 17th November. THC Administration and Toilets grants have been received plus £100 from the Ward Discretionary Budget towards the village floral displays. The Beinn Tharsuinn award made to Gledfield Primary School Parent Council was returned due to the failure of the project along with the same amount which was awarded by Creich. This money should be returned to Alex Macmanus, Company Secretary BTWF. Treasurer will send a cheque for the full amount of £924 and also advise the Treasurer of Creich CC. **AL Action.** The Beinn nan Oihgrean (/Rock by Sea) Small Grants Fund has received a further payment of £2,500. Billing has been made for £205 for advertising in Issue 29 of the newsletter of which £100 has been received. £950 has been paid to KoSDT against an invoice to cover printing costs for the next two issues. The restricted fund balances stand at approximately: Toilet cleaning = £34.00 (deficit); Beinn Tharsuinn community projects = £2668.19; Newsletter = £478.00; Beinn nan Oihgrean community benefit = £10225.00; E.ONPath Fund = £800. A full set of figures will accompany the handing over of the accounts to the Ward Manager on 17th November. AL expressed his thanks to CC members for their help and cooperation with especial mention to MT for her assistance in preparing the accounts in the form required by THC. He also registered his complaint against THC for the lack of respect shown to the position of Treasurer having received no reply at any time in six years to any covering letter submitted by him.

Item 9. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust report. (MT) The Trust AGM will be held in Bonar Bridge Hall at 7.30pm on 16th November. Ardgay Regeneration Project and Falls of Shin applications have both been submitted. Over 100 people attended the recent consultation regarding the Ardgay Regeneration Project. It is hoped to hear regarding the Falls of Shin funding by March. Match funding is also being sought. The Keep Active Together (KAT) team has published a full list of upcoming activities, Greening Kyle is winding up its Home Energy Survey project, due to finish in March at which time their Cosy Homes East Sutherland scheme should pick up, funded by British Gas. Local residences are currently benefitting from an external insulation scheme being run by E.ON.

Item 10. Highland Council. (GF) GF has not been able to establish ownership of the MacLean/Rutherford yard. Such a search would involve expensive fees. THC Restructuring of Community Services is underway. Restructuring should be aimed at middle management levels with fewer department heads. Full report expected by February. Ardchronie road works: THC is now reinforcing the wall and side banking prior to any further work. The cost of operating traffic lights here for the past four years was highlighted; stress was again placed on the need to complete this work as soon as possible and to a satisfactory conclusion.

Item 11. Windfarms. Beinn Tharsuinn. CC appoints two directors to the Board of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Company Ltd therefore no Ardgay representatives will be in place after 17th November until such time as a new CC is reinstated, hopefully in March 2016. No applications to the Ardgay section of the fund can be considered until the new CC is inaugurated. **Braemore.** The Scottish Government Reporters decision is hoped for in January. **Caplich.** This will be discussed by THC Planning in February. Muirhall Energy is making funding available to Lairg Learning Centre to run courses but CC members are unhappy at the lack of discussion with Ardgay and possibly Creich. Outreach courses within this scheme should also take place in Ardgay and Creich to ensure equal value to all three areas. BW will liaise with Peter Marshall. **BW Action.**

Item 12. AOCB. (1) Ardgay Christmas lights. The lights are currently stored at Ardgay Garage; Paul Whittock wishes to hire a cherry picker to erect them, due to weight of each unit and safety issues. It was thought that several local farmers have cherry pickers and should be approached to help. SM will make enquiries as to whether a tree might be donated again this year. As no CC will be in place there is no-one to co-ordinate this project. An appeal will be placed on the village noticeboards seeking volunteers to take on erecting lights and the tree if one is found. Anyone willing should

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contact Paul directly at Ardgay Garage. Chair will advise Paul. **MT/DH Action. (2) Core Paths.** See Item 7/ Correspondence.) **(3) Closure of Community Council.** Chair expressed thanks to all outgoing councillors, wishing them well for the future and expressing the hope that volunteers will come forward in the New Year and seek nomination with a view to forming a new CC. A full list of all the statutory and voluntary roles undertaken by the CC has been compiled and this will be included in an item in the next newsletter. PO offered to remain as Webmaster in a voluntary capacity at present. **(4) Community Broadband Scotland.** CBS has been invited by KoSDT to give a presentation in Bonar Bridge Hall on 23rd November.

Item 15. Date and time of next meeting. The present CC members will stand down at 11.59 hours on 17th November at which time the CC will go into abeyance pending a further round of nominations/election processes which will start in January. The community is urged to find enough volunteers to take on this most important community role as many local groups and organisations depend on the CC to enable them to function, to seek funding, etc. The statutory duties such as commenting on Planning and Licensing applications will fail as will the liaison channel to local and national governments until such time as a new CC can be formed. With thanks again to the outgoing members, the Chair closed this meeting at 9.30pm.

Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit awards.

At the private meeting following the CC's monthly meeting Gearrhoille Community Wood Ardgay was awarded £800 to support the essential requirements and financial obligations of running the community wood throughout 2016-17.

Ardgay Public Hall was awarded £900 towards the cost of remedial work following the installation of the new electrical heating system.

Creich, Croick & Kincardine District Day Care Centre was awarded £350 towards its Christmas Activities programme to allow for a visit to the panto and a shopping trip to Inverness.

Application by North Highland Language Centre was rejected.

From the Beinn nan Oihgrean (Rock by Sea) Small Grants Fund an award of £150 was approved to the Kyle of Sutherland Joggers towards organising a community run in Bonar Bridge this December.