

Ardgay & District Community Council



www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 11th April 2016 in Ardgay Public Hall at 7.00pm

Present: Elected, co-opted and associated members: Betty Wright, Chair (BW), Silvia Muras, Vice Chair (SM), Marion Turner, Treasurer (MT), Leslie Pope, Secretary (LP), Andy Wright (AW), Sheila Lall (SL), Rob Pope (RP)

Apologies: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

Police Scotland: No representative

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (as above). Chair Betty Wright welcomed everyone to this meeting of the CC, with a particular welcome to Rob Pope who was attending for the first time. In previous years the CC has not held a meeting in April but due to the recent period in abeyance and the presence of newly elected members it was considered to be helpful in getting the CC back on track after the break in continuity.

Item 3. Minutes of last meeting. The minutes of the March meeting were approved, with one amendment, as a true and accurate record, proposed: Marion Turner; seconded: Silvia Muras.

Item 4. Matters arising/Updates.

- (a) Bank of Scotland, Bonar Bridge. Michael Baird is still awaiting a date for a local meeting with MP Paul Monaghan, Bank officials and all interested parties.
- (b) WiFi Ardgay Hall. The Hall Committee is not currently in a financial position to go ahead with this project. BW will discuss with the Committee ascertaining the costs involved with a view to perhaps seeking shared funding with the CC, in stages, initially for the installation of a landline and broadband. **BW Action.**
- (c) CAS Plan. Comments submitted by CC have been validated.
- (d) Ardgay Toilets. No progress has been made; it is still unclear whether or not THC will close the facility. If the CC is to go ahead to operate the facility through the summer season the grant payment would be required by May at the latest. MT will discuss with Cllr Farlow. **MT Action.**
- (e) Broadband. No update available.
- (f) Home insurance. BW has established that SEPA's flood maps cannot be used for business or commercial gain nor are they arranged by post code. The public should be aware of this and report any problems experienced to the CC via the Secretary on secretary@ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk
- (g) LP and SL attended a Sutherland Housing Conference which dealt with how to adapt housing appropriately for dementia sufferers. A pilot scheme is in operation in Lochaber. HSCHT and Albyn Housing were represented and explained how they are working with communities. LP and SL were thanked for attending on behalf of the CC.

Item 5. Police report. None submitted.

Item 6. Secretary's report. (LP) (a) Correspondence. LP worked through a list of incoming correspondence most of which had been circulated by email to members. A survey from VG-ES was discussed and the CC will send a positive response as many people find their services very useful. Information received regarding the increase in fines for dog fouling, from £40 to £80. This will be the subject of an item in the next edition of the newsletter, also reminding the public of the health issues. SL will check out what information is available from local vets and also enquire about a visit to the local school by the dog warden. **SL Action.**

Item 7. Treasurer's report. (MT) The balance at the bank at March 2016 was £12,354.84 of which £11,731.32 are restricted funds, leaving £623.52 is available to the CC for running costs. Toilet Fund has -£36. Community Projects Fund =£878.48. The Beinn nan Oighrean Fund receives £2,500 per year and currently holds a balance of £9,275. Grants of up to £250 are available from this Fund; an application form is available on the CC website. The Path Fund

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balance is £800. The Newsletter Fund balance stands at £813.84. This year's accounts will go to auditing on 12th April. MT was thanked for her detailed work and reporting.

Item 8. Organisation of the Community Council.

- (a) Declarations of Interest. Blank forms will be emailed to CCs who should complete and bring to the next meeting. **MG/All Action.**
- (b) CC representation on other groups. CC reps for Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust will be MT with AW as depute. Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm Company Ltd – RP with AW. SSE & E.ON Rosehall Panel – SM and MT.
- (c) Toilets. The CC will continue to co-ordinate the caretaking meantime.
- (d) Minutes. Draft minutes will be circulated to all members who will then have five days to comment after which the **final draft** will be placed on the CC website and noticeboard. The public will be asked, via the Newsletter, to indicate if they wish to be advised that the draft minutes are available. LP will set up a CC Facebook page with herself and SM as administrators. Minutes/news items can also be posted. **LP Action.**
- (e) Policy on privacy of CC's personal contacts. It was agreed that on the website only the names of the CC members will be posted with the Secretary's telephone number and email address given for contact. In the Newsletter the list of names, addresses and telephone numbers will remain in the current format. **PO/SM Action.**
- (f) Beinn Tharsuinn grant application meetings. MT explained the procedure whereby applications go to THC which administers the Fund for the CC. CC members make the award decisions and also carry out the follow up one year later insuring the submission of invoices to the CC by awardees. THC will assess applications, note the fund available to the CC and send to Secretary who will circulate to members and MG prior to meetings. MG will advise THC of the outcomes and also send CC formulated letters to applicants. Information regarding the application procedure will be amended both in the Newsletter and on the website. **SM/PO Action.** LP will advise Alex Macmanus, THC, regarding the new CC reps to company. **LP Action.**
Discussion followed regarding whether or not meetings to discuss applications to the Funds should be held in private, as now, or in public. Members' views were divided with some favouring an open forum where applicants could make presentation with Q&A session if required while others, with experience of both systems, remained in favour of private deliberations to allow members to air opinions in confidence. It was stated that most professional funding bodies hold their decision making meetings in private. It was agreed to maintain the current system for a further three months, which would allow new members to see it in operation, after which the question can be revisited as an agenda item. **Agenda item in August (no July meeting).**

Item 9. Newsletter. (SM) A newly designed letter head for correspondence was approved with congratulations to SM on design. This will now be used on all CC documents. The funding from E.ON Rosehall Community Fund has now finished and a new source of support must be found. A payment for services by the Editor should be secured with fuel expenses considered for long delivery routes. Printing is cheaper at the moment as the Editor supplies all copy in a machine-ready format to the printers. Advertising could perhaps be sold further afield; CCs should carry copies of the Newsletter when visiting any prospective advertiser maximising personal contacts. A list of prospective advertisers should be drawn up with personal visits made to encourage uptake. A 'photo shoot' of CCs members will be held ahead of the next meeting and the pictures will appear in the following issue along with an article on the work of the CC. The outgoing CC members will also be mentioned with thanks given. SM was commended for another excellent edition. **Agenda item.**
The introduction of CC 'Surgeries' was proposed as new members wondered if this might make the CC more accessible to public. In the past the first half hour of each meeting was designated as a 'Public meeting' slot and this has worked well. It was agreed that this format should continue for the next three months, with this slot's date and time advertised on the noticeboard, website and Facebook page, after which the system can be reviewed and 'surgeries' reconsidered. **SWLP Action.**

Item 10. Website. Phil Olson (PO) has agreed to continue to maintain the website meantime and is working with SM to simplify it. Grateful thanks were recorded to PO for all his work on the site in the past and present.

Item 11. Flower tubs. While several local gardeners have expressed an interest in being involved in the project to stock and maintain the tubs, no one person has as yet come forward to take the lead. Commitment to watering requirements is a stumbling block. Planting should be carried out in May. Discuss again at May meeting. **Agenda item.**

Item 12. NC 500 route. LP is interested in collating 'package side tours' in this area. Also perhaps promote clan connections abroad, especially in the US and Canada. LP will attend the Lairg CC meeting on 4th May at which representatives of North Highland Initiative will be present. **LP Action.**

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Item 13. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust report. Greening Kyle project is now finished; Keep Active Together is funded until the end of the year. Calum Couston leaves his graduate placement within the Trust this week and will be greatly missed. It is hoped that a replacement for this post will be found. Community Broadband project is being pursued, awaiting post code roll out information from BT. Falls of Shin and Ardgay Regeneration projects are both moving forward.

Item 14. Highland Council. To help understand the work of the local councillors and the significance of the geography, MT shared the figures of population numbers, numbers of CC areas and numbers of Highland Councillors. THC Ward 5, East Sutherland & Edderton, with a population of around 7600 stretches from Helmsdale to Dornoch and Edderton and has six Community Councils covered by three Councillors. Ward 1, North West and Central Sutherland, a huge area stretching from Ardgay to Durness with a population around 6000, has eleven Community Councils which also has to be covered by only three Councillors.

Item 15. Windfarms. Nil of note.

Item 16. Any other competent business. None raised.

Item 17. Date and time of next/future meeting/s. The next meeting will be held on Monday 9th May at 7pm in the Ardgay Public Hall.

Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit awards.

At the private meeting following the CC's monthly meeting the Kyle of Sutherland Hub was awarded £2,000 towards ongoing costs of the project; Creich, Croick & Kincardine District Day Care Association was awarded £512 towards a community street party for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations; Ardgay & District Community Council was awarded £2,000 to maintain and produce the community newsletter over the coming three years. MG will advise Alex Macmanus to arrange payment. **MG Action.**

Beinn nan Oighrean awards. Ardgay Public Hall Committee was awarded £240 towards cost of new rubber feet for chairs and upholstery cleaning. **MG/MT Action.**

Meeting closed 10.10pm.