

Ardgay & District Community Council



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Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 13th February 2017 in Ardgay Hall at 7.00pm

Present: 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), Buster Crabb, till 8.35pm (BC)

Apologies: Cllr George Farlow – post meeting by email

Also present: Douglas Murray (DM) and Ian Imlach (II), Fountain Forestry, Graham MacKenzie, THC Roads Department (GM), 8 members of the public (listed at foot)

Police Scotland: PC Tracy Murray

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (as above) Chair Betty Wright welcomed everyone, especially all those attending for the public meeting with representatives of Fountain Forestry and THC Roads Dept. As PC Murray had also arrived at the start of the meeting she was invited to give her report ahead of the discussion.

Item 5. Police report. There were seven incidents reported in the last month – three road traffic related (speeding/insurance issue), one child protection issue, two advise calls and one medical matter. MT advised the officer that THC proposes to move the Polling Station from the Public Hall to Gledfield School where parking will become a serious issue on polling days. She encouraged the officer to pass this information back to Police Scotland in the hopes that a comment might be made by them to Cheryl McIvor, Elections Officer. There is adequate parking for the event if the Polling Station remains at the Hall. **PC Murray Action.**

Returning to the discussion with DM and II, it was hoped that GM would attend and he did arrive shortly after the start of this item. DM outlined the position of Fountain Forestry which considers itself to be a responsible owner of the Garvary Woodland. This forest is now reaching maturity and a three phase harvesting plan is in place over approximately the next twenty years, in five year phases. Phase One will take around five years to complete during which 25,000 tons of timber will be harvested over the first eighteen months then nothing more for three and a half years. The route advised to residents was shown on a map of the area (with copies left/handed out at the end of the discussion). This is a public road and the company has a legal right to use it for this purpose. Fountain Forestry is aware of the concerns of the residents and will do all it can to minimize them. THC will carry out a full survey of the road to establish what upgrading is required. The Scottish Timber Transport Fund has been contacted with a view to an application for funding to help with the costs involved. The agreed improvements would be made almost immediately and certainly prior to the commencement of timber extraction. Three or four lorries per day are anticipated. Alternative routes have been considered by the company but discounted due to significant cost implications. The proposed route is the only legal exit route. In other areas the company has always sought to improve roads, reduce loads, amend timings, avoid convoys or lorries meeting – a full traffic management plan would be in place. THC would be consulted to agree the maximum number of lorries per day. Donald Gillies made a clear statement outlining the grievances and concerns of the residents beginning with the complete lack of communication with certain residencies and businesses along the eastern route of the road. Medical and emergency vehicles, HGV vehicles, trailers, garage business, residencies, children, horses and other animals, blind sections and corners, inadequate passing places, some occasional downed trees, stuck lorries, damage to road surface, deep ditches with barbed wire fences and the dangerous junction to access the A836 were all sited as major issues which do not appear to have been addressed. The road was never intended to have to deal with the present level of use let alone that proposed. For THC GM pointed out that the Council has no powers to stop anyone using the road legally. THC has a good relationship with Fountain Forestry and the woodland owners. The meeting was reminded that it is in the interests of Fountain Forestry to improve and maintain the road – if it is ruined the extraction cannot continue. Funding for the improvements will be sought immediately on completion of the survey and no extraction will commence before the improvements are done and an agreed traffic management plan is in place.

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Fountain Forestry will have a binding contract with THC. Any infringements will be dealt with promptly. Mairi Munro requested that special training be given to all drivers with regard to how to act when horses are on the road, even switching off engines if necessary to avoid spooking the animals. HI-VIZ clothing should be available for residents. DM confirmed that the horses issue will form part of a risk assessment and all workers will be briefed and be given a copy of it. Warning signs will be erected to promote awareness. Speed limits will be strictly enforced. GM confirmed that the survey should be carried out within the next 2- 3 weeks after which funding will be sought for improvements. He and Fountain Forestry will come back to the community with details. He also stated that without the extraction programme there will be no road improvements. Another survey will be done at the end of the extraction period with any repairs made to ensure the upgraded standard is maintained. With thanks to all who attended this session finished at 8.05pm at which point the officials and most of the public left.

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

Item 4. Matters arising. (1) Path at rear of new housing development. It has been ascertained that although a commonly used path for very many years this is not a designated Right of Way or Core Path. A member of the public raised concerns that this path would no longer be available when the Regeneration Project, which has outline planning permission, is completed. Matt Dent, Access Officer, to be contacted for comment. **LP Action.** (2) Christmas lights. AW and BW will collect the lights from Paul Whittock and also arrange a thank you card to be sent. Indoor storage is an issue and if the lights are to be reused/sold some maintenance will be required. Although very early in the year the points raised do need to be addressed fairly soon. **AW/BW Action.** (3) Finches Playpark steps have been completed. Deterioration is evident at the entry gate. Long awaited rubbish bins are not yet in place. The lowering of the kerb is still required. **BW Action.** (4) Toilet caretaking. Three responses have been received. This item to be discussed further at next meeting once THC Budget announcement makes clear if financial support remains. LP will advise interested parties meantime. **Agenda item/BW/LP Action.**

Item 6. Chairperson's report. (1) Drivers' Square. Local opinion, gathered during conversations between local residents and CCs, appears generally in favour of adopting this name for the Regeneration Site, though there are some who would prefer the Lady Ross name maintained. There has been no direct feedback to SM/LP from the newsletter or Facebook page.. A vote tonight showed the CC in favour of Drivers' Square. It is expected that a plaque will be erected giving a brief history of the site. Ward Manager will be informed. **BW Action.** (2) CC has been asked by Tain CC for comments regarding the siting of the new Tain Royal Academy building; deadline now 22nd February. It was agreed that individuals could submit their own comments but that the CC should write to Care & Learning THC asking that the all of the issues be looked at again. The 3- 18yrs campus model does not find favour with the community. **SL Action.**

Item 7. Secretary's report. (LP) (1) All relevant correspondence has been circulated. (2) Dog waste concerns have resulted in two emails to SM who will publish them as Letters to the Editor in the next newsletter along with an article covering the scientific information on the importance of removing dog waste. THC Dog Warden will be asked to make hi-viz visits to the area. The most offences appear to be carried out late evening/early morning. **LP Action.** (3) Polling station location. No direct contact has been received by the CC although it appears THC intends to move the polling station to Gledfield School, presumably as a cost-cutting exercise. CC will appeal the decision stating reasons which include lack of communication regarding the consultation, the brief window allowed for comment which encompassed the Christmas and New Year holiday periods and a time without a CC meeting, and the lack of parking provision at the school. There are serious concerns that moving the polling station so far from the centre of Ardgay that turnout would be very badly affected. **BW Action.**

Item 8. Treasurer's report. (MT) The November 2017 balance at the bank is £17,847.47 of which £17,142.41 are restricted funds. The Admin/General Fund has £705.06 available to carry out the business of the CC. The balances of the restricted funds are: Toilet Caretaking - £29.76; BTWF - Community Projects - £145.15; Newsletter - £5,965.30; BNO - £10,202.20; EON Path - £800.

Item 9 Regular updates. (1) Planning issues. Albyn Housing/Ardgay Regeneration – CC will indicate approval. Some concerns raised over turning space requirements in Carron Place.

(2) Carbisdale – meeting in Culrain Hall on 16th February with feedback deadline of 16th March. Secretary will put this out on Facebook and advise KoSDT. **LP Action.**

(3) Newsletter. (SM) 23rd February is copy deadline with distribution expected around 10th March. Excellent sales of last issue; Bonar Bridge Post Office sold out. Last issue ran to 28 pages, due to an increased number of contributions, with a larger number expected for the next one. SM congratulated for all her good work with this excellent magazine.

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(4) Broadband. It is understood that the green cabinet in Ardgay is enabled but not yet operational.

5) Windfarms. Caplich. The PLI will be held during week beginning June 19th. CC has the option to speak if wished. BW will advise that CC wishes to keep all options open. **BW Action**. Braelangwell. Scoping is presently underway. Discuss further at next month's meeting re local issues and errors on scoping plan. **Agenda item/BW Action**.

(6) Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. SM has received a letter of concern regarding the Community Food Shop & Café. The matter was discussed and CCs voiced their continuing support for this initiative. The writer will be referred to KoSDT. **SM Action**.

Item 10. Highland Council No Councillor present.

Item 16. Any other competent business. (1) Head Teacher of Gledfield Primary School to be reminded of next month's meeting and start time. **MG Action**.

Item 18. Date and time of next meeting. The meeting will be held on Monday March 13th at 7pm in Ardgay Hall.

Beinn Tharsuinn/Beinn nan Oighrean Community Benefit awards.

At the private meeting following the CC's monthly meeting, application by Ardgay Public Hall Committee, for permission to retain balances following underspends on projects funding by community benefit, was discussed and approved.

Applicant will be advised. **MG Action**.

Meeting closed 10.30pm.

Public attendees re Kincardine Road issue: Anna Patfield, Donna Docarme, Alison Moore, Donald Gillies, Austin Price, Mairi Munro, Lindsay Munro, Rhonwen Copley