

Ardgay & District Community Council

Draft Minutes of AGM held on Monday, 12th June at 7.00pm in Ardaav Hall

Present: Elected members: Betty Wright, Chair (BW), Silvia Muras, Vice Chair (SM), Marion Turner, Treasurer (MT), Leslie Pope, Secretary (LP), Andy Wright (AW), Rob Pope (RP)

Also present: Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), PCs Angus Morrison (AM) and Steve MacKenzie (SMK)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Apologies: Sheila Lall (SL), Buster Crabb (BC)

Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies (see above) The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. The police representatives arrived at the start of the meeting and their report was taken ahead of the AGM after which the officers left. The minutes of this appear in those of the main monthly meeting.

Item 3. Minutes of last AGM. The Minutes of the last AGM held on Monday 13th June 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Marion Turner; seconded: Silvia Muras.

Item 4. Chairperson's report. (BW) This has been another busy year for A&DCC, with a mix of ongoing issues, some reaching a conclusion & others beginning; some addressing local problems and others Highland wide. I would like to thank those who have given freely of their time to CC business – my fellow councillors, our wonderful minutes secretary, members of the public who have attended our meetings or communicated their opinion via the Newsletter or our website, our Highland councillors, particularly George Farlow who attended the majority of our meetings despite the distances involved,. George did not stand for re-election to the council & will be missed at our meetings. We look forward to working with our new & returning representatives in the future. Thanks are due to Phil Olson for continuing to administer our website. Thanks to our editor Silvia, the newsletter continues to be of a very high standard – Silvia will say more about this later, but I would like to add thanks to those who deliver the newsletter to every house in our area.

There have been a couple of changes to CC personnel – in Dec 2016 we welcomed Buster Crabb. Sheila Lall has intimated she will stand down from the CC at this meeting due to pressure of other commitments. I would like to thank Sheila for her input & hope she will return in future.

Some of the issues we have addressed this year:

Broadband: Some good news here! BT installed a 3rd cabinet on the Ardgay exchange, adjacent to the toilet building in Ardgay, which went live in Feb this year. This brought 'superfast' broadband within the reach of subscribers in the village. However at distances of greater than about 1.5km, the speed drops off quickly & these customers will have to wait for the situation to be remedied by other means. How this will be done is not yet clear – there is currently a review of households who do not benefit from BT rollout so far & hopefully this will result in progress in late 2017.

Timber Extraction at Garvary Woodland: Several residents attended Dec meeting to express their concern about the felling of the forest at Badvoon, which would result in lorries using the very narrow road up Kincardine Hill to extract the timber, work which would extend over several years. The CC invited representatives from Fountains Forestry & THC roads dept to our Feb meeting to address these issues. It was agreed that the THC will carry out a full survey of the road to establish what upgrading is required and no extraction will commence before the improvements are done and an agreed traffic management plan is in place.

Windfarms & Community Benefit: As part of our meeting each month we consider applications to Beinn Tharsuinn & Beinn nan Oighrean community Benefit funds – these support many local organisations with grants of up to £2000, and fund such projects as the Xmas lights & flower tubs. There are 2 CC reps on the Eon Rosehall/SSE Achany CB panel, which awards grants bi-annually up to £20,000, funding such projects as our development officer, A&DCC newsletter & and make valuable match funding awards to such projects as Falls of Shin visitor Centre, Ardgay regeneration Project & The Family Hub. These CB funds are making a huge difference to our local area – in one edition of our newsletter I counted 14 different projects that had been supported.

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Construction has begun on the Coire na Cloiche WF; the decision on Braemore following the Public Local Inquiry (PLI) is still with the Scottish Government; a PLI into the application for Caplich Windfarm begins 19th June and there is a scoping exercise for a proposed WF at Braelangwell. The Scottish Government is greatly encouraging shared ownership in new WF schemes, which has the potential for bringing more financial benefit to the area. The CC will continue to monitor this possibility on your behalf.

Ardgay issues: The CC have co-ordinated several projects around the village, for which I would like to thank a few people: Jeannie Sparling, who stood down from her role as caretaker of the toilets. The CC once again secured funding from THC & Sheena Shaw has taken on the job for this season; Paul Whittock who for once again put up our Xmas lights; Marion Turner for organising new tree lights & together with Phil Olson & Andy erecting the tree; Jean Richardson for co-ordinating members of the Growing Group to plant & water the flower tubs; Rhonwen Copley & the hall committee for continuing to refurbish the hall & arrange wi-fi connection, which has proved very useful for our meetings; and all of you who encourage others to clean up after their dogs!

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust: The Trust continues to run a number of projects in the local area. The Falls of Shin visitor Centre opened in May & is proving very popular; work has started on the Ardgay Regeneration project which will see a business barn in operation next year & the construction of 4 houses in what is now Drovers Square; Bonar Post Office now has a new permanent postmistress, the CHESS project, which exposed unexpectedly high numbers of households living in fuel poverty has now finished but funding was secured for the staff members to continue as East Sutherland Energy Advice Service; Keep Active Together runs numerous activities in local village halls, and as such is an important revenue stream for them. In 2016 the trust drew in an amazing £3.3million to our area. There is info about all their projects on their website.

The Highland Council: The priorities that we asked our highland councillors to focus on are, as reported in the newsletter, 1. Communications – broadband & mobile reception; 2. Retaining all current local services; 3. Transport; 4. Supporting local businesses & social enterprises. Another concern that is raised at every meeting during spring & summer is the cutting of roadside verges to maintain sight lines, particularly along our many single track roads.

We will endeavour to pursue these issues on your behalf & any others which may arrive throughout the coming year.

Item 5. Treasurer's report (MT). The audited accounts were approved and will now be submitted to THC to trigger the annual grant payment. **MT Action.** Report below:

The 2016-2017 accounts show that the CC has a balance of £16868.52 of which £16444.61 are restricted funds. Each year the CC is given two grants from THC.

1. Toilet Caretaking Grant

This grant covers the cost of caretaking the toilet. Delays in receiving the grant resulted in a later opening during Spring/Summer 2016. The balance in the Toilet account is £29.76.

2. Admin Grant

This grant is intended to cover the costs of running the CC. In year 16-17, admin costs exceeded the grant amount. The CC is conscious of how tight this budget is and has already reduced meetings to 8 per year. The CC will discuss what further can be done to keep these costs in budget. The balance in the Admin account is 423.91.

By far the biggest component of the funds held by the CC arises from the BNO windfarm benefit which is disbursed to community groups through the CC's Small Grants Applications. The balance in this account is £10202.20. The accounts show that in 2016-2017 eight awards were made totalling £1572.80. These are reported separately.

The overall balance also includes grants and awards which the CC has applied for on its own behalf for particular purposes. During financial year 16-17 the CC applied for and was successful in being awarded £2000 from Beinn Tharsuinn and £5000 from EON Rosehall Community Benefit Fund to secure the production of the A&D CC Newsletter for the next 3 years. The current Newsletter balance is £5267.50

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Item 6. Report re Beinn Tharsuinn & Beinn nan Oighrean community benefit funds. (RP) Beinn Tharsuinn:

17/5/16	Kyle of Sutherland Anglers Association	Boat Upgrade	1375.00
17/5/16	Ardgay Public Hall Committee	Broadband Installation	496.00
17/5/16	Kyle of Sutherland Gala Week Committee	Gala Week	87.50
17/5/16	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	Enterprise Assistant	2000.00
10/6/16	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	Falls of Shin	2000.00
01/7/16	Invercharron Games	Highland Games	872.00
09/8/16	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	Upgrade of Post Office	2000.00
13/9/16	Kyle of Sutherland Gala Committee	Santa's Magical Forest	622.00
21/10/16	Ardgay Public Hall Committee	Room insulation	1700.00
04/3/17	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	Falls of Shin paths	2000.00
			13152.50

(MT) Beinn nan Oighrean Community Benefit Annual Report 2016-2017:

Beinn nan Oighrean community benefit is worth £2500 annually. It is disbursed to community groups through the CC's Small Grants Applications. The maximum award from this fund is £250. Details of the fund and how to apply can be found on the A&D CC website.

During the year 2016-2017 eight awards were made totalling £1572.80. The balance in this account is £10202.20.

BNO awards made 2016-2017

- Gledfield Parent Council – Eden Court Creative Sessions – movement, voice, drama -£250
- Ardgay Public Hall - seating care and repair - £240
- Kyle of Sutherland Gala – contribution towards marquee hire for Gala Fete - £50
- A&D CC – projector & screen - £198
- Gearrchoille Community Wood Ardgay – community activities in the wood - £250
- Bradbury Centre – contribution towards social activity for elderly clients - £250
- Ardgay Badminton Club – purchase of new racquets and hold-all -£150
- Kyle of Sutherland Cinema Club – contribution towards hall hire - £185

Item 7. Report from Newsletter editor. (SM) This year has been a year of growth. The newsletter has now more pages, we have passed from 24 pages three years ago, to 32 in this Summer edition. We have more of everything and some new features.

We can now gather donations online, thanks to the Paypal button added to the website and email. A big thank you to Phil Olson for his help setting this up, and especially for updating the newsletter page.

Thanks to our funders E.ON Rosehall Community Fund, who renewed their support to the project last December awarding £5,000 to produce the newsletter for another 3 years. The revenue from donations, sales and advertising is slowly but steadily increasing, helping the newsletter become a bit more sustainable.

I would like to give an especially warm thank you to our volunteer distributors: David Hannah, Vicky Whittock, Jeannie Sparling, Anna Sutherland, Iain Worthy, David Ross, David Knight, Rhonwen Copley, Brigitte Geddes, Alan Lawrence, Bob Sendall, Teresa Langley, Marion Turner and Betty Wright. Your continued commitment makes everything else possible.

Thanks to Holly and Abigail, from Ardgay Stores and Bonar Bridge Post Office, who are now selling spare copies. A few months ago we were assigned an ISSN that allows us to create a barcode. Now the hard copies will be easier to sell in any outlet.

Thanks to our contributors, whose number is increasing steadily. In this Summer issue #36 we had 25 contributors from 22 different groups and organisations.

Thanks also to Marion Turner for proof reading the newsletter, for being so patient with all the extra work that I give to her, and for keeping track of the newsletter's accounts so well.

Thanks to all who gave donations, feedback or simply help spread the word and I hope you will enjoy the next issue.

Item 8. Election of Office Bearers 2017-2018. All members of the Community Council stood down and Councillor Munro took the chair for the purpose of electing the Chair. LM said how pleased she was to be attending Ardgay CC and chairing the election

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Betty Wright was proposed to continue as Chair; proposed: Leslie Pope; seconded: Marion Turner.
Silvia Muras was proposed to continue as Vice Chair; proposed: Andy Wright; seconded: Rob Pope.
Marion Turner was proposed to continue as Treasurer; proposed: Andy Wright; seconded: Leslie Pope.
Leslie Pope was proposed to continue as Secretary; proposed: Betty Wright; seconded Silvia Muras.
Phil Olson agreed to continue to maintain the CC website and was warmly thanked for his work on it.
Sylvia Muras was proposed to continue as Newsletter Editor; proposed by Betty Wright; agreed by all.
Sheila Lall had submitted her wish to stand down from the CC. In her absence thanks were expressed to her for her work on the CC and the hope expressed that she may feel willing to return at a future date.
Mary Goulder was proposed to continue as Minutes Secretary; proposed: Betty Wright and agreed.
Any other responsibilities within the CC will continue as before, by unanimous agreement.

Item 9. Any other competent business. Two vacancies exist within the CC. During the summer recess all members are encouraged to try to find interested parties, especially seeking younger and locally active people. LM stated there is great concern that the 18-30 age group is not engaging with the local community and efforts must be made to reach out to them. This will be an agenda item at the August meeting. **Agenda item.**

Item 10. Date and time of next AGM. This will be on 11th June 2018

Meeting closed at 7.38pm.