

# Ardgay & District Community Council

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## Minutes of meeting held on Monday 11th September 2017 in Ardgay Hall at 7.00pm

Minutes approved 13/11 2017

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

**Also present:** Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), Helen Houston, Development Manager, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, Cameron Warren

**Apologies:** None

**Police Scotland:** PC Tracey Murray

**Minutes Secretary:** Mary Goulder

**Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies** (as above) Chair Betty Wright welcomed everyone and asked the Police representative to give the report. Twenty-eight incidents have been recorded in the last month, of these twelve were road traffic related – one road traffic accident, one no insurance, one overweight vehicle, four of driver behaviour and three road traffic hazards (breakdown, diesel, etc). The other incidents comprised ten advice calls, one medical matter, two relating to animals, one wildlife crime, one disorder and one false call. Advice was given for the public to be aware of a spate of rural thefts, many in the Domoch area, of tractor batteries, fuel, etc. The public should be particularly vigilant and report any unusual behaviour particularly in the rural areas.

**Item 4.** Chair then invited Helen Houston to bring the CC up to date with the business of the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. Much detail was given regarding the excellent progress of the Ardgay Regeneration Scheme with the project being on schedule and on budget. The Trust hopes to move into its new offices around the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Two open days are planned for 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> November when members of the public will be welcomed to visit the new units in the refurbished barn, the outside walls of which have been sandblasted and restored. Albyn Housing has planning permission for four, two-bedroom houses on the west side of the square and there will be one private house plot for sale which will be handled by Highland Small Communities Housing Trust. The four houses are expected to be ready for occupancy late next summer. The square is made and the road has been adopted by THC. Interpretation panels should be ready by November. The planned art gallery will not now be set up and the space for it has been rented. This exciting project will bring new life to the centre of Ardgay. CC members expressed great delight in the project, welcoming the use of the ground space and in particular the preservation of the barn building once part of the original farm buildings on this site, ensuring its ongoing use.

The Falls of Shin Visitor Attraction has been constantly busy since its opening with upwards of 70,000 visitors passing through the café and shop. Staff are settling into their new roles, many of those employed are local people. The path to the falls was damaged during a recent storm and will be re-surveyed with repairs carried out in due course. The first wedding to be held there went very well and the centre will be marketed now as a wedding venue for next year. A Falls of Shin Experience Officer is in post to promote all aspects of use of the facility, including business networking events. A recent working breakfast event brought people from Inverness and Thurso as well as closer to home. Overnight parking/camping has been a slight problem and this will be discouraged, especially as some of those parking do not make use of the facilities in the centre. Some issues have arisen within the wooded areas due to their being used as toilets by these visitors.

The other projects within the Trust are ongoing: Keep Active Together has been refunded with many activities once again up and running, Food shop and café has around forty-five regular attendees with between forty and sixty people there most weeks. The evening café has attracted between twenty to twenty-five and the entertainment has been provided by local volunteer groups. This project is funded by Scottish Government to support those in need of help with food supplies and to encourage social contact. At the start of the summer special attention was given to families who would miss the school meals service through the holidays. The Energy Advice Service remains very busy and is

achieving beyond the targets set by Scottish Government. Refunding for the next two years is being sought in hopes to extend the service throughout Sutherland. Events, shows, school and elderly centre visits continue. A major 'Step Up, Step Down' housing facility is in the early stages of talks and design. To be situated opposite Migdale Hospital the accommodation could comprise ten units with high-spec technology to offer help to those ready for hospital discharge but not yet able to go to their own homes without support. A respite bed and family accommodation is envisaged allowing relatives to stay near at hand in cases of severe illness/end of life situations. This is a very innovative project with much more work to be done to bring it to fruition. As Sutherland is one of the areas with a very high number of aging population new thinking of how services can be provided is essential. A Contracts Team is being established and the Trust is beginning to sell its expertise in management services throughout Highland. This in turn will bring in extra revenue to allow the Trust to work on yet more local projects in the future. Helen was also excited to advise that the Trust has recently taken delivery of its own vehicle, an electric powered Renault Zoe. This will be used by Trust officials when traveling locally on business. A charging point is in place at Falls of Shin and another will be sited at The Barn in Ardgay. The door of the Trust office is always open to anyone wishing to discuss ideas or projects, anyone seeking advice or help regarding funding or any of the other avenues in which the Trust team now has experience, or even people just wondering what is going on with the Trust at any time. Helen was very warmly thanked for taking the time to bring the CC up to date with so many of the aspects of life at the Trust.

**Item 3. Minutes of last meeting.** The minutes of the August meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed: Andy Wright; seconded: Silvia Muras.

**Item 5. Matters arising.** (1) Seats on Ardgay/Bonar straight. BW in touch with THC Ward Manager and Access Officer Matt Dent who has been encouraging. LM advised that Cllr Currie is looking at a similar project elsewhere in the Ward as part of a Scottish Government funded 'Active Communities' initiative and suggested that the CC discuss this with her.

**MT Action.** At a recent CC surgery LP received complaints regarding speeding on this straight and concerns due to the increase in traffic of all kinds now that the Hub is open. Speed indicator devices could also be installed. CCs to forward all their ideas to Chair who then will liaise with the Hub and contact THC Roads Director, Graham MacKenzie. **BW Action.** (2) Kincardine Hill Road. Road survey has been completed with road improvements expected soon before timber extraction starts. Meeting of Graham MacKenzie and residents on 20<sup>th</sup> August was productive. (3) Highland.gov email address. Advised that this is not possible due to costs. Agreed to maintain the present contact arrangements. (4) Barbed wire Culrain path. Issue reported via Matt Dent in August. Monitor. (5) Carbisdale trails. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) has confirmed the trails are closed due to financial restraints. Existing local access group (Kyle f Sutherland Forest Trust) is interested in taking on upkeep. MG to provide RADAG Chair email to LP for more information as to Rosehall's progress with the trails there. **MG Action.** An open meeting was held in Culrain recently to discuss the future of the hall. Locals wish to maintain some form of meeting place and an outside-accessible toilet/shower facility is required. This could prove to be a money-maker for the village. (6) Culrain station. Nothing further this month. The installation of an electronic advice board at both Culrain and Ardgay stations is essential. (7) CC insurance via THC. CC opinion is that the status quo should be maintained rather than every CC having to seek out individual insurance. Secretary to ask THC why this change has to happen. **LP Action.** (8) Polling station review. Statistics on footfall at the election are inconclusive. Official consultation due in October. CC View remains that the polling station should be located in Ardgay Public Hall. (9) Toilets supplies. Late again this month but stock now received. (10) Christmas lights. **Agenda item in November.**

**Item 6. Police report.** See item 1.

**Item 7. Chairperson's report.** (1) CCs asked to ensure that Chair is notified of all items in good time ahead of meetings. (2) Once Regeneration works are complete and the noticeboards are in full use again, space should be reserved for CC information, or the CC should erect a dedicated board of its own. (3) Hall Auction raised £2,255. The CC was thanked for its support. (4) THC Quality Awards nominations. SM will nominate Matt Dent and BW will nominate John Clark. **SM/BW Action.** Other correspondence included a survey of a Charter of Patients' rights, information regarding fireworks licence, changes to provision of dog waste bins, Low Emission Zones consultation, Highland Senior Citizen Network mailing list inclusion, FCS grant scheme, THC Welfare Support Team Debit Advice, Intimation of Sutherland County Committee meeting in November, Forest Enterprise Scotland Land Management consultation and Fountain Forestry Soil Association management assessment. Details of relevant items will be put on the CC Facebook page. **SM Action.**

**Item 7. Secretary's report.** All relevant email correspondence has been circulated. NHS poster passed to SM. Countryside Alliance Awards, 'Rural Oscars' – nomination information will be put on Facebook page. **SM Action.**

**Item 9. Treasurer's report. (MT)** The 9 August 2017 balance at the bank is £21,701.95 of which £20,765.12 are restricted funds. The Admin/General Fund has £ 936.83 available to carry out the business of the CC. The Annual

Community Benefit Payment from Beinn Nan Oighrean was received on 8 August 2017. The balances of the restricted funds are: Toilet Caretaking - £729.76, BTWF - Community Projects - £2,145.15, Newsletter - £4,517.61, BNO - £12,702.20, EON Path - £670.40.

**Item 10. Regular updates:**

**(1) Planning.** Nothing relevant this month.

**(2) Newsletter.** (SM) Delivery of the autumn edition of the ADCC newsletter is expected on 13<sup>th</sup> September. Due to the amount and quality of contributions this issue will, for the first time, comprise thirty-six pages. A total of twenty-four different local groups have been in contact for this edition, submitting contributions, book adverts or to update details. SM was congratulated by all present for another excellent edition and her ongoing work. Deadline for the winter edition is the third week in November.

**(3) Ardgay Regeneration.** See item 4.

**(4) Broadband.** It is understood that HIE is conducting a review of CBS.

**(5) Windfarms.** (1) Coire na Cloiche. Confusion last month regarding a document received has been clarified. The CC is not now required to sign it. (2) Meall Buidhe. Angus Elder of Muirden Energy will attend the November meeting.

**(6) Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.** See Item 4.

**Item 11. Highland Council.** LM hopes to have an update from BT after the next meeting of the County Committee. Education – THC progressing to more campuses of larger schools. Government requirements for 1000 hours of nursery provision by 2020 could lead to many difficulties.

**Item 12. Any other competent business.** (1) SM thanked Cameron Warren for his interest in the CC which hopes to encourage younger members of the community to attend/join.

**Item 13. Date and time of next meeting.** The meeting will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm in **Ardgay Public Hall.**

**Private Session. Beinn Tharsuinn/Beinn nan Oighrean Community Benefit awards.**

Application by the Kyle of Sutherland Hub received an award of £250 from the BnO Small Grants Fund to help with Fitness Instructor Training.

Meeting closed 9.25pm.