



## Minutes of meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018 in Ardgay Hall at 7.00pm

Minutes approved 8/10/2018

**Present:** Betty Wright, Chair (BW), Marion Turner, Secretary/Treasurer (MT), Rob Pope (RP)

**Invited guest:** Martin Thomsen, Community Engagement Officer (MTh)

**Also present:** Highland Councillor Kirsteen Currie (KC), David and Patricia Hannah (DH & PH)

**Police Scotland:** None present - report received by email during meeting

**Minutes Secretary:** Mary Goulder

**Apologies:** Vice Chair Silvia Muras (SM), Buster Crabb

**Items 1/2. Welcome/Apologies** (as above). Chair Betty Wright welcomed everyone, especially THC Cllr Currie attending for the first time, DH & PH, then introduced Martin Thomsen.

**Item 3. Guest speaker: Martin Thomsen, Community Engagement Officer.** MTh explained he and two others have been in post, based at Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust Office, since December last year working with the Sutherland Community Partnership towards production of the new Ardgay (and other areas) Local Plan. Five areas in Sutherland have been designated as deprived: Golspie, Helmsdale, Brora, Creich and Kinlochbervie. Questionnaires have been sent to all Sutherland with follow up required. Responses from the five areas will feed into all the others. The main issues being identified are Care/Wellbeing, Children, Public Transport, Employment and Fuel Poverty. This information is an asset to KOSDT and will be available to all local groups. Additional areas highlighted are local economy and employment, Internet provision and housing. Census figures from 2011 show Ardgay and District population as 627. 131 responses were received, approximately 20%. MTh's team is planning more face-to-face engagement with posters being distributed from 14<sup>th</sup> August and a workshop to be held in Ardgay Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> August from 6 – 8.30pm. On the 28<sup>th</sup> a surgery will be held in the Barn between 12 noon and 8pm with half-hour one-to-one consultations available. Results will be sent to participants. After assessment, conclusions reached will be produced in a final document in October. MTh offered to attend the CC meeting at that time to present the findings. This offer was accepted. MTh to liaise with BW for agenda. Statutory bodies will have no obligations to act on these findings, but the results will be fed to all relevant groups and departments of THC. KC hoped that the new Locality Plan will help to address inequalities and aid better use of resources. AW expressed some concern regarding the methodology of the research/statistics. MTh agreed that this is a problem for all service providers. This will provide a representative sample only. The team will try to reach out via the places vulnerable people go, e.g. health centres, chemist, shops, food stop, etc. KC indicated that the results will become a planning tool; it is not a resource tool. Ullapool is good example of Community Empowerment. Local development groups can make good use of this type of information. Chair thanked MTh and this item closed at 8.20pm.

**Item 4. Minutes of last meeting.** The minutes of the May meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed: Marion Turner; seconded: Rob Pope.

**Item 5. Matters arising.** (1) Ardgay/Bonar straight. Plinths are ready. Benches to be installed with one facing each way. The response is negative so far from THC regarding the imposition of a speed restriction. Head of Roads Dept. Graham MacKenzie to be asked what criteria is used to assess the need. Scottish Government is pushing for healthy lifestyles, more active travel – speed restrictions on this section will encourage people to walk/cycle between the villages. As both communities are raising this concern, pressure will be put back on THC to reconsider. A speed count is to be undertaken by THC but evidence from locals must be taken into account. Chair will write to Graham MacKenzie. **BW Action.** (2) Defibrillators. The project is complete, and an evaluation report has been sent to the funders. The defibrillator seminar and CPR training session was very successful with twenty members of the public attending. It is

hoped to offer refresher courses next year. Seven volunteers are now registered in the Community Heartbeat Trust Governance system to give bi-weekly reports on the Public Access Defibrillators (PADS). The devices are included in the Scottish Ambulance database and are ready to be used by members of the public or the emergency services, if needed. (3) Plant tubs. Jean Richardson and Steve Wilkinson are working with the tubs, maintaining, planting, etc. A payment of £100 was agreed to cover costs. **MT Action.**

**Item 6. Police report.** Received by email during the meeting which mentioned only three incidents: one medical, one domiciliary and one concern for a person. It was unclear if this report referred only to the last month.

**Item 7. Chairperson's report.** Discussion regarding how to organise meetings and stay within reduced budget led to the decision to reduce the number of meetings per year to six and to try to limit each to one and a half hours' duration. Meetings to deal with community benefit will continue to be costed separately. THC is commencing a review of the CC scheme. All members are encouraged to respond individually to all communications, deadline end of September, and to attend any workshops/presentations in the area if possible. CC will write to THC to indicate that the timescale is too short to respond as a CC. This is a large and weighty consultation and the timescale leaves no opportunity for CC discussion. **MT Action.**

**Item 8. Secretary's report.** All relevant email correspondence has been circulated. (1) Secretary has written twice to Debbie Sutton, THC, regarding payment of funding for the running of the Ardgay toilets but with no response. Checking on whether the payment has been received requires visits to the mobile bank within its specified hours, and the time involved in chasing up. Volunteers should not have to do all this. A&DCC has been running the toilets perfectly well for many years, but now have to operate with £100 less in funding and buy the consumables required. The cleaner attends specifically at times to open and close up the facility. None of this works under the Comfort Scheme. Cllr Currie will take back the issues to THC. **KC Action.**

**Item 9. Treasurer's report.** The 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 balance at the bank was £16,925.84 of which £16,846.66 are restricted funds. The CC Admin Fund has a balance of £-201.70 and the Windfarm Admin Fund has a balance of £280.88. The balances of the restricted funds are: Toilet Caretaking: £258.25, BTWF Community Projects: £3,811.22, Newsletter: £1,612.81, BnO: £10,993.98, E.N Path: £170.40.

**Item 10. Correspondence/Matters raised by local residents.** (1) All received emails have been circulated. (2) Carbisdale trails work day. Volunteers are required for this; the date is yet to be decided. RP expressed local concern regarding signage at the Castle; one indicating a private road and others covering up the speed bumps warning signs. Core Paths must be accessible. Awaiting a reply from Matt Dent. (3) Siting of recycling bins at The Hub. It is understood that the bins will be re-sited. Chair will liaise with Andy Hume, THC Waste Management. **BW Action.** (3) Tree planting on Jubilee Hill. Balnagown Factor is aware of the Core Path and archaeology on the hill. No planning application has been made. Secretary will write to the concerned locals. (4) Dropped kerb opposite Ardgay Stores. KC chased up on this today and the work should be done asap. She will continue to monitor. **KC Action.** (5) Private water supplies. Private water supplies were failing during the hot weather. A statement was posted on Facebook. The drinking water quality regulator has instructed Scottish Water to provide bowsers or bottled water to properties with private water supplies which have failed due to the hot weather. This will be funded by Scottish Government and co-ordinated by local councils. To access this help, contact the Highland Council Environmental Health service point on 01349 886606, state that you require assistance with your water supply. An officer from Environmental Health will then contact you and take you through the process of accessing the help available. (6) Liz Cormack wishes to install a seat in memory of her husband Sandy, on the bank in front of Oakwood Place. THC has indicated that there is no objection. MT will liaise with Liz prior to next meeting when further discussion will take place. **Agenda item.** (7) DH attended tonight to advise that he is standing down from several boards – HSCHT, VGES and CAB – after having served as the A&DCC representative for ten years. Chair recorded grateful thanks to DH for his commitment to the community over this time and asked if he would write a short piece for the newsletter. While there is no obligation on the CC to be represented at these organisations it is most beneficial to have this involvement. BW suggested that someone with relevant experience, as DH had, should fill this position, perhaps from KOSDT. SM to be asked to have an item in the newsletter. **SM Action.** KC reported Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) is facing a major redistribution of funding with all administration being centred in Dingwall threatening the continuation of the smaller offices in the area. VGES in Golspie would be greatly missed by many groups and individuals who benefit tremendously from the services provided. PH noted that removal of such support for the community flies in the face of the move towards community empowerment being promoted by Scottish Government.

**Item 11. Regular updates:**

(1) **Planning.** (1) Tain 3-18 Campus. Deadline for comments regarding the site is 4<sup>th</sup> September. CC would support the Craighill site over a cramped TRA site, especially with a campus-style development. The view was reiterated

that the campus will disadvantage the local satellite primaries. KC stated that Highlife Highland and THC Transition Team need to work more on this. Concerns have been raised regarding educational quality. The model is working well in Aberdeenshire. Sharing of information and experience is required to ensure a smooth transition for the outlying primaries. (2) Coul Links. This is a controversial issue. Support exists for the development but there is no evidence available as to the strength of that support. A statement was approved and will be submitted to Scottish Government with whom the application currently rests. The text follows: A&DCC was approached by the developer & asked to add our support to the development. We replied that he was welcome to come & address our meeting to inform local residents of proposed development & this might give an indication of support, or opposition in our local area. We received no response to the invitation & so have not given any opinion on this issue to date.

Since then there has been a lot of claims in the media & on twitter from the developers about the 'overwhelming support of the local community' for this development. We know of no robust data gathering that has occurred in Ardgay area so we can assume this is mere conjecture.

The proposal to develop has been objected to by RSPB, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Plantlife Scotland, the Marine Conservation Society, the National Trust for Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. There have been calls from international bodies for Scotland to protect its internationally designated conservation areas.

Highland Council north planning committee voted against the advice of its planning officials to grant planning permission. The Scottish government now have the option to call-in the application and make the decision at Scottish ministerial level. We would urge them to do so.

**(3) Newsletter.** Copy date for contributions and adverts is Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August. It is hoped that the August edition will be distributed during week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> September. As forecasted in April 2016 a funding application to Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit Fund is now needed to complete the three-year project.

**(4) Broadband.** The local project with Highland Wireless is progressing.

**(5) Windfarms.** (1) Chair signed the updated MOU for the SSE/E.ON Achany Panel. (2) CC is still talking with Sallachy in regard to community benefit. (3) Meall Buidhe, Croick, is expected to hold public meetings in Ardgay, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2.30 – 7.30pm, and Rosehall, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2.30 – 7.30pm. (4) Coire na Cloiche is nearing completion of construction phase. A cycle and walking route now exists between Struie and Strathrusdale.

**(6) Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.** AW recommended the Trust website for news and blog, press releases, group summaries. Much information available. Helen Houston is retiring at the end of September. The post has been advertised. MT enquired as to the whereabouts of the panels which were briefly in place in Drovers Square. They should be replaced. If not, the framework to house them should be removed.

**Item 10. Highland Council.** THC Community Council Review is under-way and all members were encouraged to complete individually. The two-month deadline is impossible for many CCs to meet owing to summer recesses. Issuing the survey at the same time is inappropriate showing that THC fails to understand how CCs work. There has been no prior consultation/liaison. The structure of the Review is important, and THC must make it relevant. Moves to amalgamate CCs is totally impractical in many rural areas which cover large geographical regions. KC and MT will each write to Alison Clark, Acting Head of Policy. **KC/MT Action.** The item to address GDPR will be added to the next agenda. **Agenda item.**

**Item 11. AOCB.** None raised.

**Item 12. Date and time of next meeting.** The meeting will be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 7pm in **Ardgay Public Hall.** Meeting closed at 10.10pm.

**Private Session. Beinn Tharsuinn/Beinn nan Oighrean Community Benefit awards. BTWF.** Application by Kyle of Development Trust had been approved by email during the summer recess with an award of £1,125 towards Post Office Improvements. Application by Ardgay & District Community Council Newsletter was approved with an award of £2,000 to complete the three-year project. **BnO.** Application by Kyle of Sutherland Gala Week had been approved by email with an award of £241.75 to assist with running two events during this year's Gala Week. Meeting closed 10.15pm.