

Ardgay & District Community Council

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Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 10th February 2020 in Ardgay Hall at 7.00pm

Minutes approved 09/03/2020

Present: Betty Wright, Chair (BW), Silvia Muras, Vice Chair (SM), Marion Turner, Secretary (MT), John Denniston, Treasurer (JD), Rob Pope (RP), Andy Wright (AW), Bill Knott (BK)

Apologies: Highland Councillor Kirsteen Currie (KC), Brookfield Renewables

Also present: Anna Patfield, Planet Sutherland

Police Scotland: Report received by email

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder

Items 1/2/3. Welcome/Apologies. As above – due to weather conditions. **Presentation.** Brookfield Renewables will be advised of the dates of the next two meetings to rearrange attendance. Chair Betty Wright opened the first meeting of the year and since the tragic accident on the Ardgay straight. A short period of silence was observed in memory of Rhona MacFarlane. The thoughts and condolences of the CC for the extended family were recorded. BK expressed thanks from the family for the unbelievable support from the community, which continues even now.

Item 4. Minutes of last meeting. The minutes of the December meeting were approved by Rob Pope seconded by Marion Turner.

Item 5. Matters arising. (1) Tree planting on Jubilee Hill. Amanda Ophof of Scottish Forestry has been in touch with MT. Although she had nothing to send yet to the CC, she confirmed that Forestry Scotland has met the Estate factor and understands that a regeneration scheme is planned, not a planting one, with fencing along the back of the site. Amanda Ophof hopes to have an update for the next CC meeting. BK has a copy of the Nick Richards' map and if the new plans are in keeping with that then it is likely things could move forward. CC agreed that it is important that new plans are presented to the community promptly, especially with regard to previously agreed boundaries. (2) Strathy Ward, Migdale Hospital. It is understood that the ward has reopened although no-one has heard more regarding staffing issues.

Item 6. (1) Discussion regarding the campaign to reduce the speed limit on the Ardgay straight. CC has been attempting to progress this with THC but with little or no response over the last six months. A speed survey was promised but no-one aware if it took place or if there were any results if so. There are many factors indicating that the current derestricted stretch is dangerous with concerns raised by The Hub and many local residents. BK stressed that the police investigation into the recent accident is ongoing, but that speed has not been mentioned as a major factor. He requested on behalf of the bereaved family that their names are not used as leverage in any campaign. Chair will contact Cllr Currie and Joanna Sutherland, Head of THC Roads, again outlining the many dangers seeking urgent responses and requesting a meeting on site. The Police, local Councillors, Gail Ross, MSP and Jamie Stone, MP will be copied into correspondence. **BW Action.**

Item 7. Police report. MT will enquire if there is any follow up information regarding points raised at the December meeting. Report included two lost dogs, two disturbances, one fatal RTC, one suspect person, one abandoned vehicle and one other RTC. Once again speeding issues, especially pick-ups on the approach to the school with obstruction problems being caused by roadside parking. **MT Action.** (2) Dog fouling on the roadside route from Ardgay to Gledfield Primary School. Recently 89 incidents of fouling were counted along this route which is used by children as a route to school. Signs will be considered as reminders of the offence and fine. THC Dog Warden will be advised. SM will ask the Head Teacher if the children might choose to submit a short article on the subject for the Kyle Chronicle. Pink paint will be used to highlight areas where dog fouling is evident. **SM/BW Action.**

Item 8. Chairperson's report. (BW) (1) Arrangements for CC items for Kyle Chronicle. SM advised that CC should submit a piece covering matters of interest from CC meetings since the previous edition. The Chronicle is not a replacement for the Newsletter, but extra space may be made available when there are matters of specific importance. Copy date for next issue is 21st February. **BW Action.** (2) CC representation. RP and SM will continue as the CC reps to

the SSE Achany and Rosehall Windfarm Panel with David Hannah and Catriona Hill the current community representatives. RP continues as rep to the BTWF board and AW the rep on the KoSDT board. He will advise the CC when the Trust AGM date is agreed. **AW Action.** (3) Xmas lights have now been taken down and stored. Around half of the lights need to be replaced at an expected cost of around £300-£500. As in Bonar Bridge and Lairg a Christmas Lights group should be established. It could seek funding for improvements, upkeep and storage as well as organising the erection and removal of the lights each year. (4) The electronic display boards at Ardgay station are not always functioning. ScotRail has a messenger alert on Facebook where regular users can sign up via ScotRail website to receive messages if their train is delayed. Possible item for Kyle Chronicle. **BW/SM Action.**

Item 9. Secretary's report. (MT) (1) All relevant correspondence has been circulated. (2) Report from Gala Week indicated there was £25 unused from their recent grant award. It was agreed that the group should retain the sum and use towards the next project. (3) THC has announced a consultation period regarding the possible introduction of car parking charges though no communication has been received by the CC. KC to be asked when the CC will be consulted. The CC does not meet again till 9th March and is unlikely to have enough time to discuss the issue. **MT Action.** It was suggested that the cost analysis report for the proposal should be circulated to CCs for evaluation. (4) Ardgay toilets. CC agreed to lobby HCs and the Ward Manager regarding the continuation of the comfort scheme. The facility, although in desperate need of refurbishment, is well used and appreciated by the public, evidenced by the donations received towards supplies and maintenance. The CC encourages THC to continue the arrangements which have worked well in the past. **MT Action.** BK enquired about the possibility of community ownership of the toilets, perhaps with a much-upgraded facility. AW agreed to raise ideas at the next meeting of KoSDT. **AW Action.**

Item 10. Treasurer's report. (JD) (1) The 20th January balance at the bank is £ 21,464.93 of which £ 20,829.22 are restricted funds. The CC Admin fund has a balance of £348.41 The Windfarm Admin fund has a balance of £287.30. The CC Admin fund was granted £330 top-up from the Ward Discretionary Fund. The Toilet Fund finished the season with a balance of £36.68. The balances of the restricted funds are: Toilet Caretaking £36.68; BTWF Community Projects £2,410.03; BNO £ 18,212.11; EON Path £170.40. (2) Scottish Ambulance advised that spare pads were required for the defibrillator following a recent incident. Treasurer has paid the cost of £154.20 charged. (3) Core Paths Officer Matt Dent has requested more stones for the Oakwood path. Agreed that funds can be taken from the E.ON Path Fund. **BW Action.** (4) Invoices for secretarial services will be submitted to the Treasurer, copied to secretary@ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk after which the Treasurer will arrange BACS transfers for payment.

Item 11. Correspondence/matters raised by local residents. Covered throughout meeting.

Item 12. Regular updates: (1) Planning issues. RP recorded thanks from Culrain Hall committee for the CCs assistance with a recent planning application which resulted in a substantial saving for the committee.

(2) Climate issues. (AP) Happy that Planet Sutherland will have a regular slot on the standing CC agenda. She thanked the CC for funding for the apple tree planting project which has completed with all trees allocated and planted, giving rise to an excellent social event which also helped to raise the profile of Planet Sutherland. The group is now considering several ideas for its next phase of action. A newsletter has been published; a small sub-committee will be formed to review progress so far and consider future stages. Planet Sutherland is working with KoSDT and Lairg Learning Centre to promote an area meeting, a business survey is in progress, work towards changing of land use across Scotland is ongoing. RP proposed the setting up of moss benches where tree planting is not possible. AP agreed to provide regular updates to the CC. AP was asked to consider taking Associate Member of the CC status and will consider it once the group has become formally constituted. (3) Broadband. Highland Wireless, pressing forward in its efforts to bring the service to Strathcarron, hopes to have transmission stations established with the next few weeks. (4) Windfarms. Update from WKN Sallachy in December indicated a possible public exhibition in near future. The development opens opportunities for a community buy-in as well as community benefit payments. (5) Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. AW advised that work is being carried out on the website upgrade.

Item 13. Highland Council. (1) KC had offered to be available on Skype during the meeting, but this was not felt appropriate by the CC. (2) Restriction of vehicles at recycling centres. While appreciating that the system is open to abuse by businesses, many rural residents make use of larger trailers and should not be discriminated against. There are only three transfer stations in Sutherland making this impractical for use by locals. Charges/being turned away from the local skips will inevitably lead to an increase in fly-tipping, causing extra expense to THC to remove, as well as degrading the countryside. Chair will write to THC Waste Management. **BW Action.** (2) Pollution on Academy Street, Inverness. The fourth most polluted street in Scotland according to a study by Friends of the Earth Scotland. THC is considering introducing more electric buses. (3) Update on plans for dealing with Climate Emergency. Old, outdated information on the Climate Change website.

Item 14. Any other business. Following on from item at December meeting, BK enquired if Community Councillors or other local residents could comment individually on planning applications – for example if the CC was to remain neutral on an application for windfarm development, would individuals still have the right to submit their own comments, either in support or opposition. BW stated that individuals are free to express their own opinions to the planning authority. Individuals within the CC must always make clear when stating their personal views that these are not the opinion of the CC. The situation regarding the Forestry application would appear to be different as individuals were not invited to submit their views. Instead the only formal route to objection was via the CC and subsequently via THC Forestry Officer.

Item 15. Dates for future meetings. The next meeting will be held on 9th March, with the AGM held on May 11th. All meetings will be held in the Ardgay Public Hall starting at 7pm. It was noted that the dates on the CC website are incorrect and will be amended. **MT Action.** Dates of meetings later in the year will be set at the AGM.

Item 16. Beinn Tharsuinn/Beinn nan Oighrean Community Benefit awards. Beinn Tharsuinn. Application by Gearrchoille Community Woodland was approved with an award of £900 towards running cost. **Beinn nan Oighrean.** Application by Kyle of Sutherland Rainbow, Brownie and Guides for £250 towards new flags and flagpoles was approved. Applicants and Phil Tomalin, Company Secretary, BTWF will be advised.

Meeting closed 9.35pm.