

Ardgay & District Community Council



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Meeting 12 June 2023 - Draft Minutes	
Date & Time:	12 June 2023 at 7:00 PM
Location:	Ardgay Hall
CC Members Present:	Chair Betty Wright (BW); Vice Chair Silvia Muras (SM); Secretary & Treasurer Marion Turner (MT); Andy Wright (AW); Buster Crabb (BC); Minutes Secretary Anna McInnes (AM)
Also attending:	Cllr Michael Baird (MB), David Watson, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (DW). <i>Full list of community members in attendance is appended to the end of these minutes.</i>
Representatives from SSEN:	Martin Godwin, Community Liaison Manager; Euan Smith, Senior Project Manager; Mungo Laing, Land Manager; Rebecca Gay, Project Manager; Tara Cowley, Senior Consent & Environment Manager

AGENDA ITEMS	
1.	Welcome from the Chairperson (BW): BW opened the meeting to welcome community members and SSEN representatives.
2.	Apologies: Rob Pope
3.	Updates to members register of interests: No interests were declared.
4.	<p>Guest speakers: SSEN re: proposed Spittal – Beauly 400kV overhead pylon line: BW read out the questions which had been sent to SSEN in advance for discussion during the meeting:</p> <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequacy of consultation process so far – Indicating preferred routes suggests that decisions have already been made. Also non-preferred routes are ‘ignored’ • How consultation process will be in future – including timescale for next steps • Will you be setting up local liaison groups to address specific concerns in each area? When will this happen? <p>Requirement & finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have SSEN decided this project is required? • What further infrastructure will be required in next 10-20 years? • Do SSEN pay for project, or do UK govt contract them to carry out work? • Why in N Scot do we have higher electric bills? • Why is this required? Scotland has enough clean energy - England can generate their own & anyway their grid cannot accept more. <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why cannot there be 2 or more offshore DC cables to take this south? • Why can any onshore pylon route not be undergrounded? <p>Euan Smith from SSEN then presented slides with an overview of the project, consultation, and engagement process. Multiple consultations are to be held up until the 2024 consents submission and work is underway based on community feedback received to date to assess potential use of underground cables, existing infrastructure/overhead routes. The slides presented can be viewed on the CC website by clicking this link.</p>

Q&A followed the presentation with members of the community posing questions including:

Route Selection

- *Can you confirm that no route has been selected along the entire programme?* Yes; it would not be selected until they publish results of consultation.
- *Map on website only shows preferred routes which pass through the most concentrated area – how can you say you are avoiding it when the routes seem to go over the most densely populated areas?* The preferred routes will be changed based on feedback or will look at alternative routes.
- *What are the route options being considered – have you identified any others?* Two routes have been identified in consultation; will look at mitigation, very challenging to find viable route options. Still looking at other options.

Cabling

- *What are the dimensions of undergrounding?* Construction corridor 50-60 metres is needed to dissipate heat and not interact with each other. Looking at mechanics of how this large engineering project would operate.
- *Why not put in subsea cable; why route over land?* They don't have that transmission infrastructure available, and cost is factor.
- *There is no community consent for this project; why not consider a subsea route which is what communities are telling you they want?* They are considering subsea and doing it to Peterhead, but have requirement to upgrade existing grid, looking to minimise as much as possible by routing around, "avoid-minimise-mitigate" is their mantra. Working with groups during this process to gather information through these discussions.
- *At Strathpeffer meeting Forum of CCs – proposal was raised to underground existing line and put 400kb line on existing route. This line impacts people at present.*
- *Is this overland line just supporting undersea line should it fail?* No – provides capacity 5.5-6gw, with some resilience built in. Onshore solution provides option to tie in.

Environmental Impact

- *What about cost from environmental impact, tourism impact, blight to property value?* SSEN environmental assessment takes this and much more into consideration.
- *How are environmental assessments conducted; preferred route seemed to be desktop exercise not taking geography into consideration?* They are looking at constraints and topographical maps, GIS software, working with internal engineers. Admitted they did not do it as best they could in this case.
- *Given environmental concerns why is the Highlands a conduit for central/south bound areas?* Areas on the map don't necessarily match higher output/demand. Not as simple as generating in areas where consumed.
- *Has anyone considered effect on water supplies, lack of mains water?* They are looking at hydrology as part of EIA, will provide details to have discussion.

Community Benefit

- *Why are we paying so much more in the Highlands? What are the benefits to this community? Will infrastructure get worse?* Because regulated by Ofgem the community benefits are not the same as windfarms – consultation on energy benefits is currently open.

Planning/Consent

- Discussion of windfarm grid connections/planning/development, grid connection not available when built. SSEN connects wind turbines but doesn't plan or build them.
- *Are you making planning application to THC?* Yes, for substation development, but overhead lines require only statutory for comments from THC and goes to Scottish Government consents unit. CCs are not statutory consultee. Ultimately SG will make decision, SSEN can only work with communities to devise best route for communities.
- *Can communities object and if so what happens?* You can object but there is no right of appeal in Scotland, this is ministerial decision.

	<p>Consultation/Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What happens next with all the comments received? When are you bringing back to community? When will you discuss with residents affected by routes?</i> Extensive feedback is being reviewed with initial review completed. Next stage to decide how to progress. Will publish report in consultation to outline themes and how they will be addressed – aiming for September. Aim to present alignment options by end of the year. Continued community engagement and continuous feedback. • <i>Example of previous projects where something changed in response to feedback?</i> The Ft. Augustus to Skye project was moved 180 degrees from original plans based on community feedback. • <i>Will landowners be subject to compulsory purchase orders?</i> They will try to avoid coming to impasse but yes that is possible. <p>BW closed the SSEN agenda item at 21:15 and thanked all for attending, with thanks to SSEN for engaging. Community members were invited to stay for the remainder of the CC business meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Approval of May 2023 minutes: Approved as accurate record. Proposed MT, Seconded SM.</p>
6.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking at Carron Bridge: Following a conversation with Mr Morphet the sign has now been removed. • 20mph speed limit along Church Street: THC again stated this area would not qualify as ‘speed limits should be evidence led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce peoples’ assessment of what is a safe speed to travel’. All agreed to challenge this as it is a route to school, which in in the 20mph zone in Bonar Bridge and should be consistent in Ardgay. • 20 mph flashing signs at Gledfield PS: still not working. SM to notify head teacher again.
7.	<p>Chairperson’s Report (BW):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC Elections: Nominations open in September for Community Council elections in November 2023. CC can’t meet for 2 months during election period. Will notify residents in the autumn Kyle Chronicle that funding applications can’t be assessed when CC’s are not meeting. Election timeline is available to download from THC website here: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18101/cc_election_timetable_2023 • Community benefit consultation for Energy extended until 15th June.
8.	<p>Secretary’s Report - including Correspondence & Matters raised by local residents (MT): All correspondence circulated by email prior to meeting. Items of note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BW, AW, MT & SM to meet with Highland Broadband to learn about their proposals for superfast broadband in the area. • David Hannah contacted MT about Senior Citizens newsletter; MT requested anyone to sign up individually. • Enquiry received from BBC East journalist looking to make a documentary about the impact of Community Benefit Funds. • MT received Police report that was very limited and unhelpful. DW noted police have very limited resourcing and suggested asking if anything CC can help with. • Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Ceremony 24th June in Golspie – CM to attend.
9.	<p>Treasurer’s Report (MT): As of 31 May 2023, balance at the bank was: £52,565.88. This notionally comprises: Restricted funds: £51,099.75; CC Admin fund: £491.20; Windfarm Admin fund: £974.94. The balances of the restricted funds are: BnO: £27,349.37; CnC: £22,246.14; BTWF Community Projects: £1,431.04; RWE Path: £73.20. Expenditure since 30 April 2023: CnC KOSDT Helping Hand 2of3 - £4,000.00; Renewal of Domain name - £10.94. Income since 30 April 2023: Beinn Tharsuinn Award to CC for wind farm admin £1,000.00; Expenditure not in statement yet: Renewal of Webspace hosting - £37.13.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>Regular Updates:</p> <p>Planning issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achany 2 transmission line exhibition will be held in Rosehall Hall on 14th June from 3:00pm-7:00pm. MT to attend. <p>Climate Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder of high risk of wildfires due to rising temperatures. <p>Windfarms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achany extension approved by Energy Consents Unit. • Garvery decision will go to Scottish Government after objection from THC. • Meall Buidhe received notification of unaccompanied visit and reporter appointed <p>Kyle of Sutherland Resilience Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No updates since last meeting. <p>Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (DW):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls of Shin: Marketing materials have been finalised and working with nominated selling agent to go on market for sale next week for £350k. The intention is to retain car park, play park, motor home area as community asset, however board will have to consider all offers including those where potential buyer may wish to purchase whole site whilst also considering existing grant obligations. • Additional updates on KoSDT activities can be found in the Summer issue of the Kyle Chronicle. <p>Highland Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonar Straight Speed Limit: Notice from THC that traffic order relating to 50/ 30mph speed limit changes along Bonar straight has been applied for. A&DCC noted their support.
<p>11.</p>	<p>AOCB: no items raised</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting: 14 August 2023</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund Applications (private session): No applications were received.</p>

Meeting ended at 22:00

List of Community Members in Attendance:

12 June 2023 A&DCC and CreichCC joint meeting with SSEN

Please tick

Name	Post Code	Resident of Ardgay & District	Resident of Creich
S. Vinnell	IV24 3DW	✓	
LOUISE WORTHY	IV24 3DW	✓	
LIZ CORNACK	IV24 3DN	✓	
L. Macleod	IV24 3ER	x	✓
T. SMITH	IV27 4BD	x	✓
A. SMITH	IV27 4BD	x	✓
S. Allan	IV24 3DP	✓	
ANITA HAY, THOMAS	IV24 3DP	✓	
ANITA SMITH	IV24 3DP	✓	
KAW MACKAY	IV24 3DS		
GAIL CASSAP BREWEN	IV24 3AR		✓
GAIL CASSAP BREWEN	IV24 3AR		✓

12 June 2023 A&DCC and CreichCC joint meeting with SSEN

Please tick

Name	Post Code	Resident of Ardgay & District	Resident of Creich
Linda Marshall	IV24 3SA	✓	
Ben Marshall	IV24 3SA	✓	
Colin Mann	IV24	✓	
Bailey & Corinne Bubbitt	IV24 3EL	✓	
David Baker	IV24		✓
JOJO GUN	IV24 3AR		✓
CLARK GOODISON	IV24 3AS	✓	
Hayley Bangs	IV24 3AN		✓
Marcus Sutherland	IV24 3BP		✓
Katie Wilson	IV24 3AA	✓	✓
W Mackenzie	IV24 3AA		✓
Rob Gale	IV24 3DW	✓	
Elizabeth Collier	IV24 3DW	✓	

12 June 2023 A&DCC and CreichCC joint meeting with SSEN

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Please tick

Name	Post Code	Resident of Ardgay & District	Resident of Creich
KELLY RAVEN	IV24 3DH	✓	
SODIE MANNES	IV24 3DW	✓	ARDGAY
CAROLINE MURRO	IV24 3EL		BENNAIR
Graham Charge	IV24 3DP	✓	
Janet Charge	IV24 3DP	✓	
Toni Tomlinson	IV24 3DW	✓	
Sue Tomlinson	-u-	✓	
STEPHAN SHAW	IV24 3DS	✓	

12 June 2023 A&DCC and CreichCC joint meeting with SSEN

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Please tick

Name	Post Code	Resident of Ardgay & District	Resident of Creich
Cameron Boudios	IV27		✓
Christine Mackay	IV24	✓	
David Watson	IV2		
STACE HEWLETT	IV24	✓	
Joe Turner	IV24	✓	
Pam + Joss Elliott	IV3U	✓	
D JAMES - Bow	IV24		
K Fonseca	IV24	✓	
D Fonseca	IV24	✓	
Liz Sawyer	IV24	✓	
Maini Jeffersons	IV24	✓	
Stuart Jeffersons	IV24	✓	
Anne Henderson	IV24	✓	

