

Ardross Community Council

Minutes of Management Meeting

12th February 2024

8.00pm

Ardross Community Hall

Present: Peter Allen (Chair), John Edmondson (Secretary), Alison Gordon (Treasurer), Emma Chisholm, David Bentley, George Mackay and Elliott Blaauw.

Jen Campbell and Jenny Wychrij (Ardross Primary Parent Council)

Dennis Pike, Janice Pike, James McDougall, Phillip Curtis, Ali Curtis, James Brett, Claire Brett, Derek Russell, Claire Bale, Sheila Campbell-Lloyd and Richard Smith

Meeting started at 8.00 pm.

The Chair reminded everyone that the meetings were recorded to aid minute taking. Once approved the written minutes became a formal record of the meeting and the recordings were destroyed.

1. There were apologies from Cllr Maxine Smith. Clair Bale and Sandra Cunliffe also sent their apologies.
2. The January Management Meeting Minutes were approved.
3. The Secretary had approached Edderton CC to see some improvement on the B9176 maintenance and safety improvement. Including the Stittenham Corners which had still not been repaired. It was agreed that the **Secretary** approach Edderton CC to come up with a joint approach.

A reply had been sent to the individual who had asked about the defibrillator suggesting that the ARK would be a suitable location, but it required regular maintenance regime and change of batteries. And a suitable plan needed to be drawn up and an application of funding if required.

4. There had been many letters of thanks for the Energy Payments from various individuals.

Elliott Blaauw agreed to make some more enquiries and obtain more information on a Conservation Organisation enquiring into mapping nature rich sites across the Highlands. Elliott Blaauw did point out that had his suggestion of doing an Environmental Audit been taken up many years ago when he had suggested it then this task was something that would've been a lot easier. He suggested that this was something we should still do. Peter Allen suggested that they should come across and speak to the Ardross Community Council.

Imogen Percy-Bell from the Highland Council had been in touch wanting to come and talk about the changes to the recycling collections. It was agreed that the April meeting might be the best meeting, when everyone in Ardrross had been informed. These changes were a *fait accompli* and council tax payers were not consulted on these changes. It would mean 3 bins would be collected.

There is Public Information Event on the 27th February 2024 held by Scottish Water between 3-7.30pm about the new water mains being put in between Newmore and Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm.

The Safer Routes to School department had sent the Report that we had requested which had been distributed. The road lines had been painted, but none of the other matters raised had been actioned and there was no timeline. It was agreed that the **Secretary** to write and ask about what recommendations were to be actioned and when and ask about the broken road sign and the speed limit. Emma Chisholm pointed out that there was only an assessment from the school side of the cross-roads and we should ask about the Dalnavie side of the cross-roads.

The Community Council insurance renewal notice had been received.

Other email correspondence previously circulated was duly noted.

5. The Treasurer distributed and presented her Report the contents of which were noted.

The Novar 1 Community Benefit had been received. A further payment from the Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit towards Energy Grants had been received.

Payments towards Energy Grants, Electricity Payments, Trees, Newsletter and Hall rental had been made.

A total of £97,377.86 had been made since April 1st 2023 had been made to eligible projects.

6. Jen Campbell wondered whether the email she had sent had been received by the Secretary. John Edmondson was pretty sure that it hadn't. It was agreed to discuss it at the March meeting if **Jen Campbell** could send the email to the Secretary for him to distribute.
7. First up for discussion was the Battery Energy Storage Plant next to a consented Battery Energy Storage Plant at Balnacraig. The site access from the field rather than the existing access point. There was concern that using this entrance would make it dangerous for vehicles on the B9176 as this section of road was used for overtaking. The fire risk was another matter. Fire Services were not a statutory consultee on these applications and there were few industry standards for these kind of facilities. Lithium fires were self-perpetuating and there was little confidence in the fire retardant measures being proposed. It was agreed to write to the Planning Authority with our concerns.

Next up was the Cromarty Hydrogen Plant. As a neighbouring community council the Secretary explained that he had put a holding objection into the Planning Authority to allow more time to respond to the application. Edderton CC were objecting to the application. Traffic movements were an issue and the snow gate closure had not even been considered.

There was a separate application for a new 20km water mains being submitted, despite this only be being built because of the hydrogen plant.

It would appear that the HGV deliveries were all going to use the Skiach junction off the A9 and no HGV traffic was to turn north out of the site.

This Hydrogen Plant was being sited in the wrong place, and the only driver was the cheaper electricity available at the wind farm before it was connected to the National Grid. On every other count the site was wrong. The plant should be being built closer to market. It was agreed to object to the Cromarty Hydrogen Plant, mainly on the increased traffic and the water supply. The other construction traffic from other projects had not been accounted for and these should be considered. It was noted that there was no community benefit being offered for all the inconvenience for Ardross, although this was not a planning matter. James McDougall asked whether it was worth objecting as it was all going to be rubber stamped by the Scottish Government. However John Edmondson felt that the Community Council's duty was to reflect the views of the community whatever the chances of success. It was always worth also suggesting conditions, whatever the stance.

It should be noted there were a lot of mobile mast applications coming in and operators were not being required to share despite the law. The Planning Authority was doing nothing about this. The Rural Network (designed to replace the 3G network) was meant to share masts. This was happening in Ardross where there were 3 masts within a few kilometres of each other.

It was thought that work on the Strathrory wind farm had paused for a month over the access entrance and track. This was no surprise at this as the site entrance was in a really poor place which of course had been pointed out by the Community Council, but not heeded by the Planning Authority or Scottish Government.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting.

Next Meeting is a Management Meeting on the **11th March 2024 8.00pm** at the Ardross Community Hall

ITEM	To Whom	WHO	Date	Status
ACCESS	Matt Dent HC	JME	Feb	OPEN
FLS	FLS	EB	Feb	OPEN
B9176	Edderton CC	JME	Feb	OPEN
BANK ACCOUNT	Santander	AG	Feb	OPEN
ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY	Conservation Group	EB	Feb	OPEN
DALNAVIE CROSS-ROADS	Roads Department	JME	Feb	OPEN

