

Ardross Community Council

Minutes of Management Meeting

11th December 2023

8.00pm

Ardross Community Hall

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

Jenny Wychrij and Jenny Campbell (Ardross Primary Parent Council

Derek Russell, Margaret and Calvert Stinton

Meeting started at 8.05 pm.

The Chair reminded everyone that meetings were now recorded. The recordings were destroyed after the written minutes had been approved.

1. There were apologies from David Bentley. Clair Bale and Sandra Cunliffe also sent their apologies.
2. The November Management Meeting Minutes were approved.
3. The Treasurer confirmed that there were 3 signatories to the Bank Accounts. Peter Allen, Alison Gordon and John Edmondson.

The Forestry Consultation had been responded to, it was thought that it was only warm words and that the Forestry would need chasing on the matters raised.

The Safer Routes to School department had not responded to our request for the Report sent to Iain Moncrieff. We have sent a reminder before considering our next course of action.

We had also still not heard back from the Access Officer. The **Secretary** to chase.

4. The Secretary outlined to the representatives from the Ardross Primary School Parent Council [APSPC] the history behind the Dalnavie cross-roads: the desire for a Safer Crossing, a speed limit on the Struie Road, better visibility lines. The Highland Council had discussed this matter between themselves: the Roads Department, the Safer Routes to School and the Head Teacher, but at no time had community representatives been asked, and when the Community Council did ask for pertinent it was stonewalled. The APSPC agreed to try and keep pursuing the matter as well.

As far as the crash barriers on Stittenham bends were concerned it had been marked as a 'Priority', but there was no money!

There had been a lot of thank-you letters for the Energy Grant.

There was a consultation being run by OfGEM over the cost of standing charges, which in the Highlands were some of the highest in the UK.

The Highland Council were also running a budget consultation. They have a large gap in funding and major cuts will be on the way. Details had been forwarded to Members and details were on the Community Council website, Members were welcome to respond as individuals.

A notification of scoping for another windfarm opposite Gruinards in Ardgay had been received. It was only just a heads up.

The proposal to grant two fruit trees; an apple and a plum to every household in Ardress was discussed. It was agreed to pursue this and make this happen. Further information was required on delivery times, varieties, cost (discounts might be available) and logistics. **Elliott** to compile an entry in the Newsletter and to get more detailed information and possible costs.

Other email correspondence previously circulated was duly noted.

5. The Treasurer distributed her report the contents of which were noted. Various payments and been received from two windfarms.

Since the last meeting £4,650 in Energy Grants had been distributed.

Since April 1st 2023 we had spent £86,909 on community based projects.

Emma Chisholm had done some research into extra bank accounts where the money could be locked away for a period to get higher rates of interest. There was a Santander account that could be used although it did revert to a normal account after 90 days, but could be continued as a high interest account although we had to be proactive to do this. They use the Post Office for paying in. It was agreed to try an open this. The **Treasurer** and **Emma Chisholm** to liaise to get this open.

6. Representatives Jenny Wychrij and Jenny Campbell from the APSPC introduced themselves. They thanked the Community Council for the donation to the Primary School for helping with extra-curricular activities, in particular transport. Although they had not intended to raise any matter, something had emerged this week about the community bus which was getting old and in need of replacement. It was thought there was fund raising to get money for the bus. John Edmondson explained that the Community Council had looked in to community transport from time to time, but it relied on usually one individual; the regulations and health and safety obligations were pretty onerous. It was also not clear also whether the Highland Council were responsible for transport to and from the swimming pool for lessons as these were a curricular activity for primary age pupils. The **APSPC** agreed to look into these matters and report back hopefully in January.
7. Derek Russell had come along to the meeting to express his concern on the number of traffic movements and in particular the HGV movements associated with the proposed Cromarty Hydrogen Plant. This was echoed by other members. There was

also concern about the water extraction being proposed and the possible effect on the neighbouring Private Water Supplies. There was an indication about building a water mains from Newmore, but this could also be disruptive. The developer didn't even know how much water that they required, nor what would happen when the snow gates were closed. But an application had not be submitted and until the details were in front of us it was difficult to comment. A proposal of this nature would be advertised on the Agenda and discussed at a Meeting. The actual proposal was not within the Ardross Community Council boundary.

SSEN had published the results of their 'Consultation' on the OHL's going through Ardross. Following a site meeting they had tweaked the route, but the details were still not clear. The **Secretary** was to ask for more detailed maps. But the main driver was probably to do with wayleaves, FSL offered the path of least resistance as far as this was concerned. Our elected representatives were not really helping the communities here and elsewhere SSEN were compulsory purchasing crofting land. It was a sign of things to come.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting.

Next Meeting is a Management Meeting on the **8th January 2024 8.00pm** at the Ardross Community Hall.

