



CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of meeting held
on Tuesday 21st May 2013 at 7.30pm
in the Invershin Village Hall**

Present: Pete Campbell, Chair (PC), Russell Taylor, Treasurer (RT), Norman MacDonald (NM), Russell Smith (RS), John White (JW), Lily Byron (LB), Sandy Chalmers (SC), Sally Williams (SW), Ron Boothroyd (RB)

Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), PCs Tom Wilson and Louise Kerr, Police Scotland

Apologies: Claire Bruce, Vice Chair, (CB), Brian Coghill (BC), PC Katy Hunter and invited guest Tara Morrison

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above) /Police report. After welcoming everyone, Chair Pete Campbell recorded the shock felt by the community on hearing the news of the destruction by fire of the Falls of Shin Visitor Centre yesterday. He congratulated the staff on their prompt actions which resulted in no casualties as staff and visitors were swiftly evacuated and the emergency services called. He called for all local agencies to work together quickly with the Balnagown Estate to reinstate the centre as soon as possible and to safeguard the jobs of staff, believed to be around 20 in number. With the recent loss of business at Carbisdale Castle, this severe blow to the local economy is a devastating addition. A letter will be sent to the Estate Factor offering any help that the CC can give to help re-open an establishment as quickly as possible. **MG Action.** PC then invited PC Tom Wilson to address the meeting. He stated that enquiries into the cause of the fire at Shin Falls are ongoing; PC Kerr was at the scene until 4am this morning. The monthly report comprised thirty three incidents which have been recorded in the area in the last calendar month but nothing of any significance. Speed checks on the Invershin bends and Balblair straight sections of the A836 have resulted in a couple of tickets issued for speeding offences. The speed checks throughout the area are considered a high priority and will be carried out whenever possible. A meeting is being arranged for early June at which it is hoped that representatives of all three local Community Councils will attend along with representatives from the Police and Highland Council Roads/Community Works departments. The wished-for outcome of this meeting is that traffic calming measures, rumble strips, new signage etc can be located at these problem areas. Any supporting evidence regarding speeding incidents should be passed to the police to help validate the need for action. Calls can be made using the new 101 number and will be routed to local officers. Also noted in the report were a road traffic accident in Ardgay (no injuries), and straying animals especially in Altas. PC Wilson warned of bogus workmen cold calling offering to carry out various jobs but these visits are subsequently followed by thefts of tools, etc. Seventeen calves were recently stolen in Caithness so all crofters and farmers are warned to be particularly conscious of their security arrangements.

GF raised the issue of roadside/pavement obstructions (sandwich boards, advertising etc). It was confirmed that such items are covered by existing legislation under the Road Scotland Act. Cllr Farlow said that Highland Council hopes to make the bylaws more robust to cope with all problems of obstruction especially for wheelchair/pushchair users and to address sightlines issues.

Item 2. Tara Morrison, Broadband community questionnaire. Tara had tendered her apologies shortly before the meeting, asking that her letter of explanation regarding her project be read out in her absence. In the letter she stated the aim of the study is to understand how remote, rural

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communities in Sutherland can make the most effective and appropriate use of broadband and the internet. www.surveymonkey.com/s/BROADBAND_SURVEY_MAIN is the link to complete the survey online and it is also available in hard copy. Tara can be contacted directly on tara.morrison@uhi.ac.uk or on 07985 541732.

Item 3. Minutes of April meeting/matters arising (not on the agenda). The minutes of the April meeting were approved, after one minor amendment, as being a true and accurate record; proposed by Russell Taylor; seconded by Lily Byron. **Ardchronie traffic lights.** GF intimated that repair works should be carried out during the summer.

Item 4. Regular updates:

- (i) **Planning & licensing.** (RS). Asked what a Section 75 consent is, GF replied that it ties the planning proposal to the property ensuring that land and dwelling stay together. No relevant applications.
- (ii) **TEC Services.** (SC) Cycle ramp at Invershin Viaduct. Following a question from Ardgay and District Community Council regarding public liability insurance SC has today written to Simon Young, Chief Engineer, Highland Council to clarify this issue. It is believed that the project is covered by HC's Community Councils insurance. The project complies with the Sustrans plans and it has been put before Simon Young. SC will reply to A&DCC. Kyleside Walk will require £4,900 to bring it up to standard. More quotes will be sought. JW will ask his son if he is interested in the contract; John White Jnr should contact SC if so. **JW Action.** The tidying up of the western approach to Bonar Bridge should be finishing within the next two weeks; the parking spaces work at the parking spaces work at Balblair Wood, Invershin has been completed; the tree clearance at Craggan Dhu has made a huge improvement, it is expected that a roadside fence will be erected. SC will act on these issues as appropriate. **SC Action.**
- (iii) **Financial report.** (RT) The Treasurer's Account balance stands at £6860.34 and the Rock by Sea account is unchanged from last month at £6633.00. A separate account will be maintained to handle the recently established CC Environment Fund. The new forms with details from the approved signatories have been returned to the Bank of Scotland. RT recorded that he is happy to answer any questions at any time with regard to the handling of CC finances.
- (iv) **Spinningdale.** (SW) SW stated it would appear that HC is not able/prepared to undertake much work to solve the problem of drainage at the culvert on the Fairy Glen road in spite of fears of under the road erosion. She will liaise with GF as HC is understood to be targeting drainage issues this summer. The roadside verges are being churned up here too and a request was made for at least one more passing place. **SW/GF Action.** An award of £200 from the Environment Fund was approved for the Spinningdale floral decorations. **SW/RT Action.**
- (v) **Police matters.** (NM) See Item 1 above.
- (vi) **Environmental/health.** (?) No CC rep has this responsibility at present.
- (vii) **Youth.** (?) No CC rep has this responsibility at present. The Bonar Bridge Hall Committee has asked if the CC can appoint a representative to their committee to replace Kay Smart following her recent resignations from local groups. No-one is currently able to undertake this additional responsibility but SW advised that her son and his wife have just joined the Hall Committee and she is prepared to handle liaison through them in the meantime. It was suggested that the Youth Group should be approached to provide a representative to the CC, perhaps considering co-optation at the upcoming AGM. **MG Action.**
- (viii) **Education/schools.** (LB) Nothing at this time.
- (ix) **KOSDT.** (PC) Helen Houston has been appointed to help raise the funds required to operate the Development Officer post for the next two years, reworking the funding applications to support the three day a week post. KOSDT is seeking an emergency meeting next Monday with regard to the disaster at Shin Falls.

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- (x) **Rosehall.** (JW/LB) Water continues to drain across the A837 just above West Lodge. GF will add this to his drainage issues list; SC will add it to his TECS actions. **GF/SC Action.**
- (xi) **Invershin.** (SC) Nothing other than the tragic fire at Falls of Shin Visitor Centre.
- (xii) **Highland Councillor's report.** (GF) Almost all forestry access/exits are now tarred. Following site visits, HC did not object to planning proposal for either Glencassley or Sallachy windfarms. Wondering whether last year's cancelled Invercharron Games was covered by HC insurance, GF was advised to check with Michael Baird. Plans appear to be in hand for this year's event, the field having been booked from PC and fundraising events going ahead.
- (xiii) **Broadband in Rosehall.** (RB) Ron has drafted a letter which now received CC approval to be circulated to the local MP, MSPs, etc. An email received tonight from Ruth Liddicoat of SSE indicates that they are considering possible support but are not yet able to commit. RB has placed several entries on the HIE dedicated website but has received no reply to any of these. He and MG will liaise on the circulation of the letter. **RB/MG Action.**

Item 5. Discussion – co-option of new members/suggestions for office bearers. See Item 4 (vii) above with regard to new members. RT confirmed that if approved by CC vote he would continue as Treasurer, MG will continue as Secretary under the present agreement, and reluctantly PC agreed that if no other will come forward at the AGM he will continue in the post of Chair. Posters advertising the AGM followed by monthly meeting will be displayed locally. **MG Action.**

Item 6. Carbisdale Castle. All agreed that it appears SYHA has no money to deal with the amount of work required. GF has approached Historic Scotland asking for a relaxation of the regulations to allow repairs to be carried out using modern materials but was flatly turned down. As the building is B listed it is understood that that should allow some flexibility. A letter will be sent to John Swinney putting the case for such relaxation of regulations as the closure of the Castle has an enormously detrimental effect on the local economy.

Item 7. Ronnie McNeill's retirement. RT confirmed that the money collected in respect for Ronnie McNeill's service to the community has been paid to the two beneficiaries which Ronnie and his family requested, i.e. the Bradbury Day Centre and the Migdale Hospital Comfort Fund.

Item 8. Beinn Tharsuinn/Rock by Sea community benefit applications. The Bonar Bridge OAP Group applied for funding for their summer outing. Both NM and RT declared their interest. In view of the brief timescale before the event, the application for the costs of the summer outing, amounting to £810 was approved in principal. NM will liaise with Mrs Mackay regarding the part of application relating to the Christmas Lunch etc. **NM Action.** Claire Mellish applied for funding from the Rock by Sea micro grant fund to help with costs she will incur while taking part in a young explorer's expedition to Norway with The British Exploring Society in late July to August. While Claire made an excellent case for her participation in the expedition it was felt that her application did not meet the criteria laid down by the CC for approval of funds from this source. When put to the vote there were two in favour of granting the award with four against. MG will write to the applicant accordingly. **MG Action.**

Item 9. Windfarms updates. Nothing further this month other than at Item 4 (xii). An up to date HC map of all windfarms, approved, proposed and operating will be sent by GF to MG. **GF Action.**

Item 10. Community Council notice board. The KOSDT notice board has been erected in Bonar Bridge. Information regarding grant applications to Rock by Sea and Beinn Tharsuinn should be made available on the community notice boards and in the local press. **NM/MG Action.** The CC board is awaiting the fitting of new glass. No magnets were supplied with the KOSDT board in Rosehall. LB to ask for them at the Key Commercial Services office. **LB Action.**

Item 11. Correspondence. A letter regarding the polling place review by HC has been received. The Criminal Justice Services annual report was passed to SC. The invitation to attend the Prize Giving at Dornoch Academy will receive the response that no-one available this year. **MG Action.**

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A copy of the agreement signed by the four Community Councils involved in the Coire na Cloiche proposed windfarm, and signed on behalf of the developers Rock by Sea, was placed on file. **MG Action.**

Item 12. Any other competent business. No other business was raised.

Item 12. Date, time and place of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 18th June 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Bonar Bridge Village Hall. The meeting will comprise the AGM, at which Cllr Farlow will take the chair for the appointment of office bearers, followed by the regular monthly meeting. Posters will be displayed locally and MG will book the room. **MG Action.**

Meeting closed at 9.45 pm.