

# Ardgay & District Community Council



Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Ardgay & District Community Council

3rd February 2026

- 1) Present: Les Waugh: Chair (LW), Robert Sawyer (RS), Anne Henderson (AH), Robert Henderson (RH), Eilidh Forbes (EF), Tommy Gordon (TG), Kerry Hawthorne (KH)

Apologies: Cllr Hugh Morrison (HC), Cllr Marianne Hutchison (HC), Eilidh Forbes (EF)

- 2) Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed and thanked members of the public for attending. The Chair reminded people to please switch off mobile phones, and stated that everyone will be given an opportunity to speak but to please keep comments succinct and address them through the chair.

- 3) Minutes of previous meeting - approved

- 4) Treasurer Report

## **Ardgay & District Community Council Treasurer's Report**

As of 03 Feb 2026, the **balance at the bank** was: £54,305.88

This notionally comprises:

- Restricted funds: £53,333.29
- CC Admin fund: £629.91
- Windfarm Admin fund: £342.68

## **Expenditure since 17 Nov 2025:**

- Multi-year award for core funding to Gearrhoille Woods - year 1 of 5 £2,000
- Multi-year award for core funding to Ardgay Hall - year 1 of 5 £4,000
- Hire of Ardgay, Nov'25  
£14

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- Bank charges  
£9
- Legal Fees, RE Judicial Review (Gillespie MacAndrew Solicitors)  
£34,325

## Income since 17 Nov 2025:

- Annual Community Benefit award: Beinn Nan Oighrean fund £4,720
- Annual Community Benefit award: Coirre Na Cloiche fund  
£27,488

## Expenditure not yet in statement:

- Nil

## Income not yet in statement:

- Nil

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## The balances of the restricted funds are:

- BnO: £44,254.38
- CnC: £49,170.34
- BTWF Community Projects: £1,158.37
- Judicial review fees (£41,249.80) (*Not yet allocated*)

## Key:

BnO = Beinn nan Oighrean Wind Farm

BTWF = Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm

CnC = Coire na Cloiche Wind Farm

KoSDT = Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

A&DCC = Ardgay & District Community Council

CC = Community Council

Judicial Review fees were queried by an interested party. Agreed we would refer back on this matter as subject to live court proceedings and the interested party is a stakeholder in the case. (Follow up confirmed by email that full details of the

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income and expenditure of the CC funds is included in the Treasurer Report and is made available at each meeting and included in the minutes).

## 5) Secretary's update.

Since re forming the CC have tried to pick up matters that were important to the community and outstanding from the previous CC. Progress to date as follows;

Church of Scotland contacted re the Kincardine Church Bell. Dornoch Firth Diocese have confirmed that the bell at Kincardine Parish Church is to remain on the church building and that the church building is to be offered for sale on the open market. The Diocese advise that this is standard practice and in accordance with guidance from the Church of Scotland in terms of what must remain with property which is sold. The statement suggests that the bell should remain with the church as per its history. MoP raised concern at this as the bell was gifted to the Parish and was originally erected at Old Kincardine Parish church which is now the heritage centre and remains in community use. Therefore, the feeling in the community is that the stance of the Diocese/C of S is, in this case, not acceptable and does not reflect the history of the bell. Agreed that the CC would try to follow up.

Ardgay rail yard and siding – email sent to Network rail, awaiting response.

Inclusive access for Ardgay Station – email sent on to Network rail, awaiting response.

## 7. KOSDT update

Since Silvia updated the A&DCC on Trust activities in November last year the following summarises our activities:

1. We have been organising details for our AGM, as held last week in Ardgay

2. We have been involved in discussions with various parties, including our MP and MSP, in regard to the proposed Pride in Place Fund which has been recently announced by the UK Government. This fund is worth some £20m of inward investment in Sutherland over 10 years and the Trust is attempting to ensure that an equitable amount of that will be directed towards South Sutherland (Ardgay, Creich,

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Dornoch, Lairg, Rogart). Currently South Sutherland is not included in the area of benefit.

3. Since our AGM, the Trust has been awarded an extension by the Scottish Government for its Investing in Communities Funding. This will ensure that the Weekly Community Café, The Community Food Larder, The Keep Active Together exercise programme, and the Community Growing project (including the Community Kitchen Garden in Bonar and the two community polytunnels), and many other activities delivered as part of the Kyle FEEDS project, can continue for the next 12 months. This also secures the employment of 1 full-time project manager and 5 p/t community officers.

4. We are in ongoing discussions with DTAS and HIE regarding future delivery, governance, and finance.

5. We have been awarded funds from the Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund to create a 12-month, full-time Community Support Officer position, including support for Community Planning across Sutherland. Recruitment will start soon.

6. We have completed final drafts of the 5 Year Strategic Plan which we have been producing for some months. The Plan was given a 'soft launch' at the AGM last week and will be available for public discussion at an open meeting to be held towards the end of February. Date to be confirmed. Community Councils will be amongst the invitees.

## 8. Local updates

### **Culrain update**

Some complaints to HC re height of verges on C1136 causing vehicles to come off the road and then have difficulty getting back on.

Highland Council and Forestry and Land Scotland have installed new signage and a new forestry map board in the forest car park.

GC had attended the HC Resilience seminar. Noted that the current KOSDT produced resilience is in place for our area but that there is an effort to try and improve that because that plan and the HC approach to resilience is at the strategic level such as fire, police, ambulance and emergency services. The level beneath that

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is currently not in place or understood. So there is a drive to try and place a greater effort on resilience to work out what it is we need to do, what is we are able to do and crucially if something goes wrong where does the liability sit. There have been a number of cases where those trying to help in times of flood etc have then been held liable for damage caused in the rescue process. How fit for purpose are our resilience hub and how do we communicate across the community. Looking to progress with CC's and resilience hubs.

## **Ardgay Hall provided an update**

### **Our update:**

**Building Works:** As you can see, we now have our new doors installed. These are being well received and have indeed given the hall a nice facelift on top of their functional improvements.

We are still working out dates for the roof repairs.

Thank you once again for your match funding from the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund.

**Hall Management:** Our AGM was last month and again very well attended. We continue to have a strong committee and great volunteer team. Our new treasurer is Valerie Graham.

**Events and Hall usage:** The hall is very busy this year with external bookings, regular user groups and our own hall events. We're working on a calendar of events for the year which will helpfully be published soon.

**Resilience:** As you know we continue to be keen to work on our local resilience program, working with others in the community, including the ADCC.

**Balnagowan Stones:** You may recall that the ADCC was going to look into doing something with these. Can we possibly review that prospect again please.

**Coire na Cloiche Fund:** And finally, thank you again for reviewing and renewing this ongoing grant.

## **Croick Church to be added update**

I'm volunteering as the Croick Church Co-ordinator for Historic Churches Scotland (HCS) now that the church is in their care and leading on a couple of projects which we're calling 'Croick Voices'.

The Visitor Book Digitisation Project is now underway, with a small team of local volunteers beginning the careful process of scanning and organising the church's

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visitor books. These books span several decades and contain thousands of personal reflections and records of visits, and the aim is to preserve this material and make it accessible for future research and local storytelling. Once we have completed the scanning project the kit will be made available for other groups - we are working out how to publicise this at the moment.

Alongside this, we are also developing an Oral History Project focused on capturing and preserving local memories and personal stories connected with Croick Church and the surrounding area. We are still very keen to hear from anyone who may be interested in volunteering, either to help conduct interviews or to share their own memories and experiences.

You may have seen mention of both initiatives in the Kyle Chronicle in December, and we are very grateful for the interest and support they have already generated locally.

## 9. Highland Council

### **Update by email from HM**

The dropped edges at the side of the new tar, I have spoken to Colin Morrice who assured me it is on the to do list, Unfortunately he is struggling with staffing, He has 2 vacancies and 1 long term sick in Ardgay Depot. So if you could highlight that there are 2 full time jobs based in Ardgay available and if it can go on the C.C minutes and hopefully if there is anyone interested they can contact the Council by the Website or any local employee.

MoP raised issue with a dog waste bin overflowing at Gledfield School. HC have been contacted but to date no action has been taken. Agreed that it would be raised.

## 10. Planning & and Licensing

Nothing on weekly lists

## 11. Windfarms/Renewable Developments

Ruith Cnoc

42 Turbines west of Oykel Bridge. 220m to tip

RS advised this application was previously refused.

Scoping opinion only. Agreed that scoping is less important than full application.

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Concerns are raised about the transport and impact road infrastructure for getting in to sites with turbines.

## 12. SSEN

KH confirmed no major update at this time. Concerns from community re road closure at Migdale despite refusal of consent. Explained that road closure is separate to planning consent but acknowledged that a two week road closure is concerning.

MoP raised concerns with SSEN ground investigation works in Carbisdale Forest and around Carbisdale Loch.

KH explained that ground investigation works are permitted under the electricity act, it is not permitted development works under planning act.

MoP confirmed that the installation of access tracks has already begun and will impact water supplies. Approached contractors who were confident that they were able to proceed with the works they are undertaking.

Question at what point works exceed permitted ground investigation and become development requiring consent?

## 12. Rural/public transport

KH discussed potential model for rural bus service after TG had previously raised the issue on behalf of the community. Looking at Ferintosh on the Black isle.

MoP interested in supporting such a project.

Agreed to check with local transport provider first.

TG raised the issue of a community pub in the hall on the weekends. Agreed it would be good to look at the model in place at Ardross.

13. Correspondence – email of support from other community councils which has been good to receive.

14. Any other competent business – none raised

15. Date, time, location of next meeting – 9<sup>th</sup> March 7p.m. Culrain Hall

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Private session

1. Declarations of interest – no declarations of interest
2. Funding applications – Coirre na Cloiche WF application from HoS Hub for £498 towards a community trip to the wildlife park.

Approved by all attendees.

Coirre na Cloiche WF application from the Bradbury Centre for £5,000 assistance with core funding.

Approved by all attendees.

3. Website/Facebook – ongoing