

Ardross Community Council

Minutes of Management Meeting

13th May 2024

8.00pm

Ardross Community Hall

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

James McDougall, Claire Brett, Derek Russell, Clair Bale, Sandra Cunliffe, Sheila Campbell-Lloyd, Jenny Wyrchii and Gillian Winter

Meeting started at 8.00 pm.

1. There were apologies from Peter Allen, Cllr Maxine Smith.
2. The April Management Meeting Minutes were approved.
3. It appeared that the recycling and refuse collections were all sorting themselves out. A few households by Dalnavie had been missed out from the delivery of the new bins, but this had been sorted.

The Secretary explained that he was still awaiting a contact from the engineers and Iain Moncrieff for confirmation that the drawings had been sent to the householder at the Smiddy. As well as the other matters. Before making a formal complaint, an attempt would be made to get the Ward Manager to intervene.

Scottish Power had confirmed that the level of community benefit being paid would not alter if the Cromarty Hydrogen plant went ahead.

Community Transport would have to wait until the Report was submitted for the June meeting.

Elliott Blaauw gave an update on the Ecology Survey. Various emails had been sent but had not gone to the Secretary or had not been delivered. Only one candidate had replied positively that he could do it, and Elliott's recommendation was that he was contracted to undertake the work. He was suitably qualified and could commence the work. However the Secretary thought that community councillors should have the opportunity to study his response and respond by the end of the week. This was agreed.

4. It was agreed that the **Secretary** write a letter of support regarding creating a new loop on the northern railway line, to facilitate connections being made and trains running on time if trains on this single track line were delayed going in the other direction.

SSEN were holding an event at the Hall on the 11th June regarding the OHL.

Other correspondence previously circulated was noted.

5. Emma Chisholm wanted to discuss a new project for Ardross regarding Energy Efficiency. This was prompted by the Community Council paying out for energy costs when really we should be trying to look at saving energy. Of the 229 properties in Ardross identified by the Highland Council unit helping out with energy efficiency in their area 168 would be eligible as private residences. There were 104 with EPC data. A total of 81 properties were likely to be eligible for grants. There were 5 council houses which the Highland Council would agree to improve as part of the project.

The first stage was to get householders to express an interest to become part of the Project, this could start with the Newsletter. Then a full energy audit and EPC Rating assessment could be undertaken. There was unanimous support for this Project. It was something that had been mooted for a long time, but there appeared to be a lot more help available than a few years ago; John Edmondson explained when he had looked into it last a few years ago a full audit would have had to be undertaken without any help and this was too daunting at the time. It was great that there was now help available.

It was not clear whether a separate company should be set up, such as a Community Interest Company to run this. The general feeling was that this project could be dealt with by a sub-committee. **Emma Chisholm** agreed to move this project forward and John Edmondson offered help if it was required.

6. The Traitors filming had caused a lot of issues recently. Many felt there had been a marked change in the attitude of the crew particularly on the road. There didn't seem to be a day go by where the Secretary didn't receive a complaint about the behaviour of film crew driving and courtesy on the road. It was noted that Studio Lambert, the production company were not using local businesses as had happened previously. But now without any community consultation Studio Lambert were closing roads, filming on private land without permission. A road closed sign had gone up just by the distillery, which was illegal as there was no traffic order in place. They had prevented people from using the road. Although letters had gone out, they hadn't got to the vast majority of households in Strathrusdale. Although disruption in the end was minor, the road closed sign had caused a lot of anxiety and uncertainty. But the main grievance was the lack of consultation and just having these things sprung on us. We all understood that the filming could bring some disruption, but it would be nice to part of a conversation about this. It was agreed to write to Studio Lambert and ask them to contact the Ardross Community Council over any road closures before making a decision.
7. The Treasurer distributed and presented her Report the contents of which were noted.

There had been only a few expenditures mainly postage for the Newsletter.

A total of £500 since April 1st 2024 had been made to eligible projects.

The Santander Account was yet to be opened.

9. Starting with Scottish Water, it was quite clear that for Scottish Water the public information event was just a tick box exercise. Their environmental consultant was dismissive of the concerns regarding fungi and other flora. They were also dismissive

of concerns about the history and archaeology including the boundary stone stating that they would consult with their representative in Cromarty rather than taking onboard the Ardross History Gazetteer.

The road closures were going to be very disruptive. But at least the engineer present was receptive to the idea of creating a Liaison Group to deal with the transport issues.

There was general dismay that whenever these companies held a Public Information Event the personnel all looked as though they wanted to be anywhere else. They ignored peoples views and just did what they were going to do anyway. But John Edmondson pointed out that it could work. When the distillery was being built the architect listened to our comments about the stack and came up with a design that respected the views from some viewpoints.

Elliott Blaauw was concerned about the trees along the Golf Course Road. He had started to some utility engineers and they had told him that the trees along the Gold Course Road we're too be lopped where they encroached onto the road to accommodate the transporting of the wind turbines for Strathrory Windfarm. He was appalled that these mature trees so important that they had tree preservation orders on them were to be vandalised and mutilated in this way. It would also include the mature Scots pine on the corner where the road joins the B9176. Telephone cables and possibly power lines would also need to be taken down. He believed that many in Ardross did not know about this and would be upset to hear about this. He believed that this should be publicised in the Newsletter.

So as well as the actual road closures whilst the turbines were being moved there would be the massive disruption as all the preparatory work was done. Of course EnergieKontor had ensured that the Ardross Community was not involved in any of this by obtaining a change to the Planning Conditions stipulated by the Scottish Government Reporter.

Listed Building Consent for two stoves to be installed in the Ardross Church; where they used to be was discussed and it was agreed to make no comment.

It was agreed to object to the 120m met mast to be installed at the head of Strathrusdale. This was in an extremely prominent position and different to that originally displayed on the HHighland Council website.

There being no other business the Acting Chair closed the meeting.

Next Meeting is a Management Meeting on the **10th June 2024 after AGM on the same date** at the Ardross Community Hall

ITEM	To Whom	WHO	Date	Status
CAR PARK SIGN	Matt Dent HC	JME	April	OPEN
FLS	FLS	EB	April	WATCHING
BANK ACCOUNT	Santander	AG	Feb	OPEN
ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY	Conservation Group	EB	March	OPEN
DALNAVIE CROSS-ROADS	Roads Department	JME	April	OPEN
LEALTY BRIDGE	Iain Moncrieff	JME	April	OPEN
BEINN THARSUINN	Phil Tomalin	JME	March	CLOSED
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	Ardross Primary Parent Forum	JW	March	OPEN
CUILICH BRIDGES	Novar	?	April	OPEN
ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT	THC Climate Change Environment Team	EC	May	OPEN
GOLF COURSE ROAD	THC and EnergieKontor	ALL	May	OPEN

