

# Brora Community Council A.G.M.

Held in Brora Community Centre at 7pm Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

1. Apologies	Margaret McIntosh; Karen McKay.
2. Present	K. Cunningham (Chair); Lee Bright; G. McBeath; L. Payne; C. Sutherland; R. Rekhy; Councillor D. MacKay; (J. Wilson doing Minutes) 2 representatives from Police Scotland; Matt Dent (Highland Council Footpath Officer) 6 members of the public.
3. Chair's Welcome	The Chair welcomed all including the members of the public. This is the last AGM before the Community Council elections, which will take place in November, when a new Council will be elected.
4. Minutes of the last AGM in 2014	It was proposed by L. Bright and seconded by Lorraine Payne that the Minutes of the AGM in 2014 be adopted as a true record.
5. Matters Arising	R. Wilson had taken over from N, Lindsay on the Windfarm Panel. The Minutes should appear on a BaDaG web-site shortly.
6. Chair's Annual Report	Copies were distributed to members and the public present. The Council had been very active in the past year.
7. Treasurer's Report	Copies were distributed to members and the public present. These accounts had been examined by G. McBeath, as independent examiner. A letter of thanks will be sent. A copy of the Report will be sent to the Ward Manager.
8. Adoption of Accounts	Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by L. Bright and seconded by R. Rekhy.
9. Election of Office Bearers Councillor McKay in the chair for this item.  The Chair was resumed by K. Cunningham .	All Councillors had agreed to remain in situ until November – so there was an “en bloc” nomination. No nominations from the floor and none received by post, so Community Council was adopted, and all office-bearers remain in post until November 2015.  L. Payne proposed that G. McBeath remain as Independent Examiner should he be willing. This was seconded by C. Sutherland. R. Wilson and R. Rekhy remain on the Gordonbush Windfarm Community Panel. R. Rekhy is also Chair of the Gordonbush Windfarm Community Panel which manages the Apprenticeship Scheme. The Kilbraur Windfarm Community Panel representative is B. Honeyman. R.G. Sim is a Trustee & Trustee Treasurer.
9. Date of next AGM	The chair brought the AGM to a close and the date for the next AGM will be in June 2016.

# Brora Community Council

## Minutes of Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 (following the AGM).

1. Chair's Welcome	The Chair welcomed members of the Council, and 6 members of the public. (J. Wilson doing Minutes)
2. Apologies	Margaret McIntosh; Karen McKay.
3. Police Report	<p>Police Scotland reported a quiet time, only traffic offences and an act of vandalism. A few teenagers had been warned about being on the school roof. There were routine licensed premises checks on-going. Nothing had been reported to the Community Council.</p> <p>Discussion around traffic management on A9 during wreath-laying ceremony. Police agreed to attend. Legally, all road closures should be applied for through Highland Council. In Brora there is the opportunity for marshals to re-direct traffic round Lower Brora.</p> <p>The subject of Police Clinics was raised. It was not possible to have 1 police officer committed to a regular evening clinic due to short staffing. The Chair will enquire again about possible routine clinics using the Library/Service Point.</p>
4. Highland Council Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ground maintenance - Lower Fascally un-usable "recreation" area – possible saving of resources in grass cutting. Warning of invasive plants if not watched. Cllr. Mackay to research. Upper Fascally – this area to be kept tidy, as it is a children's' play area. Current "local project" investigation underway to perhaps regenerate this area.</li> <li>2. Beachview Day Centre – From 1<sup>st</sup> June it will become Brora Village Hub- a health and well-being centre for the village. Engaging with Activity, (EWA) will provide 5 days a week specialist dementia and community support activities. It was suggested to BCC that "Engaging With the Community" team might be invited to the next BCC meeting.</li> <li>3. The Review of Janitorial services is going to Highland Council on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, as there was poor consultation before implementation of new system.</li> <li>4. Area Carbon Clever Fund of £40,000 for Caithness and Sutherland.</li> <li>5. Investing in young people locally, through apprenticeships – to be employer-led. Caithness and Sutherland lobbying for own board, working along with Gordonbush Windfarm etc. to keep it local.</li> <li>6. Affordable warmth – Sutherland has the highest level of fuel poverty in Scotland. Issues are - age and condition of housing stock, long winters, low incomes, and the cost of converting from pre-paid meters to Direct Debit. The Highland Council is reviewing this.</li> <li>7. Braes Hotel building – an HC structural survey has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Council, and monitoring will continue.</li> <li>8. Service Points – the issues locally are well-understood by THC review group.</li> <li>9 District Partnership –Meeting Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> boundary issues- overlap into Ross-shire and Skye. Liaison between, adult care, learning, Social Care, and other agencies across the area. Dental care issues are on the agenda. Community safety – access to defibrillation is also a concern.</li> <li>10 Scotia House – Application for new storage units on site, by owners. BCC have anxieties - about safety issues as storage will be near residential area, and warehouse full of inflammable liquids.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- about state of ground maintenance</li> <li>- about industrial unit located at village</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<p style="text-align: center;">entrance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- about the necessity for landscaping.</p> <p>The scaffolding at Drummuie is an on-going issue with Historic Scotland. This year's budget has to find £20,000,000 cuts.</p> <p>3 new businesses moving into Home Aid building off Gower St. car park. New Beaver and Cub unit starting. Promises being made on 26<sup>th</sup> June. BCC have been invited.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-</p>
<p>5.Highland Council Footpaths Officer</p>	<p>Matt Dent, Highland Council Footpaths Officer, was introduced to the meeting. He gave an introduction to the Land Reform Act, which was influenced by 1997 Labour Party's Scottish bias, and the formation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Common Law rights were formalised through the Act in 2005. The Foot and Mouth outbreak nationally in February 2001 closed the countryside and highlighted access issues.</p> <p>There is nothing in the Act which manages either the public or land-owners and managers. There are no set rules.</p> <p>The Footpaths Officer's principal task is to persuade all involved to do what is needed. He also deals with planning for windfarms etc</p> <p>Core path plans are under review and there will be some change in the Brora area. Mr. Dent pointed out that Jubilee Walk, and the Links path were washed away through coastal erosion.</p> <p>There is a very limited budget which is being decreased year on year. Caithness, Sutherland and Edderton covers 700 square Kilometres. It is helpful when local communities take the lead in action as they have access to funds that are not available to the Council – e.g. Kilbraur and Gordonbush Community Trusts.</p> <p>Land reform is still on the political agenda, although access rights have moved down this agenda and been replaced by Crofting legislation. All political parties are pro land reform.</p> <p>A member of the public raised the issue of use of the Doll suspension bridge. The access road was adopted in 2003/4, so it is a public way, which means that horses can use the bridge. Much anxiety was expressed about the huge dangers to riders and horses inherent in allowing this. The wooden planks of the bridge have been splintered and damaged. There is nothing in the Land Reform Act to prevent access, but the community could ask Highland Council to re-designate the bridge.</p> <p>BCC will ask Planning to determine how often the bridge is given structural surveys, and what the recommended weight limit is.</p> <p>It is noted that keeping clear access to the bridge is done through voluntary activity. Mr. Dent will raise this particular issue with the relevant Highland Council officials.</p> <p>Other issues related to commercial horse-riding responsibilities and footpaths were raised and discussed thoroughly. This included Uppat Woods paths, Sputie Burn core path and bridge – which are on Crofting land and owned by Sutherland Estates. Legal matters under the Act were explained by Mr. Dent as they related to this issue.</p> <p>BCC agreed to write to Sutherland Estates about the condition of these popular paths and to suggest the building of a culvert at Sputie.</p> <p>The closed path from behind the Marine Hotel was also discussed. This has been fenced off for over 20 years. Matt explained that a public "right of way" can go only between one public place and another public place. This access was never a "right of way" as it led from private property.</p> <p>Further discussion took place about wind farms in areas designated Special Landscape areas and the cost of associated public enquiries.</p> <p>There is currently, a Highland Consultation on on-shore windfarms, in which the public were invited to participate. Brora Community Council will</p>

	<p>be responding, regarding the importance of designated Special Landscape Areas.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr. Dent for his clarifications and helpful information.</p>
6 Adoption of Minutes of March meeting.	Proposed by C. Sutherland, seconded by L Bright
7. Matters Arising	<p>Most have already been covered by the meeting. The sign for Johnstone Place is going up in English, only.</p> <p>Coastal erosion – following approval from Brora and Golspie Community Councils, BaDaG submitted an application to Kilbraur for funding towards an aerial survey to map the coastline from North Brora to Loch Fleet.</p>
8. Correspondence	<p>Most correspondence has been dealt with in the meeting.</p> <p>Data protection has been renewed.</p> <p>Grant for Brora 10K 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary T-shirts applied for</p> <p>Dance group - £900 to replace costumes applied for</p> <p>Beavers and Cubs - £477 for uniforms and equipment applied for. A grant for training has already been awarded.</p> <p>The Meeting agreed to support these applications.</p>
9. Local Planning	<p>Doll Hall Planning Application has full support of BCC. It is an important community resource. BCC wish it success.</p> <p>Scotia House – Despite concerns voiced to BCC and House holders a new industrial unit was approved by Planning in May 2014.</p> <p>An application has been received for a section of the original Scotia House building to be demolished, and new and increased storage units erected. Details of this application had not been forwarded initially to BCC from Planning. Listed in NT and service Points hard copy. BCC is now granted an extension of time to formulate a response. Following discussion, serious reservations were shared regarding close proximity of whisky bonding to school, railway, A9, recreation areas, residential housing and an industrial building. There are also historical issues of ground maintenance and screening.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to object to the application on the grounds of safety, visual impact, and broken initial suggestion of job-creation.</p>
10. Gordonbush Panel Report	<p>Apprenticeship Scheme - A group has been formed to create a Gordonbush Windfarm Fund for an apprenticeship scheme launched last week – for Golspie, Brora and Helmsdale. There is £36,000 in the Fund. The 3 communities want to develop a heritage fund from residual finance. Some communities are more pro-active than others in applying for funds. The Gordonbush Sustainable fund of £70,000 is ring-fenced for Brora, and has attracted 5 applications. 4 have gone through to the Second Stage and will be assessed by BCC and SSE panel on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Successful project/s will be informed in due course.</p>
11 Financial Report	<p>End of Year accounts presented at AGM to be submitted to H.C. Ward Manager. Chair thanked Treasurer, K. McKay</p>
12 Public Discussion	<p>Concerns about glass on the car park in Gower Street were reported. It is suggested that the number of recycling bins be reduced from 5 to 3.</p> <p>Concerns about the dogs kept at Keeper's Cottage BCC will contact SSPCA.</p> <p>Chair intimated that there were 3 new businesses moving into the previous Home Aid building off Gower Street carpark.</p> <p>Also delighted to report a new Brora beaver and Cub unit starting up.</p> <p>“Promises” being made on 26<sup>th</sup> June, to which BCC have been invited.</p>

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm

The next meeting of BCC will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

- Items for the Agenda for this meeting –
- Costs of using the school changing rooms by sports groups –pending Cllr McKay's report on Janitorial services
- Brora Community Council Annual Community Award
- The Remembrance Day Parade
- Poppy Collection
- September 15<sup>th</sup> will be a closed meeting for a panel decision on local legacy project funding applications.