

Brora Community Council
 Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 15th March 2016 at 7pm
 In Brora Community Centre

Present	Margaret Mackintosh (chair); Lee Bright (sec.); Kathleen Cunningham (Treasurer); Russell Rekhy (Vice-chair); Cllr Deirdre Mackay; Dave Andrews; Sandy Crawford; George McBeath; A representative of Police Scotland 2 members of the Public.
1. Apologies for Absence	Emma Payne; Bill Honeyman
2.. Chair's Welcome	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and opened the agenda.
4 Highland Council Report by Cllr Mackay – <i>item brought forward to enable Cllr Mackay to attend another meeting.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News of the cuts in expenditure necessary as a result of cuts in council budget has been circulated widely and confirmed. • Child Poverty – a hidden concern in rural areas. Highland Council have distributed a booklet concerning Child Poverty in the Highlands and copies were available to BCC at the meeting. • Beachview – Press and Journal published a letter from NHS Highland and a leader article which said that Beachview was to close. This was irresponsible journalism. Cllr Mackay pointed out that Beachview is closed only because of a lengthy legal process. Running alongside is a review, by NHS Highland, of services to those with learning disabilities, and of respite care for both old and young people. • Self-directed support is popular, but comes from the same pool of money as the social care budget, which means that some facilities are struggling financially. • It is recognised that respite care is crucial to family carers. • Fire and Rescue – there have been 4 fatalities recently. The Service goes back after call-outs to highlight prevention and encourage awareness among vulnerable

people of preventative measures such as smoke alarms. The Service needs to know where the vulnerable are.

- Fire and Rescue have a CPR training kit, and a joint initiative has been established with Scottish Ambulance Service, who want to encourage community resilience, and to deliver training across the county. They are looking for more people to in CPR through this joint project.
- **Young Carers** – there are 73 young carers across the County, supported by Tykes. A questionnaire has gone out to be assessed by a head teacher, the local MP, Doctors and Cllr. Mackay.

High life Highland have agreed to a 50p entry fee to their sports and Health facilities for Tykes clients.

- **The collapse of the oil industry** – 600 people are employed within Caithness and Sutherland and a further 1200 local residents commute to Aberdeen. These highly paid jobs are disappearing, and there appears to be no knowledge of other job opportunities or training elsewhere.
- **Fuel Poverty** -NHS Highland statistics show that heart attacks and strokes increase to a peak in the colder months. Training has been on-going for the assessment of fuel poverty. Patient assessments on admission to hospital now include a fuel poverty assessment.
- **School crossing in Gower Street** – this is soon to be signed off. Road safety training will be rolled out as soon as the crossing is complete.
- Major concens have been reported to BCC concerning flooding in the area of the crossing. Cars are clipping their wheels on the curb as it's colour blends with that of the roadway and therefore not clearly visible. There is also a problem with parked cars in the area.

- The police officer from Police Scotland was consulted and he confirmed that motorists can be charged with dangerous parking, but not until the structure of the whole crossing has been completed.
- Cllr Mackay will raise these issues with Allan Bryce at Highland Council.
- **Highland Council Budget** – this is Year 1 of a 4 year cycle. 300 council jobs have now gone. This has taken £10m out of the local economy as a result. Highland Council wanted to raise the Council Tax this year, but would have faced a huge fine by the Scottish Parliament if they had done. Voluntary redundancies helped to reduce the impact.
- **Education** – a 6% reduction is to be made to the money available to head teachers. Small schools will be impacted more heavily than large ones. The Highland Council say that this reduction will have an impact on the quality of teaching, learning and resources. This will create additional pressure on head teachers. There will be additional impact on teacher training/management courses, and a consequent effect on the quality of education offered.
- Local Government finance is in crisis.
- **The graffiti** on the river bridge is still there. BEAR were contracted to remove it, but its location makes it difficult to access. Cllr. Mackay will speak to BEAR again about it.
- **Buses re-routing** to Station Square. The Chair received a letter from Dr. Monaghan who had written to Stagecoach about this issue. The X99 route will be changed later in the year. The difficulty was caused by the length of the axles on the newer buses.
- However, a member of BCC pointed out that parking around the Station Square was often congested. The old goods shed was in CASPLAN as an area of potential parking, but the site has been sold on.

3. Police Report

February to the present, (and now includes

	<p>Helmsdale) – 88 reported incidents – 15 fixed penalties; 11 other traffic incidents and 2 reports to the Fiscal's office. There were 3 domestic incident; 1 child protection incident; 2 housebreaking enquires are on-going. There were 4 fires; 1 report of theft; 4 road collisions and several other general traffic infringements. Speed of traffic on A9 was discussed, and it was pointed out that the Police can go over the speed limit in an emergency.</p> <p>There are fewer calls for animal rescues as the Fire and Rescue service is being used more.</p>
5. Minutes of last meeting	Approved – proposed by Sandy Crawford, seconded by Lee Bright.
6. Matters arising.	<p>The War Memorial wall (on A9) re pointing will be discussed at an imminent Friends of the War Memorial meeting.</p> <p>There was a site visit to the Gordonbush wind farm extension site. This site has been passed at the Northern Planning Meeting and has now gone to the Scottish Government Planning Consents. Ruth Liddicott, the community liaison officer for SSE has left the company. Kathleen Cunningham expressed appreciation for her communication skills, keeping BCC so well informed. Her successor takes over next month. The members send Ms Liddicott good wishes in her new job.</p>
7. Resilience Meeting Report	Kathleen Cunningham reported that Steve Marden, Emergency manager for the North met with Brora Resilience Group. Emma Payne from BCC and Ellen Lindsay from BaDaG are attending a Dornoch Resilience Meeting. A report-back will be given to BCC on how other communities are dealing with resilience issues.
8. Participatory Budget	Russell Reckhy reported that groups from all over the County met to create a steering group, which included both statutory and voluntary organisations. A fund of £15,000 has been allocated to Sutherland. It is open to anyone in Sutherland, as part of the policy of community engagement. The plan is for all applicants to go to Lairg – as the centre of the county – where

applications will be assessed. The Application form is still a draft document, waiting approval. The decision-making event will take place on 21st May. It is planned to provide buses to collect applicants from further afield, such as the West and East coasts of Sutherland for the awards event. The form is easy to fill in and will be distributed to various outlets on the West and East coasts, and posters will be going out to inform people. Applications need to be submitted by 22nd April. Commercial groups do not qualify. The decision to award money from the Fund will be made by the people present on the day, who will vote on each application. £2,000 is the maximum that can be awarded. The Group will be meeting soon to finalise the details.

• 9. Correspondence and Micro-grants

- The Highland-wide Development Plan
- Gordonbush site visit.
- Community Council Training Day.
- by BCC.
- Caithness and Sutherland Planning.
- Participatory budget Meeting (Russell Rekhy to attend).
- Deloitte RAB 2016 10th to 18th September 2016.
- Police Scotland questionnaire.
- Data Protection renewed.
- West Garty Windfarm Application (Extension to closing date requested).
- **Micro-grants** -Sutherland Sheepdog Trials – it has been supported in the past, but BCC needs some clarity about its intended location. Fiona Morrison to be contacted to clarify.
- Brora Community Events Group – Scarecrow Festival – looking for financial aid to provide banners. posters and food for a barbecue. BCC agreed to support banners and posters, but not food.
- Brora Community Centre – to replace a cooker. This was agreed.

10. Financial Report	The current report was circulated to members. £200 had been given to the Dance group and £7,186.70 is ring-fenced.
11. Public Discussion	<p>West Garty Windfarm Application. This is going to a public enquiry. A Peat report, commissioned by Muirden Energy has been issued. The Scottish Government say that all previous objections stand. A reporter will be appointed, first, then it will go to the D.P.A.</p> <p>The costs are covered jointly by the developer and the local authority.</p> <p>All current appeals are on the D.P. A. web-site including West Garty Windfarm. It will possibly be Autumn before the enquiry happens. BCC will contact E Consents to refer to our previous submissions.</p> <p>The Further Peat Investigation and Peat Slide Assessment summary done for Muirden Energy will go to the Library for the public to read.</p> <p>Local Food Production – this matter was raised by Dave Andrews who expressed concern over food supplies if there was an emergency. It is felt that encouragement should be given to local people to grow food.</p> <p>Community gardens have been established elsewhere.</p>

The Meeting closed at 8.45.

The next meeting of Brora Community Council will be on Tuesday May 17th in Brora Community Centre at 7pm