

NIGG AND SHANDWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please send all correspondence to:
The Secretary: Mrs E Waring
Nigg and Shandwick Community Council
The Old Post Office House,
Pitcalnie, Nigg by Tain,
Ross-shire, IV 19 1QP

18th November 2009

Mr Simon Hindson,
Graduate Planner,
Planning and Development Services,
The Highland Council,
Glenurquhart Road,
Inverness,
IV3 5NX

Dear Simon,

First of all apologies for not writing to you earlier, but my husband has been in hospital to have a hip replaced and I have been on Nurse Duties.

On behalf of the Nigg and Shandwick Community Council I thank you for coming to Nigg to give a presentation on the Highland Wide Local Development Plan and trust that you have received completed questionnaires from all those who were present at the meeting.

I have enclosed a copy of our local newsletter the 'Community Voice' for your interest.

Once again thank you.

Kind regards,

Eveline Waring,
Secretary, Nigg and Shandwick Community Council.

Encls: Community Voice Issue 27

COMMUNITY VOICE

produced by NIGG AND SHANDWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher

ISSUE NO.27. NOVEMBER 2009

A GOOD TURN OUT FOR THE PUBLIC MEETING

On Thursday, 1st October 30 plus local residents came along to hear what was being proposed for the Nigg Yard, the Nigg environment and the latest situation regarding the threat of the wind turbines on the Hill of Nigg. Unfortunately, the Nigg and Shandwick Community Council Chairman, Richard Cross was unable to attend but the Vice Chairman, Doug Kippen took the chair and welcomed everyone especially the three guest speakers. The meeting opened with Simon Hindson, Planning and Development, giving a presentation on the Highland Wide Local Development Plan. He stated that this plan was endeavouring to be consistent and with easy to understand policies and it was up to the community to put forward their views by the 9th November if they wanted them to be considered by the Highland Council. For up to date news go to <http://hwidep.blogspot.com> After answering questions Geoff Robson, Head of Environment and Development explained how, over the last 18 months, the Highland Council had prepared the Nigg Yard Development Master Plan which, after a 12 week consultation, was now with the Scottish Ministers for final approval. Mr Robson assured everyone that there would definitely not be an Incinerator or ghost ships, nuclear or toxic decommissioning taking place in Nigg. There was still the possibility that KBR would continue working in the Nigg Yard but there were also a number of other interested parties, one of them being DSM, who were holding a Stakeholder Meeting on their vision for the Nigg Yard on Thursday, 8th October and which the Community Councillors have been invited to attend. It is envisaged that enormous off shore turbines, 800 feet high with 500 feet blades, will be built at the Yard which would result in the land to the East on the opposite side of the Yard being utilised for storage of these turbines. After Mr Robson had answered the public's questions Peter Grant, Chairman, Nigg Awareness Group gave a brief update on the Wind Turbine Proposal for the Hill of Nigg. To date Atmos have not re-submitted a further planning application, although they have indicated that they have an updated Bird Survey which they are hoping to give to the Planning Dept. shortly. Peter Grant assured us that he would keep abreast of what was happening and would report back to the Community Council any further information he may receive. Our thanks goes to the three speakers who gave everyone a lot to talk about as was shown by all those who remained after the meeting to voice their opinions. If you were unable to attend the meeting please look up the website <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/consultations.htm> for further information. The Community Council have sent in their response to the Questionnaire on your behalf.

ULLAPOOL TAKEN OVER BY NIGG FRIENDSHIP GROUP

On Wednesday, 9th September a delux coach set off from Arabella with members and friends of the Nigg Friendship Group on a day trip to Ullapool. The first stop was at 'Harrods' for a cuppa and some shopping for those who could not resist the temptation of the goods on offer. Then off we went to Ullapool through beautiful countryside.



On arrival at Ullapool we all made our way to various shops to do 'a wee bit more shopping' whilst some stopped to watch the Coast Guard Ship loading some supplies before taking off once again to safeguard our lovely coastline.

After lunch there was still time to get more sale bargains before leaving to speed off to Strathpeffer for a lovely afternoon tea at the Pavilion. We arrived back at Arabella about 7.15pm after a most enjoyable time. A very big thank you goes to the Nigg Friendship Group Committee and especailly Gwyneth Lock for organising everything.



NOTIFICATION OF MILITARY FLYING EXERCISE Fixed wing and helicopter flying with ground support will take place between 16th and 26th November at Tain Range - No weekend flying. Full details can be found on the Notice Boards in Nigg and Shandwick..

Report on Nigg and Shandwick Community Council Meeting held in Nigg Community Hall at 7.00 pm on Thursday, 8th October 2009 at 8.45 pm

(Please note the following is purely a report on the meeting. It is not in anyway, the official Minutes which will be displayed on the Community Notice Boards at Nigg Community Hall and Cemetery Car Park)

There were 7 committee members and no members of the public in attendance. Apologies were received from John Mackenzie, Councillor Richard Durham, Councillor Alan Torrance and Councillor Alisdair Rhind. The Chairman, Richard Cross, opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the DSM meeting which was held before this meeting at the Kincaig Castle Hotel at 7.00 pm hence making the lateness of this meeting..

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th August 2009 which had been circulated to all members of the Committee, were approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Doug Kippen, and Seconded by Helen Campbell.. There were no matters arising from the Minutes, which were not covered, on the Agenda. Richard Cross, Chairman, reported that he was pleased that we had attended the DSM meeting, although we did not learn anymore than we already knew of their plans for the Nigg Fabrication Yard apart from DSM assuring us that they will not be bringing Nuclear or toxic waste or ghost ships to Nigg and that they intend to decommission mainly rigs and ships and to rent out sites to other industries who may wish to structure wind turbines. However, it is still possible that KBR will stay at the Nigg Yard as they have informed us that they are waiting for their Board of Directors in America to meet to consider their plans for Nigg Yard. Both KBR and DSM have indicated that they intend to demolish the existing rundown Training School. The Accounts' balances as at 8th October 2009 was Ordinary Account £1,390.94 and Bishop Walk Account £2,947.87. There were no Planning applications for our area other than Richard Cross getting planning permission to erect a house on his land.

A Public Meeting held in Nigg Community Hall on Thursday, 1st October 2009 went very well with 30 plus members of the public attending. Geoff Robson Head of Environment and Development, Simon Hindson from the Highland Council Planning Dept. and Peter Grant, Chairman, Nigg Awareness Group gave good presentations and John Waring put up display material which was appreciated by all.

Simon Hindson stated that the Highland Wide Local Development Plan was not just a Council Plan but was for the communities and was being set out to be a consistent and easy to understand policy. He asked the public to give written feedback on the Proposals for the Highland Wide Local Development Plan by 9th November as their views would be taken into account. The Community Council confirmed that they will be sending in their response to the questionnaire. This presentation was then followed by Geoff Robson, who reported on the Nigg Fabrication Yard Development Master Plan. He stated that amongst the surveys that had been undertaken SEPA found that there was no problem with flooding at Nigg Yard, and Scottish Natural Heritage had looked at the marine life and birds and further reports were sent to the Scottish Ministers for approval. He assured everyone that there was no intention of nuclear decommissioning ever taking place nor an Incinerator being put up in Nigg. He also said the Highland Council were still considering taking out a Compulsory Purchase Order and that they had already been approached by a number of companies who are interested in taking over the Nigg Fabrication Yard. One of the possibilities for the Yard was the commissioning of very large offshore turbines as the Government were looking at 3,000 being erected from London up the East coast. Peter Grant then gave a brief update on the Wind Turbine Proposals on the Hill of Nigg stating that although nothing was happening at the present time he had been informed that Atmos were re-submitting their revised application shortly and once this was with the Planning Dept. the public (which included children of any age and every adult in a household) would be advised in order that they could give their views on this to the Planning Dept. Peter said he would keep the community updated via the Community Voice.

Richard Cross and John Waring attended the Ward Forum Meeting on Thursday, 7th October 2009, in the Tain Youth Café. Richard reported that the meeting was very interesting especially the Police Report on their statistics. The Forum revolved mainly around people who were doing youth work in the Highlands and especially in the Tain area where there was a lot of activities being offered to the youth. John said that he brought up the subject of the much needed funding assistance for transporting children to matches etc. and also the problems occurring with getting volunteers to assist with Youth Activities due to the stringent rules of the Child Protection Policy. It was agreed that this will be fully discussed at a future Ward Forum meeting.

Eveline reported that the previous Ward Forum held in Nigg on Wednesday 19th August went very well with 12 members of the public present. Following this meeting a letter was received from Ian Hargrave, Corporate Manager regarding the Review of Community Councils - First Phase and to assist with this they are updating the Community Council Boundaries and maps have been sent to all Community Councils for their comments. It was noticed that the boundary for Nigg and Shandwick CC does not include all of Shandwick although this had been approved and amended on the map in June 2005. Alastair Clinkscales, who is responsible for the maps will be informed about this

Doug Kippen reported that he had met with the Community Services about the Area and Path to Shandwick Beach and they have agreed to do what they can this coming winter. They are looking at putting steps down to the beach from the car park which may result in a small sum of money from the NSCC. It was agreed that this was no problem. It was also agreed that the path from Shandwick to Nigg was also too damaged and costly to repair and to maintain.

Eveline read out the correspondence received and under A.O.B. Helen reported that she had e-mailed Carol Elliot requesting bins to be put up at Nigg Ferry and the council have agreed to supply a bin providing permission is given from the Landowners. Helen agreed to contact the Landowners. Doug reported that he had attended a Bus Meeting in Tain where Stagecoach were very co-operative and were looking at arranging for an evening bus, about 8pm, to run from Tain to Shandwick.. With regard to a bus stop at Nigg Round-about no decision was made. However, the bus drivers will put people off at the Nigg Round-about if they asked them to. Eveline reported that there were people very concerned that the Nigg Ferry had stopped running on 2nd October as they understood that the contract was to run from March until the end of October. Eveline to get clarification on the contract from Carol Elliot, Ward Manager. There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

NEXT MEETING IS THURSDAY, 10th December 2009 at 7.30 pm in NIGG COMMUNITY HALL

The next Ward Forum is on Wednesday, 9th December 2009 at 7.30 pm. in Milton Bowling Club. The main topic will be Housing in the Highland.

DATES FOR 2010 WARD FORUMS: FEBRUARY 25th; APRIL 21st; JUNE 24th; AUGUST 25th; OCTOBER 28th; and DECEMBER 15th.
Venues and subjects to be confirmed nearer the time.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO COME TO THESE MEETINGS

Special Note: Nigg & Shandwick Community Council wish to apologise to anyone who did not see the amended time on the Notice Boards and who turned up at 7.30 pm for the Council meeting which had to be postponed to 8.45 pm due to the DSM meeting at 7 pm which the councillors felt was important for them to attend. Also apologies to anyone who turned up for the Public Meeting on Sunday, 18th October which was wrongly publicised by the Ross-shire Journal. Eveline and John also wish to apologise for the lateness and briefness of this Community Voice (only 4 pages), but John was in hospital having a hip replacement and Eveline was on 'nurse duties'.

SHANDWICK - INFORMATION OVERLOAD ? by Doug Kippen

IT ALL MAKES WORK !!

Oldies who remember "The War" (we've had so many, but you will know the one I mean) will recall how road signs and such were taken away to make saucepans, or weapons, or merely to confuse the enemy. Though locals might still have known where they were, visiting Panzers would have gotten hopelessly lost in our de-signed rural lanes. So it should be with some relief that we Seaboarders, some of whom remember those dark days, would welcome how thoroughly a latest generation of jobsworths have festooned our villages with more and more polychrome signs, telling absolutely everyone where absolutely everything is, no matter from which air they come or where they want to go.

This additional visual burden to our already cluttered landscape verges on overload. Every day, in any direction, we can count dozens of signs, symbols and other indicators, laid on top of other, earlier and often redundant signage. Any excuse, it seems, serves for yet more. The latest addition to the Seaboard symphony of signs is a shiny seven foot-plus polychrome and bilingual fingerpole telling anyone who can read, in either language, that the muckle great concrete and sandstone breakwater that fills the left-hand skyline as we leave our car in the Shandwick carpark (we have only one, carpark, that is) is Balintore Harbour, and how many meters away it is, by a path that varies greatly in its accessibility, On inquiring, we were told that this gross imposition on our Seaboard skyline was necessary to inform wheelchair users of the proximity of the haven.

I am not sure why this category of human beings should have been blamed. My own, albeit limited experience of wheelchair use tells me that signs up in the sky present problems when, chair-bound, you have just got out, blinking in the stiff breeze, from your wheelchair adapted vehicle. I soon realised, though, that our gentle jobsworth may merely have sought a community-sensitive excuse to cover up an on-site oversight, as it were and, to do him justice, and after looking at photographic evidence, did promise to "look into" the possibility of reducing the unnecessary item in height. I await the outcome.

Even at a lower, more readable, height, the information offered by this sign, in either language, presents a "clear and present danger" to any wheelchair user foolhardy enough to follow the indicated route towards the harbour, or, even more perilously, in the opposite direction, along the eponymous Shandwick Path. This, though once a broader expanse of grass offering good going even for the lame, is now reduced to a short grass strip which rapidly becomes impassible by any but the fleetest of foot or dedicated dog-follower. Lethal, I should think, even to all-terrain wheelchairs.

What none of us is sure about is whether the path the sign refers to, and called the "Shandwick Path", is thought to go to Shandwick, or come from that hamlet. It is, of course, neither, being much too short even to leave that place. Thus it forms a new type of path, called after the place it cannot escape. I cannot but think that, when I was a child and formed my first concepts, that the road TO our county town FROM our place was called Forfar Road because it led to Forfar, not because it was wholly contained in that fine burgh.

The photographic evidence did the trick. Presented with that and a vehement verbal opposition to the erection of this overlarge, unsightly and wholly redundant intrusion on our view of the world, was met at first with surprise, a startled defence of a national scheme imposed on us for our own good and only slowly, with a grudging acceptance that, in this location, maybe the pole could be shortened such that the blessed and apocryphal wheelchair user might read its legend, in English and Gaelic without seated discomfort.

A concession, anyway. We must thank our stars that the next generation of jobsworths are not yet preparing the next addition to our tall pole, saying, on the one side "THE SEA" and, on the abverse "THE LAND", with, for those of a horizontal disposition, "THE SKY". I'd put nothing past them, these days. Be vigilant, out there.

WATCH OUT - THEY'RE OUT TO GET US.

THE NEW HIPPIES

We must thank the wonders of modern medicine for the safe return to us of our Chief Editor and Community Council Treasurer. Important people, indeed, as one can spell and the other counts numbers, rare skills indeed. Renewed, refreshed, they are, we hope, both fleet of foot, full of zest, relieved of discomfort and good for another few thousand miles. Others, we believe are in the queue for bionic modification, so we wish them what they would wish themselves, as we all joyfully if not all youthfully soldier on into yet another decade.

