



SUTHERLAND PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Approved minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 20 November 2008, at 1030
in Lairg Community Centre.

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	
Ann Keatinge William Sutherland Andy Mackay Phil Tomalin Frances Gunn Ronnie Lansley Christine Ross Lawrence Jamieson Richard Gale Kate Stephen Fiona Cameron	Voluntary Groups - East Sutherland (Chairman) Sutherland Partnership (Secretary) Highland Council Ward Manager N,W&C Sutherland Highland Council Ward Manager East Suth & Ed'ton CVS North CVS North Voluntary Groups - East Sutherland HC Community Learning and Development East Sutherland Citizens's Advice Bureau Older People for Older People LEADER Development Officer	
Apologies had been received from: Shirley McHardy, Nigel Brett Young, Barbara Watson, Denise Friel, and Steve Robertson.		
1. <u>Introduction.</u> Ann Keatinge, chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. With several new delegates present, self introductions were made. Apologies received from: Shirley McHardy, Nigel Brett Young, Barbara Watson, Denise Friel, and Steve Robertson.		
2. <u>Minutes of Meeting of 28 August 2008.</u> The minutes were proposed by Andy Mackay, seconded by Frances Gunn, and accepted as a true record.		
3. <u>Matters Arising.</u> a. <u>Minutes to Community Councils.</u> In clarification of discussion at the last SPCDF, it was agreed that SP Community Development Forum minutes should be sent out to Sutherland Community Councils in draft, as soon as they had been cleared by SPCDF chair. b. <u>Phone Boxes.</u> HC had vetoed the closure by BT of all but a few phone boxes across Sutherland (and Highland). Most Sutherland responses to the HC consultation had come from SP, through the VGES Surveymonkey survey. Good result. c. <u>Motor Fuel.</u> VGES and CVS North are collaborating on a survey on fuel costs, which has been broadened to include domestic fuel costs. d. <u>Village Hall Seminar.</u> This took place in Durness in September, and was a great success. Key messages: diversify, don't copy; "pick your shots" to make best use of funding cycles; LEADER will not fund simple refurbishment, only upgrades in accordance with LEADER key themes; wider SRDP programme, although complex, is promising. VGES will stage a similar hall event in East Sutherland in the spring. e. <u>Community Care Forum Reform.</u> Noted that although CCF funding is still not secured (is actually overdue) Christian Goskirk's former post has been advertised.		WS
4. <u>ESVAS to ESCAB.</u> Richard Gale briefed on the move from East Sutherland Village Advice Service (formerly part of VGES) to East Sutherland Citizens' Advice Bureau (a company in its own right, and a member of CAS who has given ESCAB probationary CAB status). Charitable status had been sought last April, and had taken a long time. Citizen's Advice Scotland (CAS) will consider East Sutherland's bid for full CAB status in January. Potential benefits of belonging to CAS are huge: e.g.: training; support; financial resources. ESCAB's aim is to empower vulnerable people. It is completely independent, despite its current SLA from the Highland Council. Advice sought largely concerns money; personal		

<p>relationships; benefits; housing; or community matters. Specialist advice is available from the ESCAB Welfare Rights Officer or Money Advice Officer. In total, ESCAB has 5 paid staff and 11 volunteers. Uptake of ESCAB services has increased by 10% in each of two successive quarter years - testament to CAB's reputation and the difficult times we live in. Moves are afoot for the North and West Sutherland Advice and Information Service to follow ESCAB's lead into the CAB network.</p>	
<p>5. <u>Older People for Older People.</u> Kate Stephen briefed on the work of this new initiative, shortened to "O4O". This EU Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) project, being run in several northern EU countries, is exploring and seeking to combat the common issues which older people face which stem from rurality. Older people want to stay involved in their communities, and are well able to contribute positively to their communities (by volunteering, for example) and not be a burden. O4O's approach stresses the need for all age groups to work together.</p> <p>In Sutherland, the two areas being targeted are Tongue and Assynt. Tongue's key issue is transport, and Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust is seeking funding to buy a small wheelchair-accessible vehicle. It was agreed that free travel for older people should be extended to community transport, since bus passes are virtually useless in many parts of Sutherland. <i>[pmn issue will soon be taken up by SP Transport Group.]</i></p> <p>Assynt's priority is the establishment of a residential care home to accommodate elderly local people who can no longer live in their own home to still stay in their local area. Current HC care home facilities are underused because they are Monday to Friday only. Some sheltered housing is unoccupied because it does not attract occupants. Ronnie Lansley suggested that the recent Silverwood Report could make interesting reading on the care for the elderly issue.</p> <p>Sustainability is O4O's aim: O4O hopes to support these communities to identify services for older people which can be developed throughout the duration of the project and beyond in the long term and after the end of O4O.</p> <p>Following an animated question and answer session, Ann Keatinge thanked Kate, who then left the meeting.</p>	
<p>6. <u>LEADER Programme Update.</u> Fiona Cameron, CS&ER LEADER Development Officer, briefed on progress of the new LEADER funding programme. This will provide £14.26m, (LEADER £6.76m and Convergence £7.5m) Grant rates for year 1 are a standard rate of 40% and a higher rate of 45% if 45% of public match funding is provided. The LEADER/Convergence amount for Sutherland is £1,024,957 over the four years to 2013 - a very worthwhile sum. A "shadow round" for applications which have all match funding in place has been introduced, and deadline for applications is 8 December. LEADER's formal launch is in Strathpeffer on 11 December, and SP will receive invitations to attend. <i>[pmn: delegates are Robbie Rowantree and William Sutherland.]</i> In discussion, there was mention of the SNH match-funded environmental fund, and the need for a simpler LEADER application form than those of previous LEADER rounds.</p>	
<p>7. <u>Ward Forums - the Story so Far.</u> Phil Tomalin and Andy Mackay briefed on the new Ward Forums, which are working well on a range of fronts. The forums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bring prominent speakers to Sutherland; • permit in-depth briefing on important issues, using "themed meeting" methodology; • keep councillors and officials apprised of communities' current concerns, and permit discussions of these; • serve as a useful medium for showcasing new initiatives (e.g. Highland LEADER) • enjoy a high degree of support from Sutherland community councils. <p>In questions, Ronnie Lansley commented that much less seemed to appear in the press than in the days of the former Area Committee. He regretted that, and the loss of decision-making powers in Sutherland. Andy replied that the new forums do provide good information flow about new developments, and so permit community scrutiny and comment. It was agreed that a future SPCDF should review Ward Forum progress in due course.</p>	<p>WS</p>
<p>8. <u>Sutherland Summit.</u> Ronnie Lansley and Frances Gunn briefed the meeting. Organisation for this exciting event is progressing. Two Scottish ministers have confirmed attendance: Jim Mather and Mike Russell. Ministerial availability is driving the decision on the event date, but a Monday in late April or early May looks favourite and the likeliest venue is Lairg. Some key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event will be based around community inputs rather than a "top-down" or agency-driven event, so Ronnie and Frances will "trawl" for topics in advance once date fixed; • Organisers will seek to identify synergies between current and planned projects in various parts of the county; 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it will also be a key output to articulate “next steps” as a key output of the summit. In discussions, it was emphasised that the summit’s “output focus” is consistent with the Single Outcome Agreement’s requirement of all sectors working in partnership - private, public, community and voluntary. Andy Mackay also highlighted the synergy of the summit with Highland LEADER, including our LEADER Development Plan for Sutherland. Summing up, chairman Ann Keatinge stressed the great importance of the summit event. 	
<p>9, 10, 13. <u>Update from SP and Linked Forums / Highland Compact./ Voluntary Sector Issues.</u> Owing to pressure of time, these items were held over.</p>	
<p>11, 12. <u>Lifelong Learning Issues /Youth Matters.</u> In clarification of the last meeting minutes, Lawrence Jamieson stressed that 3 of the 4 Sutherland youth workers are part time. Sadly, there is a job freeze on HC CLD vacant posts, of which there are several. Efforts continue to energise Sutherland’s integrated learning communities, involving partner organisations and building on the community analysis which was carried out last year. CLD inspections will stress the importance of partnership working, and the impact on lives. Barbara Watson’s Learning Centre Network brief was distributed - see Annex A to these minutes.</p>	
<p>11. <u>AOCB.</u> William Sutherland mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the recent Sutherland Partnership pressure against any increase in VHF bandwidth charges to voluntary lifesaving organisations, which appeared to have been successful; his call on Jamie Stone MSP later this week. He offered to relay any delegate concerns to Jamie. <p>Ann Keatinge mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a list of possible funding opportunities will be sent out with the next VGES e-bulletin; the following evening’s VGES AGM in Golspie Golf Club. 	
<p>12. <u>DONM.</u> Dates were set for all the SPCDF meetings of 2009. At 1030 on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 19 February Thursday 28 May Thursday 3 September Thursday 26 November 	All

Signed on original

W M SUTHERLAND
Sutherland Partnership Manager, Secretary SP Community Development Forum

Annex A to Minutes of
SPCDF 20 November 2008

SUTHERLAND LEARNING NETWORK UPDATE.

The learning centres are in their first term CLD classes and have new students for their Basic Skills courses and 1-1 tuition.

The NWTC’s course “Get IT”, a basic IT course covering mobile ‘phones and digital cameras as well as computers, is very full and in the other centres the demand for 1-1 tuition and support in doing FE courses is stretching staff resources. In Lairg and Brora the Adult Basic Education tutors help in basic skills tuition but there is a shortage of ABE tutors at the moment and a recruitment drive is planned for the New Year.

Brora Learning Centre has started running a second session of Highland Lives in partnership with Learndirect Scotland and thereafter will run the pilot of the confidence building course being developed there. It is hoped that this course might attract Leader funding for the network.

Assynt Leisure is reviving an old craft in its Beginners’ Knitting class while Lairg students have produced key rings, Christmas cards and calendars through IT. There is always a demand for creative classes.

Staff from Lairg Learning Centre visited Alladale Estate and have enrolled four Polish workers on an English course. Lairg has specific funding for ESOL courses and currently has 14 students, and other centres are also catering for non-English speakers.

The next meeting of the Learning Network will be held in January.