

Assynt Resilience Group

Assynt Development Trust, Assynt Community Council
Community Care Assynt, Connect Assynt working together

Minutes of Zoom meeting held at 5:00pm Monday 15th March 2021

Present: Willie Jack, Sarah-Ann MacLeod ADT, Bill Wardley Smith CCA, Liam Taylor ACC, Jane Young, CA, Observing: Adam Pellant & Ewen McLachlan ADT
Apologies: David Slator

Any conflicts of interest? None

1. Communities Recovery Fund (CRF) / Sutherland Helping Hands Support scheme (SHHSS)
WJ gave the background to the Sutherland Helping Hands Support scheme (funded through the CRF) which is being administered by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (KOSDT). WJ & WWS held a Zoom meeting on 10th March with Beth Simco and Val Houston at KOSDT to clarify how Assynt residents would be to access the CRF resource for Food & Fuel needs. The Sutherland wide scheme is not available to residents of parishes, such as Assynt, which have access to their own schemes, unless the individual schemes run out of resources before the Sutherland scheme does. It was agreed that if any Assynt resident approached SHHSS for help they would be referred on to the Assynt Resilience Group.

The Sutherland scheme is able to provide households with financial support for food and fuel. Help to the value of £250 per household is available on a first come first served basis; there is no means testing, and no cash grants are given but the Fund can make payments for any type of fuel and food directly to the provider/ supplier.

WWS told the meeting what has happened with the first three referrals: 1. Single man needing help with electricity - £100 topped up on pre-payment key. 2. Single Mum and child, needing help with solid fuel - £200 paid for a delivery of coal. 3. Family of two parents and three young children – needed help with solid fuel - £285 paid to supplier for delivery to the house. WWS also advised that in addition to this there were six food parcels delivered this week, twice as many as last week.

LT felt that the help offered by ARG should be tailored to peoples needs. WWS said that he was happy to talk to clients and the presence of the food bank helps a lot. Being flexible is the key to meeting peoples needs. JY felt that WWS had the skills, experience and gravitas and was the best person to do the job. WJ said that he felt that with food and fuel poverty that the ARG needed to act fast hence this meeting being called. In discussion WWS said he felt that a blanket £250 per household irrespective of household or needs wasn't flexible enough. JY asked if people came to ARG for help and support, were they able to come back and ask for more help. WWS said yes they were, but he had been advising people not to leave it too late. WJ advised that if there were funds remaining, that the scheme could run till May 31st. LT asked if the ARG could have a poster publicised just for Assynt – EM volunteered to produce one. LT asked how the scheme could help those who had contracts for electricity, oil or gas – WJ replied that credits can be made to the households' online energy accounts. LT asked if for smaller amounts we consider using local suppliers for logs and coal and the meeting agreed that we should do this where possible. It was agreed to review the Fund at the next meeting.

2. **Next meeting: Monday 29th March 2021 5:00pm**