Fortrose & Rosemarkie Community Council

Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 7pm by **Zoom**

Minutes

Item		Action by
1	**Welcome and Apologies** Committee: Theo Stratton (Chair) TS; Jo-Anne Pugh (Sec) JP; Anne Phillips AP; Heather Alexander HA Ex-Officio: Cllr Lyndsey Johnston LJ Associate Member: Ann Jefferson AJ Residents: Susan Munro SM Apologies: Bob Latimer (Treasurer) BL; Kerry Ward KW	
2	**Minutes of the Last Meeting** With a typographical correction, the draft minutes were approved. Proposed AP, seconded HA.	
3	**Co-option of Member** SM was nominated as a co-opted member of FRCC. Proposed AP, seconded JP. Agreed unanimously by a vote of eligible committee members.	
4 4.1	**Matters Arising** Chain of Office: The Library had been suggested as an appropriate location for permanent display. TS said a professional valuation may be necessary. AP to ask the Highland Council (THC) ward manager for valuation advice and to establish who would need to approve a location. If proceeding, JP to ask Black Isle Men's Shed for help producing a secure/ lockable display cabinet, with material paid from request to FRCC/Common Good Fund. LJ noted that, unlike other Highland Royal Burghs, Fortrose no longer has a Provost (a ceremonial figurehead). It was agreed this would be discussed at the next meeting.	AP JP
4.2	Phone boxes: HA said the contract to take over the historic K6 phonebox in Fortrose High Street has been completed by TS. BL to action £1 payment required. It is understood BT will supply appropriate paint but volunteers will be needed to apply it. Discussion on how to engage the community regarding future use at the next meeting.	BL
4.3	St Boniface Fair debrief: AP has circulated notes. Positive feedback, with a desire for the number of stalls to increase (although records show similar numbers pre-Covid). Next year's date is set for 1/8/26. Seeking to engage the wider community eg churches, schools,	

4.4 4.5 4.6 4.7	Beavers, Cubs. Checking if amplification is possible for opening speech and possible schedule of events with timings. Historic Environment Scotland will be asked what restrictions there are for activities within the Cathedral grounds. SM has written to thank individuals and businesses for donations to the bottle stall. SM to provide information for HA to thank on Facebook. AP to set a date for the next steering group meeting. <u>Fortrose Fun Day</u>: 6/9/25. 11am start on St George's Field. TS on site to open up shed for football club and help with stall set up. JP to deliver FRCC stall material to TS. SM on site 1030 and HA from 1100, plus AP to assist on stall. <u>Website</u>: HA has replicated existing material on the new site. It was agreed it would "go live" as soon as possible. HA to action. FRCC thanked HA for her continuing hard work on the project. It was agreed that a photograph competition to produce images for use on the site would be discussed at the next meeting. <u>Marine Terrace/Overflow car park</u>: No further update, but LJ confirmed that THC was actively looking at the location suggested by FRCC. LJ to monitor and update. LJ confirmed that she had contacted THC team looking at tourist hotspots (and who are responsible for the automatic visitor counters installed at the Point), and suggested that they liaised with CPAG members for insight and expertise regarding Chanonry Point and tourist provision. <u>Janitor's House, Fortrose</u>: LJ is seeking answers re future use, and has requested that the overgrown garden is at least cut back. LJ requests FRCC to monitor latter. AJ asked about an unoccupied council house on Fortrose High Street. It was noted it was in a poor state of repair and the garden overgrown. TS to provide addres for LJ to investigate and request garden is cut back. A privately-owned house on the High Street backing onto Cathedral Square is also in a very poor state of repair. LJ to make enquiries re what, if any, council action could be taken to improve appearance.	SM/HA AP TS/JP SM/HA/AP HA LJ ALL TS/LJ LJ
5 5.1	**Points from the Public** <u>Co-op Community champion meeting</u>**:** Paul McPherson (PP), Community and Member Participation officer for the Co-Op in the Highlands, had made contact, and JP, along with representatives from Rosemarkie Amenities Association (RAA) and Regenerate Our Green Space (ROGS) had met him to discuss ways in which the organisation could offer support in kind. It might, for example, be possible for them to donate food for the next	

 5.2 5.3	senior's afternoon tea. PP agreed to find out when the local store was due to close for refurbishment, for how long, and whether a temporary "pop up" store might supply emergency basic items during that time. JP to liaise. <u>Himalayan Balsam - Fairy Glen quarry site</u>: FRCC had been alerted to the presence of this highly-invasive non-native species. Residents had uprooted it from accessible areas but more plants were seen on private land behind fencing. It has been reported to THC and RSPB. JP had sent a letter to the last known business address of the current owner and had contacted the agent (named in a recent planning application) asking the owner to take action as soon as possible. <u>Bins - Rosemarkie Churchyard</u>: AP said that, disappointingly, even though bins were being put out, rubbish was still not being collected. AP to email LJ with details for LJ to chase THC waste management team.	JP AP/LJ
6	**Treasurer's Report** In BL's absence, TS presented the monthly summary. The combined bank balance as of 31 August was £6,144.94. The St Boniface Fair net proceeds were £799.00 minus outstanding payments to musicians and drivers. BL to process. JP to chase promised Common Good money for St Andrew's Steps project handrail.	BL JP
7 7.1	**Community Issues/Consultations** <u>Common Good consultation</u>**:** TS reminded meeting that the deadline was 29/9/25 for THC disposal of leases for Rosemarkie Camp Site and the Golf Club car park. He said that he was aware that a flyer had been produced under the aegis of FRCC and that some copies had been distributed. He reminded members that any letter or flyer produced by a sub-committee MUST be agreed by FRCC before it is distributed, whether on paper or online. He stressed that it was important for FRCC to get this right. To that end, he had requested more information from Lynn Bauermeister (LB), the ward manager, and the Common Group officer at THC (responses to be circulated to members by TS via JP). In summary from LB: Commercial sensitivities restrict what can be shared. For assets of this type, standard market practice is a 10-30 year lease to allow investment and improvements, to allow access to external financing, to secure a predictable income for the Common Good through structured rent reviews, and to reduce the risks of voids, downtime and higher management costs associated with re-lets. A five-year lease is too short.	JP

	THC Highland Council Common Good Fund Policy defines guiding principles: funds are handled with integrity, and in a manner that is transparent, accountable and fair. Funds are allocated, as far as reasonably possible, against essential expenditure and essential upkeep first with any surplus being applied for discretionary expenditure with regard to the interests of the residents within the boundaries of the former burgh. From Common Good officer: Regarding site notices: Guidance states the details may be published in such a way as the local authority may determine. FRCC and other community bodies informed timeously, providing a consultation poster to HighLife Highland for leisure centre, library and town hall, press notice, THC website and a "planned PR/social media communications" week of 15/9/25 (TS to clarify this). SM noted that no posters were on the noticeboards or on display in the Library/Leisure Centre. SM and AP said that notices had not been put up near the site eg on lamp posts. TS noted that THC says it can decide not to. TS said the responses above, from the ward manager and the Common Good officer, addressed some concerns in the draft letter produced by the working group. SM said that references to future capital investment and improvements must be included in any agreement, but the sub-group's FOI indicated that these decisions were a matter for the leaseholder and its business plan. Nor was it merely a matter of THC consulting on the disposal of the lease; the consultation should be on whether the sites should continue to be used for their current purposes. TS said FRCC has three options - to agree to THC proposals, to amend, or to reject. LJ said that THC had carried out the necessary publicity via press, social media etc and that people were sending in responses. She said that a consultation costs in the region of £3k per time, and that money will come from the Common Good fund. She noted that Common Good custodians - the elected ward councillors - are obliged as their primary duty, to protect the Common Good Fund. She observed that it was vital to maximise revenue to provide money for essential matters, such as local coastal defence work. Responses to the consultation will be considered, and the final proposal, drafted by council officers, will go before the Black Isle Committee for approval on 10/11/25. SM said she was sure that everyone present wanted what was best for the community but that might mean exploring alternative uses for the camp site, for example. LJ said that all the ward councillors realised that the leases needed to represent	TS

better value in future. She believed that the sums secured from the Camping and Caravanning Club (CCC) - for the right to negotiate exclusively and ongoing rent were sizeable and represented best value. JP asked if any improvements to the camp site had been stipulated as part of a deal. LJ said that the lease will include clear provisions to carry out upkeep, compliance and maintenance. A longer lease allows for capital expenditure and ongoing improvements. SM said the site had been used for camping for decades but there had been little investment for the benefit for the wider community, such as improved disabled access to the beach. It would be good if this could be part of the negotiation. TS said there was no obligation on behalf of the site to do so. SM said she was disappointed that these matters were “down to the operator”. It appeared to be a very swift “rollover agreement” with a rent adjustment, all highly beneficial to the tenant. The lack of public information had caused resentment. LJ said that if the lease was put out to tender, the lease premium would be forfeited and there was likely to be a void period, with no Common Good income, before a new tenant was installed. A new operator would require planning permission, licences etc. She said the site had been used for camping from before planning permission, as a concept, existed. SM said that the proposal amounted to an extension, and that was outwith the legislation. LJ said that the process and agreement had been reviewed by THC legal services. The ward councillors would be presented with an agreement drafted by THC and to reject it would go against the recommendation of council officers, which is a significant step. AJ said that she too was disappointed by the lack of wider consultation and the apparent lack of options. JP said that as far as she was aware, the camp site had never presented a problem to local residents and that the CCC ran a highly-regulated site eg no fires, responsible pet ownership, noise/vehicle movement restrictions, and that in her opinion, they were good tenants. If there was a change of use, and it was no longer a campsite, motorhomes and caravans would likely pose a major problem around the area. HA said she saw the benefit of continuing with existing reliable tenants in terms of keeping legal costs etc down. She asked if the proposed five-yearly rent reviews were protected from market fluctuations ie the rent would either be the existing rent or the market rent, whichever was the greater. LJ said that regular rent reviews were built into the new lease. HA said she understood that until now both site leaseholders had paid peppercorn rents. She understood

	that details of the new proposed amounts were confidential but asked LJ that, when the figures were made public, would she and her fellow ward councillors be proud of the agreement? LJ said that she would be “bowled over”. She could not give numbers, but said that CCC had handed over their accounts for inspection to ensure a commercial rate was charged this time. SM thanked LJ for coming to the meeting with useful information. TS asked if anyone wished to comment on the Golf Club. There were no comments. TS said that the draft letter prepared by the sub-committee would need revision in the light of this discussion. Actions were agreed as follows: TS/LJ to ensure notices go up in Library and Leisure Centre. TS to draft a FRCC response to THC for both proposals: Requesting THC consults Place Plan over tourism concerns relating to the area. Requesting improved beach access/commitment to coastal protection. Recommending improvement/maintenance of public access/footpath/rights of way on the sites. Requesting the community be consulted on any significant changes to the sites. Proposing the inclusion of Key Performance Indicators, with benchmarking as part of the five-yearly rent review. Requesting publication of market rent and relevant details as soon as possible, taking into account commercial sensitivities. To reflect the diversity of opinion within the community over THC’s approach to the statutory consultation, but noting the unity of purpose in seeking the best outcome for the community, and protection and maximisation of Common Good funds for use within the area. HA proposed that a new flyer be produced with a targeted message inviting residents to share their views with THC and FRCC. AP said that she had prepared two possible versions. JP noted that there had been a very low level of engagement so far, despite an invitation in the latest mailout and via the FRCC facebook page. TS questioned the reach of paper-based consultations. AP noted that previous flyers had had a good response. TS said any flyer needs to be fact-based and non-partisan, encouraging responses. HA to draft a flyer, with QR code and postal address, suggesting responses are sent direct to THC by 29/9/25 and/or to FRCC by 20/9/25, with similar publicity on Facebook and FRCC mailing list. SM highlighted the lack of information provided by THC eg FOI response and said she had a better understanding	TS/LJ TS HA/JP

          7.2	of the situation in the light of LJ's comments. JP to liaise with LJ for simple written answers for FAQs which can be provided for residents. It was agreed that a flyer would be produced by HA, distributed for comments, and when approved by FRCC, delivered/put on noticeboards asap. TS to revise draft response for discussion at emergency FRCC meeting week commencing 22/9/25, allowing for examination of responses and to ensure it was lodged with THC by deadline of 29/9/25. THC Winter Resilience programme: Discussion deferred to next meeting.	 JP/LJ HA TS
8 8.1 8.2	**Planning** Wester Green Gates property: dormer windows. No comment. Amendments to Greenside Street housing, Rosemarkie: TS to check application and linked FRCC response.	 TS
9	**Licensing** None arising.	
10	**Police Report** Not received for a second month. TS to attend Police Scotland/Community Council meeting on 30/9/25.	 TS
11 11.1 11.2 11.3 11.4	**Community Groups/Meetings** ROGS/Tidy Up: TS thanked volunteers who helped with the St Andrews path tidy up. The next session is jointly with Avoch and Killen Community Council, tackling the Avoch end of the Railway Line path on Saturday 13/9 and Sunday 14/9 from 10am-1pm. Volunteers needed. ROGS AGM 30/9/25 at the Sailing Club. CPAG (Chanonry Point Action Group): TS confirmed that he has asked THC to remove the abandoned boat. Regarding water safety signs, AJ said that the RNLI had given advice directly to THC some time ago. Details had not been shared with FRCC and no action had been taken. TS to liaise with LJ to identify who had this information and what action THC might therefore take. LJ said that she had attempted to get signs erected indicating the lack of toilets at the Point but had had a disappointing response from THC officials. It was felt that FRCC needed to push for this, and demonstrate continuing extreme concern at people toileting behind bushes at the site. TS to draft (with AJ assistance) and send to LJ. See also 4.6 above. Gordon Memorial Hall AGM: TS and AP attended. Black Isle Community Councils/Place Plan meeting: October date tbc for BICC meeting. Initial meeting of	 TS/LJ TS/AJ/LJ

  11.6 11.5	Place Plan steering group due to meet 10/9/25. AP to attend. Rosemarkie and Fortrose Trust (RAFT) AGM: AP attended. RAFT, which operates the two villages' public toilets, continues to operate at a deficit and is reliant on fund-raising. The trust is keen to recruit another trustee. Black Isle Men's Shed: Burgh furniture restoration update. Deferred to next meeting.	
12 12.1 12.2	**Any Other Business** Cigarette butt boxes: The boxes installed by FRCC need emptying regularly, and some minor refurbishment to make them easier to close. Volunteers sought to help AJ on a regular basis. JP to approach Young Councillors and include in next mailout. HA to publicise on Facebook. Benches: Deferred to next meeting.	 JP/HA
13	**Date of Next Meeting** 7pm Wednesday 1 October 2025. (Interim meeting to discuss and finalise Common Good consultation response week commencing 22/9 date tbc asap).	 TS