



## CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of meeting held  
on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 7.30pm  
in the Bonar Bridge Hall**

**Present:** Pete Campbell, Chair (PC), Russell Taylor, Treasurer (RT), Russell Smith (RS), Norman MacDonald (NM), John White (JW)

**Secretary:** Mary Goulder (MG)

**Invited guests:** Gavin Steel and John Henderson of SSE

**Also present:** Ron Boothroyd (RB), PC Angus Morrison

**Apologies:** Claire Bruce, Vice Chair, (CB) Brian Coghill (BC), Sandy Chalmers (SC), Lily Byron (LB), Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), post meeting Sally Williams (SW)

**Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above) /Police report.** PC Morrison arrived as the meeting began. Of the incidents reported in the last calendar month very few were of note. One domestic, two road traffic accidents, three road traffic offences, one theft, one drug offence and two breaches of the peace. All of these were considered minor offences. Dornoch and Tain police stations are the only two locally which are manned by receptionists during office hours. Telephone calls via the local numbers or the new 101 national number will be routed appropriately and local officers will still attend if required. With the thanks from CC members for the regular attendance by a police officer, PC Morrison left at 7.35pm.

**Item 2.SSE presentation.** Gavin Steel led the presentation with regard to the upgrading of the power lines from Dounreay to Beaully and the development of a new sub-station at Loch Buidhe. Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission is the network division which deals with this countrywide operation of the industry with SHE Distribution dealing with the local network provision. Phase One of this project is the upgrading to modern standards and the development of the main transmission system, replacing old conductors and adding new additional ones on the towers over the length of the line. These are now fully installed on the east side of the line. Phase Two deals with the installation of two new sub-stations, at Fyrish and Loch Buidhe, which will provide a more secure linked network better able to cope with service provision and outages. The Loch Buidhe site was identified as the most favourable in the area in 2011, with Planning Application being submitted in November 2012 the result of which is pending.

Detailed information was provided regarding the layout of the sub-station with regard to its position within the forestry plantation and lengthy discussion covered the access and infrastructure plans. The existing Bonar Bridge to Loch Buidhe single track road is adopted by The Highland Council (THC) Roads Authority. SSE is liaising with THC Roads TEC Services to develop: (i) pre-works upgrades; (ii) construction upkeep; and (iii) residual measures. It is hoped to extend the extent of existing winter gritting. Strong concerns were raised regarding road improvements; it was stressed that any such must be maintained after construction is complete unlike previous local experience when roadways were returned to their earlier width after windfarm construction was completed. The aim is to have a 4 metre width of road with frequently spaced passing places to reduce verge damage. John Henderson stated that SSE was working with both Highland Council and Scottish Water, which has a treatment plant on the same road, to ensure a lasting improvement to all sections relevant to their development. SSE is pro-actively consulting with Scottish Water on the interfaces between the projects – and investigating the potential for collaborative working on the key section of the route between the Bonar Bridge Water Treatment Works and Loch Buidhe. Subject to projects gaining consents and funding approval SSE is exploring the opportunity to carry out

## Draft Minutes for approval

advanced enabling works in conjunction with Scottish Water pipe-laying activities in 2014/15. The Wayleaves and Estates Team is in the process of discussing proposed PRI works with landowners and tenants along the route from Bonar Bridge to Loch Buidhe. It is hoped to keep disruption to a minimum and dedicated traffic plan will be developed with the contractor accordingly. Local information will be made available. A pilot scheme with Inverness College has 20 -30 young people learning basic skills, for example as transmission linesmen, as there is a recognised shortage of the specialised skills. It is hoped to extend the pilot scheme after fine tuning to a higher number of participants over a wider range of areas. SSE has a policy to ensure that main contractors will sub-contract to local businesses whenever possible. The 'Community at Heart' scheme within SSE allows employees one day a year to work on community projects bringing their specialist skills to bear if appropriate. As a regulated business this division of the industry is forbidden to give goodwill gestures such as the community benefit funds operated by the renewables division but indirect benefits, such as road improvements etc, will always be considered favourably. After a brief question and answer session Gavin and John left the meeting at 8.35pm.

**Item 3. Minutes of February meeting/matters arising (not on the agenda).** The minutes of the February meeting were approved, as being a true and accurate record; proposed by Norman MacDonald; seconded by John White. It was agreed that the amendments suggested by Ruth Liddicoat of SSE should be added to the Minutes of Item 2. **MG Action. (1) Carbisdale Castle.** No further communication from SYHA. Pete has discussed the problems with Lachlan Stewart, a local expert architect specialising in castle renovations, and will follow up on this. **PC Action. (2) Balblair woods parking at Invershin.** The application to the Highland Council Ward Discretionary Budget has been submitted. Grateful thanks to Ward Manager Andy Mackay were expressed for his invaluable help with the application procedure. **(3) Information pamphlet re Community Benefit Funds.** PC has still to do this. **PC Action. (4) 'Slow Down' signs/double white lines at Invershin.** No reply has been received from Simon Young at Highland Council. Cllr Farlow could be asked to enquire further. **GF Action.**

### Item 4. Regular updates:

- (i) **Planning & licensing.** (RS). Nil of note.
- (ii) **TEC Services.** (SC) By email SC had advised that the application to the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund has been completed with regard to setting up an environmental improvement fund which would be utilised to cover costs of work to the cycle path, tidying up of the western approach to Bonar Bridge, the flower displays and other appropriate projects. The clear fell at Craggan Dhu has begun, opening up the forest entrance and visual approach to Bonar Bridge.
- (iii) **Financial report.** (RT) Russell passed round the current bank statement showing a balance in the Treasurer's account of £1362.34 with the Rock by Sea account standing at £6,633.00.
- (iv) **Spinningdale.** (SW) Nothing in Sally's absence.
- (v) **Police matters.** (NM) See Item 1 above.
- (vi) **Environmental/health.** (?) Nothing - no CC rep has this responsibility at present.
- (vii) **Youth.** (KS) Nothing in Kay's absence.
- (viii) **Education/schools.** (LB) Nothing in Lily's absence.
- (ix) **KOSDT.** (PC) Projects currently being managed by the Board as they await confirmation of funding to begin advertising the Development Officer post. A new application will be made to the People & Communities Fund. Highland Leader is undergoing internal audit/ restructure, delaying any payments for six months.
- (x) **Rosehall.** (JW/LB) Nothing relevant.
- (xi) **Invershin.** (SC) Nothing other than the Balblair Wood parking. See Item 3(2).
- (xii) **Highland Councillor's report.** Nothing in GF's absence.

**Item 5. Broadband in Rosehall.** (RB) Ron quoted from recent emails from BT and government which state that the Rosehall exchange will only ever be capable of delivering 0.5Mbps. Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) has secured funding from Scottish Government to finance the roll out of

## Draft Minutes for approval

what is hoped to be a significant improvement for small communities in some remote areas. An announcement of where and what this will entail is expected by the end of March. However, under European rules the Scottish Government will never be able to upgrade exchanges like Rosehall beyond 2Mbps. This would leave broadband users wishing to improve to speeds beyond that the two options of making individual arrangements or setting up a community led system. The latter would require canvassing of local businesses and residents to ascertain opinion and the desire to work with such a system. Ron would be willing to take this forward with the full support of the community in a co-ordinated effort. It was agreed that no action would be taken until the HIE announcement makes clear the position at the end of the month. In the meantime it was suggested that Ron be co-opted as an Associate Member of the CC with Broadband in Rosehall as his remit. Proposed by Pete Campbell and seconded by John White, Ron accepted the co-option.

**Item 6. Carbisdale Castle.** See Item 3 (1) above.

**Item 7. Ronnie McNeill's presentation.** Collection boxes have been placed in the Kyle Bakery, the Bonar Bridge Post Office and Matheson and MacLeod's butcher shop. No further plans made as yet.

**Item 8. Guidelines for Beinn Tharsuinn.** After circulation of the guidelines with the most recent proposed amendments shown in red and purple, approval was given to this format with the agreement to revisit the subject once a year in future to accommodate any changes in circumstances.

**Item 9. Beinn Tharsuinn community benefit applications.** There were no applications to discuss. Once the official paperwork is received from Phil Tomalin regarding the CC's own application with regard to the environmental fund (See Item 4 (ii)) the Secretary will formally advise him of the approval of the award. **MG Action.**

**Item 10. Windfarms.** E.ON has identified a site at **Dalchork** from those on offer from the Forestry Commission. John White advised that noise levels from **Achany/Rosehall** windfarms remain constantly identifiable but only in exceptional weather conditions do they breach the regulations.

**Item 11. Community Council notice board.** RT has retrieved the notice board and has commissioned new glass for it after which it will be re-sited on the wall of the Library building.

**Item 12. Correspondence.** A letter of thanks has been received from the Christmas Lights Committee – passed to NM. A document referring to the Highland Council's insurance scheme which covers this CC was passed to RT.

**Item 13. Any other competent business.** By email Lily had expressed further concern regarding the lack of transport for Rosehall and the apparent inability of the Dial-a-Bus service to provide a service which in any way meets the needs of the community. The CC members would support any scheme which could be devised by the Rosehall community should ideas be forthcoming. A suggestion of a twice weekly funded taxi run was put forward. Monies for a workable plan could be sought from windfarm community benefit funds.

**Item 14. Date, time and place of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Rosehall Village Hall. MG to book the room. **MG Action.**

Meeting closed at 9.35 pm.