



CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of meeting held
on Tuesday 19th August 2014 at 7.30pm
in the Rosehall Village Hall**

Present: Pete Campbell, Chair (PC), Sandy Chalmers, Vice Chair (SC), Russell Taylor, Treasurer (RT), Russell Smith (RS), John White (JW), Ron Boothroyd (RB), Norman MacDonald (NM)

Also present: Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF), Tommy Agnew, Fire Service representative (TA)

Apologies: Police Scotland, Sharon Ross, Lorraine Askew

Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair Pete Campbell opened the meeting, advising that a representative of Police Scotland had phoned to present apologies and give a brief report. Recent complaints passed via the CC to the police regarding HGV trucks on the Struie have received swift and serious attention. Patrol cars are operating on the route and John Waddell of Yuill & Dodds has advised that he is taking all complaints very seriously and acting on them. The police suggest the CC should consider setting up a 'Drive Safely' scheme, working with the police, the HGV companies, schools and the many local organisations and the general public. The police and the companies were commended on their swift response to the recent complaints and the public is encouraged to continue to channel details of such incidents via the CC which will pass on all complaints immediately.

Non-agenda item. Fire Service update. Tommy Agnew attended to update the CC on the current position regarding the Retained Fire Service Station in Bonar Bridge. Fears that the station might be closed in the near future would appear to be unfounded as it is to be equipped with a brand new fire-fighting appliance on the 1st September. This is seen as a vote of confidence in the future of the station. The role of serving firemen stands at seven, three short of the number considered to be the 'safe manning level'. Although the area is well covered with stations at Lairg, Tain and Dornoch, at times staffing levels can be critical especially if more than one call out occurs simultaneously, or a major incident happens. It is hoped that with the arrival of the new appliance a visible recruitment campaign locally will bring forward new recruits to fill the missing places. Anyone aged between 18 and 50 years can apply to join and if accepted would undergo appropriate initial two week training and attend weekly sessions thereafter. Young mothers and those on benefits are asked to consider joining as daytime fire-fighters are the most urgently required. As this is a part-time arrangement fire-fighters are required to live within five minutes of the station in order to be able to meet call-out time targets. After an interesting Q&A session, Tommy was thanked for his update and invited to stay for the rest of the meeting which he did.

Item 3. Minutes July meeting/matters arising (if not on agenda). The Minutes of the July meeting were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by Russell Smith, seconded by John White. **(1) Loch Buidhe transmission line.** GF advised of an internet link to SSE's website where more information is available: <http://www.highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> RS advised that nothing has happen yet regarding the setting up of a liaison group and quoted from an email just received from Sandy Frew which stated that it is planned to start setting up site compounds on the 18th September with works on road improvement currently envisaged to commence at the end of September/early October. A couple of open meetings are being planned in the Bonar Bridge Hall at the beginning of September; meetings continue with local landowners/tenants. A weekly/fortnightly bulletin updating progress on the road improvements and identifying which sections of the road will be affected in which week will be posted in local shops once work begins. RS will liaise with Sandy

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Frew, BAM Nuttall Ltd, reporting back to the CC at the next meeting, or by email meantime if appropriate. **RS Action.**

Item 4. Regular updates:

- (i) **Planning & licensing.** (RS). Nothing relevant.
- (ii) **TEC Services.** (SC) (1) The anti-social behaviour mentioned at the last meeting appears to have decreased. THC Waste Management Team is aware of the problem and will monitor it under their street cleaning remit. (2) The new cattle grid at Craighton is still not installed; more tar was laid on the road around it today. (3) Cycle ramp, Invershin viaduct. THC Road Safety Team has stated that the ramp design should be modified with regard to the cycle wheeling strip position. No reply has been received from Network Rail. This issue has been ongoing for longer than anyone can remember and feelings are running high due to all the unnecessary delays. The original design was previously approved and should be installed. Cllr Farlow was asked to seek positive action urgently; PC will speak to Matt Dent, Project Officer. Both will report back. **GF/PC Action.** (4) Graffiti in the Bonar Bridge toilets was reported and should be removed. (5) Bonar bus shelter. Emails have been received from THC confirming that two new shelters will be erected, one each in Lairg Road and Dornoch Road.
- (iii) **Financial report.** (RT) RT passed round copies of the report which shows a balance of £3,614.94 in the Treasurer's account and £11,133.00 in the Rock-by-Sea (No 2) account. The increase in the No 2 account balance is thanks to the receipt of this year's grant from Mr Charlie Brookes. A letter of appreciation is to be sent to him and further publicity as to the uses of this account is being considered; KOSDT will be consulted. **MG/NM Action.** The Environment Fund balance stands at £846.06 with no expected expenditure in the coming month. RT highlighted a recent problem with email approval having been given to CC outgoing payments but this does not provide a proper paper trail for the accounts. It was agreed that any payment email approvals must be ratified at the first following meeting thereafter in future.
- (iv) **Police Matters.** (NM) Nothing to add to the comments at the start of the meeting.
- (v) **KOSDT.** A recent report from the Development Officer had been circulated. THC Cllrs will now be included in this circulation. **MG Action.** The report covered many activities including the ongoing refurbishment of the Bonar Post Office House, expected to complete in October after which it is hoped to find a suitable tenant for a short assured tenancy. Greening Kyle has established its energy efficiency scheme and is carrying out home visits as requested. Falls of Shin – the Trust continues discussions with Balgown Estate and hopes for an outcome in September with a view to a future facility being established on site. The Big Lunch saw more than 90 people attending; another may be held early next year. Information on other projects is available from the Trust office.
- (vi) **Rosehall.** (JW) Nil of note.
- (vii) **Invershin.** (SC) See Cycle Ramp above, otherwise nothing relevant.
- (viii) **Highland Councillor's report.** (GF) A temporary Ward Manager has been appointed, in post till the end of March 2015. Garry Cameron recently retired from Police Scotland, lives in Golspie but is based in the Service Point in Lairg. THC now has all systems in place to run the electoral proceedings for the Referendum on September 18th. The need for Village Officers in Sutherland, as exist in Caithness and elsewhere, was heavily stressed to Cllr Farlow who will pursue the matter further with THC. **GF Action.**

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- (ix) **Broadband in Rosehall.** (RB) Poor quality reply received from Stuart Robertson, HIE, simply confirming what is already known, that Rosehall and Craigs exchanges remain 'under evaluation' which holds out no hope for an improved service. Public access to the Pathfinder network which runs throughout the region but with restricted access only is the obvious solution to rural areas' problems with internet connections. Without positive action the area could remain without such connections until 2027 or beyond. Up to date and effective communication is essential to the lifeblood of the rural areas if they are to sustain population, businesses, etc. THC must be made to understand that with Pathfinder cabling it holds an easy solution to a multitude of issues and if it remains reluctant to allow its use the very least it can do is send a knowledgeable representative to the CC to discuss the matter fully. Both GF and RB will put pressure on THC to take this matter forward. **GF/RB Action.**

Item 5. Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CASPLAN). (RS/GF) THC teams are working on the next stages of the Plan with an area committee meeting scheduled for 23rd September. GF is willing to meet CC reps on Monday 22nd to discuss the papers which will be before the committee. RS will arrange a meeting in Bonar Hall at 4pm; all CCs wishing to attend will be welcome. **RS Action.**

Item 6. Carbisdale Castle/ Falls of Shin update. Carbisdale. It was felt that little can now be done as the Castle has been placed on the open market. Some interest has apparently been shown but no-one is aware of any serious intentions. The general feeling is that the SYHA is washing its hands of its properties perhaps as it begins to wind down operations.

Non- agenda item. Co-option of new member. As he had remained through the meeting and was actively engaging in discussions, Tommy Agnew was asked to consider co-option to the CC, proposed by Norman MacDonald, seconded by Pete Campbell. With full agreement from CC members, Tommy Agnew accepted the co-option and was welcomed as a CC member. THC will be advised accordingly. **MG Action.**

Item 7. Windfarm updates. Dalchork. A liaison group meeting will be held this month but JW will be unable to attend. **Caplich.** Nothing new. **Airdens.** Awaiting EIA. **Braemore.** Nothing new. It was stressed to GF that the overwhelming local feeling is against this development under any circumstances. GF was asked to ensure that this opinion is clearly communicated to the Planning authorities. **GF Action.**

Item 8. Beinn Tharsuinn community benefit/Rock by Sea Fund applications. BTWF. An application from Greening Kyle for £892 to support foraging workshops and upcycling classes was discussed, the outcome being that the application was refused. It was felt that the proposed courses did not warrant such expenditure by the Fund with there being little or no public benefit or lasting value. **Rock by Sea.** An application by Eilidh Smith for £210 to cover training costs of a Surveying Course which will take her qualifications further was approved. Once qualified Eilidh hopes to work as an independent ecological consultant in the future, based in Sutherland. **MG Action.**

Item 9. Community Council notice board. As still nothing appears to have been done, NM will take possession of the damaged board and find a local tradesman to complete the repair and siting of the notice board. It is expected that this item can be removed from the agenda after the next meeting. **NM Action.**

Item 10 Correspondence. Nil of note.

Item 11. Any other competent business. (1) Service Point. The public must be encouraged to make as much use as possible of the Service Point to stand any hope of retaining the service when it is reviewed.

Item 14. Date, time and place of next meeting. As there is no September meeting, the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 21st October 2014 at 7.30 pm in the Invershin Village Hall. SC to book the room. **SC Action.**

Meeting closed 9.45pm.