



## CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of meeting held  
on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014 at 7.30pm  
in the Invershin Village Hall**

**Present:** Pete Campbell, Chair (PC), Russell Taylor, Treasurer (RT), Sandy Chalmers (SC), Russell Smith (RS), Norman MacDonald (NM), Ron Boothroyd (RB), John White (JW), Lily Byron (LB), Brian Coghill (BC)

**Secretary:** Mary Goulder (MG)

**Invited guests:** Richard Fisher (RF) and Nicola Quinn (NQ), Wind Prospect Developments Ltd

**Also present:** 24 members of the public (listed at end of Minutes)

**Apologies:** Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

**Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above) /Police report.** Chair Pete Campbell welcomed the exceptional turnout, one of the largest numbers of members of the public to attend a CC meeting. With no police representative present, Richard Fisher was invited to make his presentation prior to an open Q&A session regarding the proposed windfarm development at Braemore.

**Item 2. Wind Prospect Development Ltd – Braemore proposal.** RF began by giving a potted history of the preparations leading up to the current situation which finds an addendum to the Planning Application due for consideration by Highland Council (THC) in March. Originally 27 turbines were proposed in 2010. This was reduced to 24 on receipt of public feedback on visual impact concerns. THC Planning Department rejected the application due to landscape impact; this resulted in the removal of the 6 most visible turbines leaving 18 as the number now under consideration. Although no montage display was presented tonight, RF advised that this is available in all of the local Service Points. The addendum was submitted at the end of 2013. If THC rejects the application, a Public Limited Inquiry will be held, in fact that may happen regardless of the THC decision. It is appreciated by the company that the largest visual impact will still be on the Achnahane area but claims that the views from the south and east have been improved. The 3mgw towers will be 80m in height, due to the surrounding forestry, and blades will be 126m to tip. Asked about the distance from the nearest residences, RF stated that Middlehill was situated at 953m, the next at 1319m and then 1443m. This was disputed from the floor as a resident had paced the distance and found it to be 800m which would incur noise levels with which it would be impossible to live, thereby rendering the property unsaleable. It was admitted by Wind Prospect that accepted noise levels at Middlehill will be exceeded at times depending on wind conditions. No turbines have been purchased as yet but the company would seek to buy the most efficient and they would comply with the noise thresholds established within the Planning system. The site was chosen from the list of suggested sites issued by THC and is not affected by Wild Land Policy. From the floor it was pointed out that 'curtailment' does not work to control noise pollution and that monitoring also fails to capture the full effects. RF offered to send details of noise conditions to the CC. RF stated that the noise assessment had been recently revised although members of the public have found no change in the figures which, in the original assessment had left in background noise. Those who already live beside the Achany windfarm confirmed that machine recording of decibel levels does not reflect the actual effect on the human ear and body. Further questions regarding noise levels, wind speed measuring and the length of payback time required to offset the carbon footprint of this development went unanswered. NQ offered to send information regarding payback times to the CC, and while the figure of six months was given many felt that this was unlikely.

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PC expressed the anger felt in the community that the company had failed to engage in any discussions until now, now at the third round of Planning application. RS stated that the CC requested a meeting in 2010 without success. In some areas it is understood that developers are entering into agreements on property values with house owners stating that they will purchase the property if the owners feel unable to live beside their development. Although no-one would wish to be in that position at least the agreement should be in place; homeowners should not have to face such losses. Wind Prospect apparently has no plans for such a procedure. In conclusion RF and NQ were asked to take back to Wind Prospect the overwhelming objection from the local community. On behalf of the company, NQ apologised for the lack of communication and the previous experiences with Wind Prospect; she appreciated that there should have been far more involvement. She will take back details from tonight's meeting and report back to the CC thereafter. RF and NQ left the meeting at 8.45pm.

The issue of the Braemore development was put to the vote; those in favour of the development – none; those against – everyone present at this time. Community Councillor Lily Byron had left the meeting at 8.40pm having expressed her requirement to leave early at the outset of the meeting. The members of the public agreed to leave their names as having been present and that list will appear at the end of these Minutes. The CC objection will be lodged with THC Planning, Scottish Government and Wind Prospect. **MG Action.**

The CC meeting restarted at 8.55pm following a much abridged agenda.

**Item 3. Minutes of November meeting/matters arising.** With no matters arising the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record, proposed by Russell Smith; seconded by Sandy Chalmers.

### **Item 4. Regular updates:**

- (i) **Planning & licensing.** (RS). The proposal for a wind turbine at Airdens has been withdrawn. A planning application has been submitted with a view to convert the Nurses Home at the old Migdale Hospital to a holiday home.
- (ii) **TEC Services.** (SC) JW reported that the postman will no longer deliver mail to Duchally due to the poor condition of the road in Glen Cassley. The cattle grid at the top of Airdens (Craigton Road) has been damaged by heavy lorries. Temporary repairs have been made but further remedial work is required. SC will discuss these issues with John Clark, THC. A pavement survey was suggested due to the poor condition of many pavements in the area. SC will discuss with Helen Houston at KOSDT. **SC Action.**
- (iii) **Financial report.** (RT) Russell passed round figures for the period from 06/04/13 to 18/01/14 showing a balance in the Treasurer's account of £6,835.94. Further details of all accounts available on request. RT expressed his compliments to LB for her handling of the Rosehall Community Transport scheme.
- (iv) **KOSDT.** (PC) Recent report from Development Officer will be circulated. **PC Action.**
- (v) **Invershin.** (SC) The cycle ramp made by Alex Lowe but not yet attached to the railway bridge will have to be paid for regardless of the outcome of further discussions. The sum of £1,400 less fitting charge is outstanding. SC will ask A&DCC to contribute. The ramp is to be an agenda item in February. Creich CC does not agree with what it has heard of the assessment carried out by David Laver for A&DCC. A copy of his report will be requested prior to the February meeting. **SC/MG Action/Agenda item.** Car park at Balblair woods requires further filling in of the surface. SC will contact Waverley Engineering to come back to carry this out. **SC Action.** A suggestion for a temporary alteration to the bus route from Lairg to Bonar Bridge, omitting the Achany Glen section has been suggested as it appears there are no passengers using the service and the road conditions in bad weather make this section difficult for bus drivers. Further public opinion will be sought from those living in the glen and will be discussed at February meeting. **Agenda Item.**
- (vi) **Broadband in Rosehall.** RB has circulated two relevant reports and a questionnaire which could be issued to assess public opinion. He is awaiting replies from Tara Morrison and Ruth Liddicoat regarding further progress.

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**Item 5. Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan.** RS will liaise with GF. **Agenda item.**

**Item 6. Falls of Shin update.** (PC) Meetings have taken place with Balnagown Estate and HIE which raise hopes for some form of community group to operate a facility on the site. A structure could be erected by the Estate, then leased to such a group/ KOSDT. A public meeting is expected.

**Item 7. Beinn Tharsuinn/ Rock by Sea fund applications.** The application by Elizabeth Mellish to the Rock by Sea fund for £250 towards the costs of participating in the Raleigh International ten week expedition to Borneo was approved. On her return Elizabeth is invited to attend a CC meeting and give a brief presentation on her experiences. **MG/RT Action.**

The application by the Kyle of Sutherland Youth Development Group for £828 to help with costs of a screen printing kit was approved. Phil Tomalin, Company Secretary will be advised to arrange payment. **MG Action.**

Two applications from KOSDT, one for £1,080 towards purchase of a multi-function photocopier and one for establishing/running a Coast to Coast race were approved in principal, to be held over until the next tranche of funds is paid in April. Once these awards are paid this money is to be ring-fenced by the KOSDT with a full report given to the CC in due course. Phil Tomalin and KOSDT will be advised. **MG Action.** The Bonar Bridge Primary School Parent Council is to be approached to ascertain if it has indeed secured the match funding required to release the £3,000 award made in principal by the CC in November. **NM Action.**

**Item 8. Community Council notice board.** NM will follow up as to when this can be erected.

**NM Action.**

**Item 9. Correspondence.** In response to a request from the Lord Lieutenant for Sutherland a donation of £50 will be sent via VG-ES in support of the annual flag raising day to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June this year and which will also mark the start of WW1. **RT Action.**

**Item 10. Any other competent business.** None raised due to the curtailing of the agenda.

**Item 11. Date, time and place of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 7.30 pm in the Bonar Bridge Hall. MG to book the room. **MGAction.**

Meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

List of members of the public who attended the Braemore discussion at the start of the CC meeting.

Robert Howden, Linsidecroy  
Phil Robinson, Inveran  
Rona Ross, Linside  
Sally Mackintosh, Inveran  
Alan Lawrence, Strath Kyle  
Colin Gilmour, Altas  
Nigel Baird, Bonar Bridge  
George Johnston, Bonar Bridge  
Angus MacDonald, Invershin  
Graham Lonsdale, Invershin  
Gary Stevenson, Inveran  
Andy Simpson, Linsidecroy

Alan Archer, Linside  
Wendy Robinson, Inveran  
Phil Meldrum, Durcha  
John Mackintosh, Inveran  
Michael Keats, Strath Kyle  
Joan Murray, Bonar Bridge  
Michael Baird, Bonar Bridge  
Nick Harvey, Altas  
Cheryl Connelly, Invershin  
Brenda Lonsdale, Invershin  
Elissa Steven, Inveran  
Ray Campbell, Balblair