



CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of meeting held
on Tuesday 19th April 2022 at 7.30pm
in Bonar Bridge Hall**

Present: Pete Campbell, Chair (PC), Marcus Munro, Vice Chair (MM), Mary Goulder, Secretary (MG), Norman MacDonald (NM), Keith Williams (KW), Rikki Veters (RV), Donna Gilchrist. Treasurer (DG)

Apologies: Russell Smith (RS), John White (JW), Brian Coghill (BC)

Guest speaker: Kate Kenmure, NHS District Manager, Sutherland (KK)

Also present: David Watson, Trust Manager, KoSDT (DW), Deputy Lieutenant Christine Mackay (CM), Caroline McMorran, Northern Times (NT), and nine members of the public

Police representative: None present

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above). Police report. Chair opened the meeting welcoming the larger turnout for the first in person meeting since before March 2020. There was no police report available.

Item 2. Kate Kenmure, NHS Highland re Migdale Hospital. KK introduced herself and indicated her areas of responsibility. Currently also covering Caithness, she manages the community teams, the mental health teams and works within the NHS, with care homes etc and the Sutherland Community Partnership. She has worked with NHS Highland since June 2020 and previously held the position of Lead Midwife and Children's Services. In the pandemic it was not possible to staff the wards at Migdale. Beds were reserved on a contingency basis, should Raigmore and Caithness hospitals become overwhelmed, and this remains the case at present. Various alerts have arisen including a red alert during the recent Covid outbreak last month. Caithness General will be opening more beds as a community hospital facility with only few beds available in Raigmore. Strathy ward staff have continued to provide mental health care in the community and have been involved in training GPs and community nurses in mental health care practice. Various options are being considered for the best use of Migdale with the hope of holding community consultations by the end of the summer. Reassurance was given that the hospital will return to full capacity use as soon as staff and money shortages are addressed. Q & A session with the public covered various aspects including the reopening of physiotherapy and occupational therapy units and perhaps outreach clinics. Admissions are currently based on complete medical and social assessments of patients to ensure the best possible and appropriate care. Discussion covered changing attitudes and best provision of care for dementia cases with a move to greater assistance for patients to remain at home/in the community. Hospital admission is no longer considered the best option in many cases. For younger mental health patients in particular, there is a specialist area unit in New Craigs with admission only when deemed necessary. The service caters for all ages. Chair thanked KK for her very full explanation and confirmed that she and her staff have the full support of the CC.

Item 3. Planet Sutherland update. Item postponed.

Item 4. Minutes of February meeting/matters arising. The minutes of the February meeting, held on Zoom, were approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Norman MacDonald, seconded by Rikki Veters. No matters arising raised.

Item 5. Speed indicator signs Bonar Bridge. MM has still not had a reply from THC to any of his five emails. It is understood that Cllr Currie had chased this in February. Equipment supplier states that he has to deal with THC re installation of permanent signs. Secretary will email Ross Bartlett, THC, urging prompt action. **MG Action.** Chair expressed thanks to Ardgay CC for their lengthy

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actions in achieving the speed reduction to 50mph on the Ardgay straight which is expected to be implemented soon.

Item 6/ Inveran bridge/road update. Last information from THC indicated the ownership of the bridge was still unclear. Secretary will ask Colin Howell for swift action as the bridge is in danger of collapse into the river at any time. People were seen on it recently despite the safety measures in place. **MG Action. Inveran road** Last indication from THC was that the work is scheduled and expected to be carried out before the end of this year. The residents were informed by the CC.

Item 7. Regular updates:

- 1. Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.** (DW) (1) Trust Manager gave a brief update on the Community Bothy, the café. It is estimated that 7,500 locals will benefit this year. Supplies are reduced here due to the Ukrainian crisis. (2) Plans continue regarding the proposed site at South Bonar. Planning decision due 26th April. THC will reject because of the SEPA one in one-thousand-year flood requirements. The site meets the one-in-two-hundred-year figure. The Trust will take this to Scottish Government if required. The 1,000-year figure is not viable. (3) Royal Mail is taking the necessary steps to provide a new post box on the pavement outside the Post Office. Hoped this will be completed in the coming months. (4) Helping Hands funding has been used. Seeking new funding for a bigger and longer lasting project. The cost-of-living crisis here is chronic, exacerbated by current events. (5) Falls of Shin. Background explained as to why the facility has been closed since the last operators went into liquidation. Out of only two applications, one reached preferred bidder status but was withdrawn because of prospective staffing problems – a widespread issue across the country. The Trust is a charity which must not be put risk; previous issues have cost money, for example, opening the toilets for public use last summer. This expenditure cannot be borne again this year. Any constituted group or individual who comes up with a viable business plan would be welcome to discuss it in detail. The securities with the National Lottery, in place since the opening and which have five years to run, mean that the Trust must adhere to all relevant regulations. The National Lottery has appointed an external consultant to examine the possibilities and options. The Trust can only sell the facility if the National Lottery recommends it. It is agreed that a private operator could make it work, though this is not the right economic environment to be starting a new business. The maintenance person will continue to work two days a week, increasing this if it proves possible. The area around the motorhomes' facility was well used and respected last year. Incidents, with evidence, of waste dumping can be reported to the Ranger Service. It is not in the Trust's interests to have the facility closed. The CC referred to many unhelpful comments on social media from ill-informed people and urged locals to refrain. The suggestion that the Trust could run the facility is unworkable as no member has the relevant skills, or the available workforce, to do this. The car park and outdoor facilities will remain accessible. The building is energy efficient but the already rising costs have doubled in the recent times. DW was thanked for taking the time to give such a detailed update.
- 2. Planning & Licensing.** (RS) RS had forwarded all relevant Planning applications.
- 3. TECS.** Dura road, Rosehall. Deep potholes and sunken road in many places; road from Altas to link with the A839 needs to be surfaced as it is now regularly used as a route which saves six miles each way on a trip to Lairg. It has tarmac to Middle Hill but not over the next 600. It is a right of way and should be reassessed for traffic; sightlines at Rosehall bridge are obscured by the newly placed Strategic Timber Fund signs which should be placed elsewhere on the route. **MG Action.**
- 4. Treasurer's report.** (DG) No. 1 account balance stands at £2,610.98 reflecting outgoing payments for secretarial and treasurer services and the annual payment to Zurich Insurance for Public Liability. The No 2 account is unchanged since the last report at £36,457.61. Work is in hand to prepare the end of year figures for auditing and subsequent adoption at the AGM in June.
- 5. Rosehall.** (MM) See TECS.

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6. Invershin. (KW) See Item 6 above.

7. Bonar Bridge. 20mph signs at Bonar Primary are on constantly. **MG Action.**

8. Highland Councillor's report. No report received. Local election on 5th May. Cllr Currie and Cllr Munro have both stood down. Thanks expressed to them for their work for the community in the past years.

Item 8. Windfarm updates. (1) Nothing to report. NM raised the issue of the high cost of electricity in this area, higher than in London. A policy change by the energy industry and Scottish Government is urgently needed to rectify the disgraceful imbalances.

Item 9. Correspondence. Any relevant correspondence had been forwarded. (1) Mid Fearn Distillery. Concerns have been raised regarding this potential development and possible issues of waste being discharged into the Kyle. The development is badly needed and will provide jobs and help the local economy, but this must not proceed at the cost of harm to the environment or the fishing and tourist industries. SEPA and Nature Scot can submit holding objections until meeting the regulations can be ensured. It is surprising that this has not been fully considered already. Most distilleries have addressed this issue and larger ones will deal with waste from smaller distilleries. While avoiding a conflict of interests, KW will monitor on behalf of CC and will report back on relevant developments, as necessary.

Item 10. AOCB. (1) Queen's Green Canopy. CM advised that Bonar and Ardgay are now on the map on the website for this initiative. (2) Jubilee weekend. The use of beam lighting on Jubilee Hill and in Bonar will create a criss-cross beacon effect on a suitable evening during the weekend of 2nd – 5th June. Funding is being sought for the equipment and the various events planned for the evening of the 2nd. Local groups and organisations are involved with simultaneous events in Bonar and Ardgay. Full details will be published locally, further information available from KoSDT. (3) Ukraine. It was asked if any refugees were expected locally, is THC doing anything? No information available though the Bradbury Centre is understood to be involved in supplies being sent out. The CC is willing to help support any action being taken. Discuss further next time.

Item 11. Date, time and place of next meeting. Next meeting, which also be the AGM, will be held in Bonar Bridge Hall on Tuesday 21st June at 7.30pm.

Item 11. Private session. Beinn Tharsuinn/Rock by Sea fund applications. BTWF. Application by KoSDT re the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations was awarded £1750 towards costs. Kyle of Sutherland Hub was awarded £660 towards a community fun day as part of Jubilee celebrations locally. Applications previously approved by email were ratified: Rosehall Village Hall, Bradbury Centre. Rock by Sea. Application by Rosehall & District Action group received funding of 768 for brush cutter training. Bradbury Centre received an award of £190 for first aid training. Coire na Cloiche. An award made to Golspie High School for £250 towards costs of running a summer school dance.

Meeting closed 10pm.

Members of the public attending until the end of the Falls of Shin item:

Chris Henzler, Lynne Henzler, Anna Sutherland, Liz Cormack, Robbie Elliot, Doris Calder, Nigel Baird, Rosie Cameron. Michael Baird