



CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Unofficial notes of meeting held
on Tuesday 18th April 2023 at 7.30pm
in Bonar Bridge Hall**

Present: Keith Williams, Chair (KW), Mary Goulder, Secretary (MG), Donna Gilchrist. Treasurer (DG), John White (JW), Tracey Smith (TS)

Apologies: Marcus Munro, Vice Chair (MM), Russell Smith (RS), Norman MacDonald (NM), Kay Smart (KS), Brian Coghill (BC), Highland Councillor Marianne Hutchison (MH)

Also present: Cllr Michael Baird (MB), David Watson, KoSDT, Caroline McMorran, Northern Times, Highland, plus approximately 30 members of the public (26 of whom gave their names which are shown at the end of these notes. These were residents within Creich, Ardgay and Culrain CC areas.

Chair Keith Williams opened the meeting noting that unfortunately some CC members were unable to attend and therefore the meeting was not quorate. As some apologies were received late today it was not possible to reschedule the meeting and it was deemed appropriate to go ahead to allow the members of the public present to air their views regarding the proposed SSEN pylon route. It was stated at the outset that the CC members present tonight would legally not be able to make any decisions but matters discussed would be conveyed to the absent CCs in order to urge a quick decision with regard to the CC's response to the public opinions expressed.

It was quickly made abundantly clear that the unanimous opinion of the public present was to reject the routes through the local areas as currently proposed by SSEN. If the route must cross the local areas it should be undergrounded to avoid major disruption to residential areas, crofting and farming lands, the ecology and local businesses, in particular the tourism industry on which the community heavily relies. If the route goes ahead as planned there will be no legacy benefit whatever to the communities affected to compensate in any way for the disruption and damages caused. An alternative route should be considered to lay the route undersea and thus avoid any of the above mentioned issues. It was feared that SSEN will strive to implement the overland route despite all objections and without any proper consultation with the communities affected.

Ron McAuley of the Strathpeffer Community Council is coordinating a Forum of Community Councils in the Highlands which is willing to work with SSEN to find the best solution for this project. The members of the forum, so far numbering nineteen community councils, believe that SSEN should clearly set out the criteria for assessing routes and the weighting given to each. It will urge that the design process should be stopped and only restarted once the views of all the communities directly affected have been taken on board.

Despite a strong call from the floor to state what action Creich CC will take, following this representation from the members of the public present, the Chair reiterated that the CC members present were unable to make any such statement tonight. Due process must be followed for any decision to be binding and carry any weight. He will contact the absent members immediately after this meeting seeking their views and once a majority decision is reached this will be formally announced on the CC website. The CC will also write to SSEN to advise of the outcome of the CC decision.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for conducting the discussion in a respectful manner.

Notes from non-quorate meeting

As no other CC business could be conducted this evening and extra meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th May at 7.30pm in Rosehall Village Hall. It is expected that this item will be included on the agenda.

Members of the public who gave their names were

Chris and Lynne Henzler, David Baker, Diane Ross, Graham Charge, A & H McIntyre, J Williams, Anne Henderson, Christin Maris, Mairi Jeffries, W MacKenzie, Valerie Graham, Christine Mackay, Samantha Kane, Liz Cormack, Liz Sawyer, Mary & Ali Sutherland, R Sawyer, C Munro, Hayley Bangs, Marielle de Jong, Gail & Garry Cassap Brown, Iain Wilson, Katie Wilson, Sheena Marian.
(Apologies for any misspelling of signatures.)

Meeting closed 9.00pm.