



Minutes – Creich Community Council 18.11.2024 7pm Rosehall Village Hall

1. **Present:** Scott Veters: Chair (SV), Hayley Bangs (HB), Colin McFarlane (CMF), Iain Bowles (IB), Shona Paterson (SP), Russell Smith (RS), Norman Macdonald (NM), Miranda Jones, minute secretary (MJ)

Oberlanders - Catriona

Apologies :Iain Maclean, Caroline Munro, David Watson

2. **Chair's Introduction** The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of the public present to raise their hand if they wished to speak.
3. **Minutes** The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

4. Local Place Plan – Oberlanders

Update on the local place plan. Started in July with guidelines and a template from the Highland Council. The initial step was mapping and spatial information gathering. Two consultations were held. The first on 18th July with the strategic delivery group made up of community action plan members. The second workshop was open to the public and held in Ardgay Hall. 38 people attended and emailed comments afterwards.

THC had a deadline on 27th September for submission of local place plans. Extension granted and validation process explained: necessity to share the plan with neighbouring community councils and councillors, they had 28 days to comment. (Plan was shared as far as Scourie and Strathpeffer who have boundaries with the KoS area) Feedback was received by the closing date of 18th October.

The plan should have come back to the community council for final approval, this step was missed for which apologies were given. The HC have granted a further stay of execution - they need local place plans submitted so they can build them into their own development plan for the Highlands. Revisions have been put on the website. Ardgay Community Council would like an opportunity to comment on the plan now they are up and running.

Representatives from Creich Community Council are concerned the language isn't strong enough in response to general worries about wind farms and BESS. There is a reason for this which is that the language in the place plan needs to represent the voice of the whole community. David Cowie at HC suggested that an appendix at the end with a voice of the community council reiterating and underlining the strength of their concern about wind farms and infrastructure.

To note: a substantial property owner in the Culrain district has contacted Oberlanders and would like to submit comments, these will be run by Ardgay CC.

Contact address for David Cowie localplaceplans@highland.gov.uk

MoP: Thanks Catriona for adding 2 bullet points on p7 re environmental issues [from local plan] would like the wording to be stronger as have been to a number of consultations and they put numpties up that have no knowledge of battery storage - message needs to be stronger - would like something in the appendix to reflect the great depth of feeling.

Catriona confirmed deadline for submission for appendix as a week/10 days.

RS: Our problems in this area stem from demographics - too few young people, too many older people. Need to start off the plan by looking at these demographics and trends over time. that would strengthen the argument that we need to encourage young people through houses and jobs.

ACTION - MJ to pull together demographic information for the KoS area

MoP: Do we have assurance that final copy will be shown to us. The lack of consultation is not acceptable - not a KoSDT doc, it's a community document and we need to have input. A substantial number of people within the community feel this way, there seems to be wariness re submitting a strong statement and we need to see the final copy before submission.

MoP: The plan does not say that the majority of the community feel we should not have any further wind farm development in the area

MoP: This document won't be a material planning consideration? Should we as a community be pressing HC to revisit supplementary planning guidance - quicker and is a material consideration re planning applications. HC need to produce

supplementary planning guidance that can be referred to for the planning applications.

HB: Creich and Ardgay councilors will get together and talk about this.

SP, IB & CMF will form a working group that will draft the appendix including “the vast majority of people” statement re wind farms and infrastructure.

Cllr Baird asked to lobby HC planners on behalf of the council.

IB: Our plan is to protect the area. We need to go back to the European body that originally gave Dornoch Firth designated national scenic area status. That needs to be extended to Ben Assynt, not stopping at Bonar Bridge.

MoP: Scottish government direction on local place plans, from their website, states (Scotland Act) “To give communities a more active role in the development planning process can include a range of issues including renewable energy projects. We need a very punchy about this in the local plan. That is missing from the draft I read. Secondly, re housing (rural burden) this is a community document. Do the community councils of Ardgay and Creich know what they are signing up to, have they been fully briefed on the implications of doing this. Community members are going to become administrators of housing potentially. How is housing going to be controlled?

CH: Communities can deliver housing, but they would not operate it - an RSL would manage the housing, you need to be a registered social landlord to be able to administer affordable housing e.g. Albyn Housing

Council agreed that the place plan be known as Kyle of Sutherland Local Place Plan. Ian to draft the appendix, Shona to collate information from Rosehall etc.

Members of the public were asked if they were happy for an appendix to be included in the plan. Agreed.

5. Matters arising

Falls of Shin: the parking meter has been altered but the sign (community owned) has not been changed.

6. Financial Report

Added Post meeting as the Treasurer was not present.

Beinn Tharsuinn balance	£29,413.62.
Ccc acc 1	£ 440.89
CnC	£15,752.18
RBS	£23,968.59
Compliant	£ 100.00
Ccc acc 2 total	£39820.77

7. Secretary's update

- All fund approvals notified of award.
- Fund records updated.
- Information sent to minutes secretary for inclusion in draft minutes.
- Sent Sutherland Resilience information & application to all members.
- Responded to Lisa Machi re representation @next meeting re Garvery and line to Loch Budhie.
- SSE funding review sent to all members. CM to take up.
- Sent Inveroykel Scoping to all cc members.
- Replied to community members requesting cc to support concerns re Inveroykel.
- Completed HC cc review.
- SRI application sent to all members.
- Organised wreath Laying for remembrance Sunday.
- Scoping letter for Inveroykel sent.
- Scoping letter for Inveroykel sent to local councillors, MSP & MP
- Approved September and draft October minutes uploaded to website.
- Agenda put out on FB & website 3 times.
- Agenda put up in Spar.
- Agenda passed to Bonar Hall for display.
- Correspondence for discussion passed to all members. Later correspondence received printed for meeting.

8. KoSDT

The council received an email from David Watson (KoSDT) sending apologies and requesting that the standing KoSDT report agenda item be removed from future agendas unless agreed in advance. Any information needed can be asked for and will be supplied.

The KoSDT AGM is now on 27th November 2024

9. **Resilience Plan** Nothing to add

10. **Planning & Licensing**

All information had been circulated, wind farms to be discussed later in the meeting

11. **Rosehall**

Letter received re FLS parceling off land that was bequeathed by local people for sustainable forestry, now being sold for wind farm development, requesting that the council send a letter to FLS stating that it is not right that they should be boxing off parcels of land to put wind farms on when it has been bequeathed for sustainable forestry. This goes against the will of those people. Rosehall community and NOROS requesting a letter be sent. FLS have auctioned off 30-year leases of land.

IB: Something has been amended in FLS bumpf that says they will look to use the land for renewable energy projects if it's deemed suitable.

Council being asked to send a letter of concern re what is happening to this land.

Cllr Baird: The late Peter Squire was looking into this. First right allows ownership back to the original owners or their descendants.

ACTION: Shona to circulate the letter, include MB and Ardgay Community Council

Author of the letter was present, wants the letter to go out signed by Community Council Chairs.

MoP: FLS are obliged to consult with local communities before going into contract with a 3rd party, has asked for details of consultation before contract with RWE is agreed (Fol request). Will forward the information to the council.

FLS getting a lot of Fol requests re the development at Inveroykel - 20 day turnaround for Fol requests

Invershin

Wind farms, railings, roads and pavements ongoing. On Street parking at Falls of Shin reinstated (Where used to say coaches only - can now park there)

12. **HC Report**

From planners - the purpose of scoping is to advise a potential applicant of a development subject to an environment impact assessment, of the minimum

information that should be included within the detailed planning application - content and extent of matters that should be included.

A scoping request is a technical assessment that forms part of the pre-planning application stage and is not open for public comment - public can submit a representation at the detailed application stage.

The detailed application likely to be submitted directly to Scottish Government (ECU) as such all representations should be made to the ECU.

The Highland Council will only be consultee to the application. Any comments received out with the correct process will not be reviewed.

Cllr Baird advised to use the ECU ref number ECU00006008 [overhead transmission line - Spital to Beaully]

RS: Wind Farms are decided by the Scottish Government, if Highland Council planning go against it then it has to go to a planning enquiry. [confirmed by Cllr Baird] We need to lobby HC to object so that it goes to a planning enquiry so that we can object to it.

MB: And also lodge objections with the ECU

MoP: Can't object to a scoping request. Some of the things that we are seeing with scoping requests at the moment there are things that are out with scope. From our communities point of view we should be saying those things should be within scope and they should be assessed in consideration with the overall impact of this development. The only way to get Scots Gov to look at renewables in a less favourable way is in terms of cumulative impact and the impact they are having on the countryside.

HB: We were asked to submit feedback, re Inveroykel, to Darius Ewen

ACTION: Hayley to email Darius Ewen to check feedback has been lodged

HC Report Continued: Brea Langwell has come in for scoping (2019)

Raised at Ardgay Community Council the state of 51-year-old bridge at Bonar. It will get painted in 2026 and they are going to be looking at the stress concrete at the railings to the pavement.

Funding from Highland Council - Ward 1 discretionary ward funding £5525, cost of living £1718.53. Any applications for items wanted should be sent to Liam Clancy.

Last HC meeting, motion put forward re code of conduct for community councils.

“When an issue of community council conduct (either collectively or as an individual) is raised, the guidance refers the matter to the Community Council to address in the first instance, with the only recourse in escalating the matter through the Ward Management structure (now Local Community Development Manager). Even where clear breaches of the Code of Conduct can be demonstrated, there is no such mechanism for the local authority to exert enforcement action.”

The council agreed to make representation to the Minister for Local Government, asking that Community Councillors be considered within the Ethical Standard in Public Life (Scotland) Act. Deadline of mid-December.

This motion was put to the council by Cllrs Mackie, Stewart, Reiss, Christie (not community councillors) following issues a number of community councillors have had.

Shared rural network - 3 mobile UK wanting to install a network off masts east of Altna Bhig near Ben Mohr Lodge Lairg

MoP - Question re transport strategy consultation. When does it end, were ccs aware?

4 cars have been delivered by SRI to communities across Sutherland to be run by volunteers to take people to hospital appointments etc.

13. Wind Farm Updates –

Coillie Beith

Letter sent to Scott saying they will have updates in Spring 2025

Inveroykel

Scoping is in. Correspondence/Objections received; all will be kept on file. Response from Jamie Stones received.

Balblair

Correspondence received and will be kept on file - application will be in before end of year.

EIA to be gone through line by line - scientifically and rationally.

Brae Langwell

CC to send in same feedback as Inveroykel.

Maree Todd replied re Inveroykel - same response received by all who wrote to her.

IB: We need a proper response from her, not a standard letter sent by her secretary. The strength of feeling in the community is too strong to be ignored.

ACTION: Ian to draft a letter in response to Maree Todd

14. SSEN Pylons (CM)

Spital - Beauty HB to submit comments on SSEN Proposal - scoping response - HB send to Ardgay CC - thanks to Bill and Colin for the scoping response.

HB - send letter to all ccs asking to join forces - Kerry to send letters to all ccs, Creich Ardgay, Lairg, Ardross, Edderton use the people with expertise in those areas. Joined up and impactful.

Kerry: work collectively to help in planning terms - developments are going to go ahead whether we like it or not - we have collective bargaining power if we work together. Last review of community benefit was 2013 and not index-linked - concerns re higher costs for fire response teams and their training for safety measures in place. We need more bargaining power for that too

Russell - for every wind farm we need to split money between the ccs. How do we split community benefit.

Primary responsibility is to our own communities, but we have collective issues.

Discussion re canvassing the community re their thoughts on wind farm developments. Surveys and use of Kyle Chronicle (goes to every house in area), social media suggested.

Hayley will put a question out to the CC to start discussions.

15. SSE Hydro Fund (IM)

Nothing to report

16. Correspondence

Request from Phil Tomalin re boundary changes. Boundary is down middle of the water - CC happy as long as HC have approached residents affected (affects 12 households in Creich area)

KoST requesting items be removed from previous minutes and an apology given - Correspondence to be attached to minutes.

17. AoCB

IB sought confirmation that the CC website was independent of KoSDT.

NM discussed allegations brought against him and the cc on social media and expressed concern that his letter to the Highland Games Association was released to the individual he had expressed concerns about. This issue was deemed not competent business of the community council.

18. Date next meeting

January 20th @ 7pm Bonar bridge Community Hall

Meeting end 8.50pm

Private Discussion

Rock By Sea

R. Scott and H Manson were awarded £300 each towards the costs of driving lessons.

R. Agnew was awarded £503.46 towards further Nail Technician training.

Z. Chalmers was awarded £500 towards an online coaching course managed by Lairg Learning Centre.

No applications received for Beinn Tharsuinn or Coire na Cloiche.

Kosdt Correspondence received and CC response can be viewed separately on the website in the correspondence section.