



**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting 9th June 2025  
@Bonar Bridge Village Hall**

1. Present: Scott Vettters, Chair (SV), Hayley Bangs (HB), Shona Patterson (SP), Caroline Munro (CM), Iain Bowles (IB), Norman MacDonald (NM), Russell Smith (RS), Colin Macfarlane (CM)  
Cllr Michael Baird (MB)
2. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Representatives from Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm (SP) presented slides in hard copy format re repowering, extension & BESS at the site. 17 turbines to be decommissioned and brought down, new and larger turbines to replace them, plus new and larger turbines to be added in western extension.

Very early stages of the project, a public information day will follow but as they have presented a scoping layout to ECU they wanted to visit the community council asap. The conversation and consultation to continue as the project develops.

4 viewpoints presented in the handouts: 2 from south, 2 from north.

Page 9 is the viewpoint from Bonar Bridge.

On the maps grey turbines are existing (12), red are new ones (31 in total).

p10 is a montage of what you can expect to see of the wind farm from that viewpoint.

P13 information re aviation lighting as a key factor for the wind farm affecting dark sky and visual aspects of project

CC will be updated with the design evolution and progress.

MoP asked to be told more about the aviation lighting

A: In the first instance any turbine over 150m needs aviation lighting.

Reduced aviation lighting can be adopted, Scottish Power looking at all options - 31 turbines does not necessarily need 31 lights. Potentially can shade the light so it's only visible from overhead. Not every turbine needs a light on it can select only a few.

Aviation protection lighting system - SP pioneering a test of that system (adopted across Europe) no lights unless a plane flies within the vicinity of the turbine and switches off once the plane has passed. (This is subject to policy change from civil aviation)

Community Engagement - they will be engaging with all affected communities including Ardross, Evanton and Creich.

Timeline for project:

- Scoping and website launched in Q2.
- First Public Information Day by end of this year or Q1 next year
- Q2 2026 2nd Public Information Day
- End 2026 submit - decision within 12 months
- Expect construction to take place in 2030 (provided no public enquiry)

Ongoing engagement throughout.

MoP asked will the existing foundations need replacing, larger turbines, more weight, greater vibrations - taking away more peat? peat will certainly be taken away for the new turbines, what about the old ones? Will there be one EIA report for the whole thing or will it be separate?

A: One EIA for whole development. The development does need bigger foundations, existing foundations 1m depth broken and then overlaid with peat new foundations of larger diameter will be located elsewhere. Will be looking to use as much of existing infrastructure as possible. CO2 gas analysis will be done

SV: What happens to old turbines? 25 years ago we were told the land will be returned to how it used to be. So people 25 years ago were lied to. It's never going to be returned, we lose the hill.

A: There will be a habitat management plan for this development that will take into account when this one finishes. How that will be reinstated.

SV: But the habitat plan from 25 years ago saying how it will be reinstated... it's not being reinstated, land not being returned, it's being made bigger.. There's nothing green about turbines. You have the government behind you. We just want the truth. We're trying to stop them but we can't stop them. You say public enquiry but there's not going to be one because they change the rules on that as well.

A: If the Highland Council objects...

SV: We are here representing the community and people ask us what are you doing and we can't explain how things are as they change all the time. What happens changes from what we were told.

SP: There's no democracy for rural areas in Scotland. We vote against developments, the Highland Council back us, and then the Scots Government overrule. Where is local democracy? Where is fairness? We want to look after the land, local environment, the wildlife, the biodiversity that is being sacrificed for this.

These are the wrong places to put this. More information coming out, Labour Govt looking to put in regional local pricing - it will not be viable for communities to put in these turbines that are doing so much damage to our environment and biodiversity, but everybody's rushing things through.

A: The EIA will include how we manage habitat and how we are going to aim to increase biodiversity in the area.

SP: Habitat management is about keeping what's there, there - keep the carbon in the ground - damage being done to this area in the next few years will never be put back - there will be a carbon cost not benefit. It will kill off salmon, fishing, tourism and rural communities.

HB: When BT was originally built, that was the only one. We're not objecting to renewable energy, it's the cumulative impact - there are another 9/10 wind farms.

MoP: The montage from BB is double the height, double the numbers, almost meeting up with Braelangwell and Inveroykel. Balblair on the other side, Rosehall will be repowered, Achany extension higher, we are being encircled.

We want to be told you won't get higher than 180 metres (Achany extension want higher than 180 as not economical under that, they want 230m). We are sceptical now because your 180m proposal could turn into 230m

A: Thank you for sharing your thoughts. To confirm there will be no batteries in this development, no BESS storage. Not sharing another development's BESS storage. It is not in scoping.

RS: Your maps need to include all the other wind farms, all that are consented and in planning. With the viewpoints, please include one from the back of Bonar Bridge

A: Please send viewpoint coordinates to us so they can be added. If we submit in 2026, there will be a cut-off point and we will include all the projects up to that date

Community benefit - to be discussed, No offer decided as yet.

### **3. Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 meeting**

Proposed by HB, seconded by CM. Minutes approved

### **4. Matters arising, if not on agenda**

Water tankers: HB to resend email to MB re taking water out of Carron Place as he did not receive it.

MB: engineer aware of leakages on Lairg Road, will be returning

Area has old infrastructure and the roads are being pounded by lorries, the water catchment area is too big.

HB to invite Scottish Water down to meet with the CC and community.

No update re toilets in Bonar Bridge. HC does not want to bring them back into use. Toilets have been proposed as a site for the KoS Mens Shed.

## **5. Financial report**

Year end accounts were presented at the AGM

Current balance

1) £193.91

2) £39, 375.68

BT £30,925.59

## **6. Secretary Update**

Secretary's report 20/5/25 – 5/6/25

- BT awards applicants notified, HC informed to make payments, fund records updated
- Rock By Sea applicants notified, details for payments requested
- Map showing visual impact on CC areas of Balblair windfarm sent to all members
- Invitation sent to Invercassley windfarm developers to attend meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June
- Contacted force 9 for key colours in green to be changed on visual impact map
- Lairg CC minutes and agenda for June AGM sent to all members
- Replied confirming attendance at CC convention
- Email sent to S Macfadden Inveroykel requesting additional date for community presentation in either Ardgay or Bonar Hall
- Request sent to Acheilidh windfarm re proposed community benefit distribution
- Rock by Sea payments to be made sent to CM
- Letter to Scottish water compiled and sent to MB to forward
- Approved minutes put on website and post informing put on Facebook.
- Facebook post put out notifying of funding application deadlines.
- Lairg Agm agenda and minutes of previous meeting sent to members
- Post on Facebook re Scottish water works on front road
- MJ invoice sent for payment to CM
- SSE hydro fund emailed with CM as new cc rep
- Draft minutes updated with sec report & private discussion then sent to all members
- Replied to all funding requests with date of next meeting.
- Drafted letter for meeting with ministers and sent to all members
- Draft minutes from May meeting put on website and post on Facebook
- AGM agenda put on website and Facebook
- AGM agenda sent to Liam Clancy & MB
- Bonar Hall booking request sent
- AGM agenda sent to MJ
- Email re Induction service, Dornoch sent to all members
- Replied with confirmation of CC rep to attend Induction Service
- Followed up fund application request for end report and invoices of previous award
- Sent CM request for proof of payment made to beneficiary of driving lesson fund

- Email sent to Maree Todd re ministers meeting.
- Ordinary meeting agenda sent to all members
- Agenda sent to MJ, MB, LC
- Called Acheilidh windfarm requesting map of impact on parishes.
- All fund applications sent to members
- Acheilidh map sent to all cc members to assist community benefit discussions
- Balblair revised colour coded map sent to all cc members to assist with discussions on community benefit
- Responded to requests regarding gardening opportunities in the area

#### 7. Planning & Licensing – RS

- Objection to Achany extension to be submitted, taking into account feedback from community
- House in BB above the school - design not in keeping with the vernacular architect of the area. CC will not submit an objection

#### 8. Rosehall - SP, Bonar Bridge- HB & Invershinn – IB updates/matters raised.

Rosehall: no further update - some potholes been filled

BB: HB trying to contact Joanne Sutherland (HC Roads) no response, will keep trying.

Invershin: Speeding issues. Police carried out speed checks. Any results to show?

MB - Calum Smith liaising with roads police in Dingwall - when officers are available they will monitor routes

MoP - could we get rumble strips at the entrance to the village? (Lives at bottom of village)

HB - trying to get the speed limit extended to Balblair

IB - HC acknowledged road dangerous HC didn't have the money but CC can pay for it

Russel Taylor's flashing light - in Pete Campbell's barn? Is battery operated - battery lasts a couple of days and then needs recharging, need one that plugs into streetlamps.

IB - do we revisit that - survey shows there is an issue

Need permission to fix into lamp supply - IB to contact. Put at each end of the village

#### 9. HC Councillor's report including Tec Services –

MB still pursuing re roads. HC have now started road dressing, white lining to follow.

CM -Drumliah road - needs total resurface

SP - ask for Altass pls

## **10. Windfarm & BESS updates**

- Coillie Beith submit mid to late June. HB to ask for an extension to end of September for CC to submit.
- Balblair – Representation submitted 25/4/25 - CC being pushed re community benefit
  - RSPB say they need another year's ornithological survey as the current one is poor.
  - HB - They need to get their map right - change colours. Showing that Golspie can see 7-8 blade tips.
  - Ardgay much more visually impacted than Lairg
- Inveroykel submit mid to late June HB to ask for an extension
- Strath Oykel- Approved- judicial review
- Braelangwell – No Updates
- Invercassley – unable to attend June meeting
  - submit mid to late June HB to ask for an extension
- Dalchork BESS- objection lodged
- Allt An Tuir- representation submitted 27/3/25
  - Nature Scot have put in their feedback lack of responsible consultation, destruction of wild land areas (These objections would work for Invercassley), impact on salmon
  - Appropriate measures need to be put in place - saying this is poor
- Garvery – Approved
- Sallachy- Approved
- Acheilidh - Approved
- Beinn Tharsuinn repowering, extension & Bess scoping submitted 16/4/25

David: Reports coming out re: contamination of peatland following Chernobyl. Studies show peat in Highlands has absorbed radiation, if peat disturbed, radiation will be released, top 3 or 4 cms - study commissioned by C4Power will be circulating this. There are strict regulations re radiation containment and release. Potential new angle for objection - radioactivity surveys needed, risk to workers etc

Highest radiation levels to be found in Sutherland and surrounding areas - maximum depth is 4cm - half-life is 40 years - release of radiation will affect waterways

## **11. SSEN Pylons.**

No further update

MB: Letter going round/being delivered re preliminary work - ground inspection for Spittal-Beauly line

Undergrounding should be considered under NPPF4 section 11

## **12. Achany / Rosehall fund update SV, SP**

Council discussed the letter sent to SP/SV from Foundation Scotland re the Rosehall/Achany Wind Farm Fund proposing changing arrangements for how the funds are administered.

2 options suggested

- 1) 80% of annual fund £215k distributed between 5 local organisations  
LDCI, Hub, Bradbury, KoSDT, LDLC

Remaining 20% panel will administer to local groups who apply to the fund.

- 2) 100% of the fund is distributed to the 5 anchor organisations

These awards will be for 10 years

Reasons: fund impact study, former panel views, and changing funding environment.

The Rosehall/Achany Panel are meeting on 30th June to discuss

HB read out a draft letter in response to the proposals letter approved rejecting proposal largely on the grounds that the timing was not right with Ardgay CC being in obedience

### **13. Correspondence- HB**

Letter from David Allan - searching premises re Mens Shed, identified the boarded up public toilets in Bonar Bridge and have been trying to contact Highland Council to discuss, with no success. They would propose to fix up the disabled toilet as part of the project and ask the CC for support with approaching the Highland Council.

HB to reply to Mr Allan advising him to get in touch with MB and that the project would need some community consultation.

MoP asked whether it would be possible to get some costings for putting the toilets back into use, to take to HC when a fund such as community generation opens.

MB to get the details on what is wrong with the toilets, is it the drains?

HB to reply to Jan Maclean

Email from Vanessa Lawrence offering services as a training provider for anyone who wishes to apply for a training grant under Rock-by-Sea fund. Offers licensing training, food hygiene etc.

### **14. Any other competent business**

MoP: Pavements, bridge & pharmacy in BB in a terrible state (residents being injured)

MB: Ward business today, capital money laid aside for roads, car parks and footpaths.  
MB does not know when the work will be done.

IB: Beinn Tharsuinn presentation - correspondence/scoping states suitable for BESS (Presenters did not know this)

MoP: Noticeboard outside library not updated by CCC for over a year

MoP: Parking outside Kyle Bakery an issue

**15. Date, time, and place of next meeting.**

September 8th 7pm venue tbc

Meeting end 9pm

**Private session:**

- Declarations Of Interest CM KOS gala
- Beinn Tharsuinn 3 awards Feis for transporting to summer camp £1,500, KOS Gala £540, £2,000 KOSDT Kyle Feeds project to be released once outstanding report & invoices submitted.
- Rock by Sea Fund R.Scott for specialist tools £300
- 3 Coire Na Cloiche 1 KOS flower festival £600 for display easels