



## Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Creich Community Council

3rd March 2025, Bonar Bridge Community Hall

Present: Scott Veters, Chair (SC), Hayley Bangs (HB), Caroline Munro (CM), , Iain Bowles (IB), Shona Patterson (SP), Russell Smith (RS), Norman MacDonald (NM)

Cllr Michael Baird (MB), Miranda Jones (MJ), Caroline McMorran (Northern Times), approximately 17 member of the public

### 1) Welcome & Apologies

Apologies Colin McFarlane (CMF)

### 2) Chair's Welcome

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

### 3) Approval of January 2025 Minutes

Proposed by CM seconded RS. Minutes approved

### 4) Matters Arising

MB couple of surnames spelled incorrectly in the minutes (now amended)

FLS letter re no public consultation - IB/CMF still to send

Boundary change request now completed

### 5) Presentation by Coillie Beith Wind Farm Developers Statkraft

A hard copy handout of the slides was given to all councillors and members of the public present.

Fraser Clarke - Project Manager presenting

Key Points:

- P7 - just one substation to be constructed, western or eastern options shown in handout
- Habitat improvement measures are still being drafted, will be in full application
- Opportunity for shared ownership
- Reduction in no. of turbines from 19 to 11
- BESS removed



- Maintained distances from watercourses, 50mtrs advised, current plan has achieved 70mtr distance from watercourses
- Layout moved away from the strath/residential properties, landscape, visual context and noise taken into account
- Peat survey work is on-going - will have a full suite of peat data in the application - design not final until peat data analysed
- Planning application will have Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), can only be written once the layout is finalised
- Ornithological and water monitoring will continue over the lifetime of the development
- Access route not yet decided, will be in application Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Planning application to be submitted at the end of May 2025, summer 2025 ECU consultation process begins
- Community benefit to be handled by an independent organisation or Foundation Scotland. The developers would like to see a legacy from the project funds
- A copy of the full application (4000 pages) will be placed in a publicly accessible location to be decided

#### Questions from the floor

Q: Community benefit £296,000/yr, equates to £5k/mw which is what we were getting 10-15 years ago and has not gone up since

A: That amount is benchmarked from the point of operation and there will be inflation rise on top of that. There are other ways of offering community benefit that are currently being discussed, we have invested in broadband and for one of our other areas. Free electricity [to people living near wind farms] unable to be offered as potentially that constitutes a bribe. Can be done by the CC with their community benefit.

Q: Cumulative impact is one of our major issues as we face a tsunami of development yet you are looking to cut off the picture of cumulative effect from Feb/Mar 25 when Balblair/Invercassley/Braelangwell etc have not submitted so the full picture will not be presented by you in February.



A: There has to be a cut off point in order for us to complete our application. If there is substantial change between Feb and May to the cumulative impact, the planners at the Highland Council would request that our information is updated. Invercassley will be taken into account, but not the ones that haven't submitted planning applications. Will double check with the tech advisors but would expect them to be considered cumulatively - will respond on this.

Developer agreed Balblair was not on the map in their presentation as this was a snapshot focused on the main clusters of development along Strath Oykel; their cumulative assessment will be circular and wide-ranging.

Q: Traffic will grind to a halt, far too many developments happening at the same time, locals won't be able to move around, this isn't taken into account

A: Traffic issues will be assessed and taken into account cumulatively. There would not be a circumstance when 2 wind farms would be delivering components at the same time. The Traffic Management Plans will be assessed by Traffic Management at Police Scotland

MoP: Transport & traffic effect needs to be assessed as part of the cumulative impact on the day-to-day existence of the community. We face dozens of years of transport issues, it's a deterrent for tourists and that's a main source of income for people round here.

Developer responded that it would not be possible to NOT include it in the cumulative impact, that is the purpose of it. Developer requested the contact details for the member of public speaking and added that they would coordinate with other developers to work out transport details. Bussing workers in, for example would reduce traffic to site, using stones found on the site will reduce the number of lorries transporting in.

CM: There are so many other areas of Scotland that are much more accessible - why not go there? We are saturated. This is a rural community being turned into industrial land. We produce way more electricity than we need, put it somewhere else. For every wind turbine that's going up we get another 6 pylons. You are just creating an industrial site, go somewhere else, we don't want this here. Put it on Arthurs Seat and



see what response you would get, just because there are only a few hundred people here it doesn't matter what we say.

MoP: The routes to site are not viable. Developer agreed the route is "a complex picture"

IB: Your company have 27 projects in Scotland? 16 north of Aviemore, why is HQ in Glasgow? Why not up here? All of this development for 1 permanent job for this community. Will the workforce be shipped in? Bussing people in?

Great that the BESS removed. Can you confirm that your development will not connect to a BESS on another site?

Developer: We cannot unequivocally say that we will not connect to a BESS. Our planning application will not contain any BESS proposals, no BESS to be built on site. I don't follow the logic of joining another BESS site.

Developer confirmed that the land is owned privately, they have regular meetings with all parties, landowners, and that the connection is secured for 2032. They have an agreed contract with SSEN.

MoP: According to SSEN these developments have not yet secured a connection.

IB: Clearly we are being misled as SSEN are saying one thing and you are saying another.

MoP I want to see cumulative night sky impact. I want to be able to see what our landscape is going to look like in the dark.

Developer confirmed this will be in the planning application and confirmed the application will be the final layout of the turbines. There will be micro-site conditions attached. The EIA assessment takes into account micro-siting. If any turbines are to be shifted that would need to be agreed by a condition in writing. A shift of 30m of a turbine is not seen to be substantial enough for public consultation.

Contact email address for the developers was given on handout.



[ukprojects@statkraft.com](mailto:ukprojects@statkraft.com)

6) Financial Report

a/c 1 £145.89

a/c 2 £43,476.31 - Coire Na Cloiche £13,848.72 & Rock by Sea £29,627.59

Beinn Tharsuinn £29,413.62

Endowment fund policy c£74,000

7) Secretary's update – 21/01/25 – 3/3/25

- Fund applicants notified of awards
- Updated fund award records
- Additional information sent to minutes secretary
- Replied to HC re boundary mistakes
- Replied to D Campbell for further information on the funding.
- Had phone call with D Campbell re funding
- Community Council Scheme review sent to all CC members feedback by April
- Request for Questions for Maree Todd meeting sent to all CC members
- NoRos date for meeting Maree Todd. 13<sup>th</sup> February published on Facebook
- Spittal – Buidhe community consultation 27<sup>th</sup> February published on Facebook
- Details for fund award payments sent to treasurer for payment
- Replied to Lindsay re Far North Line Sustainable Transport Project
- Emailed Cllr MB to get email for person to contact re Access Rangers
- FLS proposed response sent to IB & CM for looking at and reporting back
- Draft scoping for Invercassley Windfarm sent to all cc members.
- Date for next meeting added to website
- Emailed Cllr Baird again for Access Ranger email and HC email to submit letter of support for judicial review.
- Drafted BT application for Creich CC sent to all members for comment.
- Had teams meeting with Foundation Scotland re endowment fund
- Amended draft of Invercassley Wind Farm scoping sent to all cc members
- Scoping submitted 30/01/25 for Invercassley windfarm and put on website.
- Responded to resident query regarding road closure in Bonar after confirmation received from R Rudhall HC
- Highland Place Plan consultation sent to all cc members
- Dalchork Bess doc put on website



- Draft minutes put on website and notified on Facebook- updated after with CC approval removal of one sentence
- Updated all members on the Endowment Fund
- FLS info sent to Cmacf
- Draft agenda for Invercassley presentation sent to all members for comment
- Replied to Suzanne Kane regarding presentation of Coillie Beith windfarm and what we would like included
- Request sent for paper copy of Allt An Tuir windfarm, currently in Lairg library!
- Info sent to all CC members re Allt An Tuir windfarm planning application
- All funding applications circulated to members
- Scottish Government consultation on community benefit questions sent to CC members
- Agenda sent to HC, Cllr Baird & minutes secretary
- Community briefing sent to members
- NoRos email sent to all members
- Sent ECU email to all members regarding section 36 considerations for Allt an Tuir
- Sent suggestions to all CC members re community benefit consultation
- Sent rural delivery plan questions to all CC members

#### 8) Resilience Plan

No update

MB gave an update on the Sutherland Resilience Initiative (SRI). EGM to be held to elect a new board at which point the 6 founding councillor board members would stand down. He confirmed there had been public consultation to identify the priorities for the SRI which raised the issues of Transport, Childcare, Housing and the SRI chose to focus first on providing community transport following on from the work of the SCP transport group.

MB confirmed the Ward Discretionary funds have all been allocated for the financial year.

Question asked re toilets in Bonar. MB advised they are closed due to vandalism, There is also an issue with plumbing, and campervans emptying waste. Suggested that the HC block the entrance so campervans can't enter the site?

ACTION: HB to write to Debbie Sutton



9) Planning & Licensing (Russell Smith)

All circulated

Comment submitted on Loch Buidhe substation

10) UPDATE: Rosehall

Concerns about damage to Badfluich road. Forestry works have taken out some trees and badly damaged the road. We feel FLS need to reinstate or cover the costs of reinstating the road.

MB suggested that may come under the forestry agreement - will look into. Altass road also bad (on roads lists)

UPDATE: Bonar Bridge

Toilets already discussed

State of main road from junction to end of 30mph - lots of potholes - MB to find out if on capital programme

Footpath to Balblair woods - reduced speed limit? MB has taken it up with Chief Inspector Calum Smith, more patrols will be sent up.

HB will there be a consultation about reducing the speed limit at Invershin. MB said they need more data.

Contact Joanne Sutherland - MB to provide contact details, HB to write letter

Water at the hotel in Invershin. Issue for years, Scottish Water insist no problem. Black bits in the water that have broken showers. Guests with itchy skin. Water smells of chlorine. Ice machine smells of chlorine. Issue getting worse.

MoP: In England if you send a request to the water board they will send you a detailed analysis of water content and any contaminants therein - maybe do this with Scottish Water- if not happy with it ask for a test at your premises.

ACTION: CC to contact Scottish Water/ Environmental Health?



UPDATE: Invershin

Speeding - road surveyed over a year ago. Needs to be some action taken

Works guys overtaking each other on blind corners - can we ask the Police to come to a meeting?

MB - The Chief Inspector would like to meet CCs in person - joint meeting with Ardgay and Lairg. The police would give an update, plus a planning officer or various officers from HC.

#### 11) HC Report

20mph limit final consultation complete - minor tweaks made to traffic order will now be set in stone. MB brought up that they haven't altered the roads that say 30mph on roads and 20mph on signs.

Active Surveys - Community Council Consultation & Visitor Levy

Roads - number of local roads on capital repair list.

#### 12) Wind Farm & BESS updates

- Garvary approved.
  - 5 neighbouring Community Councils agreeing to split community benefit £725,000pa index linked (discussions held in 2021-22)
  - Creich 35%
  - Lairg 25%
  - Ardgay 20%
  - Rogart 15%
  - Dornoch 5%
- Invercassley: scoping submitted, no further update
- Bill sent in letter re BESS
- Invercassley will have a second consultation, to include update and information on BESS. Invercassley may not include BESS
- Strath Oykel: approved, no update on judicial review





- Braelangwell: no update
- Balblair – no update
- Invercassley: scoping submitted
- FLS: letter for Colin and IB
- Dalchork: objection lodged
  
- Allt an Tuir: Planning application submitted. Deadline 28th March. Colin putting something together for that. MoP added that NoROS work is good but need to look at cumulative impacts which is missing - data they are using goes back to 2008. Allt an Tuir references a 2008 paper when there were 6 wind farms in Caithness & Sutherland. Other reference material similarly suspect. MoP is drafting an objection letter at the moment and will pass on to CC.
  
- Question raised re helping people who may be digitally disadvantaged submit objections. HB has been in communication with Ardgay CC with a view to offering a Sunday afternoon session for people to drop in to gain assistance. date to be confirmed.
  
- CC asked to ensure any amendments to conditions done through tracked changes. Colin will review and prepare comments.
  
- Sallachy: Community benefit 1st 10 years £3,5k per mw, 11-18.5 years £5k/pmw 18-25 year £7.5k/mg. MB: Sallachy has moved developer to Boralax. 2028 deadline for Sallachy to be up and running coming to HC planning on 12th March as turbines coming out of the plans and transportation plan changing under section 42 - council is in agreement to grant permission for changes to Sallachy. Can start work onsite on 4th May this year.

### **13) SSEN Update from meeting on 2.2.25**

St Duthus meeting - they feel a united front important - flyers handed out. Testimonials needed from people whose mental and physical wellbeing has been affected by big energy.

IB - asked at the meeting re extra funding available - is for areas that can have money spent on them for undergrounding - only available for projects already in place - can



we change that? Needs to be done now, need to write to Nat Grid and say this needs to change

KH asked SSEN why they have not costed underground - they said nobody has asked us for it - not on a single feedback form

Kerry told them they are wrong - we need to prove that we have requested it.

Existing pylons will be upgraded plus new pylons

Field opposite Carbisdale Castle will have 2 super pylons plus 2 for other lines

#### **14) Invershin Power Station - IB**

Not going get any bigger but is being upgraded (substation) putting in a bigger transformer (?) only connection going in there as of this week is Sallachy - but box going in has more capacity than Sallachy provides

#### **15) SSE Hydro fund (IM)**

no further update

#### **16) Achany / Rosehall Fund update**

The total awarded was £200,250.51 post the panel meeting one application was withdrawn, and one applicant has still to accept the award.

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust - 1 year award - £55,000

Lairg & District Community Initiatives 3-year award £33,537.13 per year

Lochview Rural Training two year award £18,785 per year

Bonar Bridge Football Club - £31,215.18

Generation Science - £3,930

Lairg Primary School PTA - £12,538.42

Culrain District Hall - £40,000

Lairg Gala Week - £2,320.79

#### **Foundation Scotland Rosehall Funding**

The total drawdown for 2025 will be £82,483.19. Once the annual donation comes into the account scheduled for August, there will be £88,483.19 left for the period August 2025 - August 2026. Of this multi-year awards totalling £20,392 will be due in spring 2026 which leaves an available balance of £68,019.19 for the remainder of 2025 - August 2026.



This is the total amount available for the April 25, October 25 funding rounds

SSE Achany has its fund payment in February. After the January panel meeting all SSE funds for the year were awarded the balance now stands at zero until February 26.

Any applicants in April will not be able to draw on any funds awarded from Rosehall until August 2025.

Table below shows the 5 strategic projects identified by the fund and the award total they have received since the fund started in 2010 for Achany 2102 for Rosehall taken from recently released SSE impact report

<b>Table 2-2 – Number and Value of Funded Projects for 5 Key Organisations</b>	<b>Number of Funded Projects</b>	<b>Total Value of Funded Projects</b>
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	34	£789,238.33
Bradbury Day Care Centre	13	£151,854.33
Lairg Learning Centre	15	£215,351.16
Lairg and District Community Initiative	18	£398,628.40
Kyle of Sutherland Hub	14	£264,576.00

## **17) Correspondence**

- Insurance for comm councils £141
- Issue to raise with HC re-funding of cc's: have to pay for accounts, halls, minutes secretary, domain registration
- Alberto Molina: email re touring with Alex Banks NC500
- David Campbell: re projects SSSEN could fund. HB spoken to. Wanting to give some money for disruption caused by driving up to Loch Buidhe. Money



available 18mths before completion. Want oven-ready plans - not football strip - looking for legacy projects.

- Note to put on an agenda later in the year for people to suggest ideas for projects.
- Visitor Levy - Russell to respond - CC agreed bad idea. General feeling it will hit tourism hard. Email from Dornoch BID makes good points that can be requoted - deadline 31st March
- Far North Line project presented at Ardgay CC, lots of issues raised beyond the scope of Lindsay's influence e.g. cost, integrated transport, cycle carriages. Refer to Ardgay Minutes
- Comm benefit consultation until 11th April - Lairg & Ardgay to work together HB to liaise with CC secretaries, forward any points to HB
- Rural Delivery Plan 17th March - cc will liaise over email

#### **18) AOCB**

Email re radio switch off RTS meters (13th March). Need to go on smart meter, not always viable. Ovo don't have a solution, promised by April.

#### **19) Date, Time and place of next meeting 5<sup>th</sup> May 7pm @Invershin Hall**

Meeting end 9.30pm

#### **20) Private Discussion**

Declarations of Interest- SV BBFC & Bradbury -direct, HB BBFC -indirect, CM Golf club-direct, SP Rosehall & District Action Group -direct

Beinn Tharsuinn awards

- Creich Community Council towards running costs £ 536.21 Approved
- Ardgay/Bonar Golf Club towards vending machine £4,000 Approved
- Rosehall & District Action Group printing for leaflets £450 Approved
- BBFC towards purchase of two dug outs £3,139.94 Approved
- NSA towards transport costs for children to attend event £887.72 Approved
- Bradbury centre towards activity cost £2,000 Approved

Rock by Sea awards

1 application for KL for driving lessons £300 Approved

BBFC for first aid training of up to 10 volunteers £900 Approved



1 application for costs towards SA tractor training deferred for requesting more information

Application CB for first Aid, MTB and tidal sub training CB £1,336.20 Approved.

No CnC applications

Beinn Tharsuinn Director – NM will remain as director, SV will be alternative director

It was agreed that for all future BT and CnC applications four additional questions will be asked, we are working on getting these on to the application form.

- 1) what was your total income for the last accounting period
- 2) what was your total expenditure for the last accounting period
- 3) what are your current unrestricted reserves
- 4) why can these reserves not be used for this project

It was agreed to put some fund end reports on the website – HB to look into

Agm discussion date set for 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Discussion took place around nonattendance at CC meetings by a member.