

# Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council

## Minutes of Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012 @ 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall

**Present:** Ellanne Fraser, Phil Game, Dawn Lupton, Wilfar Matheson  
Jim Coomber

1) **Apologies:** Biz Campbell (unwell), Martin Fraser, Mary MacBeth, Jann MacRae, Neil MacRae

2) **September's minutes.**

These were accepted, proposed by Dawn and seconded by Ellanne.

Copies of approved minutes are on our website at:-

[www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=220934](http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=220934)

Email [phil.game1@btinternet.com](mailto:phil.game1@btinternet.com) if you would like to be put on the circulation list for the draft minutes.

3) **Secretary's report**

### Communications received

Weekly Highland Council Planning list - Distributed to members of the CC

Email from Geoff Underhill regarding errors in web links in the minutes; potholes; format of TEC Services Spreadsheet – see 5, 7.

Emails from Mark Crowe and Bryan Stout regarding TEC services – see 7

Emails & updated spreadsheet from Sandy MacVarish – see 7

Invitation from SLCVO to attend their AGM on 6th Nov 2012 in Portree – Mary to attend

Invoice from Achmore Hall Association for use of hall for CC meetings – passed to Wilfar

Email from Joanna Peebles, Scottish Water – see 9

Conversation with Rene Gibson regarding road faults - see 7

Emails from Robbie Bain, see 4, 11, 19

Email from Audrey Sinclair – see 20

Email from Jim Coomber – see 21

Letter from Highland Senior Citizens Network – see 22

**If anyone would like copies any of the above documents please contact Mary at**

**[mary.macbeth1@btinternet.com](mailto:mary.macbeth1@btinternet.com) or 01599 577 296.**

4) **Treasurer's report**

Opening Balance	£ 4,085.90	
Expenditure this period	£ 140.00	(Grant to repair hall fence)
Income this period	£ 0.00	
Closing Balance	£ 3,945.00	

The annual accounts have been submitted to Robbie Bain. An invoice for £120 has been received for CC use of the hall; a cheque will be dispatched asap.

**Action: Wilfar**

## 5) Distribution of minutes

Our thanks to Geoff Underhill for pointing out errors in last month's minutes; Phil will try harder next month.

**Action: Phil**

A letter was sent to Ken Souter explaining the differences between the FT & CC and circulation of information. We are waiting for the Hall Committee and Fernaig Trust to say they are ready to accept their respective lists.

## 6) Notice boards

Wilfar has put up the notice board by the hall; all agreed it is a vast improvement on the old notice board. The leaflet holders will be installed in due course.

**Action: Wilfar**

Installing the Strome Ferry notice board has been delayed as we need to seek approval for its location.

**Action: Neil**

## 7) TEC Services

Geoff Underhill emailed to suggest that road faults should be reported to the CC and the CC should then report them to the Highland Council. There was a debate about the pros and cons of changing to this method. In conclusion it was felt that the CC acting as an intermediary to the HC might introduce errors and cause delays. The objective of setting up the spreadsheet for TEC services had been to enhance the existing reporting method; to prioritise faults and reduce errors and delays. It was therefore decided to keep the current procedure.

I.e. if you want to raise a report regarding a road fault then first please report it directly to the HC on **01349 886601**, ask to be given the six digit internal reference number then contact Phil giving details of date the fault was reported, the HC reference number, the location and nature of the fault. It will then be discussed by the CC and given a priority before being put on the spreadsheet and sent to TEC services.

Last month Geoff Underhill raised road fault issues these need to be reported as described above before they will be actioned by the CC.

Geoff Underhill has requested that the format of the TEC services spreadsheet is changed from a pdf file to a jpg file to reduce the amount of data downloaded by individuals. However a jpg file is actually larger than the equivalent pdf file, when viewed it cannot be scaled as easily as a pdf file and the image on screen and when printed is not as clear as the equivalent pdf file. As no one else has raised a problem with the size of the file or requested a change of format it was decided to stay with the current pdf format. Phil to explain this to Geoff

**Action: Phil**

In the past month the road faults spreadsheet has been updated and sent to TEC services. Sandy MacVarish returned an updated copy of the spreadsheet, Phil to load to the website.

**Action: Phil**

The road fault spreadsheet can be found by clicking [here-](#)

Sandy has also emailed to say that TEC services have been able to make a start on the work at Braeintra they hope that this work will alleviate the problem as winter closes in.

Mark Crowe at Portree TEC services asked us which radio station we thought would be the best to get the widest audience to broadcast road holdups. There was no consensus from the circulation of last week's minutes. After some discussion the CC decided we should ask that problems are reported on the Highland News slot on radio Scotland as this is where school closures would be listed.

**Action: Phil**

The CC wishes to express its thanks to Sandy & Mark for their co-operation and help.

Several emails have been sent to Bryan Stout at Dingwall TEC services regarding delays caused by work on the bypass. He has responded to say that they will try to give more advance warning through the use of road signs, but has not responded to say whether they can email to warn of road works in advance. We will chase

**Action: Phil**

Line of sight issues on the on the Fernaig Road and Plockton Road are now resolved. Rene raised the issue of a sign obstructing the line of site at the Auchtertyre junction, the owners have been contacted and the sign has now been removed.

**Closed**

### **8) TEC Services – A890**

Slope inspection reports; these were first requested at the meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> June in Lochcarron. We emailed Neil Gillies requesting the same on the 24<sup>th</sup> August, 24<sup>th</sup> September and again in October. Finally we received an email from Colin Howell who had misunderstood our request. He has promised to follow up on our behalf. It was decided if we did not receive a satisfactory response this month we would escalate this further and also include it in our response to the HC - see 16 and Rhoda Grant – see 21.

**Action: Mary**

The follow up meeting to discuss the options for the A890 upgrade is expected to be in the spring of 2013.

### **9) Scottish Water - Low pressure / no supply in Strome Ferry, Emergency procedures, Damage to surfaces in the Square and Achbeg Crescent**

We have received a letter from Joanna Peebles confirming that the holding tanks in Achmore and Strome Ferry are no longer in use. The recent low pressure problem in Strome Ferry was caused by "water draw down" from the hydrant at the Skye Bridge for 4 days / nights. We have asked for more details about this. SW states that now they are aware of the problem this causes they will not do this again.

SW confirms our water is fed by gravity from the service reservoir near Plockton. Therefore there are now no emergency procedures required to deal with power failures as no pumps are needed to supply our water.

We have asked SW to provide maps and diagrams to show the layout of the mains. We have asked SW to give us details of emergency procedures should there be a problem with the main from Plockton, no reply received so far. We will chase

**Action: Mary**

We will see if TEC services can help put pressure on SW to fix the damaged road and path surfaces.

**Action Phil**

## **10) Tilhill and Braeintra / Fernaig Woodland**

The next update from Tilhill is due in January 2013 in the meantime Tilhill are to be asked to notify us in advance when stalking is planned and to notify stalkers to be considerate of local residents when out on the hill and when “processing” their kill.

**Action: Mary**

## **11) Broadband**

HIE have not yet published the results of the consultation. HIE have not yet set up a circulation list to keep people informed by email.

Phil & Mary attended the Over the Sea from Skye seminar (Tegola Project event) held at Sabhal Mor Ostaig on 12th October. Three documents were circulated to the CC as a result of that seminar. These were:-

Notes from the meeting at SMO

A proposed methodology to implement our own broadband service

Proposed Objectives & Statement of Requirements

These will be uploaded to our website.

There was a discussion covering the three documents and the CC agreed that we should proceed with our own broadband project. The Methodology, Objectives and Statement of Requirements were agreed.

Our objective is:-

To create a locally managed, industrial strength broadband service with speeds increased by at least a factor of 10, whilst reducing the costs by at least 10%.

We have contacted Alaistar Nicholson the head of Community Broadband Scotland to ask that HIE ensure that their negotiations with BT for NGB roll out will take into account the needs of community projects. I.e. that we will be allowed access to BT services without the contractual restrictions forbidding reselling and that users will be allowed to retain their BT email addresses without additional charges. Alaistar has given us some useful contacts for our broadband project.

We have checked with Robbie Bain that Community Council funds can be used as a loan to assist with the capital costs of the broadband project and he has confirmed they can.

We have asked the Forestry Outstation whether they would like to be kept informed of our broadband developments and we are waiting for their response.

It was decided the next step in our project should be to see what sort of support there would be for our own service.

**Action: Phil**

## **12) Defibrillator for local emergencies**

Mary has emailed Lucky2BHere to organize a date for training and implementation. Nothing received so far and Mary will follow this up in November when she visits Skye.

**Action: Mary**

## **13) Fernaig Trust**

Jim gave us a brief update.

The AGM took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> October where several changes were made to the Articles:-

Increase the maximum number of directors to 12

Increase the minimum of number directors to 6

The quorum will be half the number of directors with a minimum of 4

On the 11<sup>th</sup> October there was a presentation from Lewis MacDonald who wanted to take all the timber that was not suitable for saw logs and use it to produce wood chip for heating. Lewis wanted a 20 year deal, for which he was prepared to provide finance from himself and his contacts sufficient to enable the FT to buy 3,000 acres of forest. Part of this money would be in the form of forward purchase of timber for chipping and the remainder would come from a bank loan. The bank loan would be for 10 years and require £250,000 annual repayments. The remainder of the purchase price for the forest would be from grants.

The FT has decided that they need another meeting with Lewis to go through his proposal in more detail.

#### **14) Provision of a recycling centre at the Auchtertyre Business Park.**

No progress this month. We will chase the outstanding responses.

**Action: Mary**

#### **15) Issues raised at CC training session.**

##### **How to deal with licensing issues**

Mary has spoken to the HC and they will organise a licensing officer to visit next spring to explain the procedures. It will be an open meeting and we will invite the Hall Committee and anyone else interested will be free to attend.

**Action: Mary**

#### **16) Why were the Independents frozen out of the executive at the Highland Council?**

We are considering our response and will suggest there is more consultation see - 20.

**Action: Mary**

#### **17) Highland Council budget reductions**

Although members of the CC have had little time to look at this it is apparent that it is not easy to find much detail of where money is spent by the HC.

Rather than comment on the items presented to us for decisions by the HC we decided to make the following submission.

1) We agree with the HC aim to reduce the gap between high and low paid earners by introducing a minimum living wage. The best way to implement this would be to ensure that the HC salary budget remains fixed and the increase in pay to those on the lowest salaries is funded by reducing the salaries of the highest paid members of the HC.

2) All HC expenditure should be made available for all to see via the HC website.

3) All expenses for office bearers and councillors should be made available to all via the website.

#### **18) Update from our Councillor**

Biz was unable to attend due to illness.

#### **19) Capital grant funding from Sport Scotland**

Robbie Bain has forwarded details from the Scottish Government announcing a £10 million fund as part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Games to provide grants to support community led projects to encourage people to be more

active. More details can be found at:

<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Topics/TopicNavigation/Facilities/Legacy+2014+Active+Places+Fund/Legacy+2014+Active+Places+Fund.htm>

**Action: All**

## **20) Changes to electoral boundaries**

We were alerted by Audrey last Monday (22<sup>nd</sup>) that there was to be a debate the following Thursday (25<sup>th</sup>) at the HC to alter the boundaries so that Kyle, Plockton and Achmore would no longer be part of Inverness and Skye but instead be part of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty. In other words we would be part of C,S,R&C even though we would be completely surrounded by Inverness & Skye. We responded to say we thought this ridiculous and on Thursday the suggestion was dropped. The boundary is now likely to be at Attadale.

The CC felt that this was yet another example of the lack of consultation from the HC, and we will contact them to make the point.

**Action: Mary**

## **21) Rhoda Grant's questionnaire of the Lochcarron community regarding the Strome Ferry bypass.**

The CC expressed its thanks to Jim Coomber for copying us in on his email to RG (labour MSP) regarding this issue. Jim was prompted by an article in the West Highland Free Press on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October. The article covered RG's questionnaire survey of those in Lochcarron. However RG has made no effort to discover the views of others in the area. We were one of the groups omitted from RG's opinion finding exercise, quite an oversight when one proposal would reroute the main road through Achmore. Jim will send more details of RG's "survey" and emails to the CC.

**Action: Jim**

It was decided the CC should write to RG, endorsing the email from Jim. Further we should suggest she contact all the CC's in the area to allow them to canvas opinion and respond to her questionnaire. The CC will ask RG when she can visit us to discuss this topic.

**Action: Mary**

## **22) Highland Senior Citizen's Network**

We have received a letter from HSCN asking us to help find people who can provide local knowledge of services, identify needs and ensure that older people are actively involved in the decisions that affect them. We will discuss this in more detail at next month's meeting

**Action: All**

## **23) AOB.**

Dawn proposed we should express our thanks to Mr & Mrs Bennion for their action to help keep the streets clean by sourcing and distributing dog mess bags. All agreed there was a noticeable improvement and extended our thanks.

## **24) Next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm