

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council AGM

The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge

With an option of a video link

Tuesday 30th August 2022 7:30pm

1. Members Present in person

Patrick Haston, Simon Hargreaves, Gill Gray & Craig Lightbody

Public Present in person

Tim Francis (HC senior access ranger), Zoe Illfe and Peter Faye (both joined the meeting after point 6)

Public attending online

Cllr David Fraser, Cllr Chris Balance, Tony Foster (SFCT)

2. Apologies - None received

At the start of the meeting, Peter Faye spoke in private to Patrick Haston to raise his concerns that the Community Council did not have enough members to run the AGM. Prior to the meeting, admin had checked with the Highland Council ward manager, Charles Stephen and the Community council support at HC and had in writing that four member were the minimum for the meeting to be quorate and so long as the number of elected members exceed the number of co-opted members it was able to proceed (currently 3 elected members and 1 co-opted). Cllr Fraser also agreed with this. Patrick Haston proceeded with the meeting. It was also noted that the original date for the AGM had been 28th June but due to the Community broadband going down that night, the meeting was unable to take place as not all the members were able to attend in person so the meeting wasn't quorate hence no minutes from that night but Jim Cameron stood down at that meeting. The CC were very grateful for Jim's input as treasurer.

3. Co-option of any new members

There had been interest from a few members of the Community in filling the two available co-opted spaces available but only one member of the Community attended the meeting; Stephen Steiner. Only elected members of the Community council can vote on the co-option of new members; Patrick Haston, Simon Hargreaves and Gill Gray all voted in favour of co-opting Stephen Steiner onto the Community Council. Admin to contact the other members of the community to see if they are still interested in being a member

4. Adoption of minutes of previous AGM 2021

Proposed – Patrick Haston, Seconded – Simon Hargreaves

5. Chair's Annual Report

The last year has been another challenging year. While not as dramatic as previous one with the initial impact of Covid 19, lockdown and home schooling, and of course the magnificent response by the community to provide lifeline support to our most vulnerable neighbours, it hasn't been exactly easy. The rollout of vaccines and boosters has enabled an easing of restrictions and allowed some things to return to closer to normal, but the virus has not gone and many still feel uncomfortable with meeting face-to-face. The Community Council has also experienced these concerns and we have not yet returned to meeting entirely in person, so this AGM is being held as both a face-to-face and online event.

The Community Council has been able to continue to be an effective force for the area, being a powerful voice to the Highland Council, from campaigning for improvements to our road network, to getting the

funding for the Portaloos in Upper Foyers (much needed as visitor numbers have increased and the path above the car park had become an outdoor toilet).

We all know that the roads in our area and across the Highlands had been falling into a poor state over a number of years. The Highland Council were aware of this, increasing the Council Tax to fund road improvements. The Community Council were able to present a detailed list of road defects that had meant that we were at the front of the queue and you will have noticed how many roads have had been resurfaced and repaired over the last year. Obviously there is more to do and new potholes always appear, so we will continue to push for more. The recent consultation by the roads department about the plans for installing pavements in Gorthleck to provide a safe route to the primary school are very welcome, and we will work with the Highland Council to ensure that this becomes a reality.

Replacing the public toilets in Upper Foyers has been an aim of the Community Council for many years, and this has taken a major step forward in the last year. Funding has been secured and the designs updated to provide facilities that best meet the needs of the community and visitors, while trying to find an attractive but low-cost design given the rapidly increase in construction costs seen in recent months. It has taken a significant amount of work to get to this stage, by volunteers from both the Community Council and the Community Trust working closely together. This good working relationship has been instrumental in bringing the two organisations closer together, and a joint meeting earlier in the year was helpful in cementing this. This is great to see, as both organisations have the common objective of serving the people of the Stratherrick and Foyers area. Together we can achieve more.

The Community Council has relied heavily on the advice, guidance and support of our Ward Councillors from the Highland Council, in particular Margaret Davidson and David Fraser. Sadly, Margaret has stepped down as Councillor after many years of service, but David has been re-elected and we look forward to working with him for many more years.

The Community Council is made up of volunteers, ordinary people in the area who have chosen to give up a couple of hours a month to serve their community. It can be a thankless task as we seldom get praised for doing a good job, in fact, when we do our job well you don't notice we exist, but people can be very vocal when they have a complaint. Social media can be unhelpful, as questions and concerns can quickly escalate into what feel like attacks, but we recognise that this is because, like us, you all care deeply about our community and want the best for it. We may not agree about the right way to improve things, so the best way to fix this is for you to join us on the Community Council and help us do it right.

6. Approval of Annual Accounts

All approved

Zoe Illfe and Peter Faye joined the meeting – Peter Faye upheld his concern and still felt that the meeting was in breach of the Community Council's constitution

7. Election of Office Bearers

Chair: Patrick Haston (Proposed Craig Lightbody, Seconded Gill Gray)

Vice-Chair: Simon Hargreaves (Proposed Patrick Haston, Seconded Craig Lightbody)

Treasurer: Stephen Steiner (Proposed Simon Hargreaves, Seconded Patrick Haston)

End of official AGM (normal CC meeting followed)