

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25th NOVEMBER 2014
AT FOYERS SCHOOL 7.30pm

1. Present:

Iain Brown (IBR),

Sally McGuire (SM)

Catriona Fraser (CF)

Katie Ellam (KE)

Highland Councillor Margaret Davidson (Mda)

Apologies – Liam MacNally (LM) Morag Cameron (MC) Martin Donnelly (MD) Ian Bateman (IB)

Forestry Commission Update Presentation

Doug Mitchel, Planning Manager for Inverness Ross and Skye Forest District spoke on the following topics.

Forest Timber Haulage Route

Doug advised the funding application for this forest road network to take FCS timber haulage of the public roads had been successful. Key point being the funding must be spent before April 2016, along with already programmed road improvements it is anticipated to be completed by mid-2016. See attached map for route(s), this will enable empty Lorries to access the route at Trinloist, Foyers and Dirichurachan. Loaded Lorries traveling out east from Torness – Caolanour Junction via the improved public roads to the A9 or West from Trinloist/Gorthleck to Fort William. The Trinloist Gorthleck junction being improved by THC to provide better visibility splays. These routes will be designated as the “Approved Timber Haulage routes”. Access to the route from Errogie will only be used when weather conditions prevent use of the other access points.

The project partners, FCS, THC, Till Hill Forestry are working on legal aspects and will soon appoint a project manager to oversee its delivery. Further information on programme of work should be provided towards the end of the winter.

The FD are looking at harvesting option for the woodland behind Glen Lia, and are in discussion with householders over the condition of the road. Liability and access rights are still being clarified.

Access options are being looked into for the Camus block, IBR asked if a route from Glenlia would link on to the existing forest road down to lower foyers as a fall back should the lower Foyers Bridge suddenly become unusable, alternatively would improvements to the bridge be considered. Doug advised planning was at an early stage and would talk to Richard Evans THC about the bridge option.

Forest Design Plan

The Draft design plan will soon be ready for the next stage of public consultation; an evening as before is planned for January 2015. Please attend to voice your opinions and check any issues raised at the previous meeting(s) have been addressed or to require a satisfactory explanation is given if not.

Quarry Rock Blasting

Doug advised of two blasts that are planned, Allt Na Goire next week and Knockie the week after.

Firewood Compound & Community Woodland

Doug agreed with the CC that they are keen to work with the community and to look at various options with us partnership/lease/purchase via the NFLS. A compound adjacent to

the Fire station was considered as a short term fix for the firewood project pending the above discussions which could see a single solution to both items, or separate ones.

2. Police Report – Sgt Stuart advised that rough shift changes traffic monitoring was carried out on a number of days during November, no speeding was recorded and the only timber wagon was doing 32 in a 40 limit. Contact had been made with subcontractor businesses over driver behaviour issues. Please let the CC know if this was successful? The issue was also raised with Dores and Essich Com. Councils who had no such issues. Unfortunately there was no data from traffic police on their additional work in our area. There had been 3 other incidents, one of Firewood theft, the wood being recovered. Recorded crime is at all-time low. Please note as of 1st November Drink Drive limit has been halved – in short do not drink anything and drive as the limit is now very low. All the old myths of a meal and a single drink no longer apply; you would be over the new limit.

3. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of October 2014 were adopted. Proposed CF, Seconded KE, Unanimous.

4. Matters arising

Community website – **AP 1 CC to provide blurb to Eric Law to keep site up to date all to do going forward**

Glenlia & Gorthleck bus shelters – **AP2 Mda to follow up post Xmas**

Sochi Bends – **At last week's meeting THC advised it wished to continue the road closure next spring with use of traffic lights after 3pm, see report on the web site.**

AP 3 IB to write to THC to state this proposal is contrary to the October agreement where the road would be open with traffic lights from January onwards, that the lack of sufficient notice to the entire community affected by the closures of consultation meetings and failure to remove signs when the road is open is unacceptable. Also a better system is created to inform when the road is in fact open due to machine breakdowns or similar.

Foyers Toilet – **See AP 7**

ETAPE – **AP 4 MC to confirm ETAPE attendance at the January meeting**

6. Treasurers Report:

Ordinary a/c balance £3,106.51 of which Foyers Toilets Project balance £1,387.20, £1200 ring fenced for Transport Survey, £362 Ex Fraser Memorial still to be spent on a Community event. Leaving a working balance of £157.31 with £94.74 owed to Secretary for printer consumables

Play park rental review **AP 5 CF to contact landowner to confirm if a change is needed**

7. Reports

Fire Brigade – Neil advised a number of Home Fire Safety visits had been completed including revisits which are also encouraged, please make contact for this free service. CC gave a unanimous vote of thanks to the Fire Brigade for the excellent Fireworks display. Not forgetting Mr & Mrs Forbes for the use of the campsite and its facilities for an excellent event, even enjoyed by a State Minister.

Trust – KE advised;

BB - Trust supports the aim of maintaining a community newsletter/publication and that Hugh Nicol was looking into various options for how this could be undertaken.

CC Funding – The principle was accepted. **AP 6 KE * IBR will complete necessary paperwork to take the funding package forward.**

New Toilet block – **AP 7 Mda to call a working group meeting in the New Year to review the business plan and funding. Options. AP8 KE and IBR to complete initial application paper work to the Trust.**

BCC – Successful AGM, now have over 100 members with 8 trustees. Soup day, befriending groups and Handy man schemes are running well. Working on speeding up the social work assessments from the present 3 month wait. Everything going so well that NHS Highland is boasting that BCC was their idea.

Foyers – Land purchase – Ongoing with some issues. Slipway – IBR meeting SSE land agent on Thursday for an update. Paths – Consultation meetings held with a draft report to be circulated in December. Sports facilities – a first working group meeting took place & a note of it will be circulated, key point was provision of facilities for school children as well as the wider community.

AP 9 Mda to call a Ward Forum - consultation meeting in the New Year to discuss the above and Scotland's Canals plans for the Foyers pier

AP 10 IBR to email Nicola Drummond that we wish a separate Liaison Group for the Torness/grid connection works and that no work should start until Sochi's bends is complete.

Renewables – Construction on 4 Hydro schemes is under with another two to start in the New Year.

8. Roads

Errogie – Work has started and the Firewood is gone.

Corriegarth – Signage is yet to be completed, concerns expressed over the slick road surface at Loch Tarff and risk of cars ending up in the Loch. AP12 IBR to write to SSE to express concern over lack of notice re abnormal loads along the A9 Gorthleck route

Dunmaglass – The Sochi bends update on the web site provides latest info.

Torness – See AP 10 above THC are still negotiating with SSE over road improvements

Sockich's bends – **AP 11 Mda to talk to THC re unacceptable proposal of continued road closure.** Also see AP 3

There will be no closures between 19th December and 5th January, next community consultation meeting is planned for 22nd January 7:30pm.

AP 12 IBR to write to THC to advise firms that road is open till 9am to avoid use of diversion route during locals commuting time.

Gritting – new contractor appointed, Paul MacIntosh from Dores. Ongoing discussion with THC over start point. **AP 13 CF to write letter of support if needed.**

Foyers road – **AP 14 IBR to write to THC to require repair and maintenance works to this and the Compass sections of road**

Aberchaldar Hydro scheme – **AP 15 IBR to request up-to-date information on this from the planning department, as well as a site meeting with a HC engineer to look at the bridge and road conditions.** Because the road is already collapsing due to heavy Lorries for the wind turbine erection and it is questionable if the bridges will survive the Hydro scheme construction. Also previous identified repairs have not been completed to a satisfactory standard e.g. bridge expansion joints.

9. Planning

No objections are to be raised for the Balnaberran, Gorthleck affordable housing or the Gorthleck houses. **AP16 IBR to write to the Planning Officer to express our support for the HSCHT Gorthleck affordable housing and Balnaberran applications**

10. Correspondence

BB – last publication this December, meeting in January to discuss use of assets.

THC Sochi's update – see web site, 9am-3pm continue closures; 3pm-6pm open with traffic light controls.

Mr C Nicol – Sochi's bends and SSE Dunmaglass communications.

SSE – Stronlaing court case over John Muir Trust legal action is on 16-18th December Scot Gov. new web site for CC's to provide advice and support to CC's.

11. AOCB

Sochi's Bends information is on the Web Site

Trust proposal for a Community Coordinator/Project Development Manager – the concept is to have someone paid for by the Trust that can help do the leg work for groups that wish it. Also for groups with ideas who wish it, to be able to access a specialist in project development and funding options. After discussion the CC agreed we are supportive of the concept on the basis use of either is optional and is not a requirement to secure Trust Funding, also that such a proposal be shown to be supported by the community. The first consultation being at the Ward Forum Mda proposes to arrange under AP 9

Winter Toilets **AP 17 Mda to ask the Ward Manager for a Sign at the Foyers toilets advising of facilities at local businesses.**

Aberchlder Single Wind Turbine – It is noted the Photo montages were not representative of the actual views now seen, something to be aware of in any future applications.

12. Next Meeting.

Tuesday – 16th December Cameron's Café Foyers, 7:30pm