

## **CHAIRPERSON'S END OF YEAR REPORT – MAY 2017**

It has not been a year without its difficulties for Stratherrick & Foyers CC as we lost the services of two of our community councillors. I would like to thank the other members who willingly took on extra responsibilities during the months our personnel were overstretched. Without their commitment the Community Council would have struggled to carry out its work and our community would have been the worse for it. On a positive note, following an appeal for new members, Philip Crowe and Liam Longbottom came forward and were co-opted onto the council at our November meeting. I am extremely grateful for their willingness to join the CC and especially to Liam who has taken over the role of Treasurer from Martin Donnelly. We are a hardworking team and I thank each and every one of you for the dedication shown to the many and varied issues that affect our community.

Over the past year the CC has tried to represent the views of the community and pursue the best options possible with regard to renewables and road improvements in the local area. Stronelaig Wind Farm was granted planning permission in June 2016 and we are committed to getting the best deal in terms of Community Benefit. Negotiations are at an early stage and the SFCT and SFCC Community Benefit Negotiators will keep us informed of any progress made in this regard. The Stronelaig Community Liaison Group meets each month to ensure any issues raised by the community are listened to and addressed. We have certainly had our work cut out so far to ensure strict adherence to the traffic Management Plan. I would encourage community residents to keep the CC informed of any issues so that they can be resolved as quickly as possible. Aberarder Wind Farm has also recently been granted planning permission and we await further information on that renewables project.

The CC has been busy in other areas. We successfully applied to the SFCT to fund three defibrillators which have now been installed at Foyers Camp Site, Foyers Shop and the Whitebridge Hotel. If our plans to co-opt the telephone boxes at Errogie and Dunmaglass are successful, we also hope to install defibrillators there ensuring a good coverage for our area. First Aid events have been held to train members of our community in the use of these devices and also how to give emergency first aid when required. Some progress has been made surrounding access to Lower Foyers with Highland Council committing to temporary work on the Bailey bridge providing separate pedestrian access. We hope this will happen soon and we will continue to pursue this. The renovation / renewal of the Foyers Toilet block continues to be problematic but the CC is working with the SFCT to try to move this project forward in the near future.

I would like to thank other groups who have taken over the responsibility of community projects such as the Heritage Group who are carrying out refurbishments at the War Memorial and the Farigiag Steering Group working with the Forestry Commission to progress work on the land/buildings at the Information Centre. Without these volunteer groups the community would be unable to be involved in such work and I thank them for their services.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S END OF YEAR REPORT – MAY 2017**

Thanks must go to all SFCT directors for their continued hard work on the community's behalf as they do their best to manage our Community Benefit funds. The plans for the field at Lower Foyers, the Foyers Bay Project, Community Broadband, and many other such projects all take commitment and effort and as a community we should be grateful that they are willing to give up their personal time to do so. It is an exciting time for our community and we should all be engaging in the planning processes of these ventures to ensure we get the best possible outcome for the future. It is particularly good to see Steven Watson our Project Co-ordinator back at work after illness and I hope he is now fit for the challenges ahead. The Stratherrick & Foyers News continues to be an excellent publication providing the community with news, local articles and information.

We have been well supported by our Highland Councillors over the past year. Special mention must go to Margaret Davidson who, despite her role as Council leader, still managed to attend almost every CC meeting and continues to fight for the issues that affect our local community. Recently re-elected as leader, I wish her well for the next 5 years and hope she will still find the time to support our CC in its work.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for the support they have given over the past year. Martin Donnelly kept our finances ticking over in a temporary role and I thank him for that. Our new treasurer Liam has taken his new role in his stride and our finances are in good hands. Gordon McAndie represents the CC as a Director on the SFCT and his input and feedback are extremely useful. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Kim Burton our Secretary who has been an enormous support to me as Chair but also to the whole community as she endeavours to find funding for projects and keep the notice boards, website and Facebook page up-to-date.

Finally I would like to thank the whole community for continuing to support us in our work. We may not always be successful in what we try to achieve but the community should be assured that its needs and wishes are at the forefront of everything we do. To those who have voluntarily given of their time to help our community in any way, thank you. We are all working towards creating the community we would like to have and the SFCC hope, with your continued help and encouragement, we can achieve this goal.

Catriona Fraser  
Chair