

CHAIRPERSON'S END OF YEAR REPORT – MAY 2018

As always it has been a very busy year for Stratherrick & Foyers CC. I would like to thank the members who, 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 a new Liaison Director for the SFCT, Dr Jim Cameron volunteered his services. I am extremely grateful for his willingness to take on this post but sadly he has announced his resignation due to other commitments. However he has willingly offered his services as Treasurer as Liam Longbottom retires. I am delighted to receive his offer and hope that he is voted as a co-opted member in place of Liam. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Liam for his able handling of the finances which I am sure Jim will find in good order. 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 in the local area. 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. Due to the delay in the negotiations regarding Community Benefit, SSE has agreed to pay two years in advance with 23 further annual payments. With new large sums coming into the community, it is important that we find the best legacy projects to fund for the benefit of our community. We need to make sure that the future looks good for Stratherrick & Foyers – and when our descendants look back they can see that we did the best for them.

The upkeep of roads and gritting issues have been major issues for the CC over the past year. Continual reductions in Highland Council budgets have presented a challenge but as a CC we have constantly demanded a better service for our communities. With increasingly reduced budgets this has been a problem but we can only hope that next year's winter is less of an issue. As always we continue to raise local issues regarding pot-holes and verge deterioration.

The CC has been busy in other areas. We successfully applied to the "Your Cash Your Choice" event at Drumnadrochit for the on-going costs for the Foyers Public Toilets. Thanks to the sparkling pitch of Anna Crowe, we secured £1500 for the annual running costs and are hopeful for funding for a new toilet block. We have enlisted the help of Kyle & Sutherland Development Trust in our vision for the future of the Foyers Toilet Block. We hope to report on new developments in the near future.

The area has benefited from the annual "blue riband" events of the Loch Ness Etape and Marathon. The local volunteers who help at these events are to be thanked for their contribution without which such events would not happen. The CC 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 Inverfarigaig Residents working with the Forestry Commission to progress work on the land at Inverfarigaig. Without these volunteer groups the community would be unable to be involved in such work and I thank them for their contribution.

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

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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. As a CC we would especially like to thank the Trust for the purchase of the new notice boards for the community— certainly a much better provision compared to the weary and battered ones in existence. The Stratherrick & Foyers News continues to be an excellent publication providing the community with news, local articles and information.

There are renewed developments with HSCHT regarding housing at both Gorthleck and Inverfarigaig. The existing areas have been in abeyance and we hope that new plans are in place to kick-start these housing developments. It would certainly be a benefit to see housing available for young people in our area to regenerate our population and local schools.

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. Margaret has been a real champion for our area and I hope we can rely on her continued support in the years ahead.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for the support they have given over the past year. Our new treasurer Liam took his new role in his stride and our finances are in a good state as he hands over to Jim Cameron. 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.

It has been an honour to represent this community as a councillor and latterly as Chair despite the any challenges it has presented. However I feel I have done my time and, when the next elections arise, I will not be standing for re-election. In the meantime I will continue to put the community's needs at the forefront of the Community Council's agenda and fight for the good of our community.

Catriona Fraser
Chair