

# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 30<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023

### AT THE WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE

#### WITH OPTION OF VIDEO LINK

**1. Presentation from Nick Wright on the Local Place Plan and a request for the Community Council to submit the plan to Highland Council**

Following the draft local plan being shared widely in the Community and the opportunity to comment, all members of the CC agreed to submit the plans to Highland Council

**2. Presentation from Brian Shaw from the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board – potential cumulative effect on water levels and aquaculture from proposed pump storage schemes around Loch Ness**

Informative presentation given by Brian which highlighted many potential issues that any consented plans may have and further issues that any future schemes might have. Loch Ness already has the Foyers pump storage scheme that has been operating since the 1970's and the consented Red John scheme in Dores along with Loch Kemp at Whitebridge which is going to planning soon and a further scheme being planned for an area between Whitebridge and Fort Augustus. Admin to ask if presentation can be shared

**3. Present**

Patrick Haston (PH), Gill Gray (GG), Mark Hindley (MH), Simon Hargreaves (SH), Craig Lightbody (CL) and Chris Joyce (CJ)

**Public attending**

Cllr David Fraser, Cllr Chris Balance, Gareth Jones, Tony Foster, Sarah Byrne, Bill Smart (Glenurquart CC), Mark Pole (Inverness West CC), Kit Cameron, Neil Robertson, Jo Mitchell, Katherine Grant, Olivia Grant, Gordon Batchen and Sharon Ferguson (Admin)

**Apologies**

None

**4. Adoption of minutes – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Minutes of the CC meeting on 25/04/2023 were adopted as a true record of the meeting  
Admin to amend date of next meeting on them as incorrect  
Proposed by CL, seconded by MH

**5. Matters arising**

Email from Cllr Fraser re planned work for road improvements and priorities to be shared

**6. Micro Grant Applications**

Wildside Baby and Toddler group – Application for £500 to purchase equipment – all agreed  
Stratherrick Village Hall – Application for £250 to purchase kitchen utensils – all agreed

## 7. Reports

### Treasurer

Main: £13,735.95

This includes the £1k donation from Etape and £1k grant from HC to go towards the disabled access at Glenlia Park (this was arranged thanks to Cllr David Fraser). Both payments came in this month.

Micro-Grant: £2,383.82

The forms to add MH as a signatory and get online access are with the bank for processing

### Fire Report

No report received

### Boleskine Community Care

Regrettably both BCC's staff left employ in October 2022, one resigned and the other, having been given a start in life by BCC, graduated and moved to take up her career. BCC Trustees took this opportunity to review the staffing structure requirements. In particular, the 'services' workload had significantly increased as we sought to capitalise on benefits from working with the 'Highland Hospice' and provide more health & welfare options for our community. Additionally, they were aware that no previous employee had adequately met the needs to fully engage with the community – a role of key importance. So, BCC decided that not just two part time jobs should be created but three, the relevant procedures were followed and the revised Job Descriptions with the Trustee review notes were forwarded to SFCT in early December. Due to the holiday period advertisement and interviews had to be held back until January/February adverts being placed locally, on BCC web and SFCT web and media portals. BCC firmly believed that it is important for our employees to be members of our community as we sought applicants who fully understand our rural background. BCC now has three potential employees ready to start, highly committed and very able. All from our own community. Despite this setback, from January BCC has increased the Community Services and Social events that are offered at the Hub, these are all self-funded and have been well received by our members and with superb input from our Volunteers and Trustees. However, without staff assistance this becomes stressful. Additionally, the NHS now uses the Hub for Baby Clinics and as a 'Vaccination Centre' and we hope to increase such services.

BCC's problem now lies with the engagement of the employees needed to take BCC forward. Grants for BCC with SFCT commenced in 2014 and have been greatly appreciated. The lease on the land and property between SSE & SFCT and thereafter the lease to BCC all ended on March 31st 2023. Grants agreed between SFCT & BCC for employment and operations also ended on March 31st 2023. A condition that SFCT made to BCC in 2021 was that future grants should be match funded. Other funders have been contacted but all require but for 'core funding' ideas of proportions and guarantees that we have other funding committed to cover that which they are being asked to support. SFCT have not given BCC such detail and so match funding for core operations has not been possible to acquire. However, constructive discussions with other funders has enabled BCC to place applications for some small funds responses for such should be made in June. These problems have meant that our application for funds to SFCT has been delayed until after being advised by SFCT staff to place the full application but such funds, if granted, would not be available until probably September. To help BCC enable staff employment then BCC asked SFCT to extend the grant period for the employment grant from the end of March to the end of August – thus enabling the £15,000 remaining to 'bridge the gap'. This has been rejected for reasons that BCC feels are, at best, hard to understand -maybe with some invalidity and a newly contrived reasoning. A meeting between BCC & SFCT executives was held but without resolution. A solution was presented by SFCT

that would not meet needs, potentially contravenes Charity guidelines and offered without any option for negotiation.

BCC has requested another meeting, to include the SFCT CEO, and we await response.

The above was the report submitted from BCC. The chair of BCC, along with other Trustees and interested parties attended the meeting to convey their concerns. PH and Cllr Fraser offered to attend any meetings to help resolve the issues but despite sympathy for those affected and support for BCC, it was felt that the issues couldn't be resolved at a CC meeting.

### **Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust**

SLIPWAY - Planning with conditions has been granted for the Slipway at Foyers

ERROGIE CHURCH - A planning application has been submitted to the local authority for Errogie Church

PLAYPARK - A planning application has been submitted for a playpark in the Wildside Centre. We have been awarded £20,000 from the Stronelairg Fund towards this.

WILDSIDE LAND - The purchase of land at Whitebridge attached to the Wildside Centre should be completed in June.

RIVERSIDE FIELD - A call has gone out for consultants to support the planning conditions for the Riverside Field Project.

INVERFARIGAIG - The purchase of land for Inverfarigaig residents should be complete by mid-June.

PATHS - The Paths & Access Group was set up a year ago to complete a full audit of all local paths including information on who uses them, level of footfall and on whose land they are. This information was then used to determine sections of these paths which would benefit most from some maintenance/ development. Two were identified: 1) the stream crossings on the South Loch Ness Trail between Foyers and Whitebridge and 2) a section of the same trail between Foyers and Inverfarigaig, close to its highest point. Since then, the group have been awarded £20K through the Highland Council, Highland Regeneration Fund, and hope with equal funding support from the Trust, to complete the project this year.

NEW STAFF - Two staff roles have been advertised for Marketing/PR Officer and CAP Project Officer. These roles are funded by Scottish Government Strengthening Communities Fund to support the CAP and Place Plan over the next three years. We were awarded £104,000.

### **Riverside field**

The 1<sup>st</sup> pre-meeting of the liaison group, which is a condition of planning, took place in Jan this year then the 1<sup>st</sup> full meeting was in Feb 23 when it was agreed that any development would be phased. The next meeting was in April for which the minutes should be published soon. The Riverside residents are to meet with a landscape artist but date has been confirmed. Cllr Ballance raised that it was meant to be the 6<sup>th</sup> June but unsure in the landscape artist has been appointed; Tony Foster to confirm date with the residents.

CL spoke as a member of the community and raised his concerns that many of the terms of reference for the group are not being followed

## **8. Toilets**

The signs will be up soon, just waiting on a couple of the logos in higher quality CCTV, payment system for the waste disposal point and the donations box are all ordered Compass are putting in electricity to the waste disposal point, an outdoor tap and a bollard to stop folk parking by the waste disposal point

HC are providing signs for the waste disposal point at the site and at various other locations in South Loch ness to let campers know that there is this facility in Foyers

Draft concordat agreement – shared ahead of the last meeting; not had any comments on this but needs to be agreed

Peter Leyden, the toilet cleaner, is now an employee of the Community Trust

HC still not been in touch regarding the car park now the building is complete – some improvements are required

Official opening hopefully on Friday 16th June. Awaiting confirmation from Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund who was the main funder

Discussion had about issues with the car park; Cllr Fraser said to email Shane Manning. The local police had been visiting it recently and are doing a report with some issues they found

## 9. Planning

23/02188/FUL | Erection of holiday cabin | Grianach Allt Na Goibhre Errogie Inverness – no comment

23/02129/FUL | Alterations and extensions, foul drainage | Free Church Errogie Inverness – All agreed to make comment the same as had been made to the Community Trust last month; lack of parking a concern and the proximity to a listed building

## 10. Renewables

- Aberarder (SSE) – going ahead with original plans for 12 turbines at 130m. SSE bought from RES
- Cloiche (SSE) – Await outcome of planning.
- Glenshero (SIMEC) – Refused at public enquiry, no right to appeal
- Dell (Coriolis) – Scoping application in to alter the original approved plans from 14 turbines to 10, amend height from 130.5m to 200m and to vary the layout – Admin has invited developers to a CC meeting. No reply yet. Admin will chase up again.
- Corriegarth Extension (BayWar.e) – Highland council have now removed there objection, Admin to clarify but it seems to still be going to public enquiry
- Bhlaraidh – at Glenmoriston. Extension plans passed but three turbines less
- Loch Liath – same as above for location. **Now in for planning – object to height of turbines**
- Red John – Pump storage at Dores, approved at public inquiry. No further updates received
- Loch Kemp (Statera) - proposed hydro pump storage at Dell Estate. **Still awaiting planning app**
- Culachy Wind Farm (Fred. Olsen Renewables) – invite to meet. On an estate in Fort Augustus, at pre-scoping stage. Will invite to a future CC meeting.

## 11. Roads

Some good resurfacing work has been done but an increasing amount of high edges now. Cllr Fraser suggested speaking to John Taylor about this and what the priority repairs are for the area

## 12. Correspondence

HC – email to notify that along with many other car parks, the Falls of Foyers car park will soon be getting parking meters but it will be only ‘an invitation to pay’. Ward Cllr’s will have a say in where the profits after costs will go; request that money for the running of the toilets is considered

## 13. Upcoming events

Official opening of the Foyers Public Toilets – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Highland Gathering – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 12-4pm, Corriegarth Estate

#### **14. AOCB**

CL raised that the Scottish Government are looking at firework free zones and will be doing a consultation where you can comment

MH raised his concerns that the CC are getting representation from members of the community as they do not feel they are being listened to by the Community Trust; agreed to look at meaningful ways to resolve and this should be a future agenda item

Admin raised that the CC have received a renunciation document from the owner of the land where the playpark used to be in Gorthleck to end the lease early. This is to be signed by PH and SH. It was also stated that the owner was happy to accept the playpark returned in its current state and will not pursue any reinstatement by the Community Council

#### **15. Next meeting**

Next meeting will be the AGM followed by an ordinary meeting on –  
Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 19.00 Venue – The Wildside Centre