

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 27th JUNE 2023

AT THE WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE

WITH OPTION OF VIDEO LINK

1. Present

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

Public attending

Cllr Chris Balance, Catriona Fraser, Tony Foster, Kit Cameron, Neil Robertson, Gordon Batchen and Sharon Ferguson (Admin)

Apologies

Gill Gray and Cllr David Fraser

2. Adoption of minutes – 30th May 2023

Minutes of the CC meeting on 25/04/2023 were adopted as a true record of the meeting
Proposed by CL, seconded by CJ

3. Matters arising

None

4. Micro Grant Applications

Anna Peterkin (Highland Dancing Classes) - £500 to subsidise classes – all agreed

5. Reports

Treasurer

Main: £13,496.95

Micro-Grant: £1,627.82

Fire Report

No report received

Boleskine Community Care

Sunflower Care - BCC continues to promote and support recruitment of 'Care at Home' workers. In partnership with the Highland Hospice the BCC meets regularly to discuss issues that impact on the delivery of services. BCC has recently met to update Highland Hospice on issues around funding essential to the long term philosophical underpinning of life in the Stratherrick and Foyers Community.

Befriending/helping hands - BCC also is in partnership with the Highland Hospice in delivering the befriending service which has strong links with supporting 'Sunflower Care'

Spring Booster vaccine clinic - This clinic was held at the hub on 20th June. In these times of reducing our carbon footprint the BCC hub was available to provide a space to reduce the need for our senior community members from travelling to Inverness. All vaccine clinics will now be held at the Hub.

Baby Clinics - NHS continue to use the BCC hub to hold fortnightly baby vaccine clinics and these are to continue for the foreseeable future. Next clinic Thursday 29th June 9-12am, appointments only.

July Activities - The activities continue to expand at the hub. The space is also used to hold formal community meetings.

South Loch Ness News - This small monthly newsletter, volunteer led, is growing very popular. Any articles from the community are welcomed for publication. The hub activities calendar can be found on the back page. Current issue can be picked up at the hub or at the Foyers Stores. Next issue end of July.

Community Transport Scheme funded by Highland Council – continues to be an important facility in our community – please contact the coordinator on 07944 228830 to book a journey. We would like to promote the service, however we will need new volunteer drivers, please get in touch if you would like to help. BCC is working with SFCT to look at how we can promote and expand on this service to meet the needs of our community.

BCC thanks the Community Council for hearing the update, given at your last meeting 30/05/23, in regard to the funding and 'Hub' lease issues presently encountered with SFCT and for your very positive verbal support. Regrettably progress, if any, is slow. The land lease on the Hub ran out at the end of March - no progress on this has been reported to BCC since your last meeting. The BCC report to your last meeting concluded by stating that BCC had requested another meeting with SFCT Executive and CEO to determine if there could be a way forward that met both party's needs. This option was not taken up but replaced by an email on the 1st June from the CEO that formally outlined the option presented earlier by the SFCT Executive to BCC in their meeting of the 18th May. At that meeting the option was rejected for very good reasons – it entailed re-advertising for a staff member, so incurring 2-3 months' delay, for a 6-month post for a Job that would not be required thereafter and accepting that various SFCT staff would also assist in the running of the daily workload at BCC – some of whom are, we understand, not yet employed. Based upon these points BCC responded on the 6th June to formally confirm that the option was not viable.

Recently on the 23rd June BCC has received a further offer to support a single staff member but detailing some quite stringent conditions. The indication also being that the various SFCT staff should be included to assist BCC on a daily basis. This offer has not yet been placed before the BCC Board of Trustees and so cannot be commented upon here. BCC also placed the stage 1 application for a 3 year grant to SFCT on the 12th April – this included request for the core operational monies to run BCC and funding for staff (the 3 key new staff to run and take forward BCC and the BCC donation to the Highland Hospice to enable their employ of the Care-at-Home Co-ordinator). BCC has had no response from SFCT on this application which is now nearing 3 months old. At the meeting between SFCT and BCC Executives on the 18th May, the SFCT Chair and Vice-chair were adamant that this grant application was totally independent of any other issues being discussed. BCC therefore finds this delay inexplicable and does have the impact that, whilst the core funding for BCC operations continues satisfactorily, it is taken from BCC's own funds without the option for a grant replacement. BCC thanks the Community Council and will ensure that you are updated with any progress.

PH thanked BCC for the work they done in the Community and said it was regrettable that this situation had occurred but as the CC were not aware of the full story, he suggested that the CC set up a meeting with SFCT and BCC to try to resolve the situation.

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

RECRUITMENT - Peter is now employed by the Trust for Foyers Toilets. Jillian Barclay contract has been recruited as the Marketing and PR Officer, funded by Scottish Govt. Strengthening Communities grant. We are recruiting for the other job share and the Community Action Plan Project Officer - Susan Low has been employed as our Bookkeeper and we will announce the new Finance Officer soon.

SLIPWAY - QS has been requested to progress costing for tenders. We are currently tidying up the area around the slipway.

WILDSIDE LAND - The purchase of land at Whitebridge attached to the Wildside Centre is now complete.

RIVERSIDE FIELD - The local residents met with landscapers on 24th June.

INVERFARIGAIG - The purchase of land for Inverfarigaig resident's papers are being signed.

Following the CAP and Place Plan we have started the process of a Community Asset Transfer of the Forest School at Inverfarigaig for £45,000 plus annual running cost of £3000. This process will take 12 to 18 months. We would value the Community Council support for this, which will enhance our bio diversity, skills and learning programme in the area. *Members all agreed to do letter of support*
BCC - BCC have been given the option to recruit one of their posts they advertised for a six month period to provide support for Care At Home while their Stage 1 and 2 grant application is assessed. We are awaiting a response from their Trustees. Please note BCC advertised and offered these roles without seeking agreement for a change of use of their previous grant with the SFCT Board. This request was only submitted to the Board in April.

BUDGET FOR THE CC - was reviewed with a suggestion of a slight rise if requested for staff costs.

STRONELAIRG PANEL - the Trust is expecting funds to be returned from Stronelaig Grants with the suggestion that CC get £5000 to continue micro grants.

Riverside field

SH reported on this as the CC rep – the last meeting was cancelled due to many people being unable to make it. The next meeting is scheduled for 2nd August. CL spoke as a member of the community; he felt that this was too long until the next meeting. Tony Foster said the date was requested by a member of the residents group.

CL insisted that the group is still not set up as per the terms of reference and that the River Foyers Residents group had a meeting with the Trust and are awaiting a reply; Tony said he will reply.

6. Toilets

The official opening of the toilets went very well. It was agreed that admin would do a monthly update on running costs and any maintenance issues and meet with Tony to discuss.

Catriona Fraser brought up the safety issue of the cruise liners coaches coming around the Loch; SH said that they have been coming for many years. Discussion to be had with the organisers. SH also mentioned all the small coach tours; admin to contact them.

7. Planning

23/02573/FUL | Construction of playpark | The Wildside Centre Whitebridge Inverness IV2 6UN – *write letter of support*

23/02931/FUL | Erection of extension | Boleskine Lodge Foyers Inverness IV2 6XT – *no comment*

23/02764/FUL | Erection of garage (retrospective) | Tyndrum Steading Gorthleck Inverness IV2 6YP – *comment that the members of the CC would prefer not to see retrospective applications*

23/02567/PIP | Erection of house | Land 30M West of Fechlin House Moor of Knockchoilum Whitebridge – *no comment*

23/02548/FUL | Erection of house | Land 65M North of Balgorton Torness Inverness – *no comment*

8. Renewables

Discussion had about recent flooding event in Whitebridge and whether the wind turbines further up in the hills have affected the hydrology and infiltration levels; admin to contact energy companies, SEPA and Nature Scot and potentially look at a 3rd party looking into this.

Discussion had about community benefit from energy schemes; admin to clarify the rules around negotiation taking place after planning and the guidelines. Tony Foster suggested that shared ownership/investment in a turbine would give the community and income stream

- 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
- Bhlairaidh – 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.

9. Roads

Work outside Stratherrick Primary school - email received from HC; We have made good progress over the last couple of months and I am extending the works for a short distance at the southwest end over the frontage of the property Laracks. This is to provide another carriageway narrowing to better control traffic from that direction and deal with the existing reduced carriageway width as this presents a hazard and area of conflict. This will provide a much safer route for pedestrians and deal with the pre-existing pinch point at this location. Kerbing works will be completed this week on the existing works area with kerbing continuing thereafter at the southwest end. In July we will carry out path surfacing and preparatory carriageway surfacing works which will enable the carriageway widenings of the passing places and narrowing to be fully in use with a completed path. There will still be a final surface course to be laid on the carriageway but work scheduling and commitments mean this will need to be done later, to be advised in due course. Thanks for everyone's patience and support with the works it is very much appreciated. The School frontage should look very different for the new School year and the road and path will be open for full use making this part of the Village safer and more accessible.

Discussion had about caravans going down the pass at Errogie to get to the campsite in Foyers; admin to ask the owners if a sign could go at the Calanour junction.

Large pothole outside the medical centre to be reported. Admin to share reporting information.

10. Correspondence

Admin had an email from HC about shortage of private water supplies to some properties in Torness; Admin to suggest contacting the fire station to see if they could help

PH had an email from members of the community that were looking to build a house; some planning and practical advice given

MH raised that Ian Cameron had asked him if the CC had any influence to change the flood risk assessment for his property; the CC have no say in this. Find SEPA contact to pass on

11. Upcoming events

Highland Gathering – Sat 22nd July

12. AOCB

Foyers school closure – members noted their concern at the recent mothballing of Foyers Primary School. Members want to ensure that the Community are fully consulted on the long term future of the School and that the building is maintained in the meantime; Cllr Fraser said the contact at HC for this is Ian Jackson

SH raised concerns about the new parking arrangements in the car park in Foyers; although it is an 'invitation to pay', he feels it is very misleading as the writing to say that it is optional is very small and won't be seen by many, especially visitors from overseas. Admin to contact HC to look at this issue and how best to manage all donations that are being asked for in that small area.

CL raised that he feels that admin hourly rate should be increased; a request for extra hours to be funded by the Community Trust was refused in 2021 but this year's grant has a 5% increase included which will allow for an increase in the hourly rate

13. Next meeting

No meeting in July

Next meeting will be on – Tuesday 29th August 2023 19.00