

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 25th MARCH 2025

AT STRATHERRICK HALL GORTHLECK

WITH VIDEO LINK OPTION

| | <u>Actions</u> |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Present Mark Hindley (MH) – chair, Olivia Grant (OG), Gary McGowan (GM), Craig Lightbody (CL), Janet Hobson (JH), Helen Grainger and Chris Joyce (CJ) Sharon Ferguson (Admin) Public attending - Cllr Fraser, Jewels Lang, Anna Low, Ken Sinclair, Jim Cameron, Jo Cameron, Margie Elgar-Bond, Tina Jordan and Keith Oversby. Apologies – Mike Slater and Cllr Ballance Conflicts - No conflicts</p> | |
| <p>2. Adoption of minutes – 25th February 2025 Minutes of the CC meeting on 25/02/2025 were adopted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by JH, seconded by CL.</p> | |
| <p>3. Matter arising not on the agenda Road closure for remembrance service – Admin now has the forms to request this and HC have said they will waive the fees. Thanks to HC for this. FLS land at Boleskine – MH has written an email to FLS to make them aware that there is a group interested in potentially taking on an area of forestry. FLS have acknowledged and said they have passed this onto their Asset transfer department. Parking on the road at Glenlia – CL has spoken to the owners of the horsebox; he was informed this had a change of use and is now a campervan. It will be moved soon. The owners of the horse trailer are moving that too. Parking problems at Foyers shop – HC are happy to put a restricted time on the parking in the roadside bay near the shop. SFCC to consider what the time limit should be. Discussion had about wider parking issues. MH asked Cllr Fraser asked if the shop did end up as a community asset, would this mean parking charges could be removed; this question could be asked but other option is that the community takes over the car park. Could be done as an asset transfer. CL raised that making more parking at the green had been looked at before and should be re-investigated. OG suggested more disabled bays at the roadside. Admin has arranged a site meeting with HC on 10th April to look at parking issues in Foyers. Save Loch Ness meeting – Group has a temporary name of the ‘Loch Ness Biodiversity policy forum’. Tina Skinner said that they hope to start advertising meetings and encourage interested parties from all around Loch Ness to attend. MH thanked the group for meeting to add questions for the head of planning, David Mudie. Thanks also to Cllr Fraser for forwarding all these questions to David. All agreed to propose the meeting with David to be at the next CC meeting on 29th April and see if he can attend then. Navigation light at Corriegarth WF – Cllr Fraser chased again and the planning compliance officer managed to get a response from the Corriegarth WF developer; they did query if it was their light and also said they had never heard about the problem but admin has an email that was sent 18 months ago. Light is still on. Visitor Levy consultation – Anna Low spoke again of the concerns that local businesses have locally. Suggestion is that the CC complete the survey and do a letter to HC, also any individual can complete. MH pointed out that the CC have not had any support for this proposal. Admin to complete the survey and also do the letter based on the Dornie CC response that was shared by email.</p> | <p>Admin to apply</p> <p>Decision on time to be decided</p> <p>Admin to complete survey & letter</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Statkraft/apprenticeships – OG and Jewels Lang met with Vicky Johnstone (Director of centre for living responsibly at UHI); discussed report that Statkraft had produced. Concerns that no local communities, businesses or students at the UHI had been consulted in the process of the report. The report had been funded through an innovation voucher. It was felt important that any apprenticeships should be available to local people. Suggestion that the next meeting has a rep from Statkraft and the UHI as well as OG and Jewels Lang. OG to set up next meeting.</p> <p>Yard at Gorthleck – Admin now has a direct contact for the police, Planning breach reported, no reply from owner of yard yet and email sent to primary school – no vermin problem to report from them. CL reported that SEPA had got back to him and said they had received 5 complaints; Environmental health can only deal with the rat issue, all other issues like the burning of the caravans were for SEPA to deal with. SEPA has stated that the owner has ultimate responsibility and CL will pass on contact for them.</p> <p>Fireworks – CL had shared round wording for survey on the community’s thoughts on Fireworks and firework control zones. All agreed to publish the survey but this must have some background information on firework control zones. The survey will be online along with paper copies in key locations and also target schools and have some face to face sessions.</p> <p>4. Micro Grant Applications</p> <p>Alister Chisholm - £500 to maintain the war memorial; all supported but felt some elements were thought not to be very environmentally friendly (mole traps and weed killer). GM has agreed to speak to the applicant to consider other options and will report back.</p> <p>5. Reports</p> <p>Treasurer report from Janet Hobson</p> <p>Main account - £19,549.35 Micro grant account - £1,136.37 Toilets at Foyers receipts included in main account balance Via Stripe (QR code donations) = £49.68 VIA NAYAX (NEW CARD PAYMENT SYSTEM) = £11.15 CASH RECEIVED = £133.89 SFCT transferring this year’s £5k for micro grants on 15th April</p> <p>Boleskine Community Care</p> <p>Friends of BCC - We currently have 294 Friends of BCC. Application to BCC is open to any individual aged 16 or over who works or resides in the Foyers & Stratherrick area. The Board also welcomes non-residents who can contribute to and who wish to support the aims of BCC. By becoming a member, you are entitled to vote at General Meetings and can put your name forward to become a Trustee. We also send our friends monthly update emails.</p> <p>Transport - We are very proud to share our March transport statistics. We have 7 volunteer drivers who served a total of 21 passengers. They covered 1066 miles resulting in 95 volunteer hours. We have seen a huge rise in pressure on this service as people in the community become more dependent. Reasons for this are varied but predominantly due to declining health or loss of the ability to drive. We are constantly seeking volunteers for this service, please sign up if you could help.</p> <p>Befriending - In March, 5 dedicated volunteers supported 6 clients receiving 1-1 befriending. This resulted in a total of 61.5 hours of volunteering which also included our 2 group befriending sessions.</p> <p>Care at Home- From Care Coordinator - Down one service user. Up one service user. Equals 7 service users. We will be adding an extra visit to a current service user. 1 Coordinator, 3 contract staff on 16hr, 20hr and 25hr plus 1 bank staff. 59.86 hrs in a week of care but this will be rising next week.</p> <p>Hub Building - We have had a lot of work done recently at the Hub. We have had new storage cupboards installed thanks to our trustee Neil. We are having all the internal electricity work done for the arrival of our electric cars on Tuesday the 25th of March. The electric car spaces</p> | <p>Admin to share Statkraft contacts with OG OG to set up meeting</p> <p>Admin to pass on contact to CL</p> <p>Survey and info to be finalised by CL Admin to share & contact schools</p> <p>GM to contact applicant</p> |
|--|--|

have been measured out in the carpark waiting to be painted. The cars are in Arnold Clark Inverness awaiting the sign writers to put the correct logos on them.
MH noted that Billy Mackenzie had been in touch to give thanks for the micro grant that was awarded to help pay for stage 1 of looking at the potential community purchase of the shop. Jewels added that there will be a community consultation in April by the consultants. MH asked that parking issues at the shop were raised as part of the steering group.

MH and JL to add parking to discussions

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust – Craig Lightbody liaison Director

January and March minutes have now been posted onto the Trust website. The original format of the February minutes were very extensive and so need more work by admin to make them easier to understand before publication. They'll go on site when complete. Please have a read of these minutes and I will answer or clarify any queries you may have. The Trust CEO has 'tweaked' the Liaison Director job description to the CC chair's approval and will present it to the Board at the next meeting in April.

On the 13th of Mar, some directors attended training provided by Alice Duthuille from Development Trusts Association Scotland, (DTAS). All agreed that this was very valuable training and asks that Alice returns to provide the same for the directors who could not make this meeting. She said she would be very happy to do this and also to provide ongoing consultation whenever the Trust needs it.

A long discussion was had by the board on the status of the Errogie Church project. The architect has provided drawings for the new access ramp, disabled toilet and fire exit. Phase 1B is ongoing in order to get the building operational again as soon as possible.

The toilet refurbishment at the Wildside Centre is nearing completion.

An electrician has been found who will look at the car park lighting at Wildside and will hopefully get these sorted once and for all.

The Foyers bay project is almost ready for opening in the spring. An official opening ceremony is planned and will be communicated in due course. A more permanent slipway which will be more robust than the proposal in the current planning application, is planned and quotes will be sought as soon as possible for these works.

You may have heard that one of the Inverfarigaig houses has been re-released for sale due to a previous applicant stepping away. The Communities Housing Trust has re-advertised this.

The board still needs to elect a chair and vice chair but agreed to leave this to the next meeting when there are more directors present to vote. Maureen McGuire and Maire Brown are still interim Chair and Vice Chair for the time being. Peter Faye has also expressed an interest in standing for Vice Chair.

Two directors have agreed to join the Foyers Shop Steering Group. This means the steering group will have its full complement of required participants, (BCC Chair, 1 SFCC councillor, 2 SFCT directors and SFCT to provide admin and funding guidance).The ball is now well and truly rolling on this.

The next meeting will be on the 2nd April.

MH thanked Jewels for her work on updating the new terms for the liaison Director. MH also asked Jewels and Craig that going forward, any SFCT use of the Foyers school is clearly noted that it will not pre-empt any decision on the future of the school. Cllr Fraser noted that there is a very clear policy that HC must follow on school closures.

6. Foyers Public Toilets

Nothing to note

7. Planning applications lodged since last SFCC meeting

25/00214/FUL Erection of shed Land 20M NE Of Cruachan Torness Inverness

25/00889/SCRE Screening Opinion Request for a 275 kilovolt (kV) air insulated switchgear (AIS) switching station and a new 275 kV underground electricity cable – to be discussed at energy schemes.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>CL spoke about the application, 24/04611/FUL Erection of garage and 2no Short term let holiday cabins; CL has done an email with comments and it was sent to planning. If not showing on the portal, the comment is to be re-sent.</p> | <p>Admin to check planning portal</p> |
| <p>8. Energy Schemes – any updates in red</p> <p>Glen Earrach Energy Pump Storage Hydro – Foyers Substation extension (SSEN) – Aberarder Windfarm (SSE) – going ahead with original plans for 12 turbines at 130m. SSE bought from RES – MH and GM attended the recent CLG meeting for this; took forward the complaint that OG had raised about lorry drivers sleeping outside the site in vehicles. Both MH and GM were reassured that those involved in the construction of this WF are very invested in the biodiversity and doing as little harm as possible. It is important that this continues once the WF is operational and a report will be expected ongoing. For future applications, the CC should insist that reports ongoing are part of planning conditions. Ecological clerk of works to attend a future meeting. CJ suggested site visits. MH reported that there has been a change of personnel at the Strathnairn CC but they have called MH to say they are equally unhappy with the Community benefit offer; all three communities to write back to SSE to say why they are unhappy with the current offer.</p> <p>Cloiche Windfarm (SSE) – Consented Dec 23 (ext to Stronelairg). Await construction timings Dell Windfarm (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 – Two applications in; one section 42 to extend the current planning that has been awarded and a section 36 to apply for a new version of the plans known as Dell 2. Await coming to planning committee Corriegarth Windfarm (Greencoat UK Wind) – Corriegarth 2 Windfarm (BayWar.e) – Permission granted Dec 23. Loch Liath Windfarm – North side of Loch Ness, on Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston land but visual from SFCC area – HC to object to this application at next planning meeting Culachy Windfarm (Fred. Olsen Renewables) – On FGCC land. Planning refused – email received from SG to inform us that this is now going to public enquiry and we were asked if we wanted to comment further but admin cannot find any initial comment was made by SFCC. CL thought their might have been, admin to check. To ask planning if new NPF4 regs apply to this now.</p> <p>Loch Na Cathrach Pump Storage Hydro (previously known as Red John) – Above Dores, approved at public inquiry. New manager in place but no correspondence or update received. Loch Kemp Pump Storage Hydro (Statera Energy) and Ness Weir II - proposed hydro pump storage at Dell Estate – All actions that Statera were to fulfil following the November meeting are still outstanding. A new screening application has now been lodged for the substation. As it is a screening application, they are saying that the environmental impact has been considered as part of the main application but this is different to what was said in the main application and as it is a screening application, it is not open to consultation. Questions on this to be added to those for the head of planning but that won't be until the end of April; as the two planning applications contradict each other, agreed to write to planning to highlight this. Still awaiting date for the main application going to the planning committee. Also Colin Ross at HC will update us once discussions further advanced talks on road improvements.</p> <p>Carn na Saobhaidh Wind Farm (RES) – Situated in the Strathnairn and Strathdearn area, the proposal is to access from the A9 using and established road for other windfarms. At scoping.</p> | <p>MH/Admin to compose letter</p> |
| <p>9. Roads</p> <p>Drainage works at Compass have been done. Speed signs at Gorthleck and Dores have still not been re-calibrated. Admin to email Neil Fraser at HC. Bridge at Lower Foyers is making a banging sound when cars go over the bridge; CL had complained about this last year but was told there was no funds for this. CL to forward email he got and to report to Steven Grant. Cllr Fraser to visit the site on 8th April. HG highlighted that there is campervans trying to go up the corkscrew; she has spoken with Colin Ross and he is arranging signage. Tina Jordan asked</p> | <p>Admin to check records Question to be asked of planning</p> |
| <p></p> | <p>MH to write letter to planning</p> |
| <p></p> | <p>Admin to email Neil Fraser at HC re speed signs</p> |

about the link to report potholes; this has been shared online but MH will do a news item for the CC's website and will share it on there. OG reported that the edging on the Loch Bran road has been washed away and some of the passing places are not usable. There is cones out as CL had reported but further report to be made to update that it hasn't been fixed. Jo Cameron asked why there was money for traffic calming works but not for other works; monies for these works come from different sources, normally energy schemes. OG asked what was said about her complaint that HGV's going at 35mph on the B851; MH and GM reported that at the CLG meeting when this was raised, it was felt that the HGV's were doing close to the speed limit and couldn't be condoned for that but they were going to speak to the companies to ask that they try to let traffic pass when it is safe to do so.

10. Correspondences

Admin has written again to VILN board about the bridge on the South Loch Ness Trail at Ardochy; no reply as yet. GM suggested that we put our own signs up in the meantime to highlight the diversion. Liability to be looked into. Substantial signs are required. CL suggested that the pathways group take this on. JL highlighted that the pathways group are already discussing this and have been involved in discussions with VILN previous CEO. Admin had shared a SG survey on community benefit; all to look at it. Closes 11th April.

11. Up and coming events

Moteh Parrott concert – Fri 4th April @ the Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck
Highland Hospice charity quiz night – Mon 21st April @ the Wildside Centre, Whitebridge
Etape (closed road cycle event) – Sun 27th April
Ultra X (running event but road not closed) – 3rd – 4th May (one race starting from pier at Lower Foyers)

12. AOCB

Lights at Inverfarigaig – HG said that after consultation with residents, the street lights at Inverfarigaig have been turned off at night but now this has happened, some residents are not happy about it but consultation had taken place.

13. Next meeting

Tuesday 29th April 2025 7pm @ the Wildside Centre, Whitebridge

MH to add to CC website

CL to report again

Admin to report back

All to look at survey