

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 27th MAY 2025

AT STRATHERRICK HALL GORTHLECK

WITH VIDEO LINK OPTION

<p>1. Peter MacDonald – Glen Earrach Pump Storage Hydro</p> <p>MH introduced Peter MacDonald who went through the principles of PSH, how they can make use of existing windfarms and use that excess energy without the need to build more windfarms. After a presentation on the proposed scheme, Q&A held on the scheme. Some questions could not be answered and were to be emailed to Glen Earrach. Concerns raised over visual impact and very high noise levels from the blasting, particularly from Foyers and Inverfarigaig, disruption to the A82 which will affect the roads on the South side of the Loch, loss of peatland, cumulative effect and negative effects on aquatic life on Loch Ness. Community benefit levels of £20m per year was discussed. Document on project details on the CC's website.</p> <p>Decision to object based on the concerns above and the scale of this project along with the worries of the cumulative effect on Loch Ness.</p> <p>2. Present</p> <p>Mark Hindley (MH) – chair, Michael Slater (MS), Craig Lightbody (CL), Olivia Grant (OG) and Helen Grainger</p> <p>Sharon Ferguson (Admin)</p> <p>Public attending - Cllr Fraser, Cllr Balance, Jewels Lang, Ken Sinclair, Anna Low, Phil Crowe, Peter Leyden, Rob Mullen, Tina Jordan and Keith Oversby.</p> <p>Apologies – Janet Hobson, Chris Joyce and Gary McGowan</p> <p>Conflicts - No conflicts</p> <p>2. Adoption of minutes – 29th April 2025</p> <p>BCC report that was used wasn't the correct one, admin to amend. Other than that, the minutes of the CC meeting on 29/04/2025 were adopted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by CL, seconded by MH</p> <p>3. Matter arising not on the agenda</p> <p>Road closure for remembrance service – all agreed that a 1 hour closure would be sufficient</p> <p>Parking problems at Foyers shop – All agreed on 7 days a week 8am – 6pm restricted parking for 1 hour</p> <p>South Loch Ness Way – Date for stakeholders meeting still to be set.</p> <p>De-fibs – Hugh Nicol had previously attended CC meetings to request funds to install a de-fib at Ault-na-Goire; given there is no public building by these houses, all agreed that the CC should make a plan for putting a de-fib at both Errogie and Inverfarigaig as these areas are uncovered and would then mean that there is de-fibs closer to Ault-na-Goire. Discussion had on locations; the phone box at Errogie would be a good location but it is still a working phone box so we won't be able to use it. Agreed that we would ask SFCT if we get permission to install de-fibs on the forest school in Inverfarigaig and the Errogie church.</p> <p>4. Micro Grant Applications</p> <p>£500 – John Parrott for Swift bird boxes at Errogie church – majority agreed by email prior to the meeting.</p>	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <p>Admin to write objection</p> <p>Admin to amend BCC report</p> <p>Admin to contact Hugh Nicol Admin to request permission from SFCT and get costs</p>
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£500 – Gary Fentiman for radio licence for Foyers Bay radio - majority agreed. Conditions – ask for listener numbers now and at end of the year, advertise local events and advertise in other places than social media.

5. Reports

Treasurer report from Janet Hobson

Main account - £15,084.37

Micro grant account - £4,451.83

Toilets at Foyers receipts included in main account balance

Via Stripe (QR code donations) = £151.55

Via NAYAX (card payment system) = £184.36

Cash not banked ahead of meeting

24/25 accounts have been audited by Donalda Frasers and as agreed by email, a £50 voucher was purchased as a thank you as there is no charge for this from Donalda.

Boleskine Community Care

Community Larder

Our new community larder shed is nearing completion. Arbie, from Strathnairn Timber Buildings, has made an excellent job. This project was funded by a grant from The National Lottery. We have signed up with FareShare and Neighbourly to receive food deliveries for the larder. I have also reached out to Fiona at the Knockie Trust to see if we can involve the larder with their hardship grants. She has taken this to the board, and I look forward to hearing from them. The goal of the larder is to reduce food waste in the Stratherrick and Foyers Community and there will be no restrictions on who is eligible to use it.

Electric vehicles

We have had the charging points installed at the Hub since the 12/05/25. The Wallbox app gives us a great insight into all details surrounding the charger usage. The average cost per charge is £3.44 and we have used the chargers 20 times. The chargers are for BCC use only and remain locked unless we, or one of the carers, unlocks them using an app.

Treatment Room

Our recently refurbished treatment room has now been put to use. It will be used regularly each month by our new hairdresser and new beautician as well as Eva, the foot care practitioner. We also plan to book an ear wax removal clinic this month due to the services growing waiting list.

Seagull Trust Sailings

We have booked 4 sailings with the Seagull Trust. The first of these is on Wednesday the 28th of May. We have 10 people attending this trip from the community. We would like to thank SFCT for providing the community minibus and a driver for us to attend this trip free of charge.

Plant Swap

A community plant swap was held at BCC. This was a popular event amongst community members giving them the opportunity to exchange plants and seeds. Not only was this a lovely social occasion but it also raised some money for BCC.

Drama Classes

We had a visit from Steph Smart who is interested in hosting after school drama classes at BCC from August. She is going to post on the community Facebook page to gauge interest. She offers classes to those aged 4-18 and estimates each class to cost around £10 per child. We think this would be a great addition to the BCC calendar as we want to see the space used more often by children and families.

Foyers Stores Acquisition Steering Group

A new Facebook page was set up for the Foyers Stores Acquisition Group to update the community through. The steering group consists of 5 members-

Billy Mackenzie- Chairperson

Katherine Grant- BCC Representative

Craig Lightbody- CC Representative

Mark Sutherland- SFCT Representative

Peter Faye- SFCT Representative

Initial feedback from Community Enterprise has been highly encouraging. The importance of collaboration among all community organisations was strongly emphasised. If this is something the community wishes to pursue, it will require a significant collective effort.

The next steering group meeting will take place on Tuesday the 17th of June at the BCC Hub.

There was some concern that the name of the Facebook page may sound like the group are definitely buying the shop. MH expressed that the group must read the feasibility study and business case very carefully before making any further decisions.

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust – Craig Lightbody liaison Director

The draft copy of the SFCT meeting of the 30th April can be found on the Trust website. This is subject to change until accepted by the board at their next meeting on the 4th June.

The CEO report as stated in the minutes, hasn't been published on the website. I will ask that this is published on the trusts website rather than simply mentioning that it was 'circulated around the board'. The following are the highlights:

The refurbishment of the toilets and storage room at the Wildside centre are now complete. The Errogie Church project has had plans made up of the required alterations to allow its use by the community. The plans and expected costs of this will be discussed by the board at their next meeting. The Trust has since confirmed in communication with members and the community that due to priorities with other projects, it is unlikely that the Church would be operational this year.

The Riverside Field 'reset' will be carried out when the Foyers Bay and Wildside has been complete and Errogie Church building phase has started. A further round of community consultations are planned. There is a growing level of frustration among some community members for something to happen.

Plans for the purchase of the Forest School at Inverfarigaig are almost ready for presentation to SSE.

Awaiting feedback and further steps from the Pathways group.

A snagging list for the Houses at Dodd's Park has been presented to the builders. The trust has agreed to provide £500 to each family as a 'welcome gesture' to assist with moving costs. It should be noted that the minutes of the Trusts last meeting states that the £500 was provided as a grant 'to support the lack of flooring, kitchen units, cooking facilities and other basic fixtures and fittings'. I have asked how this fits in with the Trusts grant system as it is not inclusive to the rest of the community. I haven't received a reply as yet.

The Trust CEO explained that there was some issues with the housing that they were providing and the £500 for both sets of tenants was to help with some of these costs. They do hope to obtain this money back from the contractors and these conversations are ongoing.

CIlr Balance asked to be kept informed of any engagement on the Foyers field.

6. Foyers Public Toilets

The amount of coaches coming to the Falls of Foyers has been an issue; last week there was 8 full size coaches parked on the pavements and blocking the car park. The busses were from various companies. Going forward, if we can get registration numbers and numbers on the front of the coaches if possible. Would appear they are from the cruise liners but not confirmed. If parking dangerously, it is a police matter but not practical for them to attend that quickly. Situation to be monitored and photos taken if possible.

7. Planning applications lodged since last SFCC meeting

25/01922/PNO Erection of agricultural building, Land 60M NE Of Highfield Gorthleck

25/01824/PNO Erection of agricultural building and construction of track, Land 185M NW Of The Shire Tom An Mhoid Gorthleck

25/01570/FUL Erection of manager's accommodation, Land 35M North Of Foyers Lodge
Foyers

<p>25/01551/FUL Erection of extension, Torness Cottage Torness Inverness IV2 6TZ</p> <p>No comment on any of the above.</p> <p>CL questioned the Cllrs on the previous planning application that has been approved - 24/04611/FUL Erection of garage and 2no short term let holiday cabins; was SFCC's comments taken into account; Cllr Fraser pointed out that it is in the report of handling. If any conditions not being followed, it should be reported to the compliance officer,</p> <p>8. Energy Schemes – any updates in red</p> <p>Beauly CC have arranged an Energy Infrastructure Convention on Saturday 14th June 2-4pm. MH asked if anyone can attend. Open to the public too.</p> <p>HC training on social charter on 19th or 23rd June. HE could attend with MH on 19th June. Loch Kemp PSH – they have submitted further additional information with a closing date of 11th June for comment. Ness fisheries board consider the smolt work done on the additional work is still flawed. New Osprey nest has been found and reported to the relevant bodies.</p> <p>The new additional information includes the visualisation from Beinn Sgurrah that the CC requested but several things missing from the visual. It was also pointed out that the visitors centre is still showing on the plans. Initial ground investigation works within the SAC do require planning permission. Scottish forestry are still saying that they consulted with the CC about the forestry works that have been happening but neither the admin or Chair's email address got anything from them when they are saying they sent it. Cllr Fraser stated that he hadn't heard Colin Ross re the road report. Await to hear if it will be heard at the June or August HC planning meeting.</p> <p>Lynemore WF – application is for 200m turbines and all agreed to object on the basis of the aviation lights and the traffic crossing the A9.</p> <p>Glen Earrach PSH – admin has asked for an extension to the 16th June. Admin to pull together objection from issues raised tonight.</p> <p>Discussion had about getting a consultant to help write planning objections. Admin to ask the Glenurquart group if they are using someone. All agreed to look into this but unlikely to get the funds and someone in place in time for any of the current schemes.</p> <p>HC planning training – 29th May</p> <p>9. Roads</p> <p>Gully collapse outside Whitebridge has been fixed. CL has reported potholes on Glenlia road. Admin to chase up signs for the pass road, stating 'not suitable for caravans'.</p> <p>10. Correspondences</p> <p>All covered in meeting.</p> <p>11. Up and coming events</p> <p>Fish and chip van at BCC Hub – Fri 30th May</p> <p>12. AOCB</p> <p>CL raised the SEPA issues at the yard in Gorthleck; they are looking to prosecute in this case but stated that the police should have stopped the fire when they attended. Out of hours SEPA no to be shared.</p> <p>13. Next meeting</p> <p>AGM followed by normal meeting - Tuesday 24th June 2025 7pm @ the Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck</p>	<p>MH to write comment on the additional information</p> <p>Admin to write objection Admin to write objection Admin to contact Glenurquart group</p>
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