

# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 26<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2025

### AT THE WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE

#### WITH VIDEO LINK OPTION

#### **1. Present**

Mark Hindley (MH) – chair, Michael Slater (MS), Craig Lightbody (CL), Chris Joyce (CJ), and Olivia Grant (OG). Sharon Ferguson (Admin)

Public attending – Cllr Fraser, Cllr Balance, Peter Faye, Jos Kugel and Keith Oversby.

Apologies – Gary McGowan and Helen Grainger.

Conflicts - No conflicts

Also in attendance – Ross MacKillop, HC Community Support Officer- Renewables Engagement

#### **2. Adoption of minutes – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Proposed by CJ, seconded by OG

#### **3. Matter arising not on the agenda**

**De-fibs** – admin got permission from SFCT to put de-fibs on Errogie church and the Farigaig school and asking electricians for quotes. MH to get prices from the 1<sup>st</sup> aid company that he works for and make a plan for training once these are in place.

**SLNT stakeholders meeting** - Admin attended a meeting with VILN and other stakeholders of the South Loch Ness Trail; very little progress was made. Another meeting to be held at end of Sep. Admin will send poll to MH and hopefully he can attend.

**Scottish Forestry** – MH has to follow up about re-stocking but hasn't had time yet.

#### **4. Interim Elections**

Following the AGM we are now having an interim election to fill the vacant post. All current co-opted members can also apply to be elected. Closing date for nominations is Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep. All currently elected members do not need to apply.

MH also raised that the associate membership can be offered to Jewels Lang as CEO of the community trust. CL asked what benefit this would bring; it would bring skills and expertise to the group, and she would also get all correspondences. All agreed this would be a good idea to ask Jewels if she would like to accept.

#### **5. Energy Schemes (moved up the agenda as Ross Mackillop attending to speak on this)**

CJ and Admin attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Council Convention on the impact of major energy infrastructure in the Highlands that was held in Inverness on 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. It was a very lively meeting with 11 MP's and MSP's in attendance and 58 community councils represented. There was a lot of talk from the MP's and MSP's about the community benefit that comes with these schemes but that was not what the convention was about. In the end, all 11 MSPs and MPs have undertaken to take the Convention Unified Statement to Holyrood and Westminster and get it debated.

GM attended a meeting in Fort Augustus to meet with the Glen Errach developers.

Kate Forbes MSP held a surgery in Gorthleck; MH stated he is unhappy that the MSP made no effort to contact the community council to ask if they wanted to meet and was disappointed that someone of her standing and who knows more than most how local democracy works, would not get in touch and the CC had to make its own arrangements to meet her. CJ and GM met with Kate and presented the CC's statement on energy schemes. It was raised that the follow up meeting from the transport specific one that Kate chaired in April has never had the follow up meeting and the report on the B862 has never been received. Also, the issue that the condition to do road improvements was removed from the Corriegarth 2 WF when it was agreed at public enquiry.

#### Actions

Admin to get quotes  
MH to get defib prices

Admin send poll to MH

MH to contact Scottish Forestry

MH to email Jewels

**Aberarder WF** – MH had sent funding details to Ross McKillop to review, Ross reported that his colleague is contacting SSE about this issue.

**Dell 2 WF** – HC have objected to this on the basis that information was still outstanding, and they had been pushed for an answer by the ECU. This will come to the next planning committee and depending on the information received by then will depend on their answer.

**Loch Kemp** – MH had received an email about giving evidence at the public enquiry; some other members of the community hadn't received an email, and nothing had come to the CC email. MH finally got a response from HC planning re unconsented tracks. There are three in total. Members of the local Biodiversity group had taken up this issue when they met recently with MSP Kate Forbes. The 1<sup>st</sup> one, Dell estate has applied for retrospective planning for, but it is invalid, and they are awaiting new application. The other two tracks are being looked at by the enforcement team. MH asked Cllr Fraser if the CC were able to comment on the enforcement action; the answer is no to that, but the CC will be able to comment on the retrospective planning application. Cllr Fraser checked that permitted developments works were still ok to go ahead given that HC had objected but they are allowed to do these works. These works that were meant to be completed within 6 months are now close to that timeframe now; to be reported to planning enforcement.

**Glen Earrach** – additional information has been submitted. Sound levels still to be queried, peak sounds to be clarified.

**Loch Na Cathrach** – still awaiting to hear if going ahead after there application to the UK Government's Cap and Floor scheme; Ross to look into this.

KO highlighted that the Save Loch Ness group are organising a walk as part of awareness about the Glen Earrach scheme.

Ross MacKillop explained that he and his colleagues are part of community planning and were in place to support communities through the planning stage and then with community benefits. Ross is happy to meet up with the CC or individuals if help is required.

MH to contact ECU

Admin to report to  
planning enforcement  
Admin to contact  
developer  
Admin to check with RM  
before next meeting

## 6. Micro Grant Applications

£500 – Loch Ness Luvvies; to put on a one act play on two nights and a cabaret for local people to take part – all agreed.

£400 - Kathleen Farnham for subsidised Art classes at BCC and catering costs for charity event; all agreed

## 7. Reports

### Treasurer report

Admin wasn't able to get the figures ahead of the meeting. Full report to be done ahead of the next meeting.

### Boleskine Community Care

Activities - We received £500 from Tesco Stronger Starts towards children's activities. We organised a Grubby Green Thumbs event and put on a free lunch for all that attended. We had about 30 people. We plan to use the rest of the money for a Halloween event at the hub. We have a meeting at the primary school in a couple of weeks to discuss future intergenerational events at the hub. From September, our volunteers have decided to host Mid-week Mingle weekly over the winter months. We are really pleased by this as it is becoming a popular event. Book club will be restarting on Thursday the 28th of September at 7pm. This will run on the last Thursday of every month. The Hub will be used on Friday the 29th of September for a Traditional Music Night. Everyone is welcome to this.

Services - Over the last couple of months BCC has held multiple vaccination clinics, saving many the journey into Inverness. We have a visit from Hall Opticians planned at the Hub on Wednesday the 24th of September who will be offering free eye tests to all.

We now have regular hairdressing and beautician appointments at the hub. These are fully booked every time. Footcare continues to be fully booked, Eva now does 2 full days a month at the hub.

Community Larder - The BCC Community Larder continues to be a huge success and vital resource for many. It is now getting used every day by multiple people, we have seen the most footfall in the evenings.

Foyers Stores Community Acquisition - Our application to The Scottish Land Fund was submitted on Monday the 18th of August. We expect a decision by mid-November. We have also submitted our application to the Financial Conduct Authority to set up the new Foyers Community Stores Limited Community Benefit Society. BCC will have an EGM on Thursday the 4th of September at 7pm to allow members to vote on changes to our constitution. These changes are essential to allow us to continue with the acquisition project. For those who cannot attend the EGM, proxy forms are available at Wildside, Foyers Stores and the BCC Hub. We will be applying to SFCT for match funding towards the project, this will be our next big step in the process. We hope to arrange several information sessions over the next few months to keep the community as informed as possible.

Events - Our EGM is on Thursday the 4th of September at 7pm.

The AGM is on Wednesday the 24th of September at 7pm.

#### **Foyers Shop Acquisition Group – Craig Lightbody (CC representative)**

After a slow start to the project because of illness at Community Enterprise and a late submission of the commercial survey by Shepherds, Billy and the team at Boleskine Community Care have pulled out the stops and have been working feverishly since June to get the various funds and surveys to fruition, in time for the completion of the Scottish Land Fund stage 2 application.

At the end of June, a re-evaluation report was received by BCC, valuing the shop at £440K with a 'condition' report to follow in July.

BCC will be seeking a board to take ownership of the project, with the expectation that there will be a pool of expertise within the community to help take this forward.

BCC is also very keen on community investment. A 'Community Benefit Society' will be set up to help raise funds in the initial stages. A few people have come forward for this already. Numerous other sources of funding will be sought as the project evolves.

In mid-July, the SLF announced they have accepted the stage one application and that they are happy to go ahead with stage 2.

The SLF have stated that they're remit is that, for successful applications, they can fund 70 to 80 per cent of the total cost. The shop valuation is based on £380K for the building and £60k business income. This means total funding from SLF could be around £220K, (Based on 75% of £380K).

Taking investments and other funding sources into account and other costs, BCC expects to apply to the Trust for funding of £200K. They are waiting for feedback from the trust regarding this.

BCC has put in an incredible amount of work in a short period of time in order to get this project to this stage. They are to be congratulated for their resilience and commitment to this project in the name of the community.

#### **Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust – Craig Lightbody liaison Director**

The minutes of both the July meeting and the August meeting of the SFCT can be seen on their website. The July minutes have been accepted by the board, and the August minutes are subject to change until accepted by the board at their next meeting in September.

In July, Maureen McGuire, Vice Chair, stepped down from the trust. In August, Malcolm Stewart stepped down from the trust. The chair thanked them for their hard work and service to the SFCT. This leaves six elected members of the board and three co-opted members.

The riverside field project is ongoing. Although planning lapsed in June, the community will be advised of future plans in due course. Jewels will engage with community groups including the health and wellbeing group in relation to potential uses of the field.

The Community Liaison Director Role still hasn't been confirmed.

The trust discussed further funding for the Foyers Shop Acquisition and noted that further funding to progress the project, should it go to the next stage, must be subject to a full grant application.

<p>The chair noted a positive meeting with Kate Forbes. She expressed her support for increased housing and will investigate the progress of legislation surrounding Compulsory Sale Orders and revert back to SFCT.</p> <p>The board members agreed to fund this year's fireworks with the following conditions:  A constituted group to be created ahead of next year's event.  SFCT staff will not be involved in running the event  The Event organiser to discuss alternative suppliers with the Drumnadrochit Fireworks committee.  Due to constraints on staff time, this year's winter wonderland will be scaled back.  The Errogie Church project was discussed and the board agreed that the priority is to get this up and running again. The board approved the proposed building works required to make the church Health and Safety compliant. This will now be put out to tender.  The board approved the provision of a new 'Driving Lessons' grant. This will provide £300 to anyone in the community who are learning to drive. This is a one-off grant and will be paid directly to the registered driving instructor.  The next Trust meeting will be on the 3rd September.  Discussion on firework survey; admin to put wording on a survey and circulate.  Discussion on Liaison Directors role – suggestion that MH, HG, CL, PF and Jewels meet with Alice from DTAS to go through the role and both bodies governing documents to get a resolve. The role of liaison Director is one of a full Director with SFCT and this has always been the case.</p> <p><b>8. Foyers Public Toilets</b></p> <p>There have been some issues with the air source heat pump; awaiting visit from Mitsubishi as still under warranty.</p> <p><b>9. Planning applications lodged since last SFCC meeting</b></p> <p>Corriegarth felling application – MH to share screenshot of map.  25/02478/FUL Erection of shop and cafe with flat above, Land 60M South of Foyers House Foyers – <i>all agreed to object on road safety, insufficient parking, sustainability &amp; conflict with NPF4</i>  25/02986/FUL Erection of house and garage, Land 60M NE Of Highfield Gorthleck – <i>comment on size of garage</i>  25/02847/FUL Conversion of garage roof space to form short term let, Land 15M NE Of Home at Last Whitebridge Inverness – <i>no comment</i>  25/02617/FUL Installation of a new storage water tank to existing amenity block, Loch Ness Shores Camping &amp; Caravan Club Amenity Block Monument Park Riverside Foyers Inverness IV2 6YH – <i>no comment</i>.</p> <p>PF raised the issue of the lack of housing the area; he has made some enquiries about empty housing and compulsory sales orders. A meeting to be set up and the CC will be invited.  25/03084/PNO Formation of forest access - Land 124M SW Of Knockbeg Lodge Whitebridge – would appear that they are suggesting that they move the logs in small amounts from this site to a transfer point in Whitebridge that doubles the numbers of lorries – admin to query.  Jos Kugel asked if the owners of land that has planning for a house and distillery in Gorthleck could just build a house and not the distillery; Cllr Fraser will look into this, admin to forward info.</p> <p><b>10. Roads</b></p> <p>All road defects that the CC reported have been fixed. Thanks to HC from the CC.  Jos Kugel raised about the issues on the road from Errogie to the Calanour junction as very few passing places and very deteriorated edges with large potholes. MH suggested that in the short term, some passing places could be created until funds are available.</p> <p><b>11. Correspondences</b> - All covered  <b>12. Up and coming events</b>  <b>13. AOCB</b> - None  <b>14. Next meeting</b></p> <p>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 7pm @ the BCC Hub, Lower Foyers.</p>	<p>Admin to do survey</p> <p>MH to share map  Admin to write objection  Admin to place comment</p> <p>Admin to ask for clarification  Admin to email DF</p> <p>Admin to email Colin Ross</p>
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