

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 30th SEPTEMBER 2025
AT THE WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE
WITH VIDEO LINK OPTION

<p>1. Present Mark Hindley (MH) – chair, Michael Slater (MS), Gary McGowan (GM) and Helen Grainger (HG) Sharon Ferguson (Admin) Public attending – Cllr Ballance Apologies – Cllr Fraser, Craig Lightbody (CL), Chris Joyce (CJ), Olivia Grant (OG) and Jewels Lang (JL) Conflicts - No conflicts</p> <p>2. Adoption of minutes – 26th August 2025 Proposed by MS, seconded by GM</p> <p>3. Matter arising not on the agenda Interim elections – At the recent Highland Council interim elections, Michael Slater, Helen Grainger, Gary McGowan and Olivia Grant all put themselves forward as nominees and are now elected members of SFCC. As there was fewer nominees than spaces, an election was not required. MH had asked Jewels as CEO of the community trust if she would accept the offer of becoming an associate member of the CC and she had accepted. As a point of order, any office bearers that were previously co-opted members had to be re-nominated – Vice-chair – MH proposed Helen Grainger, seconded by GM Treasurer – MH proposed Olivia Grant, seconded by HG Associate member – MH proposed Jewels Lang, seconded by GM De-fibs – MH has arranged for equipment to run training sessions on the use of de-fibs and emergency 1st aid and will run the sessions. Prices still to be agreed for 2 x de-fibs and the cost of installing them. Once prices are known, funding to be applied for. SLNT stakeholders meeting – MH attended a much more positive meeting with VILN and various stakeholders of the South Loch Ness Trail. VILN now taking responsibility to arrange further meetings and apply for funds to employ a project officer to look after the trail. Scottish Forestry – MH to call</p> <p>4. Micro Grant Applications £500 – Jan Hargreaves, subsidize a Christmas Lunch for members of the community; all agreed £500 - Fiona Mohan, purchase gifts & food for a children’s community Christmas party; all agreed £500 – Anna Peterkin, subsidize Highland dancing classes; all agreed</p> <p>5. Reports Discussion had on the time it can take at meetings to read out reports that have already been circulated; as that is for the benefit of members of the community attending CC meetings or other attendees, a decision was made that reports were to be requested at least one week before a meeting and be made available for anyone to read then they wouldn’t have to be read out. Treasurer report Main account - £22,961.66 Micro grant account - £3,613.30 Toilets at Foyers receipts included in main account balance Via Stripe (QR code donations) = £334.84 (Jul, Aug & Sep) Via NAYAX (card payment system) = £469.44 (Jul, Aug & Sep) Cash = £750.35 (Jul & Aug)</p>	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <p>MH to get de-fib prices Admin to get install cost</p> <p>MH to contact Scottish Forestry</p> <p>Admin to do letters & payments to all applicants</p>
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Boleskine Community Care

EGM - On 4th September, BCC held an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to approve changes to our constitution. These changes were essential to progress the Foyers Stores acquisition project. We were delighted to receive 94 unanimous votes in favour. The updated constitution has since been submitted to OSCR and formally approved. A copy is available on our website for anyone who wishes to view it.

AGM - Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place at Stratherrick Hall on Wednesday 24th September. All current trustees stood for re-election, with no new nominations received. We continue with a strong board of six trustees: Katherine Grant – Chair, William Mackenzie – Treasurer, Susan Erlam – Secretary, Neil Farnham, Michael Macdonald and Isobel Allan
Care at Home - the latest statistics from our Care Coordinator: 9 service users, 80–83 hours of care delivered weekly (currently at full capacity), 4 carers plus coordinator, 2 × 20-hour coordinator contracts, 1 × 25-hour contract, 1 × 16-hour contract and 1 × bank staff member.

Recruitment: interviews held for two new carers, awaiting paperwork clearance.

Shop Acquisition – Funding Update - We are currently awaiting a decision from the Scottish Land Fund, expected mid-November. Following their advice, we will submit our application to SFCT once the SLF outcome is known. SFCT have agreed to hold an additional directors' meeting in November to ensure our application is reviewed in line with the SLF timeline.

Services - September was a busy month for services at the Hub. We hosted: 2 foot care clinics, 1 NHS deaf services clinic, 2 hairdressing days, 1 optician's clinic and 1 beautician day. All sessions were fully booked, demonstrating strong local demand.

Activities - September has been our busiest month so far, with events taking place almost daily.

Highlights include: Macmillan Coffee Morning (10th September): raised £250 for Macmillan, Mid-Week Mingle: now running weekly with excellent attendance, Workshops: two art sessions – pastel and gelli printing – both fully booked, Book club restarted- last Thursday of each month

Vacancies - We are recruiting for an admin assistant to help with the workload at the Hub. This role will be 10 hours a week and flexible.

Foyers Shop Acquisition Group – Update from OG as CL on holiday

Foyers Community Stores Limited is now officially registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. The founding members are Olivia Grant, William (Billy) Mackenzie, Mark Sutherland, and Craig Lightbody.

On 24th September, Olivia and Billy hosted a community information session at Stratherrick Hall, focusing on the Community Benefit Society model and the support available from Plunkett UK. The evening was lively and engaging, with excellent discussion from community members. We plan to hold many more of these sessions in the coming months to keep everyone involved and informed.

We have also arranged opportunities to learn from others who have already established successful community enterprises. A meeting has been set up with the Fort Augustus Community Company to hear about their experiences running a community shop. In addition, we will be taking part in a Learning Exchange Visit to the GALE Centre in Gairloch. The GALE Centre is a great example of how a community-owned facility can bring services, retail, and social space together under one roof.

Like our vision for Foyers Stores, it was developed to meet local needs, create employment, and support small producers, while also becoming a valued hub for both residents and visitors.

On the advice of our solicitors, we have also begun meeting with the current staff of the store to ensure they are kept fully updated as the project develops.

Looking ahead, we await the outcome of BCC's funding applications and prepare our community share offer.

Discussion had around concerns of the speed at which this project was going to meet funding deadlines and the pressure this may place on the Community Trust and in turn, relations between the two bodies. Whilst it was felt to be a great idea, it was a large responsibility to be taking on and in depth scrutiny of the business plan would be required. It was noted that whilst the Scottish Land Fund was at the end of its 4 year cycle, the fund will open again next year. Cllr Balance confirmed that the Scottish Government budgets for 26/27 are to be agreed in Jan 26 and the amount that SLF will have, will be known then. Agreed that MH would email these concerns to CL.

MH to email CL as the
CC rep on the group

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

No update as CL on holiday

6. Foyers Public Toilets

Nothing to report

7. Planning applications lodged since last SFCC meeting

25/03508/S42 Section 42 application to amend Condition 6 (site access) of 24/00045/PIP, South Muirnich Farm Gorthleck Inverness IV2 6YP - It wasn't clear what was being requested to be changed in the planning condition. Agreed that admin should contact planning officer for clarification.

8. Energy Schemes

Aberarder WF – MH hasn't heard anything back yet from HC officers that were going to be contacting SSE about community benefit for this scheme. MH has been told that as well as Strathdearn CC, Strathnairn CC have also now accepted the community benefit (CB) that SSE are offering. Discussed that despite the access to the Windfarm being in SFCC area and the visual effect being substantial, the offer from SSE is for £20k each year of the two years of construction but the ongoing yearly CB was to be split as 75% to Strathnairn and 25% to Strathdearn. Although the offer may not change as we are this far down the line, all agreed that this was a decision that SSE did not get right and that details of this with visuals from the planning app are to be put in an email and sent to the HC renewables engagement team for them to raise with SSE on our behalf. Strathnairn CC are pushing for the next Community Liaison group meeting to take place.

Loch Kemp PSH – the date for the pre-enquiry hearing meeting has been set for 26th November. The CC would prefer this to happen in person and have suggested the Wildside Centre as the venue so that it is held as close to the site as possible. The current site investigation works are classed as 'permitted development' and as such do not require planning but these works must be completed and land re-instated within a 6 month period. MH has asked Kyra Motley for legal advice and she feels that this should be able to be enforced by HC. Previous emails to be looked at to determine when the works started but circa late April/early May 25. Admin to email planning officer regarding enforcement action on previously unconsented works as not heard from HC

Glen Earrach PSH – Admin had shared details of a further meeting in Fort Augustus this Friday. It had been noted to the developers that it had only come in with a weeks' notice and being held at an unsociable time. GM to attend again.

Loch Na Cathrach PSH – no update has been received following their application to the UK Government's Cap and Floor scheme.

Dell 2 WF – No further update following HC's decision to object to the proposal due to still waiting on further information from the developers at the time of the ECU deadline.

Glenmarkie WF – new scoping application that has come in for a windfarm 8km south-east of Whitebridge with a proposal for 65 turbines at a height of 250m tall. Deadline for comments is 9th Oct. All agreed to go over scoping documents and agree a response.

9. Roads

Admin to clarify with CL if he has raised issues with road from Calanour junction to Errogie. HG raised that the lights at the works in Dores are problematic; Cllr Ballance will look into this.

10. Correspondences - All covered

11. Up and coming events

Inverfarigaig Residents Group AGM – 17th Oct, 7pm, Forest Classroom

Remembrance service – 3pm 9th Nov. Admin to ask HC to drop signs off for road closure.

12. AOCB - None

13. Next meeting

Tuesday 28th October 2025 7pm @ Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck

Reports to be in for Mon 20th Oct

Admin to email planning officer

Admin to put letter together with visuals

Admin & MH to check emails.
Admin to email HC

Admin to email HC