

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 30th JUNE 2026
STRATHERRICK HALL, GORTHLECK
WITH VIDEO LINK OPTION

1. Present

Mark Hindley (MH) – Chair, Gary McGowan (GM), Craig Lightbody (CL), Michael Slater (MS), Chris Joyce (CJ) and Jewels Lang (JL)
 Public attending – Ken Siclair (KS), Robert Main (RM), Peter Faye (PF), Alex Sutherland (AS), by video link - Cllr David Fraser & Cllr Chris Ballance (CB)
 Apologies – Helen Grainger (HG), Sharon Ferguson (Admin – SF)
 Conflicts – None

2. Adoption of minutes – 26th May 2026

Proposed by MS, seconded by CJ.

3. Matter arising not on the agenda

Service Bus – MH raised this issue again to ensure it did not drop off any bus timetable. MH then asked both Cllrs (DF & CB) if anything had happened regards the service bus post our last meeting. Cllr DF replied that there had been no movement on this subject since last discussed. MH confirmed that the CC would continue to chase this matter in the future.

De-fibs – MH has now received confirmation that he will be refunded the cost of the original de-fib he purchased in Jan 26. He has now successfully purchased a de-fib which will be despatched tomorrow and on arrival will be located on the Forrest School at Inverfarigaig. On completion of installation, it is hoped to organise suitable training post the summer break. MH received an email from SF regarding BCC de-fib cabinets needing repair, SF is currently sourcing/pricing spares.

Fireworks survey – discussed at our previous meeting following receipt of results, but as CL was keenly interested in this item and was not present at the last meeting further discussion was delayed until today. MH asked CL to provide his thoughts on the survey outcome. CL stated that he was pleased with the large turnout and surprised at how close the outcome had been. MH stated that, as there was not a clear distinction, there is no reason the change the current status quo, CL agreed with this outcome. CL did request that if future firework events were held within the community, that they would be 'shared around' the community and not just held at the campsite in Lower Foyers. PF stated that this maybe something which could fall under the SFCT Events Committee remit.

Foyers Primary School – an online meeting took place Thursday 25 June attended by MH, SF, Cllr DF, 3 teachers from local schools and a representative from the Highland Council education dept plus one local family (parent couple). MH stated he was disappointed with the meeting as there was poor representation of the local community including parents. As such, the CC members present made the point it was unacceptable to make a decision on HC next course of action regarding the school. However, the education dept representative did not take that issue onboard and proceeded to take a straw poll vote and the end of the meeting. CL stated that at a previous meeting a similar action had taken place. MH stated that at the end of the meeting he made attendees aware that the community were sick of being consulted on activities and following a process, when it was clear that a decision had already been taken on a course of action. MH was not clear of the outcome of the meeting, but the straw-pool vote was to proceed with closure of the school. MH asked if Cllr DF had spoken to the HC Ed department since the meeting. Cllr DF stated that following a meeting regards two possible outcomes (further 1 year school mothball or school closure) for the primary school, he spoke to Derick Martin. Mr Martin confirmed that the decision was to follow a course of consultation and moved towards school closure. Cllr DF stated that a final decision had not yet been taken and that it would be in the communities' interest to ensure that any future consultation meetings were very well advertised and attended. PF asked the question 'are the Highland Council aware of the demographic within SFCC area,' MH stated that 'if the primary school were to reopen, it would have a school roll of

Actions

Admin to source/price spares.

4 pupils.’ Cllr DF stated that Highland Council do look at a number of different data points (GPs, catchment areas etc.) when looking at school pupil numbers. MH requested that Cllr DF provide further feedback to SFCC once he has spoken again to Mr Derek Martin. 4. Micro Grant Applications Inverfarigaig Residents Group - The grant will be used to purchase solar panels, a charge controller, battery and pump to replace/upgrade existing system in our community Polycrub at Inverfarigaig (circa £400) and pay for our annual public liability insurance (circa £100). MH requested clarification regards public liability insurance was for. JL confirmed that the insurance would cover the polycrub and activities within that specific location. Proposed by MH, seconded by CL. MH also raised a question regards a micro grant application discussed at the last SFCC meeting, GM was able to provide suitable information. A discussion was held regards the current micro grant limit of £500, which was set in 2014. MH stated that, according to the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, the £500 figure should now be around £710 (as of May 2026). MH proposed that the micro grant limit should be raised to £750, seconded by CL. JL enquired as to whether SFCC should have to inform SSE regards any change to the micro grant limit, MH agreed that this should be done. 5. Reports Treasurer report Main account - £14,227.70 Micro grant account - £4,613.21 (the CC have previously approved two payments of £500 each to BCC that have still to be paid so the micro grant total should be £3,613.21 if both payments are made (£500 towards generator shed Feb 26 – conditions not complied with yet and £500 to pay for inflatables at garden party – await last year’s completion report and invoice)) Toilets at Foyers receipts included in main account balance - Via Stripe (QR code donations) = £133.89 (June) Via NAYAX (card payment system) = £124.14 June) Cash = Not yet banked. MH raised the point that following previous discussion at SFCC last meeting regarding Aberarder Community Benefit and the possibility of additional reserve money, should SFCC look at some form of additional savings account. MS reported that he had undertaken initial market research (bank and saving accounts) and his findings showed that the accounts/rates on offer were pretty similar across the board. MS stated that it may be better for administration purposes to set up an additional account (alongside both Main/Micro Grant SFCC accounts) with Virgin Money. JL raised a question regards public liability and additional cash funds, MH stated that following a discussion with Cllr DF, public liability related more towards physical holdings (property etc) rather than cash. Cllr DF confirmed that fact. Boleskine Community Care Activity since our last report in April 2026; with apologies for not providing a report in May due to an admin error. Attendance/footfall at the Hub over May and June 2026 to Monday 22nd June: - In May: 138 individuals attending activities such as Tai Chi, Film Club, Moovin Aboot, Mid-Week Mingle, Broth and Blether, the Art Club, Plant Swop ● 21 individuals visiting the footcare clinic across 2 dates in May including scheduled appointments for 30th May ● 5 individuals visiting Wendy Hope therapy/wellbeing ● 1 individual visiting Leteisha’s beauty treatment day ● 15 individuals visiting Aileen’s hair appointments to 22nd June: ● 146 individuals attending our usual activities plus ● 2 individuals attending Leteisha’s beauty ● 5 individuals visiting Wendy Hope therapy/wellbeing ● A sold out Thai takeaway service on 20th June	Chair to write to SSE and confirm new micro grant upper limit of £750. MS to investigate additional savings account and inform SFCC of outcome.
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- On Thursday 4th June we held our first ever Menopause Cafe at the Hub with 6 attending and future meetings are being planned
- 5 individuals are currently booked onto the free Seagull Cruise on 30th June, with thanks in advance to the Trust for use of their minibus to enable members of our community to participate in this trip

Transport activity in May (June data not available until July)

- 17 passengers
- 776 miles
- 6 drivers
- 52 volunteer hours These journeys range from taking people to Raigmore, to GP appointments, to medication delivery requests for those that are housebound, to enabling community members to attend BCC Hub or other community events.

Care activity in May (June data not available from Highland Hospice until July)

- 5 service users
- 4 members of staff plus 1 bank
- 63 hours of care delivered per week Home visits and one-to-one befriending
- May - 6.5 hours involving home visits and one to one support for 5 individuals
- June (to 22nd June) - 7.5 hours including some support provided in groups Food larder The larder continues to be well used by our community, meeting a real need locally. At times the larder is quite empty despite the generosity of local supermarkets, FairShare and Foyers Lodge and we continue to apply for grants to provide more food support to the community via this service. An incident regarding the misuse of the larder has been dealt with. Donations to the larder vary from around £15 to £40 each week. Other services and wider activities May and June were busy months for BCC. Formal management of the Foyers Community Stores has been handed over to the Stores committee, with BCC now simply acting as landlords for the premises.

Additional or new BCC events held in May and June, beyond the usual activities included:

- on Saturday 23rd May we held our annual plant swap event at the Hub with around 15 people attending to share plants and seeds.
- we held out annual Volunteer thank you event held Saturday 6th June at the Hub, with food and music offered to our volunteers without whom many of BCC's activities would not be possible
- we hosted the Thai takeaway on Saturday 20th June with a sold-out menu.
- on 30th June, we will be taking up to 10 of our members on a free Seagull boat tour from Inverness, with thanks for the use of the SFCT community bus. Beyond these specific activities, we continue with our general work supporting individual members of our community on a one to one basis - examples recently include helping elderly members of our community successfully apply for energy grants to help with the rising cost of fuel, supporting elderly members with exemptions from jury duty, supporting individuals through bereavement, loneliness, caring responsibilities and isolation, and helping members navigate online systems to apply for items such as bus passes or bin collections.

Looking ahead The BCC Summer Party is being held on Saturday 4th July at the BCC Hub in Foyers from 1-5pm. The events will include a food van provided by Olipops, drinks by the Boozy Pony, a bouncy castle, music, a raffle draw to raise funds for BCC and local stalls. Nearly all costs have been covered by the use of external food vans or grants. We would encourage everyone to attend.

Highland Hospice has approached a number of local care partners, including BCC, about the local partners taking over the management of local care provision from HH. Going forward, HH wish to focus on their core mission of palliative care. BCC is therefore in discussion with HH about taking on a more direct responsibility for the care provided locally with the aim of making a formal application. Any decisions or a formal application to do so via the Care Inspectorate would of course be based, amongst other things, on the financial viability of BCC taking on this.

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

SFCC attendance by Gary MacGowan – 03 June 2026

I provided a brief overview of the 26 May SFCC meeting. In respect of the previous question concerning negotiations with energy companies ref community benefit funds, I informed them that this will remain joint between SFCC and SFCT. I gave an update on current and proposed energy schemes and informed the board regarding the one-off payment for Arberarder Wind Farm. There

was a discussion over liability issues of SFCC receiving funds directly from SSE to give to SFCT and whether this was a deviation from accepted practice. In relation to the joint Strathnairn CC and SFCC Dark Skies application, it was suggested that the street lighting in Foyers could also be turned off at midnight. I suggested this would need to be surveyed within the community. I was asked if SFCC had received any requests for Stratherrick Hall to install car park lighting. I reported that nothing on this matter had been discussed.

The next SFCT Board meeting is Wednesday 01 July.

CEO Report to Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council –

JL reported that the Singing in the Strath event was very well attended (125 people), it was a great success and enjoyed by all those attending.

Errogie Old Church – is now health & safety compliant and open for business. SFCT have been award £10,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund, which will be used to support the Gala. SFCT has also just released a further tranche of funding for BCC.

6. Foyers Public Toilets

In the absence of SF, nothing to report

7. Resilience Plan

In the absence of SF, nothing to report. KS did ask if BCC were still taking a lead role in this matter. MH stated that was not the case, but it was a much wider piece of work, not just within SFCC area. JL stated that SF was trying to source funding/grant in support of possible employment of a consultant to help with this matter. KS asked if there was a statutory obligation on SSEs part to provide resilience, Cllr DF replied that, to the best of his knowledge he was not aware of a statutory obligation.

8. Planning applications lodged since last SFCC meeting

No new planning applications since last meeting. MH stated that SF had previously distributed some planning application which had been granted. Also confirming she had added comments (as requested by SFCC) to the Wester Drummond application regards road access.

9. Energy Schemes

Aberarder Wind Farm – MH wrote to Carol Masheter of SSE following last meeting, regarding SFCC decisions about community benefit fund and micro grant increase. As of yet MH has received no response. JL stated that she would be happy to broach the subject with Carol Masheter at their next meeting.

Loch Kemp – MH stated that there had been a flurry of emails starting with Starthnairn CC being contacted by Loch Cathrach hydro scheme regarding an imminent OFGEM Cap and Floor scheme decision and indicating they would like to hold a community event. OFGEM published their 'Minded To' decision, listing schemes which have their Cap and Floor support. On the list were, Loch Kemp, Corie Glass, but not Loch Cathrach. As such, Loch Cathrach has now cancelled their planned community event. MH stated that one of the criteria for the Cap and Floor scheme was to have planning in place, which neither Loch Kemp or Corie Glass have. MH received a phone call from Brian Shaw who informed MH that Loch Kemp was placed at No 1 on all the lists within the OFGEM documents indicating it was noted as the best scheme. MH went on to say that the scheme the PLI considered was for a 600MW scheme of 15hrs duration, but the OFGEM 'Minded To' support is for a 660MW and 22.5hrs duration. So in effect, it is a different scheme that still has not been consented. MH stated that OFGEM are looking at a consultation process with a deadline of 07 August 2026. MH asked if either Cllr had anything to say on the matter. Cllr CB stated that he was astonished by OFGEMs decision, both the issue of Loch Kemp award and that OFGEMs supported the scheme despite not having passed planning. Cllr CB stated that he would be contacting OFGEM regarding this issue and recommended that SFCC do the same. Cllr DF supported this advice, also recommending that contacting the local MP would be advisable. MH went on to say that the Reporter for the PLI is currently preparing his report, but as far as he is aware, the report covers a scheme that is no longer

being built. It was agreed for SFCC to look at the Cap and Floor decision, to see what aspects we would like to challenge, and which organisation we should pursue this issue. Dell 2 Wind Farm – dragging on for months, PLI was supposed to be completed, but Highland Council, Nature Scotland and the applicant still trying to agree on peat. The report has now agreed to hold a second enquiry meeting, which took place on Thursday 25 June, attended online by MH. The in-person hearings will be held on the 27 & 28 July, in the Wildside Centre. Primarily to discuss, the main sticking point, peat. There is a further site visit planned for the 29 July, which will be followed by a Conditions Hearing to be held online on 20 August 2026. MH is to attend that hearing session. Glenmarkie Wind Farm – MH, HG, CJ, GM attended a meeting with Ruth Liddicoat and Lucy Blake of Vattenfall, on the 16 June. On the whole, the Glenmarkie team appeared quite open, willing to listen to SFCC concerns and indicated a willingness to change aspects of their scheme. They appear to have a plan to avoid aviation lighting (red lights) by using a form a sensor based lighting/warning. However, this would require a change to airspace designation, only allowing those aircraft with suitable transponders to use the area. Their construction manager believes using the A9, A 862, A851 route would be impractical, and prefers the A9, A82 and back up from Fort Augustus. They are aware that the Dell 2 access has not been built, so are unable to use that as an entry point. A further meeting was agreed for September (date tbc) focusing mainly on transport. It is hoped by then they will have a more focused design. Loch Liath – information emailed to SFCC members by SF. SFCC not included in the PLI process for this scheme. 10. Roads AS stated he has been campaigning for some time to get new roads signs located at the top and bottom of the Errogie to Inverfarigaig road ends, due to the damage caused by unsuitable vehicles using that road. KS raised a point regarding an unused culvert at Calanour junction. MH stated that this would be included as a question when SFCC submit their priority road issue request to Colin Ross at Highland Council. Cllr DF recommended that SFCC contact Matt White at Highland Council to arrange a suitable time/date for a combined SFCC/HC road survey. This would ensure that SFCC could cover all their priority requirements during a face-to-face discussion. 11. Correspondences MH stated he had received an email from SF regarding Highland Councils intentions to conduct works on public footpaths in the Falls of Foyers area. JL noted that Highland Council were also intending to conduct a tree survey in the Foyers area within the near future. 12. Up and coming events BCC Summer party – Sat 4th July @ The Hub, Lower Foyers 13. AOCB Nothing to report. 14. Date of next meeting Tues 25th August 2026 7pm @ The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge Reports to be in for Tues 18th August 2026	MH to discuss with SF. SF to confirm details with HC.
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