



Cromarty and District Community Council
Approved minutes of meeting held on
Monday 27th February 2023, 730pm
Virtually via Whereby

Approved
Minutes
27/03/23

Present

Community Councillors: Paige Shepherd (PS) - Chairwoman, Alan Plampton (AP) – Treasurer, Peter Ratcliffe (PR) - Secretary, Kari Magee (KM) & Andy Thurgood (AT).

Highland Councillor(s): Lyndsey Johnston (LJ).

Member(s) of the public:

Minute Secretary: Claire Fraser (CF)

1. Chair's Welcome & Apologies

PS welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished all a Happy New Year.

Apologies from Nigel Shapcott & Dominic Scott-Lodge - Youth Member.

Minute secretary note – Meeting entirely online this month due to illness.

2. Declarations of interest

No changes to declarations since meeting of 26th October 2020.

3. Approval of previous minutes, 30th January 2023

The minutes were approved by KM and seconded by PR.

4. Matters Arising from previous minutes, 30th January 2023

1. (4.1 – On hold – Waiting for more direction re. TMP in 2025.) **On hold.**
2. (4.2 - To discuss redesign of the Welcome sign for Cromarty). Email sent to Fraser to discuss next steps. **Action – PS & FT.**
3. (4.3 – To resubmit photos of fly tipping at Whitedykes to THC). Ongoing. **Action – KM.**
4. (4.4 – To discuss action required re. progressing level-crossing system @ Reeds Loop (see May minutes for full info). Ongoing. **Action – PS/KM.**
5. (4.5 – Still waiting guidance from TSG re. Green Freeport proposals). Ongoing. **Action – KM.**
6. (4.6 – Potential to involve the Primary School with Links Shrubbery continuous maintenance). **On hold.**
7. (4.8 – Residents to continue to submit noise complaints directly to THC). Ongoing. **Action – KM.**
8. (4.9 – Letter for local businesses re. current vacancies to be submitted for approval). Letter has been sent round. To be emailed or posted? To discuss. **Action – PS.**

9. (4.10 – Seek a new contractor for bus shelter repair). More damage has been done. Email has been sent to Stagecoach (trying to see if they'll action the repairs). Stagecoach have agreed to undertake the works, but planning is needed. To discuss. **Action – PR.**
- 10.(4.11 – On hold - finance needed from THC re. Reeds Loop maintenance, but enough in budget just now).
- 11.(4.12 – Pictures of damaged fence sent to Cai at THC for action)). Chased up. **Action – PS.**
- 12.(4.13 – Re-visit our approach for requests re. large events in the future). **Action – ALL.**
- 13.(4.14 – Still awaiting reports re. major maintenance issue at Hugh Millers Institute). Ongoing. **Action - AP.**
- 14.(4.15 – Refresher resilience training to be arranged). See VH report. **Action – AP.**
- 15.(4.16 – Awaiting response from keyholders re. providing names of the regular users/key holders of the hall to PS post financial year end). Ongoing. **Action – AP.**
- 16.(4.17 –KM to follow up the youth mentoring programme with Dom). **Action – KM & TG.**
- 17.(4.18 – Retrieve funds held back by Di Agnew for repairs to TVH (Common Good) post year-end financial statements). **Action – AP.**
- 18.(4.19 – To chase Andrew Puls at THC re. self-seeding trees plus repairs to East Church). **Action C&DCC.**
- 19.(4.20 – Approved to receive £3k funding from community regeneration fund = survey in March 2023). Not yet received, under review. **Action – AP.**
- 20.(4.21 – Weed burning to be completed once weather improves). Ongoing. **Action – NS.**
- 21.(4.22 – Decision being made in January re. 3 year funding programme (YC)). **Discharged. Funding declined.**
- 22.(4.23 – Ongoing monitoring of daffodil field maintenance required). Daffodil field has been cleared of brambles etc & plants (plus items of fly tipping also exposed). **Action – PR.**
- 23.(4.24 – To discuss hedging options for The Victoria Park at future date). **Action – ALL.**
- 24.(4.25 – Prepare a poster to encourage folk to apply for social housing regardless of their circumstance). To be sent to members for approval. Ongoing. **Action – PS.**
- 25.(4.27 – Contact other members of THC re. raising funds to replace gym equipment in The Victoria Park). Ongoing as grant application was refused under (4.37 in Nov 22 minutes). **Action – AP.**
- 26.(4.28 – Gritting package submitted, team set up – 5 more bins are located on site. To be monitored). Team set up, THC have paperwork. Not much use at the moment. **Action - PR.**
- 27.(4.30 – Update Cromarty Live Website). Currently looking at existing security parameters. **Action AT.**
- 28.(4.32 – Await reply from newsletter team re. POCF regular contribution). **Action – PS.**
- 29.(8.1 – Discuss the sub-committee document circulated by AP (led by Nige)). **Action – NS.**

5. Youth Issues

AP spoke on behalf of the youth team.

Mid-Ross cares health & wellbeing fund has been granted (a total of £10k).

This allows for the 15h youth worker contract to be extended for another year & allows for the 5h youth worker recruitment package to be sent out.

Huge thanks to Wanda for this!

Note – looking for £7.5k to be received for 2024/25.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report and accompanying notes (**Appendix A & B**), were prepared by AP and circulated prior to the meeting.

Gritter servicing invoice still to be received.

There is £1k in the cost of living fund, that will be spent during the month of March. Will be feeding those in need via Sutor Creek. Advert will be up via Facebook/the website/newsletter this week. **Action - AP.**

There were no further comments or questions.

7. Victoria Hall (VH) Report including Youth Café

The Victoria Hall Report (**Appendix C**) that was prepared by AP and The Youth Café Report, prepared by Fraser Thompson, were circulated prior to the meeting.

The visits re. the roof repairs have been carried out. There are a few pieces of substantial repairs needed (in particular to the kitchen flat roof). The boiler service has also been done.

News this week:

The NHS baby clinic will be held at The Victoria Hall (as the routine immunisations are no longer done at the GP). 6 month contract secured.

There were no further comments or questions.

8. Members' Reports

8.1 Portfolios

Portfolio Reports prepared by PR, PS, AP, AT, & KM (**Appendix D-H**) were circulated prior to the meeting.

- Alan:

There has been communication from residents re. the length of time it's taking to secure a tenant/tenants in The East Church Hall. To be shared with members. **Action – AP.**

- Andy:

Port of Cromarty Firth

Discussion arose re. the meeting with PofCF (see AT report).

Positive aspects – they answered all of the questions they had for them.

Nuclear, specifically ionising radiation sources, won't be involved as part of Green Freeport.

Ferry:

Is this worth applying for funding for to make it a year-round service? PofCF confirmed it was worth applying for. Applications are always welcome (to decide who is doing the application).

Action – all.

AP then addressed Lyndsey re. BIAC –

- 1) Has the ferry funding been agreed for 2023/4?
- 2) Is the BIAC involved in this this year?
- 3) BIAC/C&DCC should communicate if they are (as would only need the port to subsidize part of the year).

LJ confirmed however that she's not seen it on the agenda for the BIAC yet (but she doesn't know the answer). THC budget is to be approved on Thursday so we will know from then.

In the meantime, PS should contact the ferry to see if they've applied for anything (and advise them that the PofCF might be interested). **Action – PS.**

Complaints re. noise pollution:

Rory (identified 2), Port of CF (identified 1), THC (identified NONE, but AT knows they were copied in on at least one). Shows lack of communication in The Highland Council for one.

Highlights his frustration as no real complaints have been made in the last 1/4 but could be due to a multitude of reasons (colder weather, windows not open etc). THC confirmed they are now following WHO 2009 guidance.

Andy asked at what point does a complaint trigger action, and is awaiting a response to this question.

Discussion concluded – reporting does need to be more consistent, as there's still not much data to work with.

Website

New website that has been designed by Claire (partially uploaded old info), costs about £150 per year. We are currently licensed through Plexus with Calico running the domain.

Before taking further action we need to email Plexus asking about the encryption and malware steps they are taking at the moment, with regards to data protection etc. We should also ask them what their costs would be to update the website. **Action – CF.**

AP to give Claire Garve's email as she'd already emailed Plexus to no response. **Action – AP.**

- Peter:

Planning permission is needed for the bus shelter works. We should ask Stagecoach to cover the cost of this (we can do the application if they fund the £150). To go ahead and apply for planning. PR to organize. **Action – PR (already an action point).**

Daffodil field has been cleared and it's a huge improvement. Hasn't heard of any other developments (or reason for the clearance). We can worry about this when we need to.

- Kari:

Retrieving a further quote from Donald Maclennan (Contractor) for repairs to the bridge. KM to take pictures and send them over first, as he wants to see the extent of the damage. KM to do that this weekend. **Action – KM.**

- Paige:

Thanks extended to Ardvark for filling in the potholes in the town (on the shore road), even though they were told by THC to stop. All members agreed it was an act of goodwill by them and they were putting their excess funds/stock to good use.

There were no further comments or questions on any portfolio.

8.2 The Highland Council

- 1) Budget meeting (council wide) is being held on Thursday 2nd March 2023.
- 2) The roads on the Black Isle are appalling. We're all aware the budget has been cut, there's just not enough funding to cover the cost. However still recommends that we complain/report any damaged roads to THC via the website.
- 3) Toilets in Cromarty - due to reopen on 6th March 2023.

Discussion then opened as LJ was looking for more information on the reason for closure. Thinks there might not have been as much 'damage' as was made out.

Members advised that THC had said there were items set on fire but that we did ask for a damage report and it never appeared. Agreed it was a bit odd and we needed more answers. Somethings will have to be accepted as wear and tear.

LJ suggests we look into taking them on as a community asset. This needs to be discussed further but all members agreed that due to local businesses now suffering, our main focus is the toilets reopening. We can follow up the main detail afterwards. **Action – all.**

- 4) Confirmed there is a further recycling bin to be provided to households. Will separate out cardboard from plastic etc. Fortnightly collections will remain.

8.3 Correspondence Received

Resident has emailed regarding the condition of the ladies walk. All members agreed this is owned by the Cromarty Estate. AP to go back to resident and ask them to email the estate. PS to then email Cromarty Estate in support of residents request. **Action - AP/PS.**

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Pirate's Graveyard

There is a hole (above the crypt) that needs to be filled (or at least attention drawn to it) to prevent injury/kids falling into it. KM to email John Nightingale (Cromarty estate). **Action – KM.**

AP to send a link to KM re. a contact at Friends of Hugh Miller (who's on good terms with JN), and might help progress her email. **Action – AP.**

9.2 Cromarty Signs

A resident has offered to redesign the sign at the bus shelter (links). PS to contact Craig Fraser and ask him who is responsible for this sign. **Action – PS.**

9.3 Cromarty Community Development Trust (report from Julie)

CDT had their first meeting back after a two month break.

CDT & C&DCC to meet to discuss everything and to find a way to go forward, working together rather than against one another.

PS to email JM re. dates after this meeting. **Action – PS.**

East Church Hall (TECH)

Have had the go ahead to organize an Open Day to the public. Will be discussing a date at their next meeting (this month).

Campsite

All progress is going well.

Note – LJ and JM left so members could discuss The Black Isle Place Plan.

9.4 Black Isle Place Plan

Discussion opened between members regarding this. AP started off by explaining what the plans are.

He explained that BIAC (Black Isle Area Committee) money was funded to BIP (Black Isle Partnership) to hire consultants to do a BIPP. The community councils complained because couldn't work out why they weren't consulted.

It turned out that the BIP was not the correct organization for this. £30k was granted, and CCs were asked to provide applications for ways to spend the funds. The community councils however said this was not possible in the time frame given. Recently, CC's have been contacted by Councillor Sarah Atkin to see what has to happen for them to get involved. All councils agreed that BIP must not be involved. This has now been done. They still hold the funds but that is all.

PS & AP were told on 15th February about a meeting on 13th March 2023 (to be held at The West Church Hall) that is looking for community thoughts on what we want to have/see in the area etc (I.e. a place plan). Question is, how much involvement do we want in this? If communities can form a 'Place Plan' then the government are more likely to fund the things included in the 'plan'.

KM asked how it differs from The Inner Moray Firth Development Plan and AP advised that they'd been told the two go hand in hand. KM also asked who decides what is a priority? Someone will likely always be disappointed and is worried that will be damage the C&DCC to be seen to support something like that (could be a double-edged sword).

AP is worried because we are all volunteers, and it could add a lot of additional work in a short space of time (to gather the data) but thinks it's going to happen anyway even without the C&DCC support.

Discussion continued. Members agreed that they've not given us nearly enough notice and although it's a Black Isle Place Plan, it doesn't mean that what works for the Black Isle will work for Cromarty. We must get the Cromarty name out there somehow.

Aware Knockbain CC have made progress with ideas, and Avoch & Killen want to do so before the meeting also. Members are happy to support an advert going out from C&DCC about the public consultation that is being held on 13th March 2023 (without offering our opinions). AP to draft something for posting and sent to members. **Action – AP.**

10. Date of next meeting

Next meeting – Monday 27th March 2023 at 730pm.

PS thanked everyone for attending. Meeting ended at 2157pm.

APPENDIX A

Agenda Item 6 – Treasurer’s Report Notes

1. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** show Amounts Receivable/Payments in advance that reflect the anticipated funding of our Whereby meeting costs, advance payment of March’s Whereby meeting costs and the Amounts Payable reflects the Cost of Living Grant received in December not yet spent. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
2. **CROMARTY AMENITIES FUND** movement reflects the public donations to the Fund via collection tins. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Alan Plampton
26/02/23

APPENDIX B

Agenda Item 6 – Treasurer’s Report

Statement of Financial Position at 26th February 2023				
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Net Assets			<u>Movement</u>	<u>at 27/01/23</u>
Bank & Cash in hand balances as at 26th February 2023		12,450.06	-48.15	12,498.21
Paypal Balance as at 26th February 2023		0.00	0.00	0.00
Amounts Receivable/Paid in Advance		178.50	17.00	161.50
Amounts Payable		-1,000.00	0.00	-1,000.00
Total Net Assets at 26th February 2023		£11,628.56	-31.15	£11,659.71
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Represented by:				
C&DCC Accumulated Fund Reserves at 1st April 2022		2,332.16	0.00	2,332.16
Surplus/ Deficit for the year to date		-49.08	-50.00	0.92
		2,283.08	-50.00	2,333.08
Community Amenities Fund		128.38	33.85	94.53
Emergency Resilience Fund		24.96	0.00	24.96
Covid-19 Resilience Fund		0.00	0.00	0.00
Provision for Guidebook reprinting at 25th November 2022		78.75	0.00	78.75
Gritting Fund		682.32	0.00	682.32
Cromarty Live Fund		46.01	0.00	46.01
Community Defibrillator Fund		1,006.88	0.00	1,006.88
Net C&DCC Reserves		4,250.38	-16.15	4,266.53
Community Event Funds				
Bonfire Night Fund	2,302.14		0.00	2,302.14
Gala Fund	2,677.70		0.00	2,677.70
Splash & Dash Fund	126.00	5105.84	0.00	126.00
Open Gardens Fund	206.86		0.00	206.86
Gluren bij de Buren Fund	202.06	408.92	0.00	202.06
Designated Community Funds				
West Church Playgroup Fund		1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00
Cromarty Rising Fund		513.42	-15.00	528.42
		£11,628.56	-31.15	£11,659.71
Alan Plampton 26th February 2023				

APPENDIX C

Agenda Item 7 – Victoria Hall Report

1. **Bookings** have increased but will slow down after March, when a serious financial review will take place. The History Society has now successfully moved to the Victoria Hall ahead of the West Church closure. From Wednesday 15th March, we are to become the new venue for the NHS Highland Baby Vaccination Clinics. To start, these will be held fortnightly and reviewed after 6 months. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
2. **Repairs & Maintenance** is ongoing. Roof repairs have been completed by THC contractors and the boiler has been serviced. The disabled toilet has developed an electrical fault in the light/fan which was likely caused by damage via the external ventilation cover. Until repairs are completed, we have no disabled toilet. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
3. **Sheddie** Emergency Resilience/Action Plan refresher training will take place during the summer for all C&DCC members and the registered key-holders. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
4. **Youth Cafe** The latest monthly report is attached. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

Alan Plampton - VHMC
26/02/23

Cromarty Ferry.

- The Ferry Service is closed for the winter season.

Dog Fouling. (Overall). Ongoing.

There still appear to be instances recently, however, we watch and observe! [**Ongoing**]

Links & Links Events Diary / Beaches and Litter.

- Bookings have been successful to date, well managed by the users and without incident.
 - There is a booking for The Cromarty Film Festival, for 23 to 27 March 2023. Copies of Diary distributed by email to C&DCC Members and interested parties.
 - There is a booking for the Cromarty Fourways Club for 7th to 9th May 2023. Notice distributed to interested parties and members.
 - I will return the key that I have, as there are other keys and the Cinema access is available.
 - Vehicular access to The Links still partially closed and locked, by Community and C&DCC decision. However, there are two removable stanchions at the Cinema end that can be removed at time of emergency to allow access, also there is more than one key to the padlock at the East End.
- (No Change)**
- The area in front of Bob Maclean’s house (old ice rink) is marked off by permanent embedded wooden bollards, and large stones to stop parking and to let the grass and wild flowers grow. All donated by a local resident, (Fran Sadler); all flower seeds and plants gratefully received. [**Ongoing**]
 - The Dog Waste Bins continue to be emptied, by Craig Fraser, by others, and myself. There have been no noticeable incidents. Photographic records kept.
 - There is an old wooden bench, actually up on Braehead, that needs to be repaired or replaced. [Had various comments on Facebook but no positive action taken to date. Need to sort out ownership?]. Did not approach Avoch men’s shed yet. (Ongoing)

Litter.

- Highland Council have removed a number of bins. Town Bins continue to be being monitored and recorded. The Main Town bins continue to be emptied on Tuesdays, Commercial Bin Day.
- Highland Council have changed the type of bin in some cases to those with restricted opening. This will cause issues. Survey to be updated. Email sent to Department on this and the number that were removed.
- The Bins which are most at issue (Due to takeaway food / motorhomes/ other rubbish?) are (No change):-
The Harbour Area. / The Cinema Area. / The Toilets Bin / The Bins (now 2) on Shore Street, in the vicinity of “Old Fish Store”. (Photos are available) We also have an issue with the sole rubbish bin at the Sutor Car Park getting emptied. [But being emptied to date.]
- Local volunteers, and some from out of town, continue to uplift litter and dump in the Town Bins. Cromarty Litter Pickers - equipment has been distributed.
- Some small additional equipment is stored in the Sheddie, to be distributed, and to be used by litter expeditions.

PoCF, Nigg Liaison, Rig Noise & Freeport Proposal.

Nigg Liaison Meetings - Main Report issued by Kari Magee and Andy Thurgood.

Noise Complaints – handled by Andy Thurgood and Kari Magee.

PoCF - Emails being received regarding next Community Meetings with PoCF.

Cromarty Firth Freeport Proposal – Opportunity Cromarty Firth have now been awarded one of the Places with Contracts.

Green Hydrogen Processing Plant – according to news comments, Twitter etc, planning and preparations continue. The existing plan and drawings continue to be transmitted.
Meetings – (MS Teams - attended by Andy Thurgood and myself.) on an ongoing basis. Notifications and invitations continue to be sent out by email.
Andy reported back to members by explanatory email, with screenshots. I added some contribution.
Matters are all very commercial, especially the scope of the green hydrogen processing plant, supply and transmission. But some news is being given out.

Gritting and Machine Maintenance.

Newhall Smithy have carried out some maintenance work on the gritters.
There has been some activity carried out by the team of gritters to date this winter. Additional volunteers joined the gritting group.
Grit bins have been topped up by Highland Council Community Services, but the bins need to be surveyed regularly. A further 5 no. bins have been requested and supplied by Highland Council and were located around the town as required. The principle being for the members of the community to have access to grit for their use, to improve better Community Effort.
The Cromarty Community Assistance Request submittal was sent to Highland Council as required for the Community Assistance Scheme. Survey done on most of the Grit Bins, but I missed the Nichol Terrace “hidden” one.
The four grit bins in the old dairy area were not topped up by Community services, however the others were topped up and made ready for the next occasion. I did comment to THC on this, also sending thanks for the support to date.
There was a snow brushing machine/plough donated to the town by Simon and Jenny Gunn, however we have not had enough snowfall in order to try it out. The thank you letter was not sent yet by myself, I was waiting to include photos of the machine in action, making it more appropriate? I will follow up.
Can I ask on the progress on the water supply for rinsing the units at the Sheddie? (Ongoing)

Cromarty Dog Waste Bins.

Ongoing.
Red Bins (6 No.) are being emptied on a regular basis both by some volunteers and Regular checking those at:-
The Links (2); The Reeds Walk Path; Cromarty Bowling Club Car Park; Stroopie Roadie, The Denny.
The Links ones are done regularly. The Reeds Walk and Bowling Green Car Park ones are emptied. Also The Denny and Stroopie ones.
Dog waste continues to be dumped in town bins, I do check, and it is reassuring that those concerned do this in most cases, rather than leave lying on the ground or around. Though I am sure that people rely on the bins (all types) being available. The industrial bins are collected on a Tuesday and all this waste goes to landfill.

John Nightingale Follow Ups.

Previous email contact regarding the anticipated clearance of the Daffodil Field was sent to John Nightingale and responded to. Clearance works to the area has since been carried out and recorded. The roadside areas have now been cut back and cleared. Lots of daffodil plants can now be seen.

Sutor Car Park.

No changes recently.
Sutor Litter bin was being monitored by Nige (on his travels) and was being previously emptied by visiting HC worker.

Previous Craig Fraser Projects – From 2021:- (Ongoing.)

Gaelic Chapel. [No change – ongoing.]

Previous virtual Meeting held. Craig had raised and discussed the Land Ownership documents from Land Sassines, to be reviewed. (No change). The main scope required is for clarification on the actual ownership of the building.

Site visited and stage photos taken. The bell is still in situ.

There were signs of the area being used and visited.

Graveyards in General. No. 1,2,3,4. (No change – ongoing.)

Consideration to be given to vegetation clearing and review of work carried out by Highland Council. No recent check done. Winter season coming to an end so needs to be re-assessed.

Consideration on Trees at Side of Road on The Denny.

Previously, the Trees on the Denny at the roadside have been commented on for safety reasons – needs to be reviewed.

A.O.C.B.

E.V. Charging points.

Project is being carried out by CCDT.

Cromarty Benches.

Survey needs to be updated.

No progress on the dilapidated bench on Braehead whether it is to be renovated or replaced?

Bus Stop Shelter on The Links.

There has been more damage done to the shelter, photos are available.

An email was sent to Stagecoach, who responded. A site meeting was held with concerned personnel, Stagecoach/C&DCC (Self)/local contractor, with favourable response, Stagecoach Manager has confirmed to take on the Work, with Local Contractor (Colin Keith). Copies of emails were sent to concerned personnel.

Previous plan to relocate the shelter has been agreed in principle, with Stagecoach taking on the Project. Emails copied to personnel.

The Highland Council Planning Department (Erica McArthur) have advised that, as before, planning permission is required. With the action to be taken, with submittal by C&DCC, the cost to be reduced to £150.00. Therefore we need approval from the C&DCC for this cost. An account has to be set up, THC Planning System was being worked on when I tried to access.

Please review the attached email messages, in the Binder.

John Nightingale, as before, has agreed with the proposal with conditions, such as clarification regarding planning permission, and action on the re-siting of the bins. (Copy of email attached, in Binder)

Mary Peteranna (Salmon Bothy owner) has offered to assist with arranging with the renovation of the local guide notice. I have asked about ownership of the existing notice, with no confirmation to date. Also, enquired what progress has been made on the replacement Cromarty sign for the Shore Road. (This could be included?)

A more comprehensive report will be prepared on this Project. In the meantime I have attached a Binder of the relevant emails that have been already forwarded. There are no photos included.

Other Meetings.

None by self.

APPENDIX E

PORTFOLIO REPORT – Paige Shepherd

Planning-

- No Update

Police Report

- No Update

Victoria Park Fence Repairs

- There has been a quote sent to the Highland Council for the repairs of the fence. At the moment, I am awaiting to hear back from them about next steps. It was found that the fence cannot be repaired in patches as the chain link has mostly rusted. A whole new fence would now be required.

Port Authority

- Andy, Cllr Atkin and I met with the port on the 23rd of February. In the last 3 months since our last meeting there has been 2 complaints raised with the port regarding noise. Residents are encouraged to please continue to log their issues on the Port website <https://pocf.co.uk/contact/>. The Port, Highland Council and the C&DCC are going to share the number of complaints made to have a better understanding of the issues and to keep lines of communication open. The Port have agreed to give an update to the Cromarty Newsletter to keep residents up to date with activities. Global and POCF are continually carrying out noise monitoring around the port and we have agreed to meet again in the next 3 to 4 months.

Road Surfaces

- As the condition of our roads continues to be a major issue the C&DCC would like to thank Aardvark Contracting for filling in the potholes at the shore front of Bayview Crescent. Please use the Highland Council website to report all potholes and road issues using the link below. https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/96/road_faults

BICC

- Alan and I attended the BICC on the 15th of February. We had a brief update from Inspector Ross regarding crime in the area. The main point on the agenda was regarding the Black Isle Place Plan. The consultation for Cromarty will take place on Monday 13th of March at the West Church hall. Discussion to follow at Monday's meeting. Presentation document on Alan's portfolio.

APPENDIX F

PORTFOLIO REPORT – Alan Plampton

1. **BICC** Paige and I attend the latest meeting, where we received a presentation from the consultants employed to create a Black Isle Place Plan. We were informed that they intend to host a presentation to the Cromarty public on Monday 13th March at the West Church Hall. An explanatory report is attached to help understand the Place Plan principles. **ACTION – For discussion by Members under AOB to decide on C&DCC position and participation.**
2. **Housing** There are no official updates. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

Community Councils Liaison Meetings – Port of Cromarty Firth 21/02/23

Peter and I attended this early evening, virtual meeting. As previously emailed, the items discussed can be summarised as:

1 noise complaint reported since the last meeting. This was recorded at 3am, but investigation couldn't identify a source.

Immediate expansion plans were discussed, referred to as 'Phase 5' development, essentially a £200m expansion at Invergordon; this will be proceeded by a £3m scoping exercise, pre-consultation including a marine EIA.

Green Freeport

- Planning to undertake webinars, and Consortium Roadshows to liaise with communities (from Nairn to Brora)
- FAQs on Green Freeport to be issued in the next week, available on the POCF website
- Facebook & Instagram pages to go live over the next month

'Opportunity' Cromarty Firth, is exactly that – a series of opportunities that can be pursued. There is no specific master plan. The Consortium is now a registered company.

We requested funding for an all-year ferry service. This could be requested from the Shared Community Sponsor Fund (along with requests from other competing parties). Peter highlighted that the Ferry would support employment opportunities at Nigg. As Peter has shared in his WhatsApp message, Alex Johnson did ask why Cromarty hadn't requested funds before?

Hydrogen capability will proceed to planning this year (for an Electrolyser at Alness). Production should be live in 2025, initially feeding the distilleries by road haulage. Longer term, this will probably move to pipeline (at significant cost). At this stage, it is about proving the concept, with a view to scaling-up. Green Freeport will accelerate this process.

Peter asked about increased vessel traffic through the Firth. On the basis that traffic tends to relative to the projects being undertaken in the Firth, it's possible that changes may not be noticeable. This said, as technological developments lead to larger equipment in the renewables sectors, it is likely that the vessels we see, will become increasing larger – same number of movements possibly, but larger vessels. The other unknown, is around the flow of work. If there is time between projects, vessel movements will diminish, if there is a consistent line of work, then movements would become accordingly consistent.

Noise Liaison Meetings with POCF, PON and Highland Council 23/02/23

Paige and I attended this face-to-face meeting with Joanne Allday (POCF), Rory Gunn (GEG, PON), Clifford Smith (HC) and Sarah Atkin.

Noise complaints from the last quarter were reviewed:

- POCF had received 1, related to localised noise at Invergordon.
- PON had received 2, 1 from a Cromarty resident (coinciding with the logged complaint known to CDCC), the other coming from a resident at Tarbat
- HC reported not received any complaints in the period (*although reviewing this post-meeting, it does appear that the complaint identified to PON and CDCC was copied to HC*)

It was agreed that all incidents would be circulated between parties at the time of awareness, so that complaints from Cromarty are logged consistently.

Investigation into the Cromarty incident identified that this was due to a berthed tug, that had its bow to the port, for the purposes of fuelling the vessel. This had meant that the engine exhausts were facing towards Cromarty. Although the noise is reported as being within the legal limits, I did point out that unless the measurement is taken in the pathway to the receptor, it will not be truly representative.

POCF and PON both confirmed that they continue to actively monitor noise on both sides of the Firth. We suggested that it may be good for complainants to see this in action, and by getting involved, perhaps better understand the process.

We also reaffirmed that the berthing of rigs at anchorages that were distant to the town, is still the preferred way of mitigating noise.

After the last meeting, I followed up with Clifford Smith (HC) on whether HC have now adopted the use of WHO Guidelines for Community Noise 2009, rather than those from 1999 (as used for the noise complaints at the time of visit by the Ocean Endeavour rig). He confirmed that this is now the case – but then went on to state, that these are only guidelines. In response, I asked from a technical perspective, what would be the trigger point for a prosecution? He wasn't sure, as this wouldn't be his decision. I asked if he would clarify this as an action point.

Paige reported that POCF and PON can feed into the Cromarty newsletter, and provided details on how to do this.

The Neptunes guidance has been reviewed by the British Ports Authority (BAP). Feedback has identified that no UK port is currently working to this guidance. POCF and PON stated that many of the mitigations suggested are already in place. With Green Freeport expansion, options for future mitigations remain open, and will undoubtedly be influenced by rapidly evolving technologies. The BAP raised the Neptunes report at the last Joint Ports and Shipping Environmental Meeting, and this is scheduled as an agenda item for their next meeting.

The proposition for an enhanced noise monitoring project was briefly discussed. It was agreed by those present, that on the basis of only one formal complaint being received over the period, we should review this again at the next meeting (to be scheduled 3-4 months from this meeting).

The low number of complaints could arise from a number of factors – reduced activity in the Firth over the Christmas period; increased operational control by POCF and PON; and the likelihood that residents will be more inclined to close their windows during the winter period.

Andy Thurgood
26/02/23

100 Steps Project

1. **Litter Pick.** Changeable weather in January and February delayed the litter pick. A litter pick, and debris and weed removal will be organised for the afternoon of 18 March 2023.
2. **Tree Health Check.** The trees along the path were checked after the recent bad weather and no issues were identified.
3. **Deteriorating bridge.** One further bridge was cleared of debris as part of the maintenance weekend. The bridge has deteriorated, and it is likely that a replacement will be required. A request for a quote has been sent to Donald McLennan.
4. **Wildflower Steps.** AP asked for steps to be cut up to the wildflower meadow near the Hugh Miller monument. The work will be organised for 26 March 2023.