

**STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2012
AT THE FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Members present:

Mr M. Houston (Chairman)	Mrs E. Merther (Secretary)
Mr F. Ross (Treasurer)	Mrs M. Cameron
Mr K. Fraser	Mr L. MacNally
Mr A. MacPherson	Mr A. Sutherland

Also present:

Mr Ronnie MacRae (Highland Small Communities Housing Trust)	
Ms Helen Cameron (Albyn Housing Assn.)	
Councillor M. Davidson	Police Constable A. Mathieson

Apologies received:

Councillor H. Carmichael	Councillor D. Hendry
Councillor H. Wood	

1. Adoption of Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2012 were adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Mr A. Sutherland Seconded: Mr K. Fraser

2. Affordable Housing Scheme - Gorthleck

Ronnie MacRae and Helen Cameron had kindly come along to the meeting to discuss the way forward with this scheme. There have been many delays with the scheme over the years, initially due to problems with waste water, and also mains water supply, which had to be addressed. The chief problem now was agreed to be financial, with grants for such schemes being less readily available, and much less generous. Helen Cameron reported that there is currently strong support from Highland Council, who will offer loans to 'kick start' such projects. Agreement has been reached on the sale of two plots of land to provide finance for further development. Cllr. Davidson suggested the formation of a working group to look at the many options available, including some possible community ownership, so that progress can be made. A working group comprising HSCHT and Albyn representatives, Cllr. Davidson, and Mr A. Sutherland and Mr L. MacNally for the CC, was agreed, and meetings will be arranged.

The land earmarked for development at Inverfarigaig was mentioned, but it is not possible to undertake this scheme in addition to the Gorthleck scheme at present.

The Chairman thanked Ronnie MacRae and Helen Cameron for attending our meeting.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

(a) Broadband Provision

No new information has been received. Mr Graeme Ambrose of Destination Loch Ness requested a letter of support for their project after his visit to last month's meeting, and this has been sent.

(b) Local Community Care Project

Mr Paul Davies of Care in Strathnairn, and Mrs Merther had attended the Seniors' Lunch Club on Friday 24th February. Mr Davies had explained the proposed scheme to those present, and there were some very useful discussions. Following this it was felt that there is a clear need for such a scheme in this area. This will be discussed further.

(c) Street Lighting - Energy Saving Measures

The notice asking for community feedback on this suggestion will appear in the March Boleskine Bulletin.

(d) Parking - Foyers Shop and Cafe

Cllr. Davidson reported that the land owner is in the process of confirming his ownership of the land, and it is hoped something can be put in place before this summer. This will come out of next year's budget.

(e) Foyers Public Toilets

No new information received as yet. Cllr. Davidson will enquire about progress.

(f) Foyers Schoolhouse Appraisal

The problems of potential uses for the house in such close proximity to the School were noted. It was also noted that the house is in need of significant work. The option of its use as a nursery was again mentioned, and also the fact that the rent on the existing nursery building is extremely high. Mrs Cameron offered to make enquiries with the current Nursery organisers.

(g) Possible Events for Jubilee/Olympics Year

It was agreed that an emphasis on local activities would be appropriate. Mrs Cameron had a number of suggestions. She will approach the various local Clubs involved to gauge their interest in participating. If there is sufficient enthusiasm she will get a group of local people together to organise things.

(h) Boleskine Bulletin

After various meetings and discussions the Editors have agreed to continue printing the Minutes in the BB. The CC will cover the full cost as necessary, and the Minutes will be printed as a 'self-contained' section in the centre of the BB. They will be supplied ready formatted so that no further work is required by the Editors.

4. Correspondence

Highland Council Correspondence

Dates for Community Council training

Planning for Integration - NHS Highland/Highland Council (circulated)

Notice of Aird & Loch Ness Ward Forum - 1st March 2012 (circulated)

Great Glen Way Business Workshop - 29th February 2012 (circulated)

Other Correspondence and Circulars received

Letter re new Whitebridge bus service

South Loch Ness Heritage Group - Dates for 2012 (circulated)

NHS Highland - Briefing Note 2 (circulated)

Forestry Commission - Changes to Felling Licences (circulated)

Notice of Inverness Area Gang Show - 11th-14th April 2012

Letters Sent

To Destination Loch Ness - Letters of support for Broadband project
and for Foyers Pier project

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported a payment of £22.50 for hire of Stratherrick Hall.

Account balances are as follows:

Ordinary A/c: £1339.50

Project A/c: £7227.66

6. Planning Matters

(a) New applications:

New 33,000v. overhead line to new house - Lyne of Gorthleck

10m pole, dish, equipment cabin & meter cabinet - Loch Mhor, Gorthleck

(Mr Fraser has previously declared an interest.)

Construction of 23km. below ground water main to Gorthleck

House - land 125m NE of Lyne Cottage, Gorthleck (renewal)

Conversion of steading - 25m N of Lyne Cottage, Gorthleck (renewal)

Two house plots - land NW of Heatherly, Errogie (Full. Outline already granted)

Members inspected applications and documents associated with all applications. There were no objections. The last three applications had been previously received in 2009 and site visits carried out at that time.

There was an enquiry regarding the provision of toilet and canoe storage facilities for the Great Glen Canoe Trail. No information has been received by the CC and enquiries will be made.

No further response has been received regarding the new access road to house plots at Errogie, and the CC concerns about encroachment of pavements alongside the main road. Cllr. Davidson will enquire as to the current situation.

7. Fire Brigade Report

Mr Kirkland was not present. Cllr. Davidson stated that members would have been aware of threats to rural Stations reported in the press. The Fire Brigade will come under the control of one national authority from 1st April. Efforts are ongoing to obtain recognition of the different needs and skill requirements for rural stations.

8. Policing Matters

PC Mathieson had no new matters to report, and stated that crime levels in the area are currently low.

9. Roads and Signage

(a) Outstanding Matters

Timber extraction - Cllr. Davidson now has the report prepared by Colin MacKenzie of the Forestry Commission regarding extraction policies and approved routes. On past experience members were sceptical as to whether these would be adhered to. Cllr. Davidson felt there is a need to have a meeting with the timber harvesters, and will ask Charles Stephen to arrange this.

The following items have been raised with Richard Evans of TECS, and are reported as being inspected and prioritised:

Pot hole by cattle grid - Bochruben road; Grass etc. - pavement at Thain Road, Whitebridge; Parapet wall - Altkirk bridge, Inverfarigaig pass; Overhanging trees - Dores/Foyers road adjacent to Easter Boleskine; Pot holes, drainage problems, and damage to roads throughout the area. The Chairman phoned Richard Evans regarding a number of problems with drains and ditches.

Damage on the Garthbeg road is described as needing more than pot hole repairs, and work is promised by mid-summer.

A review of speed limits on A and B class roads is being undertaken, and Errogie will be included in this.

Parking on the road at Glenlia - Substantial funding required to achieve any improvement. They will look at what can be achieved.

Bridge by Boleskine Cemetery - Cllr. Davidson reports that a recent inspection has shown this to be in a dangerous condition. The earliest that contractors can start is 12th March 2012, when the road will be closed for two to three weeks. Initial response from SSE at the Power Station had been discouraging about use of the bypass road, but members felt that this is unacceptable. Alternative routes are extremely inconvenient, and totally impractical for the bus, for example. An approach to SSE Estates Office in Perth was suggested.

Cllr. Davidson reported that TECS officials had declined to go round the area with herself or Cllr. Hendry, stating that they know where the problems are and are prioritising them. However, the feeling of the meeting was that there is a total lack of organisation and co-ordination, and nothing gets done until the dreadful condition of the roads causes an accident or damage to a vehicle.

(b) Meeting with TECS to Discuss Proposed Road Improvements

Discussions are taking place with land owners, and Richard Evans estimates that a meeting should be possible later in March.

(c) Other Roads Items

Mr MacNally reported that extraction of a large amount of timber is due to take place on the other side of the Loch, which could cause delays on the A82. This may well cause an increase in traffic on this side of the Loch, and it was suggested that we request traffic monitoring so that any changes in volume can be verified. The Chairman will request this. Cllr. Davidson noted that the Forestry Commission should notify us when work is planned.

A number of issues relating to bus services were raised. Whitebridge residents are concerned at the loss of the service to the Knockie road end, and Cllr. Davidson is in discussions to attempt to resolve this problem.

It was noted that the loss of the Wednesday shoppers' bus through the Strath is causing considerable problems for some elderly residents.

The following suggestions were made:

Provision of a service, even once a day, between Foyers and Fort Augustus. This would fill the gap in the service around Loch Ness.

Possible provision of an evening bus between Foyers and Inverness.

Making the Dunmaglass quarry an official stop on the Croachy route, as the bus has to turn there in any case.

Cllr. Davidson will raise these items at the Ward Forum this week. She suggested that she might be able to get the Transport Officer to come along to a CC meeting to discuss problems.

10. Water and Sewerage

It is hoped that representatives of Scottish Water will attend the March meeting to discuss the proposed new water main. This is yet to be confirmed.

11. Community Project - Gorthleck

Final payment is awaited from Leader. Once everything is wound up then a report will be prepared.

12. Renewable Energy and Community Benefit

SSE representatives are to meet with the CC and C Trust on 5th March to discuss community benefit in relation to Stronelairg.

13. Any Other Competent Business

(a) Mr Sutherland noted that if no comments are received regarding C Trust Minutes by one week after circulation, then they are taken as approved. He wondered if this should be applied to CC Minutes. The majority of members felt that they prefer the present system, which allows more opportunity for discussion if required.

(b) Mrs Cameron wondered if a questionnaire seeking community priorities should be prepared. This will be discussed further.

(c) A resident enquired how to raise matters of concern with the CC. The Chairman advised that he or the Secretary are normally the first points of contact, by phone or

email. Any other CC member can be contacted if more convenient. Contact details are in the BB.

(d) A resident reported that the old access to Loch Mhor for launching small craft is very overgrown. The Chairman suggested that a group of interested people should get together to deal with this, and if necessary they could apply to the C Trust for funds.

(e) With the proposed repairs/upgrade to Foyers pier, a resident enquired if it will be used for transferring large loads for green energy projects in the area. Cllr. Davidson assured her that companies concerned would not be allowed to offload large and heavy loads from the Loch onto small local roads via the pier.

(f) A resident expressed concern that elderly residents have been informed there will be no bus to the Telford Centre for day care after the end of March. Cllr. Davidson stated that she is aware of plans to target day care for those most in need. She is due to meet with the Manager, and will clarify what the continuing arrangements are for service to the community.

(g) A resident complained regarding her treatment in relation to an old planning application. The Chairman indicated that this matter has now been concluded, and there will be no further discussion on it.

(h) The Secretary had received a report of damage to the notice board in the Foyers shop car park by cement lorries turning there to access the SSE site. It was agreed to write to SSE requesting repairs.

(i) Mr MacNally enquired whether all letters written by the CC should be vetted by all members before being sent. There will be further discussion.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The date scheduled for the next meeting (27th March) clashes with CC Training in Inverness. It was therefore agreed to make the date of the next meeting Thursday 29th March 2012 at the Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck.

The meeting was closed at 9.40 p.m.