

**STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5TH AUGUST 2013
AT THE STRATHERRICK HALL, GORTHLECK**

Community Council (SFCC)

Present:

Iain Brown (IBR) & Ian Bateman (IB)	Whitebridge,
Liam MacNally (LM) & Catriona Fraser (CF)	Gorthleck
Morag Cameron (MC) & Sally McGuire (SM)	Glenlia, Foyers
Martin Donnelly (MDO)	Foyers
Roz Rowell (RR)	Torness

Apologies:

Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

Present: - Willy Fraser	(Chair)
Graham Ambrose	(Director)
Fiona Ambrose	(Company secretary)

Chair opened meeting Appendix 1

The meeting was held by the CC in response to a petition received from a CC member, with regards to commitments made at the trust AGM by directors.
(See Appendix 1)

Point 1 **A community consultation into the changes was promised but not followed up.**

Willy Fraser explained that the old constitution was not workable, and so much work had gone in to the new constitution therefor it was adopted after the CC approved it by 6 votes for 2 against.

A discussion on issues arising from the petition followed.

The issues were;

Point 2 **New constitution is still not fit for purpose e.g.**

No director or member may benefit from the funds, an obstacle to getting community members involved, also payments in the past and present to cover CC cost?

Point 3 **What were the changes and why were they needed?**

The trust representatives did not bring a list with them preferring to leave members of the public to look through the constitution on line or await the Trust meeting in September to find this out.

A solicitor was used to ensure the constitution was legal, quoted a price of £500 plus Vat final cost awaited

Question 1 Why did we pay for the solicitor if they are now a member of the Development Trust Scotland Association (DTSA) which provide free legal services

Answer 1 because the work was undertaken before membership was taken up
Trust Survey The trust has received 60 responses to their community survey (a standard proportion of responses for this type of survey).

Concern was expressed that the most appropriate method was not used to secure more responses e.g.
The survey was intimidating for some;
You could have gone door to door.

An offer of guidance on the most appropriate methods to be used by a suitably experienced member of the community had not been taken up by the Trust before undertaking this survey.

Request A breakdown on how much money is going back into the community and where it is being targeted
Answer with we can't give you that information yet.

Concern was expressed that the Trust is not making sufficient efforts to communicate and engage with the community in a way that will encourage involvement i.e. virtually all meetings are behind closed doors - private meetings

Answer that this could not be held as an example of the community's concerns was made stating most of the community are not here.

In response CC it was noted that this is the democratic system in action
i.e. none attendance does not confer approval just either prior commitments or apathy on behalf of the others who did not attend or do not stand for election be it in the CC or Trust

Past Trust directors confirmed the Trust was set up to take advantage of the Tax breaks that a company can utilise and to spread out workload across more than one committee. It was also noted that in the early years the Trust struggled to get people interested in coming forward as directors of the Trust

Concern was also expressed that the Trust is not democratic in its operations in that the directors are not elected to post by the community whose money is being spent.

The Chair explained that whilst this would be one way forward it has the potential to result in two groups both democratically elected by the community not agreeing on what the money should or should not be spent on.

The chair outlined that the discussion leads him to believe that as elsewhere where there is separation of the Trust from the CC this leads to conflict and division within the community. As such the CC should look at alternative methods for how the organisations interact and engage with the public. Giving the example of how Tomatin conducts Trust business where there is a Trust with office bearers (legal requirement) who carry out the work presently undertaken by our trust directors (research, develop options, make recommendations on the way forward) however the final decision (mostly just ratification of recommendations) on the way forward for which projects to progress, grant funding, investments etc. is carried out by the CC at one of its meetings. This may enquire depending on workloads for additional CC/Trust meetings. Thus all discussions and decision on expenditure is held in public, the decision makers are democratically elected and accountable to the community.

He also indicated there are other combinations that can be used, one member of the public suggested the majority of Trust directors could be CC members.

The trust representatives indicated that members of the community can apply to become members of the trust and in so doing would have more of a say on how the Trust operates. However it was pointed out that the Trust has the right without giving a reason to refuse membership, this was viewed by some as having the potential for screening of opinion to match that of the directors wishes.

It was also confirmed that the directors of the trust are not paid for their time; all of their work is done in a voluntary capacity which was commended by all present. Also there could be up to 10 directors, 3 of whom selected by the CC which does not have to be CC members.

The consensus was;

1. That we all want to move forward to secure benefits for the community that will be sustainable beyond the cash funding from these Renewables schemes.
2. The Constitution was a working document that will need further review and amendments
3. The CC will take on-board the discussion and will consider the options for how we wish the organisations to interact and represent the needs of our community through a democratic system that allows the community ownership of what their money is to be spent on and who the people making those decisions are to be.

Fiona Ambrose handed out a report from the trust in response to the Petition. Please see attached. Appendix 2

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and being forthcoming with their opinions and hope to see them all the following night at the next CC meeting.

N.B. The person whose initials are highlighted is responsible for completion of the relevant Action point

Date and Location of future meetings

6th August, Stratherrick Hall - CC meeting with SSE Dunmaglass presentation

20th August Stratherrick Hall - CC meeting

27th August, Stratherrick hall - CC meeting with FCS Forest Design Plan/Timber transport presentation, public drop in session during the day 1-7pm at Stratherrick hall

14th September Stratherrick Hall - CC meeting

24th September, Stratherrick Hall - CC meeting with Albyn Housing presentation, Gorthleck housing development, drop in session during the day 1-7pm at Stratherrick hall

[Future meetings will alternate between Foyers school and Stratherrick hall](#)