

**STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2010**  
**AT THE STRATHERRICK HALL, GORTHLECK**

Members present:

Mr M. Houston (Chairman)

Mrs K. Grant (Treasurer)

Mr K. Fraser

Mr A. Sutherland

Mrs E. Merther (Secretary)

Mr M. Bateman

Mr A. MacPherson

Also present:

Police Constable A. Mathieson

Councillor D. Hendry

Mr J. Taylor (Highland Council TEC Services)

Apologies received:

Councillor M. Davidson

**1. Adoption of Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2010 were adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Mr A. Sutherland

Seconded: Mrs K. Grant

**2. Matters Raised with TEC Services**

Mr John Taylor had kindly come along to the meeting to answer some of the CC's questions. The Chairman requested clarification on arrangements for winter gritting this year. Mr Taylor reported that spreading rates will be the same as last winter, the difference being a closer adherence to the approved code of practice which dictates the spreading rate to be used according to the prevailing conditions - frost, ice, or snow. Drivers will be instructed on the spreading rate for the day, but if they find conditions to be worse than anticipated they will have discretion to increase the rate and notify the depot of this.

Mr MacPherson noted that snow blading sometimes simply packed the snow down, and requested that lower blading be used when possible. It was recognised that this is not always possible due to the road camber. However, Mr Taylor will pass the comment on.

Mr Taylor reported that, due to the slow nature of the procurement procedure, the new contract for winter gritting was not due to be announced until the end of the week. In the meantime the service will continue as before. Members expressed great concern at the possibility of a contractor from outside the immediate area being appointed, and felt this could result in delays and a significant drop in the standard of service. PC Mathieson noted that Mr Fraser, our local contractor, had always been willing to help the Police in emergencies when vehicles were stuck or had gone off the road, and loss of this local assistance could potentially put lives at risk. Cllr. Hendry will make enquiries about the appointment policy.

The question of road clearance to allow access for medical treatment was raised. It was thought there may be residents who need to attend hospital for regular treatment, but do not necessarily have any contact with Social Services, so are not on any list as being in need of assistance when roads are bad. Enquiries will be made to see if a list of people requiring such help should be drawn up.

Roadside tree clearance - Mr Taylor reported that some clearance has been started on the Loch Bran and Dalcrag roads. Work has already been done on the Glenlia/tunnel road and the Ballagan road. The Farigaig pass road is still in need

of more clearance. Mr Taylor has been in contact with the Forestry Commission and has been pressing for work to go ahead. He is informed that a contractor has now been appointed for the work, and he will make further enquiries to get dates for the work. It was agreed that road closures should not be required, as long as adequate warnings about possible delays are posted. It was agreed that the inclusion of roadside clearance in harvesting contracts is far from ideal. Inevitably the harvesting will take priority over the roadside work.

### **3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

#### **(a) Key Worker/Affordable Housing**

No new information had been received.

#### **(b) Wade's Bridge at Whitebridge**

Mr Bateman reported that the immediate work is complete. Further work on the SE and NW buttresses is planned for next year if funding can be obtained.

#### **(c) Fraser Monument & Burial Ground at Foyers**

Enquiries are ongoing.

#### **(d) Broadband Provision**

Nothing further has been heard from BT. The Chairman reported that Avanti have informed satellite customers that they are upgrading their service.

#### **(e) Care in Strathnairn**

There was nothing new to report at present. Mr Bateman noted that a monthly lunch club is held in Strathnairn, and there had been suggestions that this could also be done in Stratherrick. He wondered whether funding might be available through the Community Trust. Mr Sutherland felt this could well be the case and suggested an application should be made.

#### **(f) CC Elections**

Only ten nominations had been received for the new Community Council, so no election was required. The Chairman informed the meeting of names of the new CC members.

#### **(g) Bottle Banks - Whitebridge**

Information on land ownership was still awaited. The Secretary will make enquiries.

#### **(h) Progress with Travel Plan - Foyers School**

The Secretary had been advised that a Travel Plan has been submitted. Cllr. Hendry reported that some further information is required on children travelling from Lower Foyers, and this is being followed up. It was agreed that if a safe walking plan can be produced this will be most beneficial.

### **4. Correspondence**

Highland Council Correspondence

Notice - results of CC election

Other Correspondence & Circulars Received

Scottish Water - Performance Review 2009-10

Insurance for CCs

Scottish Health Council - Newsletter

Leaflet - play equipment

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

Account balances were reported as follows:

Ordinary A/c - £1390.50 (including £362 in grant money for Fraser Monument and £11.73 held for Mr J. Campbell, Senior Citizens' Fund)

Project A/c - £15,154.58 (including £10,000 grant received from Awards for All. Cheques for £800 were written at the meeting.)

## **6. Planning Matters**

New applications:

Renovation & extension, Heath Cottage, Errogie (Full)

Two dwellings North of Wester Drummond, Whitebridge (PIP)

A site visit had been undertaken to the Whitebridge site last year. There were no objections to either application.

## **7. Fire Brigade Report**

Mr Kirkland was not present, but no new matters had been reported.

## **8. Policing Matters**

PC Mathieson explained some of the problems involved in him attending meetings. It was agreed that the CC should write to say how much we value the Police input to our meetings, and hope that arrangements can be made to make it easier for PC Mathieson to attend.

He also explained how the current financial cutbacks are impacting on the Police service, with closure of some stations and officers having to cover much wider areas than previously. Members expressed concern about the possible loss of local cover. It was agreed that we should write to request clarification on arrangements for cover in this area.

## **9. Roads and Signage**

### **(a) Outstanding Matters**

Junction to Lower Foyers - The ditch below the rock face has now been cleared.

Surface damage road to Lower Foyers - Mr Taylor said that TEC Services are aware of the problems on this road and inspections are being carried out with a view to improving drainage. This should prevent damage recurring once the surface has been made good.

Errogie speed limit - Feedback following speed checks is still awaited.

Water on road adjacent to An Clachan, Gorthleck - Inspection has been carried out and work is to be done to correct the drainage problem.

Collapsed culvert below Bochruben, Torness - This has now been repaired.

### **(b) Bridge at Lower Foyers**

With the current financial cutbacks Cllr. Hendry said that there could be a long delay in replacing this bridge. In the meantime he has made enquiries about the cost of providing a new footbridge, and asked members whether they thought he should pursue this option. It was felt this would be a huge benefit to all residents of Lower Foyers, and he was asked to go ahead with this.

### **(c) Other Roads Items**

The Secretary had made further enquiries about the bus shelter for Lower

Foyers. There has been a further delay as the Department concerned has been instructed to go through a procurement procedure for bus shelters, and is having to advertise for tenders for a contract. This means it will be the New Year before the contract is awarded, and we are now promised the shelter before the end of the financial year.

Mr MacPherson reported that the run-offs on the Torness Brae need clearing. Mr Taylor will request this.

Mr Bateman reported some bad pot-holes on the Ardochy Road near Killiechoillum. This will be looked at.

Repeated flooding on the Dores road just outside Inverness was mentioned. Mr Taylor will investigate the drainage.

#### **10. Water and Sewerage**

A letter had been sent about disruption to local businesses due to the short notice given about the recent interruption in supplies. No reply has been received. However, a representative from the sector of Scottish Water dealing with private customers had phoned the Secretary to apologise. She explained that business customers are dealt with by a different sector of the company. The business sector had been informed about the proposed interruption over a month beforehand, and should have informed its own customers. It was agreed that the standard of communication from Scottish Water is generally very poor.

#### **11. Community Project - Gorthleck**

The Chairman reported that a Project Manager has now been appointed, and planning is progressing.

#### **12. Renewable Energy and Community Benefit**

Mr Sutherland informed the meeting that there was nothing new to report on the Dunmaglass negotiations as yet. He said that it has been suggested that Highland Council should convene a meeting to bring together all the community groups involved in Community Benefit.

#### **13. Any Other Competent Business**

(a) Mr Bateman noted that some additional magnets are required for some notice boards. The Secretary will obtain these.

(b) Mr Sutherland reported that the Errogie phone box is in need of attention. Someone local has cleaned it up considerably, but the door is sticking and it badly needs refurbishment. Cllr. Hendry advised that BT has a responsibility to maintain these boxes and he will get in touch.

The Chairman thanked members for their hard work over the past three years. The inaugural meeting of the new CC will be arranged by Mr MacLure.

The meeting was closed at 8.50 p.m.