

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25th OCTOBER 2016
AT FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL AT 19:30

1. Present

Kim Burton (KB)

Catriona Fraser (CF)

Gordon McAndie (GMc)

Martin Donnelly (Mdo)

Ian Bateman (IB)

Margaret Davidson (MDa)

Colin Howell (Head of Infrastructure for the Highland Council)

Norman Smart (Principal Engineer of Structures for the Highland Council)

Apologies

Jennie Devlin, Helen Carmichael, Dr Jean Davis,

2. Lower Foyers Bridge

Colin Howell addressed the meeting and explained that he, Margaret Davidson and Norman Smart had visited lower Foyers earlier in the day to inspect both bridges and the surrounding area for possible locations for a new bridge.

Mr Howell went on to explain that money for works to the bridges comes from the Highland Council's Capital Programme. A 10 year programme was approved by THC in 2015, allocating £9million for major bridge works. There are currently 1700 bridges within the Highland Council area, of which, the bridge at lower Foyers is ranked 6th in the list of work priority. It is highly likely that the allocated £9million for bridge works will be spent on the first 1-5 bridges in the priority list. Margaret Davidson advised that although the lower Foyers bridge is not likely to be repaired using money approved in the current capital programme, it is possible that adhoc funding may become available from Scottish Government, and if this should be the case then the plans for the lower Foyers bridge need to be 'shovel ready' (Agreed location & design, community agreement, land access etc...)

Mr Smart advised that the old masonry bridge is currently category B listed and has been deemed beyond economic repair. The north face of the bridge is in terrible condition and THC has been tracking the deterioration of the bridge since 2009. It's category B listing would make it a very lengthy and costly exercise to even apply to demolition the bridge, and given the access issues of the current site for construction works, Mr Howell & Mr Smart advised that the best option would be to build a new bridge in a nearby location or repair the existing bailey bridge.

The Bailey bridge is showing signs of wear and was 2nd hand when it was installed in 1985. It is envisaged that the Bailey bridge may only have 10 years of its life span left. The deck plates have already been welded once since install.

Public feedback/concerns

- Currently no pedestrian access across the river – Mr Smart advised that a separate footbridge could be 'bolted on' to the side of the Bailey bridge as an interim or permanent measure.
- Concerns that the increase in rain water and the possibility of trees coming down the river may further damage the bridge or demolish it completely.
- If the masonry bridge is beyond economic repair, do we just leave it until it falls into the water? – Yes, however it would be monitored from a safety perspective. It is also thought that BT and water mains services run through the masonry bridge.
- Can it just be repaired as a footbridge? – No, as the cost would be the same to make it structurally sound enough to be a footbridge as it would be to make it a vehicle bridge.
- Can it be spanned with scaffolding? – Not economically viable due to the excessive cost to gain the loading required over such a massive span.
- Realistic timescale of a new bridge? – 4 years at the earliest

- Experts ideal situation? – Mr Howell & Mr Smart agreed that in their ideal situation, a new bridge would be built nearer to the Bailey bridge as a site lower down the river would require less groundworks.

The general feedback from the public was that a new bridge would be preferred over just repairing the Bailey bridge, however they would like to see a pedestrian bridge added to the Bailey bridge as soon as possible, as an interim measure.

It was agreed that Mr Smart would issue a draft plan with possible new bridge sites that would be available on noticeboards and the SFCC website for public feedback.

Mr Smart will then put together some proposals for the works along with some projected costs. Further community consultation will take place in due course.

The community are encouraged to feedback thoughts, questions and concerns via the Community Council Secretary so that a collective response can be issued to the Highland Council.

Feedback should be directed to SFCC Secretary Kim Burton on kim.burton12@btinternet.com or 01456 486297.

3. Adoption of last minutes

Minutes of the last meeting held on 25th October were adopted.

Proposed by GMc, seconded by MDo

4. Co-option of new members

Phil Crowe & Liam Longbottom had applied to become members of the SFCC.

Both were co-opted on to the SFCC by a unanimous vote.

5. Matters arising

- Flashing speed signs – awaiting a response from THC

MDa to chase up

6. Reports

- Trust – AGM to be held on 30th November. Advised that the Project Co-ordinator is currently off sick but is on the mend. In the meantime, all correspondence should be directed to the Trust Administrator instead.
- BCC – AGM was held on 5th November where new trustees were welcomed
- Police Report – Nothing to report
- Fire – still 4 recruits awaiting training. Changes to training are imminent due to recent media coverage – ideally made easier than having 2 block weeks away to start with. Margaret Davidson had been in contact with the new LSO John MacDonald who had advised on 15th November that approval would be granted within 2 weeks for welfare facilities at Foyers Fire Station – however still nothing!

MDa to chase up with John MacDonald

Investigating the possibility of reducing the number of fire fighters required for the tender to go out. Currently 4 are required. Looking to reduce this to 3.

New control centre is now in Dundee. Concerns re: the lack of local knowledge

7. Renewables

- Stronlaig – Agreed that the designated components route will be via Fort Augustus. Haulage route is via A82 and through Fort Augustus also, meaning not wind farm traffic is permitted to come through ward 13. 'No access to Stronlaig wind farm' signs to be erected on the A9/B851 junction. Concerns raised regarding work vans and pick-ups travelling to the site via the top road through Gorthleck, and the bottom loch side road. It was advised that numerous workers rent properties and are staying within these areas during construction.

There was some concern that the wording of the transport plan had changed between phases 1 and 2 of the wind farm construction, and that there needed to be clarification on action being taken against drivers that did not adhere to the plan.

CF to email SSE with concerns from the community

There is to be no community benefit negotiation this time. The benefit will be the set government advisory rate of £5k per megawatt.

- Aberarder – Appeal submitted by RES Ltd on 14th July 2016 – nothing to report since.

8. Roads

- Does to Foyers road repairs will be carried out by internal Highland Council staff and are due to commence next week. It should be noted that these works will be weather dependant as the team carrying out the repairs are also required to undertake winter road maintenance.
- Concerns raised about the lack of passing places and state of the road edges at a location between Dalcrag and the Stratherrick grave yard. Email sent to John Taylor of THC – awaiting response. Second e-mail sent – awaiting response.
- Wood lorries need to be encouraged to turn right at the end of the timber haulage route, then left at the Calanour junction and out to the A9 via Farr. Haulage companies to encourage driver training – acceptable community driving in rural areas.
- Concerns raised over black ice and camber at Dumnaglass corner.
- Concerns raised over lack of barriers at Calanour Junction and Torness.

9. Planning

- EE mast applications –no updates
- 4 planning applications received this month – no objections received;
 - Proposed dwelling house at Plot 2, Land North of Strathbrock and Phoenix, Errogie
 - Form and upgrade private way for timber extraction, Land 330M SE of Dirichurachan, Torness
 - Installation of telecommunications apparatus and associated works, land 705M SE of Meallagie, Whitebridge
 - Condition 2b to be adjusted on 09/00303/OUTIN to adjust the road gradient, Land 110M NW of Craigdarroch House Hotel, Foyers

10. Correspondence

- Invoices received from Business Stream, Gorthleck Hall and EDF Energy.

11. Up & coming events

- Saturday 10th December – Childrens Community Christmas Party
- Saturday 17th December – Community Carol Service, Stratherrick Hall, 2pm

12. AOCB

- Glenlia bus stop hasn't been repaired
- CF to email Ivor Suitor to chase up*
- Concerns about deer in the Boleskine Graveyard ruining graves and flowers etc. MDa advised the community to get a price for a new fence to keep the deer out and make the Highland Council an offer to repair.
 - Initial defibrillator training course held on 14th December was well attended with excellent feedback from all attendees. Further training to be held in due course.

Tuesday 20th December at 19:30, Craigdarroch Inn

Meeting closed at 21:30