



Strathdearn Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in The Strathdearn, Tomatin, on 11th March 2025

Councillors Present:	Diane Buckle (DB) - Treasurer Margaret Menzies (MM) - Member	Susan Falconer (SF) – Secretary James Duncan (JD) - Member
Also Attended by:	12 members of the public Duncan MacDonald (DMacD) – Highland Councillor	

Item Ref	Details	Action By
1	<u>Apologies</u> Barbara Macaskill (BM) - Chair Ken Gowan (KG) – Highland Councillor Duncan MacPherson (DMacP) – Highland Councillor	
2	<u>Introductions</u> SF opened the meeting stating that the chair BM had resigned from the Strathdearn Community Council (SCC). Having accepted a recent promotion at work and now having to care for her aging father, BM found it difficult to continue to dedicate sufficient time to enable her to honour her commitments to the SCC. BM was herself unwell and therefore was not in a position to attend the meeting. SF praised the work that BM had undertaken over the last few years on behalf of the SCC and stated that BM had encouraged the community to contribute to the work of the SCC and had been instrumental in supporting a number of new community centred initiatives. SF highlighted that there were now only 4 Councillors and an increase in the workload. SF therefore suggested that she may submit a paper to the next SCC to engage a paid Minutes Secretary. SF suggested that Item 13 on the Agenda (the appointment of a new Chair) be taken as the first item for discussion. This being agreed SF nominated JD as the Chair. This was supported by MM and DB. Accepting the nomination, JD's appointment was duly agreed and he took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. JD also echoed the words of SF by thanking BM on behalf of the community for her hard work, dedication and leadership over the last few years.	SF
3	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> JD declared his son had submitted an application to the SCT; he would therefor abstain from any vote at that time.	
4	<u>Minutes of the meeting of 11th February 2025</u> The minutes were accepted as accurate. Minutes approved by MM and Seconded by DB with no noted corrections	
5	<u>Matters arising that were not considered elsewhere on the agenda</u> There were no actions arising that were not on the agenda as separate items.	
6	<u>Financial Report</u> DB stated that at the 28 th February 2025 SCC had £1062.64 in the SCC bank account.	

7	Law and Order No report had been received from the police regarding law and order	
8	Road Safety No information or update had been received regarding road safety issues in the area	
9	Applications to the Trust Three applications had been received by SCC during the month:- 1 – Tomatin Children’s Entertainment Committee Submitted two applications (a) Trip to Farm Ness for the sum of £822- 12 and (b) for a trip to Loch Insch Water Sports Centre for the sum of £1975-00. Following discussion it was agreed that the applications were in accordance with the charitable terms as it promoted children’s education, health and wellbeing. The application for £2,797.12 was approved. 2 – Tomatin Football Club J Duncan (junior) had applied for the sum of £5,000-00 to enable Tomatin United Football Club to participate in the football league during the 2025 season. The total costs for the provision of football strips, rental of football pitches, referee fees, transport, welfare, etc. is estimated at £7,500 to £8,000 (depending on performance). The balance between the actual cost and the allowance is to be met by sponsors and team member contributions. There are several of the team who are local to the Strathdearn Area as are the management and support crew. Following discussion it was agreed that the application met with the charitable terms and also served to promote the area. The application for £5,000 was approved 3 – Moy Defibrillator(s) G Noble had applied for a sum of £7,500-00 for the provision and installation of three defibrillator units in the Moy area – for location at the Old Station, Ruthven and Lynbeg. There are currently two existing defibrillator units within Strathdearn; one at the Strathdearn in Tomatin and the other at Moy Mains. The Councillors considered that, although it was a poorly drafted application, it would benefit the community and could save lives. Discussion also covered the ongoing operation, maintenance and servicing of the units. As the existing units were managed by WRT staff, the ongoing care and maintenance could be included within their remit; although this would have to be agreed should the application be successful with the SCT. The application for £7,500 was approved Whilst a successful application would result in better defibrillator coverage in the Moy area, it would still leave the Tomatin area exposed. It was therefore suggested by the Councillors that a survey should be undertaken across Strathdearn to determine if additional units should be acquired. The above Applications will now be forwarded to the Trust. General Comments on Applications - It was generally considered by all that a number of the recent applications had not met with required standards and a large number of the applicants had not attended the SCC meeting(s) to answer questions of their request for money. This was seen as a serious failing and applicants should make an effort to attend in order that sufficient information can be given to enable a decision to be made. It was suggested that the wording of the application be reviewed to reinforce the fact that attendance is expected. Steve Cormack highlighted that Edward Cameron MacKintosh is responsible for the form but that he would speak to him and investigate if a change could be made to ensure that the standard of any application is acceptable.	SF
10	Planning Matters The only planning applications that were lodged that are of concern to the community were from two wind farm developments and is a separate agenda item.	

11	Windfarms – Progress from SWIAG SF provided a progress update stating:- • That the SWIAG had met on two occasions since the February 2025 SCC meeting; • SWIAG had engaged a consultant who had :- ○ Developed an analysis framework to evaluate the community survey returns; ○ Populated the framework to determine the public views; ○ Produced a report on the work • A letter had been sent to all addresses in the IV13 postcode advising them of the work undertaken and providing a link to the Strathdearn website where a copy of the report is available; • Made available a paper copy of the report at the Strathdearn for all interested parties and also offered to provide personal copies of the report should this be requested; • SWIAG were currently working on an updated questionnaire to be made available within the next few weeks to coincide with the planning applications being lodged; • It is intended to analyse the new survey forms and respond to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU) who are processing the planning applications; • It is intended that this information will be given to all residents in another letter within the next ten days; • SWIAG are to be available at the Strathdearn Spring Fair in order that the public can obtain more information or give their views; • To date two (2) planning applications have been received – Balnespick and Clune. The statutory consultation period for responses is only 28 days. SF has been in contact with ECU and obtained a 30 day extension to the consultation period for Balnespick; she is to request a similar extension for the Clune application; • SF had also been in contact with the HC case officer for the windfarms who has been helpful in the clarification of the timetable for representations SWIAG to continue progress with windfarm matters and report back to the next CC meeting Note:- wind farm applications are being dealt with by the ECU NOT the HC Planning Dept who are a statutory consultee. Further discussion from the floor: It is essential that as many survey forms be completed and returned to SWIAG as it is essential that the SCC reply to the ECU is truly representative of the community views not just the vocal few. SF said that, from the information currently available, the community are not totally opposed to windfarms, they consider that the density of windfarms within the area is too great. As planning applications are probably consented on a “first come - first served basis”, the community need to decide which (if any) they should oppose and which could be supported. DMcD reinforced that the work of SWIAG is essential if the community wish their views to be known. DMcD also highlighted that the two applications currently submitted will soon develop into 12 Planning Applications – 6 made under Section 36 for the windfarms and a further 6 applications for the network infrastructure to enable the windfarm(s) to connect to the existing network. He considered that SCC should also contract neighbouring community councils and establish a collaborative approach. He also understood that, although the statutory consultation period for the SCC and the public is 28 days, the HC have 4 months to make comment. Consequently it is necessary that SCC and the case officer establish a mutual understanding. DMcD stated that he would try and establish why there is a difference in the consultation period.	SF DMcD
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	Further discussion took place regarding the community benefit payment currently being offered by SSE for the Aberarder Windfarm. Whilst most windfarm developers offer £5,000 per MW electricity generated per annum. SSE take a different approach offering the local community £2,500 per MW per annum, the other £2,500 per MW per annum going to a central community benefit fund that is administered by SSE themselves and can be used country wide even in places with no windfarms. Action: A collaborative group from SCD, SCC and SCT are to pursue these discussions	JD
12	<u>Update from SCD</u> Duncan Bryden gave a brief update on progress with the current projects, the success of the youth activity program and the events that are scheduled for the coming weeks	
13	<u>Correspondence</u> SF stated that only one item of correspondence warranted discussion. This being from Mr W Campbell seeking support in opposing a planning application that is to be lodged for a quarry by Pat Munro. He had indicated that a similar planning application had been in 1999. Although the planning application had failed due to archaeological burial cairn on the site, the developer had undertaken work that resulted in damage to the cairns. DMCD suggested that SCC contact the Chair of Strathnairn Community Council and establish the facts. He also understood that, as yet, the planning application has not been lodged. A member of the public stated that there was a resident with Strathnairn who is an expert in archaeology should assistance be required by their Community Council in appealing the planning. Action: JD to contact the Chair of Strathnairn CC	JD
14	<u>Any other business</u> - JD again highlighted the urgent need for new members to come forward and join the SCC. He stressed that should the SCC fail to get sufficient members this will impact on the work of the SCT and SCD. Consequently it is in everyone's interest to ensure that the SCC remains viable. Action – A recruitment drive for CC members to be started in earnest - Alan Hardwick provided an update on the progress of the Tomatin flower planting project which the SCC and SCT had supported and thanks the community for their ongoing input.	All
15	Date of future meetings – 8th April 2025 Meeting closed 9 pm	