



Strathdearn Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held in The Strathdearn, Tomatin, on 13th May 2025

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

Item Ref	Details	Action By
1	<u>Apologies</u> Ken Gowans (KG) – Highland Councillor	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> None	
3	<u>Presentation by William Gilfillan (WG) on the Windfarm Survey Results</u> The headline outcome was that whilst, in general, the community were supportive of green energy, there was concern at the concentration of wind farms within the relatively small area that is Strathdearn. To date four (4) Planning Applications have been lodged with the Scottish Government – Energy Consents Unit (ECU) with another two (2) expected within the coming weeks. The SCC have made a formal response on one (Balnespick) with the others to follow in line with the deadline dates. WG explained the survey criteria and how the results had been analysed. Overall 33% of the community had responded to the survey and the overwhelming concern related to the cumulative effect of the turbines. The results also highlighted that the concerns were not the same for each of the proposed developments – the visual impact was of high concern where the site was close to habitation whereas environmental and wildlife concerns took priority within the more remote locations. Consequently the submission for each development will differ significantly. WG also highlighted that the community had also rated the developments with their preference(s) to which should proceed and which should be rejected. Balnespick being the most preferred location and Clune being the location with the most concerns. WG responded to a number of questions from the public ranging from the effect on property prices to the overall cumulative effect of Section 36 (Wind Farm Planning Applications) and Section 37 (associated cabling and infrastructure Planning Applications). Overall he encourages anyone with a personal objection or comment on the proposals to submit their concerns or otherwise to the ECU. Following the presentation and questions SF thanked WG for his work to date and also complimented the members of the Strathdearn Windfarm Information Advisory Group (SWIAG) for their professionalism and input to developing the survey and promoting the initiative across the community.	
4	<u>Minutes of the meeting of th April 2025</u> The minutes were accepted as accurate. Minutes approved by DB and Seconded by MM with no noted corrections	

5	<u>Matters arising that were not considered elsewhere on the agenda</u> Item 5 (a) - Litter bin in Lay-by at junction with A9 and Tomatin access road – Councillor Duncan MacDonald (DMacD) had submitted a report stating that he had spoken with the HC and the matter was subsequently resolved.	
6	<u>Financial Report</u> DB stated that SCC had £1061-43 in their bank account.	
7	<u>Law and Order</u> No report had been received from the police regarding law and order	
8	<u>Road Safety</u> - A report submitted by DMacD stated that Old Mill Road was an adopted road for which the HC were responsible. HC have a proposal to undertake maintenance work on the road to an acceptable standard; however to date the work has not been programmed. - A member of the public again raised the matter of the wooden road bridge spanning the Findhorn adjacent to Riabeg. There are concerns that the wooden bridge deck is rotten and there are two cracks within the abutments. <u>Action - A letter to be written to HC Roads Department highlighting the bridge condition and requesting a structural examination to ensure its safety.</u>	JD
9	<u>Applications to the Trust</u> Three applications had been received by SCC during the month:- 1 – Strathearn Community Developments (SCD) Submitted an application to ensure their ongoing commitment to initiatives to promote community health and wellbeing; including the Snug, sports club membership support, etc. The application, in the sum of £35,000 for each of the next 3 years (i.e. £105,000 total), is make up the shortfall in budget allocation that has arisen due to inflation, a significant increase in the number of residents taking advantage of the facilities, etc over the last three years. Following discussion it was agreed that the SCC would support that application. 2 – Kim McLeod – Children’s Dance Competition The submission is made to provide support for local children to attend an international dance competition in Paris. The 4 local children are part of a group from Highland who are competing in at an international level. The request fulfils a number of the charity requirements. Kim McLeod did however state that the names of the competitors will not be confirmed until June 2025 – the figure requested is a maximum. She will update the SCC as soon as final information is available. The request was supported by the SCC. 3 – Moy Fair Crafters Unfortunately the applicant was unable to attend the meeting due to a family bereavement. However this is an annual request to support the local people in the community who engage in craft work. The support helps promote local craft work through the provision of stalls at the Moy Game Fair. The members of The SCC considered that historically the cause has been very successful in their work and believe that it meets with a number of the charitable requirements; the request was therefore supported.	
10	<u>Planning Matters</u> The only planning applications that were lodged that are of concern to the community were from wind farm developments and was covered within a separate agenda item.	

11	<u>Windfarms – Progress from SWIAG</u> SF provided a progress update stating:- • As previously noted the SWIAG had submitted a formal response to the ECU on the proposed Balnespick development; • The next deadline is for comments relating to the Clune Wind Farm application. This representation involves a number of additional criteria to those relating to Balnespick but is at an advance stage of preparation. • SWIAG have already obtained extensions to the dates for submission for each of the applications in order that each development can be given separate and full consideration. SF believes that the timescales for submission for each of the applications will be met; • She has been in contact with the MPs and MSPs and voiced the community concerns that the cumulative impact of all the wind farms had not been properly taken account of. To date Fergus Ewing is the only one to have replied • Copies of the submission to the ECU will be made available on the Strathdearn website; • SF encouraged any member of the community who has personal concerns contact the ECU and make their feelings known; Following discussion SF agreed to send copies of the ECU submissions to the local MP and MSPs	SF
12	<u>Update from SCD</u> A brief update was provided by Maureen on the progress on the affordable housing project	
13	<u>Correspondence</u> SF stated that several items of correspondence had been received by the SCC, these being: • An email had been received from consultants Mott MacDonald stating that they had been engaged to look at the design and placement of art works along the road development. They would like to attend the next SCC meeting to discuss their proposals and seek the community views. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and that some of the local artists may wish to be involved. <u>Action</u> – Contact Mott MacDonald with an invite to the next SCC meeting • Correspondence had again been received regarding the fencing of the children’s play area in order to improve safety <u>Action</u> – As the asset belongs to SCD, SCC will contact SCD and relay the request to them • SF has been approached by a new member of the community who is interested in potentially becoming a member of SCC <u>Action</u> – contact be established and she be invited to meet with a member of SCC to discuss this	SF JD/ DB SF
14	<u>Any other business</u> • Annual General Meeting – the importance of maintaining an active community council was again discussed. It was decided to undertake an advertising campaign to improve awareness and seek new members <u>Action</u> – an advert is to be prepared and mounted on the Strathdearn Web page	SF/ SC

	• JD advised the meeting that he had been in contact with Carole Masheter (SSEN), Aberarder Windfarm, with respect to the receipt of community benefit monies. The benefit being £15,298.30 per year for the first 2 years and £30,596.60 from year 3 onwards for the operational life of the generating asset. JD stated that he had consulted with the SCD and SCCT Chairs and requested the Community Council members to agree that these monies from Aberarder be allocated to SCD. This was agreed by a vote. • With more benefits likely to be coming - SF suggested that there is a need to prepare an agreed procedure for the negotiation, allocation and purpose of such community income. SF believed that a group should be established to develop an agreed procedure and also examine other potential methods of benefit income in order to secure an ongoing legacy income to the future community. SF highlighted that there are a number of alternatives other than cash. These include part ownership in a wind turbine, investment in the energy supply company, local energy discount etc. Action – SCC members establish a sub-group with a clear scope of work to address the subject of community benefit. This group should include members of the SCD and SCCT in order that there is a clear and unambiguous understanding of how the benefit is being allocated in order to deliver the requirements of the Community Development Plan. • Duncan Bryden highlighted that there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place between the SCC, SCD and SCCT which was meant to define the relationship between the bodies. He suggested that the MoU should be revisited to ensure that it is still fit for purpose. Action - A review of the MoU be undertaken by the new SCC post AGM	All All
15	Date of future meetings – 10th June 2025 Meeting closed 9.10 pm	