



Strathdearn Community Council

Minutes from meeting held in The Strathdearn, Tomatin, On 9th December 2025

Councillors Present:	Susan Falconer (SF) Hannah Yarr (HY) Margaret Menzies (MM) George Mcleod (GM) Kevin McKnight (KMck)	Chair Secretary Treasurer Member Member
Also Attended by:	Councillor Duncan Macpherson (DMacp) Councillor Ken Gowans (KG) Councillor Duncan McDonald (DMcD) 3 Members of Balfour Beatty (BB) 3 Member from Transport Scotland (TS) 19 members of the public	Councillor - Highland Council Councillor - Highland Council Councillor - Highland Council

Item Ref	Details	Action By
1	<u>Apologies</u> No apologies received	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no declarations of interest	
3	<u>Announcement by Chair</u> The chair opened the meeting by announcing the death of Mr James Duncan. Jimmy had been a stalwart, well known and respected member of the Strathdearn Community who never failed to respond to any request for help. Over the years he had been an active member of each of the community bodies; more recently the Chair of the Community Council and a Director of SCD. The community were shocked and saddened by his loss but highlighted that he left behind a significant legacy as most of the initiatives that the community currently enjoy were brought to fruition through Jimmy's involvement. The chair concluded by speaking on behalf of the community in sending its condolences to the family.	
4	<u>Presentation by Balfour Beatty (BB)</u> BB opened their presentation by offering their condolences to the community and Jimmy's family Main points of the presentation were as follows:- • Temporary traffic lights will operate on the 26th January 2026 for 24 hours; • Temporary traffic lights will operate on the 2nd and 3rd February 2026; • The National Cycle Network 7 (NCN7) will be temporarily be diverted to the line of the old NCN7 during January and February 2026 in order to undertake essential maintenance to the new NCN7. Thereafter it will be re-diverted to the new route;	

	• New road signs will be installed on the A9 Tomatin Junction from January 2026 – these will be in place until late 2027; • The Balfour Beatty site will be closed down for over the festive period, however traffic management inspections will continue to be undertaken to ensure site safety; • An explanation of the permanent road layout and signage was provided. Questions by SCC and Audience:- 1. Do BB have a winter resilience plan to ensure that the general public are not impeded as a consequence of their works ? – Yes a plan is in place to work alongside Bear Scotland and Highland Council as required to ensure that there is no adverse public impact. 2. Is there any progress on understanding the impact on the bus service or bus time table ? No – discussions are still active but BB will advise the community as soon as information is available. 3. Concern still exists over the lack of lighting at the Tomatin road junction. SCC pointed out that road alignment had changed, road markings were poor and existing landmarks had been removed. This had caused a number of the residents and visitors to miss the junction and several near accidents had occurred. DMacPh stated that he had received a number of complaints about the junction from his constituents and visitors regarding the safety of the junction without lighting. He wished the matter to be formally minuted in order that the concerns are formally recorded as it may be a factual representation of the situation in the event of a serious accident. The TS representative stated that they take safety seriously and that the situation had been analysed and found to be satisfactory, they considered that it is a matter for BB if they wish to install lights. BB indicated that they had undertaken the necessary risk analysis but would take another look at the situation.	
5	<u>Minutes of the Meeting of the 11th November 2025</u> No changes were indicated. The minutes were proposed by HY and seconded by MM	
6	<u>Matters arising from minutes (but not covered elsewhere within the agenda)</u> • Point 4 – Defibrillators Jimmy Duncan had been working on this initiative but it had now been passed to KMCK who would take the lead roll; • Point 9 - Timber abstraction from Glen Kirk forestry - The contractors had not been abiding by the agreed operating times and numbers of trucks. Complaints from residents had been received and The Highland council has now implemented a pause order on these truck movements. Following discussions it became apparent that there was a disagreement on the allocation of blame (haulage contractor or Timber felling operators). Timber abstraction had now been halted and will not resume until RTS (the haulage contractor) produce, submit and agree a revised Traffic Management Plan to control traffic on the road. This is unlikely before spring / summer 2026. • Point 14 – Care in the Community. GM reported that he had met with Liz Campbell (LC) to discuss and get a better understanding of the community requirements. It was obvious that care provision was lacking within Strathdearn area; in part due to financial shortcomings in the system. As a result GM had been in contact with a care provider to establish what could and needs to be done to re-establish a package for care in the community. In short:- ○ The company are interested in working with the community; ○ The company are putting together a care package proposal – cost and operation; ○ The package will incur a cost to the community and the government offering do not meet with actual service costs; ○ GM has been in contact with the Local MSP (Fergus Ewing) to question why carers are not paid for travelling time as this disadvantages all rural communities;	KMCK

	○ A report will be submitted to the SCC as soon as more information is available; ○ A decision will be required as to where the funding should come from. The Chair thanked GM and LC for the considerable amount of work they have undertaken over the past few weeks	GM
7	<u>Financial Report</u> MM stated that the SCC had £1,651.75 in their bank account. SF reported that she was still in discussion with the Bank of Scotland (BoS) in order to obtain internet banking. Progress had been slow because found an issue with the way the bank account had been established. However the matter was still being progressed.	SF/MM
8	<u>Law and Order</u> SF noted that she had received a report from DMacPh regarding illegal camping in the Garbole area. The police had been in attendance. The matter was resolved amicably.	
9	<u>Road Safety.</u> • Raigbeg Bridge safety – KG reported that he had spoken to the Roads Department on the matter. A technician had undertaken an inspection and reported that, as the structure had been temporarily repaired it was safe. However, he recommended that a full detailed structural inspection was necessary to look at what permanent works were required. This is currently being organised. KG to report back as and when information is available. • Fallen trees adjacent to A9 – KG reported back that he had spoke to the HC tree specialist who advised him that the responsibility for fallen trees rested with the land owner. However HC could take action if it was considered a safety issue. A member of the audience referred to the original discussion as the HC did not address the subject. During the construction works on the A9 a large number of trees had been felled. This had led to a number of trees on adjacent land now being subject to wind loading. These trees had previously been secure and safe. The actions of the A9 construction contractor had been responsible for the changes that have impacted on third party forestry – so who was responsible for the repair of any damage or paying for tree loss. KG was not in a position to answer and agreed to obtain opinion from HC. • Moy path alongside old A9 – GM reported that SCD had met with a contractor and a price is to be obtained for the required repair work. He will report back on progress at the next meeting;	KG GM
10	<u>Applications to the Trust</u> • Snow Clearing – A submission has been made to the trust based on the financial allowances used during 2024 / 2025. Although a specification was submitted to several contractors for prices, only one bid was received. This was from Ian MacDonald based in Moy. GM met with Ian and an agreement reached on the contractual arrangements. The specification was developed from the previous arrangements. Questions were asked by the public on the areas covered by the snow clearing contract. The Chair stated that the community would not undertake work that was the responsibility of the HC as it could have insurance implications. Consequently, during the recent snow fall, GM contacted KG and the HC as Mill Road was dangerous and required immediate action. Details of the snow clearing responsibilities will be shared with the Community.	SF

11	<u>Planning Matters</u> No new planning issues	
12	<u>Local Place Plans (LLP) and Community Action Plan (CAP)</u> Helen Bailey (HB) updated the meeting on progress since the last meeting. Notably:- - HB had taken a stall at the winter market in the Strathdearn to highlight the work being done on the LLP and CAP. She indicated that had been successful and had attracted the attention of a number of locals; 19 members of the community had made contact with her to discuss their thoughts on the LLP and CAP. This had been useful and gave some direction to her work over the coming months; - HB intends commencing a community engagement exercise in January 2026 when she hopes to obtain the views of a broad cross section of the community, local businesses, estates and companies currently working within the area (e.g. BB and TS). She will also contact developers who have voiced an interest in the area to determine their aspirations; - HB had spoken to the HC Planning as she considered that the actions within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) may influence how the LLP would be viewed, noting that a significant amount of the areas previously identified within the IMFLDP had been removed; - HB gave a brief update on her programme to deliver the LLP and CAP The chair noted that a member of the public had identified a link between development, the LLP / CAP and the wind farm proposals. It was considered that there is a close alignment and that the proposals for wind farms in the area should be part of the consultation – highlighting the community’s opinions on this matter. . KG and DMacPh replied with respect to the content of the IMFLDP stating that HC were now focused on identifying potential areas that could be developed economically. As such the development plans were now of a “quasi financial” nature looking at cost and practicality and not as aspirational as in the past.	
13	<u>Windfarms – Progress from SWIAG</u> GM updated the meeting that since the last meeting a further one wind farm project has been proposed – Glen Kirk area. A request for Scoping Opinion had been received from the Energy Consents Unit asking for comments by 9th January 2026. GM had contacted the ECU asking for a 45 day extension as it would not be possible to put together a meaningful response within the current time scale. GM also pointed out that the initial community consultation looked only at 6 wind farms, a further community consultation exercise will be required for the proposed Glen Markie and Glen Kirk Wind farms. GM considered that it would be inevitable that one or more wind farms is given planning permission and consequently the community should consider forming a committee to address community benefit negotiations and what the money should be used for. KG indicated that the Highland Council had developed their ‘Social Value Charter’; part of which promotes additional community benefit monies be obtained for local council allocation. Whilst not promoting or rejecting this proposal DMacPh suggested that the community look closely at the charter prior to support.	GM
14	<u>Update from SCD</u> Updates were provided by GM, summarised as follows: - Fencing work has been completed in Hazelbank Woods; - Affordable Housing is progressing well and on programme. A Draft Housing Allocation Policy has been developed – copies are available for the community to comment on;	

	Changes are to be made to the shop and café in order to address some of the inefficiencies	
15	<u>Correspondence</u> The chair noted that a number of pieces of correspondence had been received. They will all be mounted on the community web page. However the follow items warranted discussion:- Cameron Barracks, Inverness – The proposal to use these facilities to house asylum seekers had received mixed press. Consequently information had been sent to community councils to explain the proposals Tourism Levy – a letter had been received from Caravan and Camping Association disagreeing with the flat rate levy and requesting support - MCR Pathways – An organisation established to provide career mentoring to students had written to seek input from people willing to take on a mentoring role in Inverness Schools	
16	<u>Any other business</u> - The closing date for articles for the next community newsletter will be Wednesday 28th January 2026 - There will be no Strathdearn Community Council meeting in January 2026	
17	Date of future meetings – 10th February 2026 Meeting closed 8.40pm	