

**Minutes of the SCC Meeting
Held in The Strathdearn, Tomatin, on 11th August 2026**

Councillors Present:	Susan Falconer (SF) - Chair Margaret Menzies (MM) - Treasurer Kevin McKnight (KMck) – Member	Hannah Yarr (HY) – Secretary George McLeod (GM) – Member
Also Attended by:	14 members of the public (including 4 online) Duncan McDonald (DMcD) – Highland Councillor Duncan MacPherson (DMacP) – Highland Councillor Ken Gowans (KG)- Highland Councillor Allan McLean (AM) - Station Commander Inverness	

Item Ref	Details	Action By
1	<u>Apologies</u> None	
2	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> None were declared	
3	<u>Visit from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Station Commander</u> - AM took the opportunity to introduce himself, and gave a summary of his career to date and family Key updates for Strathdearn: - A multi-agency tabletop exercise will take place at Tomatin Distillery involving the distillery, Fire Service, Police Scotland, Highland Council and other partners. The exercise is required because the distillery is a COMAH-regulated site and will test emergency response, decision-making and recovery planning. - The recent Cairngorm wildfires required support from fire crews across Scotland and highlighted the importance of: - Firebreaks - Water access - Partnership working - Weather and vegetation monitoring - Drones and thermal imaging were used to identify hotspots and direct firefighting resources. Firebreaks and proactive land management were identified as key measures to reduce wildfire spread. - More broadly, AM encouraged closer cooperation between communities, estates, landowners and Forestry and Land Scotland. - The Fire Service continues to offer Home Fire Safety Visits and community fire safety presentations. Going forward, AM and his team could support Strathdearn across the following areas: - Support and help facilitate a wildfire tabletop exercise to test SCD local resilience plans and emergency responses, if there is appetite to do so - Assist with community preparedness and awareness, through fire safety talks, guidance and engagement with local residents and landowners, should this be organised.	
4	<u>Minutes of the SCC meeting of the 9th June 2026</u> Draft minutes from the June meeting were reviewed, with concerns raised by the Chair of the Strathdearn Community Charitable Trust (SCCT) regarding references to Trust funding decisions and discussions (Section 8 of the June 2026 meeting minutes)	

	• He emphasised that the Charitable Trust operates independently of the Community Council and is accountable to OSCR, with funding decisions made privately by Trustees. • Discussion focused on previous funding applications, including after-school services and Moy Fair/Crafters funding, and how these were represented in the June minutes. • The Charitable Trust wanted to clarify that the Trust's decision not to fully fund one application was based on financial constraints, not opposition to the project. • Trustees considered the negotiation of Moy Fair arrangements by Trust representatives to have been successful, resulting in reduced costs and provision of a free tent. • Members agreed there had been some communication and clarity issues regarding how Trust decisions and outcomes were reported back to the Community Council. • It was reiterated by the Chair of the Trust that the Community Council's role is to discuss and recommend applications, while final funding decisions rest solely with the Trust. • Discussion highlighted the need for greater clarity around roles, responsibilities and communication between the Community Council and the Trust. • Members stressed that there is no wish to abolish the Trust, but that future governance and processes could be reviewed and modernised where appropriate. • It was clarified that previous funding support provided to SCD was a Trust decision and not related to financial issues within SCD. • Members acknowledged that amendments to the June minutes had been exchanged by email in advance of the meeting, but agreement had not been reached. SF had not received the latest email. There was agreement that further discussion was required, and therefore the relevant section of the minutes would be left in draft form until an agreed version could be reached. Actions Agreed • SF to work with the CC Secretary to review wording for the disputed sections of the June minutes and agree with the Trust • Continue discussions on clarifying Community Council and Trust roles, responsibilities and communication processes going forward.	SF SF
5	<u>Financial Report</u> • Financial report as of 30th July showed a balance of £1,118.88, with no significant financial activity to report. • Following the AGM and submission of the required paperwork to Community Council Support, the Council is awaiting its annual funding payment. • It was noted that the expected payment has not yet been received and a reminder will be sent to follow this up.	
6	<u>Law and Order</u> • There was no update on the Coffee with a Cop initiative due to other commitments taking priority. It was agreed to keep Coffee with a Cop on the agenda as a reminder for future updates, potentially inviting the new Chief Inspector. • Members received an update from DMacP following the appointment of a new Chief Inspector for Inverness, Craig Still. There will be a new community policing model being rolled out across Scotland. It was noted that the Highlands' existing approach to community policing is already closely aligned with the new national model. ○ A new community policing email contact has been introduced and is available on the Police Scotland website. Members noted the importance of sharing this contact information with the community once received. ○ Police representatives highlighted the value of community intelligence and encouraged residents to report suspicious activity, concerns about drug misuse, unusual vehicles, environmental crime, or other matters of concern, even where no immediate criminal activity is evident.	SF

	Meeting attendees discussed the importance of reporting all incidents, including shoplifting and anti-social behaviour, as reported crime statistics influence police resourcing and funding allocations.	
7	<u>Road Safety</u> RTS - Ongoing monitoring of logging lorry movements and compliance with agreed transport plan conditions, including timing restrictions and spacing between vehicles - Highland Council has reminded haulage operators of their obligations under the TMP. - Action: Re-circulate the approved transport plan, including permitted operating times, to Community Council members. Verge Cutting - Following discussions with Highland Council, verge cutting was carried out in the area after concerns were raised about the community continuing to fund the work. - A locally arranged contractor will undertake one further cut at the end of the month as funded by the trust, with the expectation that Council-led verge cutting will resume in future years. - Action: Continue engagement with Highland Council to confirm future maintenance arrangements. Roadside Hedge Maintenance (Kyallachy Brae) - Concerns were raised regarding overgrown hedges and overhanging branches affecting visibility on a difficult corner. - Highland Council has inspected the site and scheduled flailing works for September following the bird nesting season. Raigbeg Bridge - Members reviewed the April inspection report (shared by KG), which concluded that the bridge structure is not considered dangerous and does not require immediate intervention. - Concerns remain regarding the condition of the bridge decking timbers despite the positive structural assessment. - Action: Follow up with Highland Council regarding the condition of the decking and any future maintenance plans. Road Surface Defects - Concern was raised about two sunken service crossings or trenches in the road near the hall, which are causing discomfort to road users and may deteriorate further. - Action: Report the locations to Highland Council for inspection and possible remedial works. General Roads Engagement - Positive feedback was given regarding support and responsiveness from Highland Council officers dealing with roads and infrastructure matters within the area. - Particular recognition was given to Council officer Lucy Tonkin for her assistance with multiple local issues. BEAR site compound - No further update required on this topic Area's not discussed, and therefore carried over to future meetings: - Old A9 cycle route - Station Road - Old Mill Road	GM SF SF SF
8	<u>Applications to the Strathearn Community Charity Trust (SCCT)</u> - The Community Council considered an application from the Children's Entertainment Committee seeking £1,784 towards the annual Halloween Disco, Christmas Party and Christmas Tractor Run. - The application highlighted the importance of these events in bringing together children and families across the area, particularly those living in more isolated locations, and supporting community wellbeing and social inclusion. - The Children's Committee reported that it had contributed 10% of costs from its own fundraising activities and planned further fundraising through events.	

	- Members expressed support for the application and agreed that it should be recommended to the Trust for final consideration and decision. - Samantha Meade, speaking on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Community Council for considering the application and outlined the continued success and growth of the events, including the introduction of the Tractor Run. Trust Funding and Future Allocations - It was noted that discussions have taken place regarding the level of funding allocated to children's activities and that funding support remains available at present. - Members noted that local children's groups had met to discuss future funding arrangements and collaboration, with further discussions expected. - The meeting briefly discussed the complexities of providing grants to other charitable organisations and noted that any such awards would require careful consideration under the Trust's governing arrangements. Trust Governance Update - An update was provided the Chair of SCCT on the future of the Trust following receipt of legal advice. It was reported that the Trust will continue beyond January 2027 and that existing funds remain secure. - Community Council members were further advised that forthcoming legislative changes may temporarily require future income received after January 2027 to be spent rather than accumulated in reserves until further provisions are enacted. - It was confirmed that these changes are not expected to affect the day-to-day operation of the Trust in the foreseeable future.	
9	<u>Planning Matters</u> Local Place Plan - Positive feedback was received from Highland Council indicating that the Local Place Plan is expected to be successfully registered, with only minor amendments likely to be required. The final feedback is awaited. - Members welcomed the achievement, recognising the significant work involved and the contribution of community volunteers, and Helen Bailey, in developing the plan. - It was noted that the plan will feed into wider Highland Council and Scottish Government planning processes and will help shape future development decisions in the area. - The Local Place Plan will also inform an updated Community Plan and provide a stronger basis for supporting or objecting to future developments. Wind Farm Developments and Community Benefit Aberarder Wind Farm - Concerns were raised regarding a proposed agreement that would require communities to seek approval from SSE before spending community benefit funds. - The proposed agreement has been rejected and a detailed response submitted jointly with neighbouring communities. - Members expressed disappointment that SSE is not providing the full £5,000 per MW level of community benefit directly to affected communities. They plan to split the £5,000 per MW into community benefit and a central pot 50/50. Farr Wind Farm Extension - A public exhibition has been held regarding proposals for an additional ten turbines - The developer has confirmed that community benefit arrangements will continue should the wind farm be repowered in the future. - Details of any future repowering proposals are still under development. Balnespick Wind Farm - Remains one of the most active proposals currently progressing through planning. - Members noted positive engagement and communication from the developer and agreed they have maintained a constructive relationship despite ongoing planning objections. - A voice note had been sent to be included in their latest podcast - Further environmental impact information is expected later in the year. Community Benefit Planning	

	- The Community Council is shifting focus from individual planning applications towards preparing for future community benefit opportunities arising from proposed wind farms. - The SWIAG subgroup will now consider future community benefit arrangements and funding options. - Potential models discussed included community ownership, shared ownership, investment opportunities and local energy discount schemes. - Members agreed that residents should be provided with clear, accessible information on the potential benefits, opportunities and risks associated with each option. - Action: Prepare a community information and consultation exercise, targeted for the November newsletter, outlining possible community benefit options and seeking community feedback, which will include the forecasted monetary income the community may receive.	SF/GM
10	<u>Update from Strathdearn Community Developments (SCD)</u> An update was not provided by SCD in advance, therefore GM outlined key areas. - General Manager- Helen Gerling has been appointed as General Manager following a competitive recruitment process and took up the role this week. She will be the main point of contact and oversee all SCD operations, including the shop and café. The next step is to recruit project support resources. - Care in the Community- Members noted continuing challenges with services and were referred to recent social media updates outlining interim support options available. - After school provision- No update was provided. Park and Ride Project - Full planning permission has been secured for the proposed Park and Ride facility, with land agreements in place and Balfour Beatty confirming its willingness to deliver the project. - Balfour Beatty requested confirmation of community support to assist discussions with Transport Scotland regarding project funding. The Community Council agreed to formally support the Park and Ride proposal and confirm this to project partners. - Members welcomed the success of the Ember bus service and considered the Park and Ride facility a valuable addition for residents and visitors. - Highland Council's EV infrastructure team has approached SCD about installing two electric vehicle charging points at the Park and Ride site. These would be fully funded externally and would not create any cost for the community. - Additional funding has been secured to enhance the planned bike shelter, including solar panels and lighting.	
11	<u>Correspondence</u> - All correspondence received by the Community Council is logged, with significant items shared through community communication channels where appropriate. Bottle bank area - Concerns were raised regarding the condition of the bottle bank site, including fly-tipping, overflowing containers and the unexplained removal of bottle banks from the location. - Highland Council officers responded promptly to reports of fly-tipping and confirmed investigations are ongoing into the missing bottle banks. - Members agreed the area would benefit from a tidy-up event, and the councillors advised PPE and litter pickers could be provided by the council, and black bags collected.	SF
12	<u>AOCB</u> Community Council Elections - Attendees were reminded of the forthcoming interim Community Council elections and encouraged residents to consider standing for election. - The elections provide an opportunity for current co-opted members to become full elected members and for additional residents to join the Community Council. - Key election dates and nomination arrangements were noted, with publicity to be shared through local communication channels. Defibs	

	- It was noted that the list of Defibs should be included within the newsletter. This should be shared with Denise B. Winter Snow Clearing - Early planning has commenced for winter snow-clearing arrangements in partnership with SCD. - Members discussed identifying a more cost-effective delivery model while maintaining support for priority areas, particularly routes used by carers and vulnerable residents. - Local contractors or residents interested in assisting with snow-clearing operations may be considered, subject to funding and operational requirements. Meeting closed 9pm.	KM
13	<u>Date of Next Meeting</u> The next meeting will be held on 8th September at 7pm	