



## Strathdearn Community Council

### Minutes of the SCC Meeting Held in The Strathdearn, Tomatin, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2026

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| <b>Councillors Present:</b> | Susan Falconer (SF) - Chair<br>Margaret Menzies (MM) - Treasurer<br>Kevin McKnight (KMck) – Member                                                                                                                                                                              | Hannah Yarr (HY) – Secretary<br>George McLeod (GM) – Member |
| <b>Also Attended by:</b>    | 12 members of the public (including 4 online)<br>Duncan McDonald (DMcD) – Highland Councillor<br>Duncan MacPherson (DMacP) – Highland Councillor<br>Ken Gowans (KG)- Highland Councillor<br>Lynva Forrest - Fred Olsen<br>Cris Thacker- Fred Olsen<br>Peter Kane- Kane Partners |                                                             |

| Item Ref | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Action By |
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| 1        | <b><u>Apologies</u></b><br>None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |           |
| 2        | <b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b><br>None, however, SF took the time to announce election results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SF and MM remain in elected spaces</li><li>KMcK, HY and GM move from co-opted to elected members</li><li>Duncan Bryden and Katie Ford will be joining Strathdearn Community Council as elected members, bringing total cohort to 7</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |           |
| 3        | <b><u>Visit from Balnespick Windfarm (Developer: Fred Olsen)</u></b><br>Detailed slides used, and will be available to the community following the meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Project revisions following consultation: Developers confirmed the proposal has been reduced from 9 turbines to 7 turbines, with turbine height reduced from 200m to 180m tip height. Changes were made in response to feedback from the Community Council, NatureScot and the Cairngorms National Park Authority, with turbines moved further from sensitive viewpoints and the National Park. All assumptions and models are a snapshot in time, and should re-runs be needed if the development is approved, these can be updated.</li><li>Further Environmental Information (FEI): Updated environmental assessments are being finalised and expected to be submitted in late September. Additional visualisations, including 360° daytime and night-time views, will be published.</li><li>Landscape and visual mitigation: Two turbines have been removed and the remaining layout adjusted to reduce visibility from key viewpoints, particularly around Lochindorb Castle and the National Park.</li><li>Peatland and habitat restoration: Developers explained that peat disturbed during construction would be reused for restoration. Habitat enhancement and restoration measures will be included within the Outline Biodiversity Management Plan.</li><li>Ornithology and wildlife assessments: Updated collision risk modelling and assessments for golden eagles and other bird species have been completed using current NatureScot guidance. Developers stated the findings indicate no significant effects on protected bird species.</li><li>Tourism assessment: Economic consultants have updated tourism impact assessments using 2024 visitor data. Developers stated there is no evidence that the proposed development would significantly affect tourism, although the public challenged this conclusion.</li><li>Aviation lighting: Only 3 of the 7 turbines would require aviation lighting. Lighting intensity would vary according to visibility conditions, operating at lower intensity most of the time.</li></ul> | HY        |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire risk and battery storage: Developers advised that battery energy storage systems (BESS) would be designed to current safety standards and appropriate fire mitigation measures would be implemented. Future battery technologies would be considered if the project proceeds.</li> <li>• Community benefit funding: The proposed community benefit package remains at the industry-standard level of £5,000 per MW per year, equating to approximately £250,000 annually or £8.8 million over the project lifetime.</li> <li>• Grid and energy infrastructure: Discussion highlighted wider concerns about grid capacity, wind farm constraint payments and the need for additional energy storage infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Q: Why is the project being revised?</b><br/>A: Feedback from statutory consultees and the Community Council led to the removal of two turbines and a reduction in turbine height to lessen landscape and visual impacts.</li> <li>• <b>Q: What does the 1:9 or 1:10 peat restoration ratio mean?</b><br/>A: For every area of peat disturbed, a larger area will be restored or enhanced. Developers aim for a 1:10 ratio where possible but stated site conditions can affect what is achievable.</li> <li>• <b>Q: How are high-risk turbines for golden eagles identified?</b><br/>A: Through collision risk modelling, flight path data and field surveys. Developers agreed to provide further detailed information from their ornithology consultants.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Why are some bird survey details confidential?</b><br/>A: Sensitive information relating to protected species and nesting locations is typically withheld to prevent disturbance and potential harm.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Could aviation lights only operate when aircraft are nearby?</b><br/>A: Developers explained that Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS) are not currently proposed but could be considered in future if approved and widely adopted by aviation regulators.</li> <li>• <b>Q: What will happen to turbine foundations and components at decommissioning?</b><br/>A: A decommissioning plan would be required. Developers stated that concrete, steel and other materials would be broken up, recycled or reused where possible. The developers are already starting to decommission some of their older sites, so will be testing and partnering over the coming years and hope the market sees improvements in recycling infrastructure.</li> <li>• <b>Q: How were conclusions reached that tourism would not be significantly affected?</b><br/>A: Developers said conclusions were based on consultant-led analysis of tourism data. The public questioned whether local businesses had been adequately consulted.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Why are more wind farms being developed in Scotland when grid constraints already exist?</b><br/>A: Developers stated Scotland has strong wind resources, while acknowledging grid infrastructure improvements and additional storage capacity are needed.</li> <li>• <b>Q: Can community feedback still influence the application?</b><br/>A: Yes. Developers confirmed that many project changes resulted directly from community representations and encouraged further submissions during the planning process.</li> </ul> <p><i>Please note:</i> Highland Councillors only asked generic questions, and did not ask anything specific to this windfarm.</p> |  |
| 4 | <p><b><u>Minutes of the SCC meeting</u></b></p> <p>9<sup>th</sup> June 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The June minutes, which had not been approved at the August meeting, were revisited.</li> <li>• HY reviewed the meeting transcript and recording and redrafted Section 8 of the minutes.</li> <li>• Amendments, including a correction regarding the rejection rate, were agreed with Frank, Chair of the Strathdearn Charitable Trust.</li> <li>• Members confirmed they were satisfied that the revised minutes accurately reflected the discussion and proposed approval of the June minutes.</li> <li>• Proposed KMCK, Second GM</li> </ul> <p>11<sup>th</sup> August 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No amendments were raised during the review.</li> <li>• Members confirmed they were satisfied with the accuracy of the minutes.</li> <li>• Proposed GM, Second MM</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |

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| 5 | <p><b><u>Financial Report</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MM confirmed that online banking access has now been successfully established, enabling payments to be made and received electronically.</li> <li>• The current bank balance stands at £1,604.99, including the Highland Council grant of £830.36, which has now been received.</li> <li>• Members thanked MM for persevering with the lengthy online banking setup process.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                   |
| 6 | <p><b><u>Law and Order</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Beats newsletter was received and shared on the local Facebook page.</li> <li>• A possible “Coffee with a Cop” event may be arranged in October due to changes in upcoming meeting schedules.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised by MM regarding a recent vandalism of the local post box, including damage to the lock, obstruction of the letter slot, and resulting disruption to mail collections.</li> <li>• Additional incidents of minor vandalism were reported by the public, including damage to signage near Meg’s Garden and concerns about damage to the playground shelter roof.</li> <li>• Members discussed raising awareness of the incidents within the community without making accusations. It was suggested that local schools be informed so they can remind pupils about respectful behaviour and community responsibility.</li> <li>• The Community Council agreed to consider an appropriately worded notice to inform residents of the incidents and encourage vigilance. There is also a possibility of using the new policing email outlined during Aug meeting.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | SF                                                                |
| 7 | <p><b><u>Road Safety</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns were raised about road safety at Kyllachy Brae, particularly the risk of accidents involving cyclists and vehicles on blind corners. Members agreed to ask the Council about additional warning signage and the planned hedge cutting. Members noted that overgrown hedges are restricting visibility on certain sections of road and increasing safety concerns. This has been planned in by Highland Council already.</li> <li>• Concern was raised about a School bus stopping on a blind bend near the village, potentially creating a hazard for passing traffic. The issue will be raised with Highland Council.</li> <li>• Road surface issues, including bumps and potholes, were highlighted and is already being dealt with by SF.</li> <li>• It was noted that Glen Kirk haulage operations have been completed, although some lorry movements from the glen continue to be observed. Questions were raised about traffic management arrangements associated with forestry operations.</li> <li>• Members discussed ongoing A9/Balfour Beatty roadworks, including long delays caused by convoy systems, and agreed concerns would be raised with the community liaison representative to ensure this is properly advertised.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding litter associated with roadworks traffic and workforce activity, particularly at the southern end of the village. Evidence will be gathered and reported to Balfour Beatty.</li> <li>• Members discussed wider litter issues in the community and the possibility of organising a community litter-pick event.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised about the poor maintenance of the village footpath installed several years ago, including overgrown vegetation, accumulated soil and weeds, and a lack of promised maintenance. It was agreed that Highland Council should be contacted regarding the condition and upkeep of the footpath and surrounding public areas, as they had previously promised. KG gave contact details for Debbie at Highland Council.</li> <li>• Members expressed concern about the overall appearance of parts of the village and the need for improved maintenance of public spaces.</li> </ul> | <p>SF</p> <p>SF</p> <p>SF</p> <p>SF/GM</p> <p>GM</p> <p>SF/KG</p> |

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| 8  | <p><b><u>Applications to the Strathdearn Community Charity Trust (SCCT)</u></b><br/> The Public discussed difficulties experienced by some applicants using the online application form, including text limits and formatting issues. It was agreed that these concerns should be raised with Steve who supports the online form.</p> <p><b>Tomatin flower project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application submitted to continue the Tomatin Flowers Project and support gardening activities with local primary school pupils.</li> <li>• Applicant was present at the meeting to answer any questions.</li> <li>• The project aims to enhance village appearance, improve biodiversity, increase community involvement, and develop a seed bank for future planting.</li> <li>• Members praised the success of the project, particularly its engagement with children and visible benefits to the community.</li> <li>• The Community Council unanimously supported the application and agreed to recommend it for approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training Courses Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application submitted for funding towards chainsaw, telehandler, and outdoor first aid training courses for local residents and businesses.</li> <li>• The project aims to improve health and safety, increase community resilience, support woodland management, and provide skills that may be useful during emergencies.</li> <li>• All course places were reported as fully booked.</li> <li>• Applicant was present at the meeting to answer any questions.</li> <li>• Members recognised the benefits for local businesses, community woodland work, emergency response, and wider community resilience.</li> <li>• The application will be forwarded to the Charitable Trust for consideration, with some notes around the telehandler course for additional discussion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shannon MacKay- Physiotherapy at Glasgow Caledonian University</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application submitted for support towards MSc Physiotherapy tuition fees at Glasgow Caledonian University.</li> <li>• Applicant was not present at the meeting.</li> <li>• Members acknowledged the educational value of the application and the potential long-term benefits should the applicant return to work locally.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding the direct benefit to the wider community and the precedent that funding individual higher education courses could create.</li> <li>• It was agreed that the application would be forwarded to the Charitable Trust without a recommendation, allowing the trustees to make the final decision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Snow clearing contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing to revise the snow-clearing specification and reduce costs.</li> <li>• An application is expected to be brought forward once costs and contractor interest are clearer.</li> </ul> | HY |
| 9  | <p><b><u>Planning Matters</u></b><br/> No discussion</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |
| 10 | <p><b><u>Local place plan update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Place Plan was successfully registered in mid-August, completing the project. The plan will now be considered in future planning decisions and by Highland Council.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |    |
| 11 | <p><b><u>Windfarm and Community Benefit – SWIAG Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A public consultation event for the proposed development at Carn na Saobhaidh Windfarm is scheduled for 21–22 September.</li> <li>• A meeting with SSE Aberarder was due to take place the following evening regarding community benefit arrangements.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding SSE’s revised community benefit proposals, including the withdrawal of previously discussed construction-phase payments and restrictions on how community funds could be used.</li> <li>• It was noted that several neighbouring Community Councils share similar concerns and that discussions will continue through the Aberarder Community Liaison Group.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |    |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members discussed proposed construction access routes for one of the wind farm developments, including the use of roads and a bridge within the glen. Concerns were noted about the suitability of the route for heavy construction traffic.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |
| 10 | <p><b><u>Update from Strathdearn Community Developments (SCD)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal update was received from Strathdearn Community Development (SCD) beyond the regular monthly update circulated by email and Facebook.</li> <li>Members were informed that Helen Garland has been appointed as the new General Manager and took up post in mid-August following a recruitment process.</li> <li>It was noted that ongoing projects are being reviewed and managed following recent staffing changes, with future reports expected from the new General Manager.</li> <li>Progress on discussions with NHS Highland regarding local care provision remains stalled pending wider organisational changes within NHS Scotland.</li> <li>An update was provided on the planned after-school activities programme, which is intended to operate five days per week. Agreement has been secured with High Life Highland, and implementation is awaiting staffing arrangements.</li> <li>Members discussed community benefit funding governance, accountability, and reporting arrangements, including the balance between community control and funder oversight.</li> <li>It was noted that SCD's activities are guided by the Community Plan and Local Place Plan, with financial reporting subject to scrutiny through annual accounts, AGMs, board oversight, and charity regulation.</li> <li>Members of the public raised concerns about the accessibility and clarity of financial information and suggested that reporting could be simplified to assist community understanding.</li> <li>It was agreed that specific questions regarding SCD finances and reporting would be raised with the SCD Board for clarification, specifically covering the electricity bills for the hub. Any further questions should be submitted to GM/SCD, and the public is also encouraged to join the SCD board via the constitutional process.</li> <li>It was emphasised that effective community representation depends on confidence in those elected or appointed to act on the community's behalf, while the public are encouraged to ask questions and engage with the process.</li> <li>It was confirmed that SCD and associated organisations operate under charity governance requirements, with accounts scrutinised by directors, members at AGMs, and the charity regulator. Attendees are reminded that organisations must comply with governance and reporting obligations, similar to any company or charity, with management accounts regularly reviewed by the board and annual accounts made available for scrutiny.</li> </ul> | GM |
| 11 | <p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>The Community Council received information about the Tesco blue token community funding scheme. Details were passed to local groups, including the school and community gardening project, as potential funding opportunities. Discussion took place around the importance of seeking external funding opportunities where appropriate, alongside the use of community benefit funds.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |    |
| 12 | <p><b><u>AOCB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members noted several Highland Council consultations, including those relating to green space management and biodiversity, and discussed the balance between biodiversity objectives and maintenance of public areas.</li> <li>The Highland Fire and Rescue Plan consultation was highlighted as particularly relevant to the area.</li> <li>Members welcomed an upcoming SCD wildfire preparedness seminar, which will focus on community resilience, prevention measures, and emergency preparedness.</li> <li>It was noted that the new bottle banks have now been installed.</li> <li>The ongoing Highland Council Visitor Levy consultation was highlighted by KG, and residents were encouraged to submit their views. Clarification was sought on how the proposed Visitor Levy would be applied to accommodation bookings. Confirmed this would be per booking, not per Airbnb bedroom (example).</li> </ul> <p>Meeting closed 9.20pm</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
| 13 | <p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 13<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |    |