**Strathglass Community Council** (SCC)

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 28th November 2013, at 7.30pm, Cannich Village Hall**

Present Molly Doyle, Ian Campbell, Robin Sproull, Edward Redmond, Heather Redmond, and approx. ten members of the public.

Apologies: Donald Fraser, Cllr. Margaret Davidson and PC. Karen MacKenzie

1. The Chair, Mrs. Doyle welcomed all those in attendance.
2. Mr.Malcolm Macleod, Head of Planning - Highland Council, gave an excellent overview of the Planning Process with particular emphasis on the Community Council Role within it. Copies of the document “The planning system in Scotland: an introduction for elected members” produced by The Improvement Service were made available. To summarise the talk:
* Three major elements: Development Plans as we have seen with the ongoing consultation on the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan updated every five years and Development Management i.e. Planning Applications covering new buildings, changes of use etc. Some smaller domestic issues such as sheds, solar panels etc. are now granted ‘permitted development’ so a planning application is no longer required. Finally – Enforcement.
* Three levels of Planning Application: National e.g. Beauly-Denny Line; Major e.g. 50 or more homes, wind farms generating 20-50MWatt power (n.b. Mr Macleod confirmed after the meeting that it was in fact 20+ and not 10+ as he said at the meeting); Local which are the applications we hear of at each meeting and run to approx. 2500 per annum through HC.
* Developers of Major Applications will need to inform HC and consult locally prior to submitting the application. A range of impact assessments would be required depending on the type of development.
* Other Applications e.g. for large Wind Farms are made under Section 36 direct to the Scottish Government who would then consult with HC who would likely consult locally. If HC objected this would most likely trigger a Public Enquiry.
* Individuals or Community Councils need to respond promptly (two weeks) to HC if they wish to object to an application. The Community Council can become a Statutory Consultee if they notify HC that they wish to do so on a case by case system. The time allocated for a response may be extended from the usual four weeks if need be.
* Officers decide on planning applications in 94% of cases, only 6% are decided by the full committee. If there are more than 5 objections from different addresses that cannot be resolved then the application must go to committee, similarly if there is an objection from a statutory consultee e.g. Community Council.
* Objections must be for Material considerations e.g. planning history for site, site suitability, compatibility with neighbouring property & locality, potential loss of privacy from adjoining properties, the Development Plan, impact on natural heritage etc. Things not included as a Material Consideration would include moral considerations, political or ideological considerations, personal circumstances of applicant, cost, protection of private interests etc.
* There is an Appeals process: if a local application is refused by an officer, the appeal would be heard by a local review body of 9 members of HC. If the HC committee refuses an application the Reporter at Falkirk would decide an appeal. Appeals may be made to Scottish Ministers for larger developments.
* Enforcement. The Public can report breaches, preferably via the HC website and the form “report a Potential Breach of Planning Control”. If computer or internet access is an issue, the Service Centre will complete the form over the telephone.
* Questions & Answers: SNH Wild Land Mapping has changed the designation of some areas which means that there will be changes to areas available for wind farms, from April 2014.

Wind Farm planning permissions last for 25 years after which a new application is required or the turbines would have to be removed.

Most small hydro schemes would be dealt with as a local application to HC.

Scottish Govt. expects major applications to be dealt with in four months. This includes wind farms with more than three turbines. In fact they are rarely assessed within this timescale.

Wind Farms in an adjoining Community Council area do not HAVE to consult adjacent CC’s, but HC would try to do so.

The Planning Department offers advice on how to object to an application. Help is also available from the document distributed at the meeting, by looking at previous applications approved and rejected, and by reading the minutes of Planning meetings at HC.

Visual Impact is assessed by ‘Visualisation Standards’ as explained on HC website.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting: Ian Campbell proposed the adoption of the minutes, seconded by Edward Redmond and agreed by the committee.
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:
* First Responders: The meeting held on Wednesday 13th November was attended by approx. 14 members of the public. Posters are to be prepared requesting additional volunteers. The local co-ordinator does not have to be a First Responder themselves. It seems likely that a resident is willing to take on this role.

Public Access Defibrillators: These cost £1000 each with a local contribution of £400 required. The British Heart Foundation funds the balance. Locations would require power to keep the equipment frost free.

* Most other matters arising are still ongoing.
* Soirbheas: Currently advertising for a full-time Community Development Officer. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will work with Donna Green for a period to hand-over the work already undertaken. New Directors are required.
1. Planning Applications: Two new applications – Beaufort Enterprises seek to replace a boat house on Affric Estate; and a house and garage are planned for land near Dunedin, Cannich. Approval has been given for three new septic tanks by the river in Cannich.
2. Police Beat Report: Sgt. Hay attended the meeting and gave the report which mainly consisted of Road Traffic matters – 2 drivers charged with crashing and failing to report their accidents; a range of other infringements such as using mobile phones, no MOT, failing to stop at red light etc. No other matters of significance relevant to the SCC area. **Q&A** Rather than rely on commercial alcometers, Police advice is Do not Drink & Drive. Remember that the effects of alcohol can last into the next day. Livestock on the roads identifying ownership and proof of problem can be difficult, photographic evidence would help as would gaining the ear tag number if possible and safe to do so. The owners have been approached by the Police more than once but a letter from the SCC would do no harm.

Please liaise with PC Karen MacKenzie if you have any problems or enquiries.

1. Beinn Mhor (Tomich) Wind Farm proposal: nothing further to report.
2. Green Highland Renewables: A meeting was held on Monday 18th November. Ian Campbell, Molly Doyle and Donald Fraser attended on behalf of SCC (and maybe other groups). Local Energy Scotland (LES) were present to give advice. GHR wish to deal with a single umbrella organisation representing the local groups who may benefit from the Community Benefit. Questions were raised whether the SCC can fulfil this role. A separate organisation with representation of local groups (perhaps only the organisations representing 50 people or more should be involved) may need to be set-up. LES could provide £10,000 for set up costs. A meeting with SCVO is planned to advise on how to set up this organisation. Initially they would accept the approx. £18,000 community benefit and consider whether they should invest in the project as well.

The next meeting is scheduled for 16th January 2014.

1. Treasurer’s Report: A donation has been made to Cats Protection League following recent considerable assistance with controlling the Cannich cat population. Free funds still available approx. £900. Donations to the Cannich Bridge Primary School and also the Children’s Christmas party will be made.
2. Correspondence:

Police Scotland Traffic Warden Review: Plans are to withdraw the traffic warden role from Police Scotland. Local Authorities can take up the responsibility. Contacts are given if you wish to report your views.

Mauld Estate plan to extract timber from 2013 to 2017. They have been advised to avoid congestion on the Kiltarlity-Eskadale-Kerrow road.

Additional £10.3million extends Climate Challenge Fund until 2016 for community projects to reduce carbon emissions, tackle climate change and make community improvements.

HC Winter Maintenance Plan for 2013/14: main thing to note is the priority given to certain roads for snow & ice treatment.

Community Council training: the date for the Inverness session has moved from 26th Nov to 10th Dec.

NHS Highland Inverness West District Partnership: Phipps Hall Beauly Friday 20th Dec 10am until 12.30pm.

Consultation on Community Empowerment(Scotland) Bill. This proposes to make it easier for communities to take over public land & buildings; help communities have their voices heard on local services; increase transparency & community involvement on common good assets, strengthen community planning etc. The document runs to 86 pages and consultation closes on 24th January. Each Community councillor to take a chapter each and discuss at next meeting.

Queens Baton Bearers for Commonwealth Games: sorry missed the deadline but the baton should be in our ‘area’ on Friday 11th July 2014.

HC Review of Polling Districts and polling Places: SCC are satisfied with existing arrangements.

Proposed book on the place names of Beauly, the Aird and Strathglass: letter of support sought – agreed.

Inverness Area Community Council Forum: e-mail circulated of the noise problems experienced near the extended Wester Balblair substation. Bear it in mind should any such development be considered in our area.

1. A.O.C.B.

Beauly-Denny access tracks: some landowners are seeking to retain these for their use. SCC were asked if they wished to encourage retention for leisure & tourist purposes. No great interest expressed.

Public Toilets at Hall are closed November to March: The sign does **NOT** state this.

Pensioners Christmas Lunch will be held in the Hall on Wednesday 18th December. Lists are in the Cannich Shop & Tomich PO. Please encourage relevant people to sign up.

Robin reported that on 17th November 1973, over 100 people met and formed the Strathglass Community Association which was the forerunner of the SCC.

1. Dates and times of future meetings :

Thursday 9th January 2014 Thursday 20th February Thursday 3rd April

Thursday 15th May Thursday 26th June & AGM