**STRATHGLASS COMMUNITY COUNCIL (SCC**)

**Minutes of the meeting held at Cannich Hall on Monday, 24th October 2022 at 7-30pm**

**Present:** Nigel Ellis (Chair), Paul Stirling, Georgina Parker, Leeson Carlyle, Humphrey Clarke

**In attendance:** Kieren Jones (Nature Scot), Willie Fraser and Linzi Sevwright (AKDMG) and 19 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Alan Hood, Carol Masheter (Soirbheas) and Cllrs. David Fraser, Chris Balance and Emma Knox.

**1. Welcome.**

The Chair noted that there was a quorum, welcomed all those in attendance and declared the meeting open.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting.**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th September 2022 were proposed for adoption and unanimously approved.

**3. Matters arising from the previous meeting.**

All matters arising were included within the agenda for the meeting.

**4. Police report.**

No police report was available.

**5. Beaver Translocation to Strathglass and surrounds - Kieren Jones (NatureScot).**

a) The Scottish Government has set out a long term strategy to reintroduce beavers to Scotland over the period 2022-45 as part of a plan to enhance biodiversity. It will be administered by NatureScot who will issue the required licences.

b) The issue of a licence is conditional upon consultation with the community involved and the provision of a strategic environmental impact assessment that will include suitable mitigation measures to provide for potential river bank damage and adverse environmental impact on existing wildlife.

c) Mitigation measures might involve protecting trees, removing dams (beaver dams are legally protected two weeks after construction), constructing culverts under dams and re-locating the beavers. It was admitted under questioning that once released beavers, like other wild animals, will go where they choose without reference to the agreed release site or to the licence holder who has no residual responsibility.

d) Translocated beavers will be health tested and will only be licenced for release in suitable locations.

e) Though thorough hydrological surveys would be undertaken, there was no confirmation that specific individual concerns will be addressed unless there was a clear risk of damage. In such cases, a rapid mitigation response is expected.

g) It was pointed out that the consultation by TfL had started with press releases and social media postings before any consultation with representative community bodies and it was suggested that NatureScot’s consultation process, prior to the granting of a licence, should emulate that of a planning application so that the views of relevant Community Councils are formerly considered.

h) There was a general concern that residents in the area, who could potentially lose homes and livelihoods (with no prospect of compensation), were not being considered. When pressed as to the benefits of translocation to the local community, only possible improved local biodiversity and some increase in eco-tourism were offered.

**6. Deer Management - Willie Fraser and Linzi Sevwright (AKDMG).**

a) The members that the AKDMG represent are responsible for the deer population over a large land area, stretching from Strathglass to the West Coast. The group’s traditional interests have now expanded to include collaborative land management in order to sustain and improve biodiversity, restore peatland and improve grazing for livestock.

b) As part of their plan to engage with local communities, they have recently worked with schools and Soirbheas to promote the benefits of a sustainable deer population and venison as food source. In 2023, they aim to hold public venison butchering and cooking events.

**7. Soirbheas report.**

a) A draft contract for the partnership with Highland Hospice to develop a Care at Home Service is under review. It is hoped that the future Home Care Co-ordinator role will encompass the current Befriending Co-ordinator role.

b) A heritage walking weekend is planned for 25/26th March 2023 and Soirbheas is working with the heritage groups in Glen Urquhart and Strathglass to identify and develop heritage sites.

c) Kara Scott will be joining Soirbheas as Assistant Community Development Manager on 1-11-22.

d) The Tier 2 grant deadline is 28-11-22.

e) Grant programmes are currently being reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of both communities.

f) The food larder at Café 82 in Drumnadrochit is currently open from 8-00am until 8-00pm and is well stocked with essentials. A similar facility in Strathglass could be made available if required.

**8. SCC matters**

a) Wind farm, energy storage and infrastructure update:

i) Fasnakyle energy storage facility – PAN submitted to HC for an up to 50MW facility comprising of 52 battery storage containers located south of Fasnakyle Church. A public consultation was held on 28-9-22 but a full application cannot be made to HC before mid-November.

ii) Loch Liath wind farm – a public exhibition has been held and comments invited for the 13 turbine, 85.8 MW proposal that will require a section 36 application to ECU in 2023.

iii) Tomchrasky wind farm – a public exhibition was held on 21-9-22 in Glenmoriston for the 29 turbine, 50+MW proposal that will require a section 36 application to ECU.

iv) Crathaich wind farm – a PAC was held on 19-10-22 for the 14 turbine, up to 70MW proposal adjacent to the existing Corrimony WF and a section 36 application to ECU is expected in Q1 2023.

v) Bhlaraidh wind farm extension – consented by the ECU 30-8-22.

vi) Fiodhag wind farm – no further information.

vii) Bunloinn wind farm – no further information.

viii) West of Beauly Asset Replacement Projects – SSEN are holding a public consultation event in Cannich on

1-11-22.

b) Struy shelter:

An estimate for ground clearance and base preparation has been received. Chair to discuss with CM.

c) Cannich Christmas lighting:

AH has contacted HC officers to ascertain costs, etc.

d) 2023 SCC meetings schedule:

It was agreed that meetings should revert to a Wednesday evening in the Cannich Hall meeting room to avoid potential conflict with other meetings often held on a Monday. Chair to propose a 2023 schedule at the next meeting.

**9. SACC matters.**

a) AH had apologised for the cancellation of the Bonfire due to the usual site, and suitable alternatives, not being available.

b) Both AH and the Chair had been approached by residents enquiring about the re-starting of GP surgeries at Cannich Hall. Chair to contact the Practice Managers of both Beauly surgeries.

**10. NP Working Group.**

a) The group is currently consulting with NatureScot, who will be responsible for recommending the location of a new National Park to the SG.

b) A website, “Future Affric” has been launched.

**11. Treasurer’s Report and financial matters.**

The HC grant of £473.27 has been received so funds available, after deduction of debits in period and reserved funds, is £2579.41.

**12. Planning**

AH had provided details of applications submitted and decided in period.

**13. Forestry matters.**

a) FLS have published their draft Visitor Action Plan.

b) FLS are considering the recruitment of volunteer rangers from the local community.

c) GACP is considering holding four meeting per year in future.

d) Construction of AKW Phase 2 has commenced.

**14. Correspondence.**

The Chair provided a summary of correspondence received since the last meeting. Of particular note are:

a) advice of forestry work in Balmore Wood which may cause traffic disruption on the A831- further details to be advised.

b) notice from the organisers that the Highland Cross 2023 event will be held on 17-6-23.

**15. Any other business.**

HC requested, on behalf of a resident, consideration of a 20 or 30 mph speed limit being imposed on the GlenStrathfarrar Road that is currently derestricted and PS queried the purpose of traffic measurement strips recently placed at a number of locations. Chair to contact HC Roads regarding both issues.

**16. Next meeting.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.15 pm. The next meeting will take place at Cannich Hall on Monday, 5th December 2022 commencing at 7-30 pm.

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