**STRATHGLASS COMMUNITY COUNCIL (SCC**)

**Minutes of the meeting held at Cannich Hall on Wednesday, 25th July 2022 at 7-30 pm.**

**Present:** Nigel Ellis (Chair), Georgina Parker, Alan Hood, Leeson Carlyle.

**Apologies:** Humphrey Clarke, Paul Stirling.

**In attendance:** Cllrs. David Fraser and Chris Balance, Nicky MacLennan (Soirbheas), Karen Steel (TRA) and one member of the public (part).

**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 27th June 2022 were proposed for adoption and unanimously approved.

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

All matters arising from the previous meeting were covered within the agenda.

**4. Police report.**

No report available.

**5. Soirbheas report.**

NMcL provided a summary of recent Soirbheas activities which included:

a) Consideration of a proposal to work with Highland Hospice to provide adult social home care provision in this area.

b) A forthcoming “Recycling Week”.

c) Recent joint events with AKDMG to enable an improved understanding of deer management and conservation for over 100 schoolchildren.

d) Deadlines for the latest Tier 1, 2 and 3 grant proposals were provided and advice that the Apprenticeship Fund (up to £22k grant is available to assist local businesses providing apprentice opportunities) will open at October end.

e) Work on the AKW Phase 2 has started.

f) A good response was received to the recent Photo. Competition and the best 13 photographs have been selected for this year’s Soirbheas calendar.

g) A six month review of the Befriending Service will assess its effectiveness.

**6. SCC matters.**

a) The Minutes of the SCC AGM held on 27-6-22 were proposed for adoption and unanimously approved.

b) Proposed windfarm developments:

No further information was available regarding any of the proposals.

c) Glen Strathfarrar, Struy public shelter:

No further information available. A reply from the Erchless Estates Estate Manager is awaited.

d) Joint Soirbheas / SCC / GUCC meeting held 29-6-22.

The Chair provided a summary of the recent meeting, which was attended by two representatives of each organisation, and the key points were:

i) Soirbheas had awarded £132k in grants to thirteen groups and two apprenticeships (including £48.5k for the AKW Phase 2) between April 2021 and March 2022.

ii) Soirbheas income for 2021/22 had been £110k from Corrimony WF and £59k from Bhlaraidh WF which leaves them with a cash balance of £400k (down £40k from 2020/21) of which £110k are currently committed.

iii) There had been no recent contact with any of the proposed windfarm developers.

iv) A review of the Befrienders Service, post Covid, will be conducted and a proposal to work with Highland Hospice to provide adult social homecare was under consideration.

v) GUCC provided an insight into their experiences of a public consultation process for the Glen Urquhart Community Action Plan.

vi) SCC provided an update on Strathglass activities including the letting of the two new homes built upon the site of the former District Nurses’ house.

vii) There was a discussion regarding a SEPA proposal for a “carbon calculator” and whether community benefits could be derived from carbon sequestration.

**7. SACC matters.**

a) Cannich Hall is fully open for events and meetings but regular bookings are well down on pre-Covid levels.

b) NHS Highland has signed a lease for the continued use of the Meeting Room as a GP Surgery but there has been no contact with either of the surgeries in Beauly.

c) There had been insufficient volunteer resource for the Gala to take place this year. It is hoped that an event will take place in 2023.

d) A Bonfire Event is planned to go ahead in November and there are plans for a Halloween event.

e) SACC has undertaken to contact all community groups regarding a Strathglass Community Action Plan.

**8. NP Working Group.**

Reported by PS that regular meetings are taking place and a website is nearly ready for launch. There has also been liaison and discussion with a number of local and national bodies.

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

a) No change to the bank balance since the last meeting.

b) A payment to the ICO was due.

c) The Chair advised that he had received a query from L2BH regarding a donation for replacement parts for the Cannich Hall defibrillator fitted last year. It was confirmed that a donation had been made and L2BH had been provided with details of date and cheque number.

**10. Planning**

a) There had been no applications submitted in period.

b) Three applications had been decided in period.

**11. Forestry matters.**

a) Heavy thinning of Lower Guisachan is expected to commence in the next few weeks with timber extraction through Tomich.

b) Plodda tracks have been further damaged by heavy rain with one vehicle being stuck overnight. Damage to the lower track was thought to have been caused by heavy plant used during the construction of the hydro at Dead Man’s Bridge.

c) We were reminded of the consultation request received from FLS regarding the Draft Community Strategy for Scotland’s National Forests and Land. PS to handle a response, after soliciting input from SCC members, prior to the deadline of 23-8-22.

**12. Deer management.**

a) It is hoped that a representative of AKDMG will be available to attend our October meeting.

b) Late in 2021, AKDMG were awarded £10k (80% funded by Soirbheas and 20% by TfL) for a Community Deer Engagement project to promote deer management and conservation in Strathglass (the work with schoolchildren quoted in para. 5c above also refers).

**13. TRA matters raised by Karen Steel.**

a) Litter picking equipment is available from SACC.

b) HC expects to attend to the non-functioning streetlight in Tomich whilst personnel are in the area upgrading the Cannich Bridge traffic lights.

c) Further to a request that Tomich streetlights be switched off from midnight until 6-00 am, HC have advised that they were switched off after a local referendum in 2014/15 and then later switched back on again after further requests from Tomich residents. HC did advise at that time they were unable to respond to further, differing requests and that, as LEDs have since been fitted, the energy savings to be made by switching them off again would be minimal.

d) Upon request that the community be allowed to repaint the streetlights, DF advised that materials could probably be made available but that a maximum safe working height would need to be established. AH pointed out that requests from Cannich residents to undertake the repainting of Cannich Bridge netting in 2018 had elicited a positive response by HC but, to date, no materials had been made available.

**14. Correspondence.**

The Chair provided a summary of correspondence received in period, including:

a) a note of thanks from the organisers of 2022 Highland Cross for the support of Strathglass residents.

b) an invitation to comment upon an NHS Highland Draft Engagement Framework by 29-7-22.

c) a consultation request, by 3-8-22, from HC regarding the free supply of period products.

**15. Any other business.**

a) LC advised that road signage in Glen Cannich was in a poor condition or missing.

b) In answer to a query from the Chair regarding Christmas lighting in Cannich, DF advised that HC had withdrawn funding for Christmas lighting installation in rural communities a few years ago but had not properly advised SCC. In future, installation would be invoiced by HC or would have to be provided by the community. NMcL suggested Soirbheas may be able to help.

c) DF advised residents to continue to report potholes and confirmed that remedial work in Tomich was scheduled for later in the year.

d) DF advised that the removal of branches overhanging roads was the landowners’ responsibility. As a last resort, HC will remove them and charge the landowner.

**16. Next meeting.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at approx. 8.45 pm. The next meeting will take place on Monday, 5th September 2022 commencing at 7-30 pm, at the Cannich Hall.

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