

Chair Report. May 2020.

I think we would all agree that this has been a remarkable year for Ferintosh Community Council. Certainly none of us would have foreseen that this year's A.G.M would be conducted virtually, but if there is one thing I've learnt about FCC, it's that it rises to the challenges of the day.

Over the past year we have:

- Seen the completion and opening of the new Crask junction.
- We have successfully worked with the residents of Mulbuie to have a 40mph speed restriction on part of the B9169. Although works have yet to begin on this due to the current lockdown, we will continue to monitor and push for completion at the earliest possible opportunity. Many thanks go to our former colleague Colin Lawrence, who is responsible for taking the project to its current point.
- Colin Lawrence and Roslind MacNaughton stood down at the end of their four year term. They were a valued part of FCC and we hope they are enjoying 'retirement'. Again, thanks to both of them for all their work and the support they gave me in my role as Chair.
- For the first time in FCC's history, we had enough people put themselves forward as prospective councillors that we were able to give residents the ability to democratically elect their Community Councillors, which means we are in the very healthy position of having 9 councillors and 1 very active Associate Member.
- At our inaugural meeting in December, we were delighted to welcome Gordon Morris, Karen Harcus, Alison Lowe and Alastair Macintyre to the existing team of myself, Bruce Morrison, Eilidh Richmond, Iain McCallum and Sally Falconer, along with Adam Fletcher as an Associate Member. I consider myself very fortunate to have a great team of colleagues to work with.
- We have actively engaged with residents. Two stand out consultations for me were the feedback for the Munlochy Junction and the projects that residents would like to see FCC undertake over the next four years. The responses we received to both these consultations were outstanding and we are exceedingly grateful to have residents that fully engage in their communities.
- Eilidh Richmond has done an excellent job in revamping The Noticeboard and the feedback that she has received has been really positive. We hope to continue to develop The Noticeboard so that it becomes a real community asset. Thank you Eilidh for all your hard work.

- For those of you who keep an eye on the website, you will notice it has undergone a major transformation. I would like to express a huge thank you to Adam Fletcher, who has not only brought the website up to date, but has risen to the challenge of Covid-19 and produced an information resource for residents that is second to none. Things are constantly changing and the last few weeks have been very fast moving, although for some it may not feel like that. However, Adam has coped with me passing on huge amounts of information to go on the website and has made sure it stays up to date and relevant. Many thanks Adam.
- In April we hosted our first online monthly meeting and were delighted to be joined by some of our residents who can't usually make a meeting.

All of which brings us to now and the extraordinary situation the country and our communities find themselves in. Just before lockdown, FCC responded to a call from residents to make sure that the elderly and vulnerable members of our community were looked after. We set up our postcard initiative, which has resulted in a list of 48 volunteers, but more importantly friends and neighbours all looking out for each other.

With the lockdown, new challenges have arisen for residents and communities and FCC's goals have become more immediate and that is really to make sure that our residents know where to go for help and receive that help when they need it. The need to use our volunteers has been low so far, and we do have concerns that there are people slipping through the cracks and our main focus is to work out how to prevent that from happening.

When restrictions begin to be lifted and we start to face what is being termed as the 'new normal', we will revisit the consultation on future projects as residents may well have new priorities they wish us to focus on.

As Chair, I realise there is still a lot that FCC can do to establish better connections with all the community groups that we have across the FCC area and that will be something we will be working on over the coming days and weeks.

Our valued email listing is increasing. It is a very useful tool for us to be able to engage with residents and ensures that we're working towards your actual needs and not what we determine your needs to be. Thank you to those who are on it. If you'd like to be on it, then drop Bruce an email: ferintoshcc30@gmail.com

Before I wind up here, I would like to say a particular thank you to Cllr Gordon Adam who has pulled the Black Isle Community Councils together to address the needs of Black Isle residents as a whole, and is putting in a huge amount of time to keep us updated, answer queries etc. I would also like to thank our

Ward Manager Di Agnew and her staff at the Dingwall Hub, who are not only supporting those who need it most, but are keeping Community Councils informed of what is going on at every level. We have been bombarded at times with more information than we know what to do with, but it has all been helpful and relevant.

This coming year is going to be an interesting one for FCC and I certainly have no idea where it's going to take us, however, I'm hugely confident that myself and my colleagues will continue to work on your behalf wherever we can. In the few short months since the new Community Council formed, we have knitted together well and I'm grateful for the continuing support I receive from all my colleagues.

Becky Richmond
Chair