

FERINTOSH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE ON WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023

MEMBERS: Paul Cottis, Emilia Leese (Joint Vice-Chair), Alison Lowe (Treasurer), Iain McCallum, Peter Moffatt, Bruce Morrison (Secretary), Becky Richmond (Chair), Aileen Wilson (Joint Vice-Chair).

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Lyndsey Johnston (Ex-officio member), 1 resident.

APOLOGIES: PC Robert Smith, 3 residents.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (to take no part in relevant discussions): Becky declared an interest and non-participation in the discussion about the Black Isle Place Plan but happy to answer questions.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES: (excluding actions carried out, carried forward and those considered later in the agenda. Split into 'Report' and 'Discussion'. 'Reports' are circulated to Community Councillors before the meeting (and to residents at the meeting) and not presented orally at the meeting).

Reports: **Associate Membership** of local organisations. FCC agreed to fully discuss as an agenda item in January.

Black Isle Place Plan: Emilia, in the chair, outlined the key elements of this 5 /10 year plan i.e. considerable consultation with over 3K comments; four clear categories of action and crucially an attempt to reset the working relationship between communities, the third sector and the public sector. FCC discussed and agreed that there was nothing unacceptable in the draft plan but improving the readability of the plan would be helpful.

Kessock Bridge Plan: Cllr Johnston reported that there would not be a plan coming forward soon partly because of security issues. However, when Cllr Johnston asked about catastrophic failure, the following response was received:

"The Kessock Bridge was constructed in 1982 with a 120-year design life and, with appropriate management and maintenance, there is no reason why the bridge would not continue to function for many more years thereafter.

The inspection programme includes for a variety of types and frequencies ranging from 3-monthly up to 25-year specialist inspections. The bridge is also (numerically) structurally assessed on a regular basis to advise the load carrying capacity of the bridge. Both the inspection and assessment regimes are the primary management tools used to advise the programme of maintenance works to keep the bridge safe for public use.

It is also worth noting that Kessock Bridge is protected from earthquakes by the incorporation of seismic buffers, a relatively uncommon bridge feature."

Grass cutting in Culbokie: Paul reported that FCC, CCT and THC all have a current interest in the future management of the grassy areas throughout Culbokie so the three parties are meeting on 17 January to seek an agreed way forward.

Community Planning Partnership: Becky attending its next meeting (Tuesday 19 December) to discuss the anti-social behaviour issues current in Culbokie. Discussion: No issues.

MINUTES: Last month's minutes were approved (proposed by Alison, seconded by Paul).

FINANCIAL REPORT: Alison reported one transaction (£50 to Ferintosh Hall for Senior Citizens' event) leaving an available balance of £4393.92. Alison has received a request from Ferintosh Volunteers for £20 to buy materials to help with the volunteers' efforts to lay the Christmas Tree Trail. FCC agreed.

PLANNING /LICENSING MATTERS (only new information included):

Objections Lodged:

21/04324/PIP: New House, 165m S of Foxlea House, Highfield Park (Hinterland, flooding, contamination). Resident has responded to the new drainage alleviation plans.

23/00446/PIP: Residential Development, access, landscaping, drainage and associated works, land at Mount Eagle, Culbokie (i.e. Mount Eagle estate in Culbokie): Objection submitted. THC Local Development Plan Team has stated that the application does not comply and approval of a new LDP is awaited. Residents have recently become aware of machinery present on what they felt was common land but Iain has confirmed that the land is owned by the developer and has the right to store machinery.

23/02754/S36: Abhainn Dubh Wind Farm (major, 13 turbines), Heights of Dochcarty: THC has been given an extension until 5 July 2024 to make decision (targeting the June NPAC). FCC will reconsider in February 2024 whether further consultation with residents should take place before considering what lobbying should/could take place. More objections and comments have been submitted.

Comments lodged:

21/05575, 6 and 7/PIP: THC is going to review the planning gain calculation and who processes it (ref. Wee Bus). Iain has written to Malcolm MacLeod (MM) to try and understand why the existing recommendation was not followed through. MM has replied saying that he will investigate the matter but, with no reply, Iain will request again.

ECU00004851 Carn Fearna Scoping: comments lodged following consultation.

Fairburn Wind Farm extension: Iain has asked to be kept up to date with future proposals.

23/03030/FUL: Single storey extension (amendment 22/00156/FUL), Culbokie Inn, Culbokie, Dingwall, IV7 8JH: Comments were submitted about mitigating potential issues around car parking and noise.

Alleged Breaches of Conditions:

23/02254/FUL (renewal of 20/01531/FUL): Plot 1, 45m SE of Mulbuie Hall: No 1.2m pathway. Reply to FCC letter had been received from THC stating that indeed the pathway should have been constructed and THC will pursue. Dafydd Jones has responded to Iain's request for more information (see below).

Planning Enforcement Charter Report lodged for alleged breach in the grounds of the former Church of Scotland site at Urquhart (22/00103/ENF). Development activity is now ongoing and will be removed on completion.

New Applications:

23/04961/FUL: Erection of workshop, office and laboratory, grounds of Tigh Na Tobar, Duncanston: No comment.

23/05356/MSC: Erection of house (21/01173/PIP), Land 75M NE of Brackla Wood, Culbokie: No comment.

23/05437/PIP: Erection of two houses (renewal of 20/04566/PIP), Land 90M NE of Suil Beinne, Muir of Ord: FCC registered as consultee. Iain to write to Dafydd Jones about this (and other relevant new applications here) requesting THC's view of where the line is drawn between acceptable and over development on this road. Guidance will also be sought on the need for Enforcement Notices to ensure the safety of pedestrians by providing a 1.2m footpath.

23/05543/MSC: Erection of house, Land 25M East of Tyree, Muir of Allangrange, Muir Of Ord: FCC registered as consultee. As 23/05437/PIP above.

23/05566/FUL: Erect porch and alter existing bathroom window, Cambuslochy, Easter Kinkell, Conon Bridge, Dingwall, IV7 8HY: No comment.

23/05617/PNO: Proposed extension to an existing farm/forestry building, Craiglea Croft, Braes of Dunvourne, Duncanston, Dingwall, IV7 8JD: No comment.

23/05539/FUL: Erection of extension to dwelling and access point altered, Logie Farmhouse, Muir of Allangrange, Muir of Ord, IV6 7RB: FCC registered as consultee. As 23/05437/PIP above.

ACTIVE PROJECTS (split into 'Report' and 'Discussion'. Some 'Reports' are now circulated to Community Councillors before the meeting (and to residents at the meeting) and therefore not presented orally at the meeting).

Community Services: Report: Paul is now back in action and will follow up the various issues, including the absence of advance Give Way signs approaching the A9. Discussion: No issues.

Community Link Project: Report: Aileen: nothing to report. Discussion: No issues.

BICC: Report: Alison: nothing to report. Discussion: Peter asked about FCC's commitment to BICC and there was agreement that FCC would take it one meeting at a time.

Ferintosh Volunteers: Report: Aileen reported that the Xmas trail was going ahead in Glascairn Woods and that the recent litter pick garnered fewer bags than usual which may well indicate less littering. Discussion: No issues.

Flooding: Cllr Johnston believes that Iain Moncrieff is planning to go ahead with the flood defence system early in the New Year but Cllr Johnston will ask for an update on the details of the plan. Discussion: No issues.

Pothole Hunters: Report: Bruce reported that the next review meeting is planned with Iain Moncrieff for next Monday 18th. Cllr Johnston is pursuing the reason for the absence of reporting by THC of the Participation Request and, if no further response from the Community Engagement Team, then consider other approaches in the New Year. Discussion: Peter asked for clarification about Participation Requests.

Ferintosh Community Bus (FCB): Report: Bruce reported on the meeting with THC held on 13 November at which THC presented a draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) as the start of a negotiation process towards working together. Alison, Becky, Bruce and Emi have explored many possibilities on how to progress this process and decided that an SLA is not the appropriate starting point. FCC instead has submitted its requirements for discussion and negotiation into an eventual contract. In addition to discussing the SLA, THC took away a couple of actions (to explore with Stagecoach possible Dingwall journeys on Tuesdays and Thursdays; to check that THC's charge card will work on the new rapid charger that will be live on the Culbokie Green very soon).

Since that meeting a month ago, there have been various emails and phone messages from FCC to THC with no responses or acknowledgements. Possible dates in January were pencilled in for a partnership meeting but not confirmed. The discussions with THC about partnership working have now been ongoing for over a year with very little progress to show for all that effort. Alison, Becky and Bruce expressed their extreme frustration about the process of engagement with THC and, more importantly, the ever increasing risks to the development and sustainability of the Wee Bus project.

Bruce reported on a customer survey of 27 residents (FCC, the volunteer drivers and all the key Wee Bus stakeholders have seen the anonymised version). The feedback strongly demonstrates that residents are experiencing a very welcome and well run service, especially for the teenagers. The residents were also encouraged to provide us with improvement and development ideas and FCC now has a valuable list of thoughts that will be worked on in 2024.

Discussion: Alison, Becky and Bruce presented (to FCC) a draft letter to David Summers, manager of the Community Transport Team in THC, for discussion and agreement from FCC. The letter is from FCC expressing the concern about slow progress, poor engagement and the negative impact on the resilience of the Wee Bus team. The letter also proposes a solution to the current situation in which THC simply does not have the resources to engage with FCC in an effective manner. FCC discussed and agreed that the letter was a constructive approach with clarity of the issues, provides a constructive way forward and would help future discussions.

Noticeboard: Report: Becky updated FCC on her plans to complete the printing (using Instaprint) of the flyer and have them available for distribution by 12 January. Becky also felt that Noticeboard needs to develop its content to broaden support for all the groups in the area. Discussion: No issues.

Email list: Report: Up 6 to 820 to 46% for the first time (46% estimated as 818 voting residents). Discussion: No issues.

Primary Care Issues: Report: DMG has proposed to invite Fiona Duff, Primary Care Advisor to the Scottish Government, and Clare Morrison, Director of Healthcare Improvement & System Redesign in charge of Community Engagement to the next meeting on 15 January as they're interested in DMG's initiative here in engaging with Community Councils.

Corntown Junction: Report: No report. Discussion: No issues.

REPORTS (from public bodies and local organisations):

Police Scotland (PS): Peter reported that his analysis of the situation is that PS may well be under reporting (and FCC may well want to recommend a wider category of report) and there is certainly a weak presence at meetings. This month's report contained one incident: assault in Culbokie. Discussion: Becky/Peter to meet up and discuss options for progressing.

CORRESPONDENCE and REQUESTS (split into 'Report' and 'Discussion'. 'Reports' are now circulated to Community Councillors before the meeting (and to residents at the meeting) and not presented orally at the meeting).

Organisations: Report: **Newsletters** from CCT/THC/SCA/TAS Community Transport Partnership/HSCN; **FLS:** further updates on felling operations; **Free Church of Scotland:** notification of Remembrance service (to FB page); **Ferintosh Hall:** request for FCC letter of support to CRF to fund repairs to external walls (FCC agreed and letter sent); **Scottish Boundaries Commission:** advertising upcoming Local Enquiries (none in nearby areas); **BEAR Scotland:** apology and action now completed on the missing lines at the Duncanston junction; **Carnegie UK:** feedback from workshop about Participatory Democracy that Bruce attended but of such a wide remit that little came out of it directly relevant to Community Councils; **POCF:** December meeting for Community Councils liaison; **THC:** consultation on where to make savings (sent to email list); **SSEN:** invitation to join a feedback webinar for Community Councils potentially affected by the new pylon line development (Spittal to Beaully); **Scottish Community Councils:** free webinars for Community Councillors; **Ferintosh Hall Committee:** request for financial support for Seniors Lunch (£50 approved); **SG:** update and encouragement to contribute to the ongoing consultation, Democracy Matters; **Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ):** invitation to Community Councils to contribute to stakeholder survey; **THC:** funding alert; **RSE:** new fund for community-led research for healthier living; **Dingwall Medical Group:** link to mental health services; **Cromarty & District CC:** sent approved minutes; **SSEN:** webinar on Wednesday 13 December about Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beaully pylon line upgrade (sent to email list); **Met Office:** winter hazards training course for community volunteers; **BIP:** Community Councils received confidential advanced copy of the draft Black Isle Place Plan with one question – is there anything in it that is unacceptable? (see above); **Culbokie Church of Scotland:** notice of Christmas services (to FB page); **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:** Dingwall recruitment event, 18.00 to 20.00, Tuesday 19 December; **SG Improvement Service:** training available on Planning Appeals for Community Councillors.

Discussion: Port of Cromarty Firth meeting is tomorrow but Becky's experience is that FCC area related issues seldom emerge so best to choose just the relevant meetings.

Residents: Report: concern about whole surface area in the **recycling area**; looking for **Hall contact details** to start a boxing club; asking about **transport to Raigmore** (sent details of The Drivers Scheme); enquiry about **past market photos** (none on the FCC website); now receiving the **THC briefing twice** (FCC has decided to continue to circulate to the email list so will indeed duplicate if individuals also sign up); further concern about **neighbour disputes** (suggested CAB and FCC pursuing multi-agency approach); **missing advanced Give Way sign on B9169** approaching the A9 from Culbokie; suggesting **Warning: Accident Blackspot** signs at the dangerous A835 junctions, especially Corntown (sent idea to resident involved in lobbying who felt that it was probably now illegal. Also sent to Bear Scotland for comment); **curious about diggers** appearing on communal ground behind the Mount Eagle estate (see planning above); **wheelchair access around Baluachrach pavements** (checked and some are available); **more pavements** through Culbokie (in the Active Travel Village plans); **Xmas greetings;** informing FCC that a **fencing issue** has been resolved; asking FCC to consider promotion of the new THC regulation against **pavement parking**; pointing out the **deterioration of the road surface** at the recycling point (sent request to be treated as Safety Critical).

Discussion: The Pavement Parking Ban will go into Noticeboard as well as on the FB page.

INTERACTION WITH RESIDENTS: Resident raised the issue that, within the interior of the Baluachrach estate, there is no pavement on one side of the road and asked FCC to be aware of the issue of reduced safety should the matter arise in future developments. Cllr Johnston will help look for improvements to the current situation.

AOCB: Cllr Johnston updated FCC on four issues: 1. There is a proposal in front of full Council tomorrow to amalgamate the Black Isle Committee with the Easter Ross Committee (the two are linked by the Cromarty Bridge and the Cromarty Ferry with the Green Freeport as a common opportunity). 2. The faulty roundabout in the football club play park is to be replaced with an accessible model in the New Year. 3. There is concern about long term parking occurring in the Spar car park so THC is putting in a sign to limit parking to one hour. 4. An improvement plan has been approved to address the poor rating of the Culbokie Nursery.