

FEUGHSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2022
STRACHAN HALL

APPROVED MINUTES

The meeting was recorded with agreement from those present.

PRESENT:

CC: Simon Richards, Jill Randalls, Ross Clephan, Sam Wylde, Cecila Rogers, Lynsey Craig, Nicola Loosley. Audrey Dykes attended by video link.

Councillors: Rosemary Bruce, Eileen Durno

Members of the Public: 4

Meeting chaired by Simon Richards.

1. Apologies: None received.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Proposed: Cecila Rogers Seconded: Sam Wylde

3. Police Report.

A report had been received. There had been a small number of anti-social issues, acquisitive crimes, road safety crime and very few wildlife crimes. Drugs are still an issue and the police request that incidents are reported.

4. Treasure's Report.

The Treasurer had circulated the following report.

	Balance 25/1/2022	Expected/ Committed to 31/3/22	Look Forward Balance at End Financial Year 31/3/22
Unrestricted	£966.56	-£76.78	£889.78
Restricted – Glendye Webcam	£906.74	£0.00	£906.74
Restricted – Midhill CB Admin	£293.00	£0.00	£293.00
Restricted - Community Action Plan (CAP)	£281.91	£0.00	£281.91
Restricted - Strachan Flowers Collection	£494.76	£0.00	£494.76
Totals	£2,942.97	-£76.78	£2,866.19
Funds available at Fred Olsen for FCC Midhill Community Benefit	£35,977.96	£5,477.56	£41,455.52

5. Councillors Report.

From Councillor Bruce:

A Council Tax increase of 3% had been agreed which would represent an increase of £4.50 per month for properties in Band D. There would be an increase of 1.5% in council house rents.

Banchory library had been recruiting additional staff and from 21st March would be opening for 6 days per week. After-school opening hours would also increase.

From Councillor Durno:

There is money available to fill pot-holes but there is a problem with allocating labour. The non-so-urgent pot-holes will also be looked at.

There is still money available from the Scottish Government for resilience planning. Funding can be applied for through the Marr Area office.

A new scheme has been established for those who are concerned about social distancing as Covid restrictions are dropped. Under the Distance Awareness Scheme, those preferring more personal space will be able to obtain a lanyard from libraries, amongst other places, to indicate their preference. Cllr. Durno to send a link with further information.

6. Secretary's Report.

Communications had been circulated. JR highlighted in particular:

- NL had attended a Wireless Innovation in Rural Communities event.
- A community engagement questionnaire had been received and is due for return by 20th March.
- An email from Janelle Clark stating that the school would be declared surplus to requirements in April had been received.
- A Community Impact Assessment forum will take place on 3rd March. RC to attend.
- The Community Health and Wellbeing fund closed early.
- The SSEN Resilience Found is open and closes on 29th April.
- Match funding up to £750 is available through Marr Area Partnership.
- Scottish Rural Network Active Community funding for projects of between £5,000 and £40,000 lasting a minimum of 2 years is available.
- A Tesco Community Grant is available for projects up to £1,500.

JR confirmed that she would write to thank John Mackie of Scottish Forestry and Land for the meeting with FCC that took place on Monday 21st February.

7. Glen Dye Moor.

A presentation was given by David Robertson and Neil Crookston from Scottish Woodlands. The presentation covered the woodland creation and peatland regeneration scheme proposed by Scottish Woodlands as a carbon offset project for their client Aviva with equity partner, Par Equity. Notes are attached hereto as Appendix 1.

8. Planning.

8.1 Applications: IA advised that there had been 3 applications.

- Birkwood:- The installation of ground sited solar panels. Historic Scotland is seeking clarification on a few issues.
- South Wing Cottage, Hallyards:- withdrawn
- Plot 1, Ardine:- Change to the design of the property

8.2 Delegated Powers increase proposal: Cllr. Bruce advised that there had not been support for the change in numbers of representations required for referral in rural areas. With regard to how the number of objections is defined, by individual or by household, discussions are still ongoing. In future, if Ward members are not present for a planning referral, they will not be counted in the numbers.

8.3 Other Planning matters: JR asked whether objections would be made regarding MSC Sections 42 and 75. Cllr. Bruce advised that this would be discussed at the next full Council meeting. IA suggested that Community Councils would wish to be consulted about removal of any planning conditions which had been applied at the time of approval.

9. Resilience Planning.

RC advised that he was awaiting specification confirmation and costs for a generator from PJB Electrics. A proposal would then be prepared and given to the the Hall Committee which would need to look at operational and fuelling issues.

CR suggested that the use of Calor Gas instead of a generator would alleviate some of the problems associated with a generator.

A discussion took place about provision of help to those in need of assistance. A member of the public suggested that there may be some learning points from the flooding resilience plans drawn up in Peterculter.

It was agreed that as many members of the public as possible should be encouraged to complete the resilience questionnaire which should be returned to RC. The deadline is 20th March.

Cllr. Bruce suggested that FCC look at resilience plans already in existence in other local communities. She believed that GDPR considerations could be a hindrance in establishing a list of addresses of vulnerable people. It was agreed that JR, RC and NL would work on a resilience plan.

ACTION: JR, RC and NL to work on a resilience plan.

10. Transport, Roads and Infrastructure.

Nothing to report

11. Climate and Environment.

CR was aware of an apple tree planting initiative and thought that this was something that might be looked at by FCC.

SR asked the Councillors if there was any initiative within the Council to assist homeowners to retrofit private dwellings for energy efficiency in accordance with the British Standard PAS 2035 – Retrofitting dwellings for improved energy efficiency: Specification and Guidance. SR suggested that opportunities should be sought to influence Governments to take action on this. Cllr. Bruce advised that Council housing stock was being brought up to standard but any measures taken in the private sector would have to result from an initiative by the Scottish Government.

12. Communications.

NL advised that the broadband voucher scheme for those without super-fast broadband was ending in March. She was not sure what would replace it or what the grant situation would be for those households which had received a voucher for an interim solution and later discovered that fibre broadband plans excluded them. A discussion took place about the voucher scheme. NL to seek clarification from Jack Rigby.

NL advised that she was to attend a Brand Definition workshop. She asked that FCC members look at the website for Crathes, Drumoak and Durris as an example of CC website possibilities.

LC advised that there was one logo submission and that it would be good to have several from which to make a choice. SR agreed to ask Adam if he could produce other designs.

ACTION: NL to write to Jack Rigby and to contact Finzean CC. SR to contact Adam.

13. Community Matters.

13.1 Queen's Jubilee: SR asked members if they thought the community should mark the event. He had received an offer to organise an event from a member of the community. It was agreed that it would be good to have something and that the offer be accepted.

ACTION: SR to make contact and accept the offer. RC offered assistance with the funding application.

13.2 School Garden: SR had perceived a growing interest in taking over the school garden. JR expressed concern that we had not yet had anything in writing to confirm that the wild garden is part of the Council's estate and available for Community Asset transfer. However, the Council had confirmed that the building and the garden could be available separately. It is not clear who owns the canteen area. RC advised that a member of his household was preparing to circulate a questionnaire to assess the degree of interest in volunteering to maintain the garden.

13.3 Glen Dye fence and gates: SR had just received the map showing current paths, fences and gates as discussed in previous meetings. The agreement of the Estate would be sought prior to general publication.

Public concern had been expressed about the new gates on the access road to the west of the AA box to Feughside Inn road. FCC had not received prior advice of this installation. SR suggested he take this up with the Estate.

AD advised that the Estate was looking at putting in additional car parking for people accessing Clachnaben.

ACTION: SR to seek agreement to the map and discuss the new gates with the Estate.

13.4 Sunday Brunch: SR reminded everyone that this would take place in Strachan Hall on Sunday 27th February between 10am and 1pm.

14. Matters Arising.

14.1 CR asked whether would be possible to issue the Minutes in draft form, prior to their approval at the monthly CC meeting. It was agreed that the Minutes should not be issued until formally approved.

14.2 RC informed members that a proposal had been made for the Hall Committee to use windfarm funding for crockery for the hall. He would follow this up.

The meeting closed at 9.28pm

APPENDIX 1

Proposals for Glen Dye Moor.

Notes on presentation to FCC by Scottish Woodlands on 24th February.

Representing Scottish Woodlands: David Robertson
Neil Crookston

David Robertson explained that Scottish Woodlands is a privately owned forestry management company. This presentation was not part of the Consultation process. He wished to outline client objectives for the site and provide details of the site itself. Neil Crookstone provided details of the Consultation process.

Scottish Woodlands manage 300,000 hectares of land, harvest 1.2 million tonnes of timber a year and are responsible for 25% of new woodland in the UK.

A map showing the boundary of the 6,353 hectares purchased was presented. The area subject to proposals for a windfarm is not included in this purchase. Scottish Woodlands' client is Aviva and the fund is run by Par Equity. Scottish Woodlands act in the capacity of managers.

It is to be a carbon offset solution for Aviva only and the offset will not be sold on to others. The timber will not be sold for biomass.

Part of the the proposal is for 1,800 hectares of peatland restoration. This involves patching it up, re-wetting and reducing run off.

The other part of the proposal is for circa 3,000 hectares of new woodland, 1/3 of which is to be commercial planting and 2/3 native woodland. The commercial crop would be Sitka spruce and Scots pine.

DR confirmed that public access would be maintained. There would be an emphasis on species conservation.

The proposal is in line with Scottish Government drivers of increasing the percentage of woodland cover from 18% in 2019 to 21% in 2032, representing 5% of available agricultural land in Scotland.

Stage 1 is preparation of the outline proposal. Stage 2 is data gathering and site assessment. Stakeholder engagement is actively encouraged and comments can be submitted and feedback obtained prior to the official stakeholder engagement process. The official stakeholder engagement process is anticipated to start around July. The CC is a non-statutory stakeholder and, amongst the statutory stakeholders will be Scottish Forestry and Land.

Summary of questions and answers:-

Q - Will there be an impact on tracks and trails?

A - Only a positive one.

Q - Will there be any planting on peatland?

A - Potentially there can be planting on peat up to 50cm in depth.

Q - What will happen to the carbon capture capabilities of peat that is planted on?

A - It is a question of putting the right tree in the right place. There will be no deep ploughing of peat.

Q - The 3,000 hectares of proposed woodland and 1,800 of peatland do not add up to the total purchase of 6353 hectares. Is anything planned for these missing hectares?

A - The initial areas in the plan are not fixed and may change as the project evolves.

Q - As per the press release, will there be significant employment opportunities? How many full-time?

A - There will be people involved in the initial establishment process. Thereafter people will be required for management and activities such as fence inspections and thinning processes. On site full-time jobs have not been taken into account.

Q - Will there be Capercaillie friendly deer fences?

A - Fences will be marked to make them more noticeable to Capercaillie and there will be engagement with the RSPB Capercaillie officer.

Q - Will there be any grouse shooting on the land?

A - There will be no shooting on Glen Dye for sport, just deer control. There will be deer management and hare management plans produced

Q - Is there a plan to introduce beavers?

A - No.

SR thanked David and Neil on behalf of FCC. David offered to undertake a consultation on site.