

Feughside Community Council Meeting  
Approved Minutes  
On Line  
Thursday 28th October 2021

**Present :**

CC : Simon Richards, Jill Randalls, Ross Clephan, Sam Wylde, Cecilia Rogers,  
Lynsey Craig, Audrey Dykes, Nicola Loosley, Marijke Stallaert.

Councillor Ann Ross

Members of the Public :1

**1. Apologies:** Cllr Bruce, Cllr Durno

**2. Approval of previous meeting minutes:** Proposed: C.R, seconded: N.L

**3. Police Report:** none received.

**4. Treasurer's Report:**

The treasurer provided the following summary of the FCC Accounts and comments for October:

	<b>Balance 26/10/2021</b>	<b>Expected/ Committed to <u>31/12/21</u></b>	<b>Look Forward Balance at <u>31/12/21</u></b>
Unrestricted	£1,009.73	-£24.00	£985.73
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	£774.76	£0.00	£774.76
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£3,266.14</b>	<b>-£24.00</b>	<b>£3,242.14</b>
Funds available at Fred Olsen for FCC Midhill Community Benefit	£35,977.96	£0	£35,977.96

**Midhill Community Benefit:**

The RPI for September 2021 was published on 20/10/21 (308.6), hence £16,627 was added to the amount available for FCC Community Benefit.

**BT Webcam Account:**

The dispute with BT over the final webcam account was reviewed by the Ombudsman. In summary the decision and recommendations are as follows:

"After reviewing your complaint and for the reasons I have discussed above. I do acknowledge the inconvenience the matter caused you, however, I cannot agree that BT increase the level of goodwill offered to £1080. I do require that BT send a letter of apology to acknowledge the delay in closing your account and inconvenience the matter caused. I also require them to provide a goodwill gesture cheque payment £100 and confirm in writing that no late payments have been reported to UK credit reference agencies. Finally, I require BT to provide confirmation in writing that BT account VP15310770 is closed with a zero balance".

BT has until 21st November to implement the resolution.

**5. Councillor's Report**

Cllr Ross updated FCC on Glen O'Dee Community Hospital developments - i.e. the possibility of the temporary closure of Morven Ward becoming a permanent closure.

Cllr Ross resigned from her role with the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) so that she could properly represent the views of local people. She reported that today (28/11/21) the senior management team met and decided to keep both Morven ward and Aboyne hospital open "for the winter".

SR had emailed the HSCP leadership team earlier in the day expressing FCC's dismay at the decision to close without public consultation.

JR asked if there was anything FCC could do to prevent permanent closure.

Cllr Ross urged everyone to take part in the forthcoming Strategic Needs Assessment consultation.

Cllr Ross was thanked for attending during her holiday.

**6. Secretary's Report:**

All communications have been forwarded as appropriate.

Various training opportunities are available online for CC:

- Suicide prevention
- CC induction training 04.11

Several road closures are due to affect the local area:

- Cairn O'Mount for 14 days from 01.11
- Knappach for 2 days from 04.11

- Feughside to Potarch for 1 day on 29.11

**ACTION - AD** to contact snow gate webcam operator to add note to camera re road closure.

## **7. Planning:**

Current Applications:

- *APP/2021/2288 Site Address: Site To The North West Of Woodhead, Tillquhillie, Banchory* ; Applicant: Scottish And Southern Electricity Network Hydro Electric Notification for High Voltage Overhead Lines Supported by Wooden Poles (Retrospective). No details given on application. No comments from the general public have been received. CC decided not to comment.

Updates:

- Castlewood APP/2021/2122 Erection of Agricultural Building: Planning has requested more information regarding location.
- Fetteresso Wind Farm - the Hearing Session will take place online from 1st to 3rd November. RC to attend to present FCC Inquiry Statement.

## **8. Transport/ Roads:**

- SW reported on the excellent road / pot hole repairs actioned by Aberdeenshire Council between Feugh Bridge and Crathes Bridge. Cllr Ross reported that she and Cllr Agnew from Stonehaven had campaigned hard to get these improvements made.
- CR comment on the lack of double white lines by Feugh Bridge/ Strachan turn off. Cllr. Ross urged all to report any problems of this nature on the Council website.
- Kirsty's Brae. LC reported that the chevron signs, which blocked the exit road view of residents nearby, have been removed. An alternative has yet to be decided.

## **9. Climate:**

CR gave a short summary about the local climate group's participation at COP26. The group are to plant a mini woodland behind the dental surgery in Bellfield.

## **10. Education and Youth:**

Feedback from a collaborative online meeting held 18.10 between Marr Area Manager, Education and Children's Services, Estates and Live Life Aberdeenshire to discuss the future of the school building. FCC were invited to the meeting.

- Use as a Forest School - It appears, that despite previous positive discussions with Aberdeenshire Council (Service manager for Communities and Partnerships) and being assured that a pilot study was in progress (minuted by FWCC May 2019), the proposed feasibility study by Aberdeenshire Council had not materialised. Ms Nicol (Live Life Aberdeenshire) stated that the council were no longer in a position to take this forward and that plans had been revised.

- It was confirmed that both the school building and the 'wild garden' were in council ownership but the road separating the two was privately owned (Rachel Goldring - Education and Children's Services).
- It was confirmed that the site could be split.
- Janelle Clark (Marr Area Manger) will forward a link regarding Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and advised the community to consider their Community Action Plan
- Community Councils are not able to apply for a CAT - this would have to be done by a separate group using a Community Trust. Any application would have to include a viable business plan showing a sustainable development.
- Marr Area Committee will decide if the site should go to the highest bidder.
- Time line - it was stated that there would be a tight time line for a CAT due to the financial pressures faced by the council.
- Council unable to disclose running costs of the building.
- Building costs were based on replacement costs and not able to be given until a CAT requested.
- Council may have to board up the building in the future to protect the asset.
- The community are not allowed to keep the grounds clear and tidy as could be in breach of Health and Safety. A risk assessment would be required.

MS reported her disappointment at how she perceived Aberdeenshire Council had misled the community re. the possibility of reusing the building as a Forest school. She also thought that the tight time scale and detailed business plan conditions etc make it virtually impossible for the community to investigate the possibility of asset transfer.

SR reported back on a conversation with the owner of the road (separating the school and the garden). Likely that conditions will be imposed on the future use of the road.

SR also stated that unless a group/ individual comes forward to take on this project our options as FCC are limited.

NL suggested that we could look into the potential for setting up a private Forest School.

IA suggested a blitz on communications with the community.

NL commented that a short time frame doesn't appear consistent with the intention of the Community Empowerment Act 2015.

SW commented that she felt very concerned that the community seem to be misled on two counts : the closure of Morven ward (Glen O'Dee Hospital) and the decision not to take forward the potential use of the school as a Forest School. Both these decisions appeared to be made behind 'closed doors' without democratic community involvement. To now push through the disposal of land and buildings at the school in a hurry is unacceptable.

It was stated by the Council that they would not support any project that would compete with Strachan Hall.

It was agreed to advertise the opportunity of Asset Transfer of either school or garden or both within the community.

It was also agreed to request an extension of at least one year from Aberdeenshire council.

All present agreed, excepting 1 abstention.

**ACTION - JR** to write to Aberdeenshire Council to request extended time frame. **JR and AD** to publish on Strachan Today and Strachan Hub.

### **11) Communications:**

- An FCC social media presence is needed, as Strachan Hub Facebook page is a privately run page and not aligned to the CC.
- It was noted that the Community Noticeboards were well used with links to the CC website, Strachan Hub and Strachan Today.
- NL advocated for office bearers to post CC items on social media.
- NL has drafted a policy, which covers the point above.
- A better representation of the outlying communities of Auchattie, Tilquhillie, Glendye, Blackhall and Bridge of Feugh on the Strachan hub, possibly renaming Strachan Hub to be more inclusive.

**ACTION: JR and AD** to reflect on the best way forward to solve these issues and to report back with a solution.

### **12) Community matters:**

- Glen O'Dee - permanent closure of Morven Ward - see above.
- Woodland for Sale at Scolty Hill: CR reported that Savills are marketing a 10 hectare plot of mature woodlands (Norway Spruce and some native species) that sits on either side of the Scolty carpark track. Offers over £190,000 are invited and the closing date is likely to be early December. A Banchory and Auchattie based group are exploring the possibility of a community purchase with a view to replacing the Norway Spruce with native trees and shrubs. The plan would be to create an area that can be re-wilded and used for recreation and as a focus for local engagement in environmental improvement. The group will be looking for any advice and support available.

Please contact FCC or Euan Duncan for further info or with any offers of support. Any application to the Midhill Benefit fund would need to go through the normal process, once a community buyout was proposed.

- Footpath in Strachan: SR reported that he had been contacted by a member of the public regarding the need for a footpath connecting the new houses on the west side of the village and Manse Croft. NL recalled this issue had been investigated before and would search for previous correspondence. Cllr Ross advised contacting Neil Mair from Planning Dept to discover what was agreed in the planning approval. A planning enforcement could be issued to the builder if this was a condition agreed at the time.

**ACTION: NL** to look for previous correspondence. **SR** to contact Planning dept with photos and exact location.

- Glendye Estate trails

SR reported that a further meeting had been held with the estate to discuss the newly created trails at Bogendreip. SR asked that if a trail and paths group were to be created within the Strachan/ Glendye Community would such a group be eligible for windfarm funds? LC replied that it would be essential that a clear community benefit could be demonstrated.

LC asked for an update on a trail map. SR reported that it would soon be available and that Glendye Estate are hopefully prepared to erect a map on site at Bogendreip. This map will be based on a trail map overlay on the OS map.

ALOAF ( Aberdeenshire Local Access Forum) are still to indicate a suitable date and time to meet up with Glendye estate. LC promised to raise this at the forthcoming ALOAF meeting in November.

JR reflected that the forest is now a commercial enterprise and asked CC members to reflect on the fact that many deer have been shot as part of the commercialisation drive.

AD reported that the Grousemoor has been sold and is in private ownership, including Char Cottage and Clachnaben. The proposed windfarm site has been retained by the Gladstone family.

AD reported that the estate will provide information on estate management including replanting activities.

- Remembrance Sunday - November the 14th. A wreath will be laid by SR on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council at the Strachan memorial. The minister of Finzean and Birse is to lead a short service.

**Date of next meeting:** Thursday 25th November 7.30pm via Zoom.