

Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council  
Chairmans Annual Report  
2014 – 2015

The big political news and talking point of the year was of course the referendum on Scotlands future and whether we would be dealing with a freshly independent country or contiuing as part of the United Kingdom .

The result was a fairly definite vote in favour of staying with the Union and the trend in our area was much the same as across Scotland.

We have also experienced a General Election which has seen the re - election of the sitting government. In Scotland however there has been a complete turn round politically and we are now represented by a majority of SNP Members of Parliament.

All these happenings however do not have a bearing on the members of our Community Council , who continue to work on behalf of our small area with no political allegiances to the fore . Their efforts have only the benefit of Stromeferry and Achmore residents benefit in mind.

This year we have been bolstered by the addition of Kath Biss , who kindly agreed to join us as a co-opted member. This takes a little of the pressure off the committee and adds a wry and dry sense of humour to meetings as well as giving a broader representation.

There are a wide range of topics covered through the year and I will outline a few of the more major of these here.

We have a newly repaired bridge at the bottom of Achmore crossing the Ascaig river , a substantial expenditure and I think most agree it will extend the life of the bridge . This and other smaller yet significant attentions to our roads is due mainly to the good communication we have with the TEC service through our spreadsheet reporting service.

Things have not run quite so well for the difficult decisions which have to be made concerning the Stromeferry Bypass which has been handed back to the Highland Council to try to find funding for the works . At a public meeting organised through the CC by Mary in Achmore Hall we were inform that no final decision has yet been made although it was implied that the on line route was probably likely to be dropped,leaving the Glen Uddalain and the Lochcarron/Port a Chuillin routes the two main

contenders . Both these were well above the available funds so the need is to find alternative funding. To this end , there is now an HC task force tasked with sourcing money. Watch this space!

With a proposed cut of £64m in this years budget, roads and particularly gritting through winter ,are likely to suffer. Handy then , that our winter resillience kit is here to keep Achmore and Strome roads open in the event of heavy snow or ice. We only had cause to use the kit on a couple of occassions last year but the purpose was served and the shovels etc will be out again this winter,anyone wishing to help get in touch,a great way to keep warm on a winters morning.

If you do decide to help out and things don't go too well for you then don't panic , because this year,with the help of Lucky2Bhere we have installed the villages' defibrillator on the wall of the village hall , we hope it is never used in earnest , but a comfort to know it is there.

Mary generously donated £200 which were her secreterial expenses to Lucky2BHere . We had planned a fund raising day to donate to the Lucky2BHere organisation , but that has not yet happened ,although we will be organising a village day and would be pleased to hear suggestions from young or old for ideas for it.

As is now known,the new Hospital site for our area is Broadford for the “Hub” with a smaller facility in Portree, through all the consultation and steering committee meetings Mary has kept us informed and contributed on our behalf.

We attended and contributed to the campaign to keep the Customer Service Points open and through our councillor Audrey Sinclair , were informed that Kyle would remain although Lochcarron would be downgraded to being open part time and having to share resources with the library.

A recycling plant in Auchtertyre has been a regular item on our agenda and a facility much needed in this area. Again we have tried to help the process to make it happen but it seems the advantage to residents and the resultant fall in land fill costs and charges have been outweighed by the cost of having to have a facility constantly manned, This item was taken off our agenda recently but we intend to reinvestigate and put it on the agenda again since all members think it is a facility much needed and we would encourage residents to lobby for the eventual installation.

Our finances , in the hands of Dawn, are healthy and we have made contributions to a few local causes .

We have purchased (approx £150) and installed a bench seat at the cattle grid on the road towards Strome and our thanks go to Bill Gillespie who has gone out of his way to trial the seat for us and you. If you feel the need to chat to him on the seat then get in touch and make an appointment here. Next one will be on the fernaig road I think .

The village hall has a new boiler for the central heating system and the CC contributed £500 towards this , something we will all benefit from for a long time hopefully.

We have given a loan of £800 to CMNet ,the broadband group , and have been given a very accurate and detailed repayment schedule by them .

The broadband project has gone very well and everyone who has entered it feels it is working in their favour, the next step is to extend the access to customers in Ardeaskan,Ardnarff,Stromeferry and Craig and also to be able to improve the service as developing technology allows . This project is a great example of a small community taking initiative and forging ahead in a pioneering way. We were not the first to do it but under the leadership of Phil , this team has provided us with a service which BT decided it would not give us . The network which links Achmore to Plockton at the moment will soon link to Lochcarron which will make the service more secure and adaptable as well as being able to increase speeds to what could not have been imagined a few years ago.

These have been a few of the main topics the Community Council has covered this year but the committee has spent a lot of time discussing , arguing, agreeing and laughing at meetings throughout the year on behalf of all residents in the Stromeferry and Achmore area. I would ask that the residents give a spare a thought for the work that is done and if there are any people who would like to contribute to make things run smoother for us all , please think about joining the council or attending meetings to let your thoughts be aired .

Jann MacRae resigned from the 2014 committee mainly due to work commitments throughout the summer season preventing her being able to attend meetings.

This year our Highland Councillor, Audrey Sinclair , has been in attendance at our meetings and I would like to thank her for the work she does on our behalf through the council with her experience, knowledge and good communication. If she would like to trial one of our seats she is most welcome, just communicate with Willie .

Your Community Council for 2014/2015 were:

Secretary :	Mary MacBeth
Minute Secretary :	Phil Game
Treasurer :	Dawn Lupton
Members :	Ellanne Fraser
	Kath Biss

Thanks to them for their attendance and work which I am sure is appreciated by those who benefit from it

Wishing the community well for 2015/2016

Neil MacRae    Chairman