

# Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council

## Minutes of Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January @ 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall

**Present:** Audrey Sinclair, Kate Bulloch, Ellanne Fraser, Martin Fraser, Phil Game, Dawn Lupton, Mary MacBeth, Jann MacRae, Wilfar Matheson

### 1) November's minutes were approved without change.

Proposed by Dawn, seconded by Ellanne

Copies of November's minutes were sent out early in December, and copies are still on our website at [www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/library.asp](http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/library.asp)

Or email [phil.game1@btinternet.com](mailto:phil.game1@btinternet.com) if you would like a copy sent to you.

### 2) Mary then reported back with clarifications from Robbie Bain (our ward manager) on questions raised at last month's meeting.

The maximum number of members for Stromeferry & Achmore CC is eight; we have a core allocation of seven plus one more than most CCs because of our low population density.

We must have a minimum of six normal meetings per year and one additional annual general meeting to be held before June each year.

Robbie Bain (our CC ward manager) was asked to provide best practice for CC production of minutes and he confirmed that our approach last month issuing draft minutes was the preferred approach. There was then a general discussion covering various points relating to the minutes and the following conclusions were reached.

Copies of draft minutes will be produced by the Wednesday night following the meeting and circulated only to attendees of the meeting for comment.

**Action: Phil**

All comments regarding the minutes to be returned to Phil by the following Sunday night. **Action: All**

Draft minutes will then be circulated to everyone in the area the following day; on the first Monday of the month following the meeting. I.e. January's minutes will be circulated on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> February.

**Action: Phil**

Robbie Bain is to be sent a formal copy of approved minutes, however apart from Robbie we will not issue approved copies of minutes unless major changes to the draft minutes are required. Previous months are available on our website.

**Action: Phil**

We will record the numbers for and against when a vote takes place and a majority decision is reached. Proposer and seconder will be documented but we will not normally record how individuals vote. However individuals have the right to request that their view is recorded in the minutes.

**Action: Phil**

We will write to everyone in the area who is not on our email circulation list explaining how to obtain copies of CC minutes and other documentation.

**Action: Phil**

We will research the cost of a notice board.

**Action: Wilfar**

We will research location of a notice board for Strome Ferry.

**Action: Martin**

### **3) Other recommendations from Highland Council for CC meetings**

Mary informed the meeting that there were specific agenda items to be presented and discussed at CC meetings. We are currently missing the secretary / treasurer's report.

### **4) Community Council online course as sent out by Robbie Bain.**

It was decided that this was too large a topic for us to tackle at this meeting and we would go through the course in sections starting next month with the first four topics.

**Action: All**

Some (but not all) members of the CC had been sent letters asking what training they required. Audrey confirmed that a course would probably be taking place in Kyleakin and that everyone on the CC would have an opportunity to attend, not just those that received letters.

Subsequent to the meeting the course has been confirmed by Audrey. Kyleakin Village Hall, 20<sup>th</sup> March from 4pm to 7pm.

### **5) Re-siting of the re-cycling bins from the Square**

Dawn reported that it was not possible to gain access to the recycling bins from the square and therefore she could not restrict access from the road.

Wilfar suggested that the bins be relocated in the square away from the road and accessed from the hall garden. Wilfar to contact the contractors to see if this is possible.

**Action: Wilfar**

### **6) Stromeferry By-pass update from Audrey.**

Audrey told us that the best place for the latest information is the Highland Council website.

[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) and [www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/roads/stromeferry.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/roads/stromeferry.htm)

The second page contains a link to the bus and passenger ferry timetables these trips are free; the website also has the bus and train timetables where trips are charged at the normal rate.

Mary asked if the car ferry service could be extended to start at 7:00 am, Audrey replied that the service had already been extended and now starts at 7:00am and finishes at 6:00pm Monday to Saturday, no service on Sunday.

There will be another round of meetings in the week commencing the 13<sup>th</sup> February for the Highland Council to inform us of progress. The meeting in Achmore will be in the hall on Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and Lochcarron on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

A reminder will be distributed nearer the time.

**Action: Mary**

According to the current schedule the road will re-open on the 17<sup>th</sup> February but only during the day. At night the road will be closed and repairs will continue. The road is expected to be fully open by mid April.

Wilfar raised several questions regarding the response of the Highland Council and the disruption caused by the delay and the issues of using the railway line. After further discussion it was agreed we would write to the Council raising our concerns and requesting explanations of the delays as well as registering our interest in the proposed short and long term solution(s).

**Action: Audrey to provide contact points at the Council**

**Action: Mary to draft a letter for all to comment on.**

Audrey confirmed that there would definitely be investigation of a longer term solution once the road was in use again.

## **7) TEC services spreadsheet?**

It was agreed the spreadsheet was a good idea. A copy is to be sent to TEC services (George Speed) for their comments before we restart the process.

**Action: Phil**

## **8) Budget**

We have just under £3,700 in the CC bank account, not including this year's grant. We must submit forms by 31<sup>st</sup> March to ensure we receive this year's grant.

**Action: Wilfar**

We have to compile a list of regular commitments based on previous year's expenditure.

**Action: Wilfar**

We should start to plan where to spend our resources for the coming year.

**Action: All**

## **9) Tilhill and Braeintra / Fernaig Woodland**

Colin Parsons has forwarded information from Tilhill regarding the woodland above Braeintra. Mary spoke briefly to Tilhill and will gather further information relating to the woodland and the proposed harvesting of timber.

**Action: Mary**

Mary will draft a letter to Tilhill for all to suggest comments.

**Action: All**

## **10) Jubilee celebrations for the Queen**

We have received a letter from the Queens representative Mrs. Janet Brown, Lord Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty reminding us that the Jubilee weekend falls on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2012. There will be a full program of events in London and all local communities are being encouraged to get involved and lay on events including as many people (especially younger members of the community) as possible.

There are two events that they emphasise:-

- 1) The big Lunch which takes place on Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> June.
- 2) Lighting the beacons / launching flares on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June.

If you would like to participate in local versions of either of the above or have suggestions for other events to mark the Jubilee please let a member of the CC know.

**Action: All residents**

## **11) E-mail communications – difficulties**

Martin raised the topic of email communications; how to ensure that items came to people's attention, brief comments weren't misinterpreted and that we all had access to the same versions of software.

After a general discussion it was agreed that we should use the subject field to draw attention to emails requiring an urgent response, assume the sender had our best interests at heart, and wherever possible use industry standard software when sending attachments. E.g. rather than send Ms Word files convert them to PDF files (Portable Document Format) which can be read by anyone using the free Adobe download.

**Action: All**

## **12) Broadband**

Biz had forwarded Phil details of the latest developments and contacts as requested. These are:-

Our initial point of contact is Andrea Rutherford.

The Scottish Government's target is to upgrade all broadband by 2020.

Significant progress is expected to be made by 2015

The tendering process started last June.

The work will start in 2013.

The budget is expected to be between £200 million and £300 million.

Three of the four original contractors have dropped out leaving BT as the sole provider.

Contracts are expected to be signed in August 2012.

It is not clear how decisions will be made as to which areas are upgraded and when. It is not clear who will make these decisions.

**Action: Phil**

### **13) Scottish Water**

#### **There are two outstanding issues:-**

Low water pressure in Braeintra & Stromeferry and no water when there is a power cut, and as far as we are aware there is no plan to resolve it.

New main and disruption on Plockton road, we understand that there is a further delay in completing this project.

It was decided to ask representatives from Scottish Water to attend a meeting with the Community Council so we can have an update and press for a solution.

**Action: Mary**

### **14) Highland Council points of contact & method to be used?**

Phil asked Audrey if we were to contact members of the Highland Council direct or go through the “call centre”. Audrey told us that the “call centre” was just to lift the burden from staff answering phones and taking messages and staff should return our calls promptly and talk to us directly as before. Email contact should continue as before.

### **15) Working with other Community Councils**

It was agreed it would be a good idea to join forces with other CC when the circumstances dictated. We will make contact with Lochcarron & Plockton CC in the first instance.

**Action: Mary**

### **16) Defibrillator for local emergencies?**

Mary described the work of the charity Lucky2BHere which will provide defibrillators and training in rural communities to provide emergency first aid in the critical minutes before paramedics can reach the scene.

After a general discussion about the benefits and potential drawbacks it was agreed we should get more information so we could have a more informed discussion at a future meeting.

**Action: Mary**

### **17) Group Buying for Domestic Heating Oil**

Mary suggested that we look at extending the existing group buying scheme for heating oil. For example, combining the orders of several households we ordered 4,000 litres of oil on the 25<sup>th</sup> January, this gave us a small discount over the basic price of oil. However if we had managed to order 10,000 litres the benefit would be an additional saving of 3 pence per litre of oil (£30 per 1,000 litres). The oil company, Highland Fuels is happy to make any number of deliveries as long as each is at least 500 litres. This might need some synchronization between members to ensure that we all get the maximum amount of fuel and saving. Would anyone interested in joining the scheme please contact Mary via email at

[mary.macbeth1@btinternet.com](mailto:mary.macbeth1@btinternet.com).

**Action: Mary**

## **18) Shed on the green opposite Achmore Square**

An issue has been raised with a member of the CC regarding the shed on the green opposite Achmore Square and who owns the building. The issue being the safety of the building and the possibility it will be blown down in a storm causing damage to people and property.

It is thought that the building is in private ownership even though it had been available for general public use for many years. There was a discussion regarding the remit of the CC to intervene in such matters and it was felt we should be very careful before taking on the role of “local policeman”.

In this case it was decided that the person who raised the issue should be asked to discuss the matter with the owner of the property before raising it with the CC. It was agreed that the CC would not get involved with this issue at this stage and no action should be taken by the CC.

This then raised the question of whether the item should appear in the minutes. Concern was raised that the owners of the building might be made aware of the issue when they read about it the minutes, or possibly when a third party raised the issue with them having read the minutes.

Considering the fact that the CC was not going to pursue the matter as we felt it should not have been raised with the CC at this stage there was a discussion about the best way to document the item. In essence an entry in the minutes would make our recommendation of a private conversation between two parties public knowledge, possibly before it had actually occurred.

Audrey’s advice was that if the item was on the agenda it should appear in the minutes, however if the item was removed from the agenda there was no need for it to appear in the minutes. It was unanimously agreed that the item should be dropped from the agenda and the minutes as this was in best interests of all parties involved and therefore it did not appear in the draft minutes issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> January.

This item has now been restored to the minutes due to the intervention of Jim Coomber (see February’s minutes).

## **19) AOB.**

Phil suggested we ask Lizzie for our own access to the website rather than having to ask her to upload information on our behalf. It was agreed we would have one userid which we would then manage internally.

**Action: Phil**

Mary asked if there was any news from the Fernaig Trust about the feasibility study. Kate replied that the technical study was underway and would take about three months. Several people asked that the minutes of the Trust be sent direct via email rather than just posted on the website. Kate said emailing minutes had been stopped as some members of the community had raised objections. It was suggested that a cut down mailing list is used for those that would prefer to receive the minutes via email.

**Action: Kate**

**20) Next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm.