

Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on 27th November 2012 @ 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall

Present: Biz Campbell, Martin Fraser, Phil Game, Mary MacBeth, Jann MacRae, Neil MacRae, Wilfar Matheson
Cameron MacRae

1) Apologies: Ellanne Fraser, Dawn Lupton

Presentation from Cameron MacRae from Kyle police station

Cameron explained that the police would like to take a more active role in communities through the CC meetings. He explained that the police could help in areas that might not be obvious, e.g. if the HC are unresponsive regarding fixing dangerous road faults then they should be reported to the police where they will be logged. If the faults are not repaired and vehicles are damaged then the HC would be held responsible for repairs.

He advised residents to be wary of thefts from heating oil tanks, the police were aware of several incidents but there was no discernible pattern. His advice was not to padlock oil tanks, better to seal them with a cable tie. If tanks are padlocked thieves will damage the tank to steal the oil and then the tank will need to be replaced before more oil can be delivered.

He advised residents to beware of strangers knocking on doors looking for casual work. If anyone claims to be working on behalf of a major company, ask for identification. If you have doubts about people who claim to be representing companies you can call the local police in Kyle, who will usually have been told in advance whose staff will be working in the area.

Residents should note any strange behavior or unknown vehicles; Cameron advised us to make a note of the number plate, make and model etc.

Cameron explained he would be happy to address and issued that arose locally and either he or one of his colleagues would be available to attend future CC meetings.

The CC thanked Cameron for attending and he then left the meeting.

2) October's minutes.

These were accepted, proposed by Wilfar and seconded by Phil

Copies of minutes are on our website at:-

www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=220934

Email phil.game1@btinternet.com if you would like to be put on the circulation list.

3) Secretary's report

Communications received

Weekly Highland Council Planning list – distributed to CC
Annual report from Scotsway and an invitation to their AGM
Results of Quality Awards – Highland Council - distributed
Press Release re: Minor landslip on A890 - distributed
Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation: Supplementary Guidance 2012 Review-distributed

Stromeferry (A890) Options Appraisal Economic Stakeholders Meeting
Communication from Scottish Health Campaigns Network (SHCN) – distributed (see 22)
Monthly SLCVO e-bulletin – distributed
University of Highlands and Island – Launch of its Talking Science Community Project (see 24)
Other communications will be documented within the relevant agenda item.

If anyone would like copies any of the above documents please contact Mary at mary.macbeth1@btinternet.com or 01599 577 296.

4) Treasurer's report

Opening Balance	£ 3,945.00	
Expenditure this period	£ 120.00	(use of the hall)
Income this period	£ 940.90	(HC grant, 2012 – 2013)
Closing Balance	£ 4,765.90	

5) Distribution of minutes

Several new email addresses were added to all three lists this month; we will ask the hall committee and Fernaig Trust if they are ready to manage their own circulation lists.

Action: Phil

6) Notice boards

Mary put up the leaflet holder by the hall.

Closed

Neil spoke to Ewan who has given his permission to site the board on his property but the location in Strome Ferry is not ideal. We will look for a better location.

Action: Neil

7) TEC Services

Geoff Underhill has decided not to report faults using the procedure detailed in last month's minutes.

Closed

An updated copy of the spreadsheet was loaded to the website. Sandy has confirmed that no more work is planned for Braeintra in the near future. Work has begun clearing the verges on the A890 from Braeintra to Achmore.

The road fault spreadsheet can be found by clicking [here-](#)

We have told TEC services we would prefer road problems to be reported on the Highland News slot on radio Scotland. An email was sent to Sandy & Mark thanking them for their co-operation and help.

Closed

We chased Bryan Stout at Dingwall TEC to ask for a response regarding whether they can email to warn of road works in advance. Again, no response, we will ask Alistair Dodds the chief executive of the HC for their escalation / complaints procedure.

Action: Phil

8) TEC Services – A890

Slope inspection reports; these were first requested at the meeting on the 25th June in Lochcarron. We emailed Neil Gillies requesting the same on the 24th August, 24th September and again in October. Finally we received an email from Colin Howell who had misunderstood our request.

Still no response; it was decided we would raise this at the A890 steering group meeting on the 4th December.

Action: Wilfar

9) Scottish Water - Low pressure / no supply in Strome Ferry, Emergency procedures, Damage to surfaces in the Square and Achbeg Crescent

We have asked SW to provide maps and diagrams to show the layout of the mains. We have asked to be given details of emergency procedures should there be a problem with the main from Plockton.

No reply this month, we will chase again.

Action: Mary

We asked TEC services if they can help put pressure on SW to fix the damaged road and path surfaces. Sandy responded to say he will help if he can; he will try to examine the problem on his way to or from work but short hours of daylight are making this difficult. Sandy asked if we could send him photographs of the problem areas in the interim.

Action Phil & Wilfar

10) Tilhill and Braeintra / Fernaig Woodland

Mary asked Tilhill to notify us in advance when stalking is planned and to notify stalkers to be considerate of local residents when out on the hill and when “processing” their kill. No response this month.

The next update from Tilhill is due in January 2013.

Action: Mary

11) Broadband

HIE have not yet published the results of the consultation and have not yet set up a circulation list to keep people informed by email. We have chased Andrea Rutherford asking for an update, no reply.

The Forestry Outstation has responded to say they are not interested in our broadband project.

We have 36 households signed up; details sent to 21 emails addressees remain unanswered.

We have households in every corner of the CC area; Achmore, Braeintra, The Glen, Portchullin, Strome Ferry and Ardnarff. Please note only properties that have registered will be surveyed in the Feasibility Study. If you want to join the scheme then email Phil at phil.game1@btinternet.com

Geoff Harrington has very kindly offered his help. Professor Peter Buneman and William Waites of Edinburgh University have been providing expert advice and guidance.

Residents at Craig are keen to participate and there was some discussion as to whether CC funds should be used to support residents outside of our CC area. We decided we would allow residents at Craig to join since the incremental cost of additional backbone equipment was anticipated to be relatively low.

The draft Statement of Requirements (SoR) has been issued for comments to those who have “signed up”. As responses are received they will be put on the website.

Action: Phil

Phil presented guideline financial figures based on a system designed for 36 users, it was stressed these figures were given prior to the Feasibility Study (FS) commencing and without a full survey of the properties involved and therefore were very much estimates and subject to change. However the following points were noted:-

To set up a test bed with a borrowed internet connection between Plockton and two premises in Achmore would cost around £650; this equipment will be used for the demonstration. It was agreed that the CC would fund the test bed assuming the results of the FS were satisfactory.

Indicative costs for the backbone system, i.e. the components shared by everyone are within CC funds (no estimates for Craig were included in these figures)

As expected the start up cost i.e. the total cost of equipment for the backbone, all 36 premises and a year’s line rental was outside the current CC funds.

Any loan from the CC to the broadband project could be repaid within 5 years.

Phil suggested we look at the figures in more detail at a subsequent CC meeting and decide how much money the CC should / could “invest” in the broadband project.

The SoR will be finalised by the end of December, and the FS will start in January.

Action: Phil

We will investigate what is needed to restore the power supply up to the TV repeater.

Action: Martin

We will investigate acquiring scrap scaffold tube & fittings to construct hill stations.

Action: Phil / Neil

We will look for a “donor” in Plockton who will allow us to borrow their broadband connection so we can demonstrate the system without having to sign contracts with an ISP.

Action: Wilfar

The latest information can be found at: - www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=433827

12) Defibrillator for local emergencies

Mary has emailed Lucky2BHere and asked them to provide dates for training in either January or February next year.

No dates received so far, Mary will follow this up in January.

Action: Mary

13) Fernaig Trust

Neil & Martin gave us an update from the last FT meeting.

No progress with the proposal from Lewis MacDonald.

The FT is now looking at different options for the Hydro Scheme. One option would see the FT work in partnership with one of the power companies. There are options to lease rather than buy the land from the Forestry.

There will be a re-assessment of the Hydro Scheme and how any income it generates should be spent.

The Hydro scheme will not be operational before 2017 as a grid upgrade is required before a connection can be made.

The FT is looking at what is required to set up a holding company to allow them to interface with the Forestry and employ staff.

14) Provision of a recycling centre at the Auchtertyre Business Park.

Mary sent out chasing emails to our neighbouring CCs, but no responses. We asked Biz to raise it on our behalf when she attends their meetings.

Action: Biz

15) How to deal with licensing issues

The HC will organise a licensing officer to visit next spring to explain the procedures. It will be an open meeting and we will invite the Hall Committee and anyone else interested will be free to attend.

Action: Mary

16) Why were the Independents frozen out of the executive at the Highland Council?

No progress this month.

Action: Mary

17) Highland Council budget reductions

The HC is to have a meeting to look at cuts in more detail next week. Biz promised to give us feedback.

Action: Biz

18) Update from our Councillor

Biz attended a meeting with other councillors and TEC services in Kyle, the problems with the low verges on the Plockton road were noted.

Biz attended a meeting discussing redevelopment plans for the Ploc in Kyle.

Biz told us about the joint venture between the NHS & HC to support care for adults, there was a meeting 3 weeks ago at Dornie and she was surprised we did not attend. None of the members of the CC present had any recollection of an invitation. We will check our records and find out why we were not invited.

Action: Mary

19) Capital grant funding from Sport Scotland

No feedback.

Closed

20) Changes to electoral boundaries

Closed

21) Rhoda Grant's questionnaire of the Lochcarron community regarding the Strome Ferry bypass.

Our thanks to Jim Coomber for sending us more details of Rhoda Grant's "survey".

We wrote to Rhoda Grant and asked why she did not contact all the Community Councils in Ward 6 through the appropriate channels, what efforts she made to contact the residents of Stromeferry and Achmore and where she fits in the overall scheme of the A890 project?

She responded to say she was contacted by some Lochcarron residents, who were concerned about the dangers posed to their children travelling to Plockton High School. She sent out 150 copies of a questionnaire to local Lochcarron retailers to offer to customers to gauge what the opinions were to the options proposed for the Strome Ferry Bypass. She is not part of STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) which is the group that will determine which option is chosen to resolve the bypass problem.

Rhoda Grant did not ask if residents of Strome Ferry & Achmore had any views regarding the options put forward for the bypass.

Closed

22) Highland Senior Citizen's Network

It was decided we should get involved with this project

Action: Jann

23) Privacy of communications sent to members of CC.

Please note, any communication with members of the CC regarding any aspect of the work done by the CC may be raised as an agenda item and discussed at CC meetings. This will be at the sole discretion of the CC.

24) AOB.

Lack of grit on the Strome Ferry hill

We have been contacted by Lynn McLaughlin regarding the school bus not being able to pick up children if the road is icy. There was considerable debate as to how this situation has arisen. It would appear that the HC set the key priorities as to which roads should be kept clear. Once these have been gritted it is up to the driver to decide the order to grit the remaining roads. The school bus drivers have discretion not to drive down icy roads.

It was decided we would contact Sandy MacVarish to see if he can help.

Action: Phil

We will also talk to the gritting lorry driver to explain the importance of the road down to Strome Ferry.

Action: Neil

University of Highlands and Island – Launch of its Talking Science Community Project

The UHI is looking for groups in remote areas who can demonstrate science or technology projects. It was suggested the broadband project may be something that would interest others (assuming it goes ahead).

Action: Phil

25) Next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25th December (only joking), January 29th at 7:30 p.m. Achmore Hall.

The meeting closed at 10:45pm