



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS
COMMUNITY TRUST HELD AT WILDSIDE, WHITEBRIDGE AND VIA MS TEAMS
AT 7.00 pm ON WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2024.**

Present	Catriona Fraser (CF), Malcolm Stewart (MMS); Craig Lightbody (CL); Chris Gehrke (CG); Maureen McGuire (MM); Ken Sinclair (KS); Maire Brown (MB).
Apologies	Gareth Jones (GJ); Mark Sutherland (MS)
Non-attendance	Susan Greer (SG)
Chair	Catriona Fraser (CF)
In Attendance	Tony Foster (TF), Kirsteen Campbell (KC).
Minutes	Kirsteen Campbell (KC)

Declarations of interest: None

(A) INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

(B) MINUTES

MM **PROPOSED** and CF **SECONDED** the Minutes from the AGM held on 29 November 2023 and these were **AGREED** as a correct record and **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair.

CG **PROPOSED** and KS **SECONDED** the Minutes from the Post-AGM meeting held on 29 November 2023 and these were **AGREED** as a correct record and **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair.

(C) FINANCE UPDATE

The Board noted the finance report and agreed to forward any questions to the Finance Officer.

(D) TRUST MANAGERS REPORT

The Board noted the circulated report. TF outlined his plan to circulate this to Directors every month, and the Board agreed to respond with any questions within a week of receiving it.

In terms of circulating Board Meeting Minutes, KC to send these to Directors by the following Wednesday. The Board agreed to read and respond to these by the Wednesday after this. Within this two-week timeframe, the intention will be to share a draft copy on the Trust website. The final copy of the Minutes to then be signed off at the next Board Meeting.

Action: KC to circulate draft minutes within a week of each Board Meeting.

Action: Directors to read and respond to Minutes within a week of receipt.

The following points from the report were discussed by the Board:

HOUSING

TF: The Trust has been awarded funds from the Scottish Government for two houses for affordable rent at Inverfarigaig and have a letter of comfort from SSE about the drawdown being considered from Glendoe. These funds from SG are approx. £227,535. If this is to go ahead, it is expected that the houses will be ready by September 2024.

WOOD CUTTING/WILDSIDE

TF outlined the intention to train Matt Rhodes, SFCT Facilities and Buildings Manager, in chainsaw use. KS advised that the risk of accidents to occasional chainsaw users is extremely high, and the Board agreed that contractors should be brought in instead, for any future wood cutting.

THE SHOP & BCC

TF: BCC met with the Scottish Land Fund to discuss a feasibility report re purchasing the shop.

BCC to form a Steering Group, including Trust staff members Sarah Byrne and Robbie Burn.

The Trust has agreed to provide logistical support to BCC as well as to assist with finding funding.

NATURE RESTORATION GRANT

TF: The Trust have been awarded nearly £20,000 for a Nature Restoration Grant which will support work at Inverfarigaig, Errogie and Whitebridge. The Board thanked Sarah Byrne for securing this.

CG highlighted that the grant covers work for which budgetary provision had already been made. CG proposed that some of money saved be transferred to the Forest Classroom Project to purchase a copy of the original Forestry Commission cast iron sign for Farigaig Forest from the company that has retained the original mould. The Board agreed.

FOREST SCHOOL

TF stated that the Forest School asset transfer has been agreed. Maintenance and liability concerns were discussed by the Board.

FOYERS BAY

MMS noted the good turnout at the first Steering Group held on Tuesday, 9 January. He commented on the meeting being very positive with next steps discussed. It was noted that a concrete slipway may not be required, and the existing slipway was functional to launch vessels into the loch with the correct machinery to assist. MB commented on the requirement to make it as easy as possible to access the water.

MMS stated that the proposed slipway design is baseline and would likely require significantly more finance than the available funding. The possibility of using funds to pay for shore-based amenities, rather than a concrete slipway, was discussed by the Board.

The potential ground investigations and costs involved were discussed by the Board. Particularly with relation to potentially harmful substances at the hump that could pose an issue. It was agreed by the Board that investigations will have to be undertaken by a professional contractor.

RIVERSIDE FIELD

CF updated the Board on the Riverside Field project. The suggested landscaping was discussed between the local residents group, architect and landscaper online here for comment [Riverside Field | Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust \(stratherrickcommunity.org.uk\)](https://stratherrickcommunity.org.uk) No comment to the recommendations have been received from Pathways Group.

TF: The Trust offered 1p to purchase the land for car parking at Riverside Field and as a consequence of that the Local Authority agreed and have offered the whole play park area within that. TF will clarify with Highland Council if the play park will be maintained by them as an existing play park.

This also means there will be no loss of amenity as the land inside the field can be given to the park behind the fence gate entrance, and a ramp into the playpark area for buggies/people with varying needs can be arranged.

CL asked about scaling down the master plan so that fewer vehicles would require use of the parking spaces. CF responded saying that the master plan includes everything, although not everything within it has to be undertaken. She went on to say that withdrawing the master plan would result in a lengthy wait for it to go to planning again.

In relation to the four parking spaces outside the field, TF stated that these would have to go ahead as they are a requirement for safety going into the field.

Action: TF to check status of maintaining the park.

PHASE 2 ERROGIE

TF: Accelerate consultants are reviewing the second draft of the Errogie Church Business Plan. Heritage Lottery new grants are due to be announced in January and we'd like to be ready to make an application for that for Phase 2.

They have also provided advice on Governance and Charity Status. TF will share the Governance Paper at the next Board Meeting.

INVESTMENT

TF: Wind farm negotiations – SSE re investment discussion is in February and community benefit/possible investment with Corriegarth 2.

Action: Clarendon documents to be agreed and signed by the Board.

PROJECT PLAN

MM went through her proposal for a new approach to recording projects and the current Trust Action List. The Board agreed to this format and will assist in rolling it out one project at a time. MM also added the need to address the current Trust Action List.

Action: MM to discuss with Caroline Tucker (Project Co-ordinator) and Robbie Burn (CAP Officer).

Action: MM and CF to discuss the current Trust Action List at the next Business Meeting.

GOVERNANCE

TF outlined the focus of the next Board Meeting which will include the Governance Paper provided by Accelerate; Board Training; Grant Training with SSE; possible Charity decision; and any changes required in relation to policies on the website.

(E) PROJECT DIRECTORS

The Board went through the Project Director list and allocations were made for the coming year. This includes both Directors and Staff.

(F) AOCB

Changes to previous Minutes (6 September 2023, 4 October 2023 and 11 November 2023).

TF presented changes to previous Minutes to the Board:

THAIN ROAD (4 October 2023 - (E) Trust Manager's Report – Housing and Land)

The risk assessment was available to the Board in Board paper. The risk assessment has not indicated any **immediate danger to life** but we need to deal with some issues of high risk. I indicated to the Board I would send out the risk assessment to neighbours and give them the opportunity to remove hazardous material that belonged to them. There is quite clearly, from the report, some hazardous material on the land that needs to be removed. However our solicitor has advised we need to give local residents time to remove any high risk items themselves before taking any further action. We have written twice to residents and seen some in person. Some have complied with our polite request, others have not. We will now be informing third parties, such as the local authority and police, to help action any further request to improve the environment at Thain Road.

CF added to the discussion that the Trust has no immediate plans to make changes to the land and the Board noted that this is something that will be discussed in the future as the land is zoned for housing development. The Board agreed the importance of maintaining good relations with the residents of Thain Road regarding any future development plans.

KS queried whether any current residents could claim prescriptive rights over the land. TF responded that currently there is no evidence to suggest any residents can make a claim.

CG added the importance of safeguarding the Trust's right to any future development potential whilst also maintaining positive relations with the residents. TF noted that the process has begun to create a memorandum of understanding between the Trust and residents of Thain Road in relation to any future development plans.

It was also noted by the Board that any future correspondence in relation to Thain Road should be directly with current residents.

KNOCKIE FUND (6 September 2023 - (D) Trust Manager – Knockie Trust)

The new concordat had been updated for 2023-24 but needs to be reviewed and signed.

CLARENDON (11 November 2023 - (A) Introduction)

The Board accept and agree the recommendations from Clarendon.

TO CLARIFY ACCURACY Executive Summary of Risk Assessment

The land has been in a state of abandonment for in excess of 10 years, during which the residents of Thain Road have started using it as their own land.

The ideal and safest solution would be to clear all items from the land and fully fence the perimeter to prevent unauthorised access, however the Trust would like to maintain good relations with the residents of Thain Rd and would like to allow them the continued use of the land until further notice, provided that this is done in a safe and responsible manner.

There are currently large amounts of wood stored at various locations on the land. Some stacked in lengths and some split in wire containments. Coupled with the redundant car batteries, disused vehicles, containers of fuels and oils, and discarded machinery, the risk of a fire occurring on this piece of land is particularly high.

The Trust will need to insist that the residents ensure all wood is stacked safely and that suitable warning signage regarding the dangers of climbing on log stacks and their possible collapse be erected. Discarded vehicle batteries should be removed immediately and disposed of at a regulated waste battery disposal centre. Operational batteries can remain but must be stored properly (see risk assessment section for more details).

Disused vehicles should be removed from the land onto the owner's own property where possible with any remaining vehicles being drained of fuel and oil, and left in safe and secure conditions.

Fuels, oils and other hazardous substances need to be stored correctly. These must be kept upright, in the original containers, stored on spill mats or drip trays and in well-ventilated areas. Flammable substances such as fuel must be stored in flameproof containers or cabinets. Toxic substances must be kept locked away when not in use.

The general appearance of the areas used by the residents is poor, with general rubbish and discarded items all over the place. The housekeeping standards across the land need to be improved.

The residents should be required to clean up the areas they use, store all items safely and neatly, and discard of all rubbish and unwanted or damaged items accordingly.

Operational vehicles used by the residents pose a very low risk, assuming that they are properly maintained and parked safely and securely in the layby.

The Trust may find it difficult to encourage the residents to comply with the controls required to be implemented to reduce the risks currently present on this piece of land and, should be prepared to adopt additional measures of implementation if resistance is met.

There are presently some very high risks that need to be addressed in a timely manner to ensure the Trust have fulfilled their duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of users of their land, and the ongoing protection of the environment.

Distribution of flyers:

KC requested clarification from the Board re the distribution of flyers from external parties with no link to the Trust. The Board agreed that this should be a matter for the Community Council to consider, and the Trust will take guidance based on their decision.

Memberships:

The Board welcomed three new Ordinary members.

(G)DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7pm, Wednesday 7 February 2024, Wildside Centre/MS Teams

Meeting closed at 21:10

Signed by Chair (CF): _____

Date: _____