



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST HELD AT STRATHERRICK PUBLIC HALL, GORTHLECK AT 7.00pm ON WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2017**

**Present** Peter Faye, Zoe Iliffe, Sharon Ferguson, Ken Sinclair, Frank Ellam, Julie Murphy  
**Chair** Zoe Iliffe  
**In Attendance** Steven Watson (Project Co-ordinator), Laura Walker-Knowles (Administrator)  
**Apologies** Garry Page, Stewart MacPherson, Hugh Nicol

**Declarations of interest**

None

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. MINUTES – 3 MAY 2017**

Ken Sinclair **proposed** and Peter Faye **seconded** and the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 June 2017 were thereafter **AGREED** as a correct record and **APPROVED** and signed by the Chair.

**MATTERS ARISING**

The Knockie Trust have been contacted in relation to providing an article for the next edition of the news and to see if they want a closer working relationship with the Trust.

The insurance renewal policy was checked and the cover is the same as last year, it just has a lower premium.

The Grants Team met this evening and will report to a subsequent meeting.

The Project Co-ordinator has now completed and circulated the Director biographies. Directors to confirm they are happy with them.

Invitations to the Broadband Open Day have been drafted and sent out.

**Action  
by**

The Project Co-ordinator is just awaiting a third quotation and will thereafter instruct the engineer in relation to the Foyers Bay Slipway design.

The Land at Riverside geotechnical survey has been carried out.

Further to the suggestion at the last Board Meeting the Chair had discussed with both the Project Co-ordinator and Administrator who both confirmed they are happy to review sporting, student and energy saving grants going forward. Grants Team to consider as part of their ongoing review of the grants process.

### 3. FINANCE

- (a) The Finance Director updated the Board with month end figures. The cash flow forecast showed two grants unpaid at the time of writing the report. The Finance Director advised the Board that one of these was the grant to the Community Council as they had made an application for funds to keep the toilets open in which they had based their figures on previous years' water rates (plus a 6% estimated uplift) but it was subsequently agreed that the previous year's total was incorrect. The grant has therefore been reduced by £270 and the 6% uplift taken off. The water company has given an undertaking to read the meter.

Total bank interest for last month was £219.79. The closing balance at the end of the month was £674,274.81. The Legacy Fund has had its annual valuation. At the end of May the Trust had invested £171,000 and this was now valued at £188,000, ahead of the expected target.

The actual expenditure cashflows for 2016/2017 and the proposed budget for the next financial year were discussed in detail.

In relation to project expenditure for 2017 and 2018 the Board discussed the proposed budgets and the probability of an increase in insurance following on any construction. It was noted that major construction on the Riverside Field was unlikely until the following financial year and the Foyers Bay project had accounted for insurance costs within the projected budget. The estimated cost could therefore remain as budgeted.

*At this point the Chair asked the Project Co-ordinator and Administrator to leave the meeting. Steven Watson and Laura Walker-Knowles duly left the meeting during the following discussion.*

The Chair and Financial Director raised the question of staff salaries.

As Steven Watson is currently still only working part time (going to 4 days per week at the end of July), it was **AGREED** that no

increase in the Project Co-ordinator's salary should be included in the budget.

The Board then discussed the question of the Administrator's salary. It was noted that she is currently paid £12 per hour and works 7½ hours per week. It was agreed that it was inevitable that, with the progression of the Trust's ongoing projects, the number of hours would increase. As discussed earlier in the meeting Laura had also recently agreed to take on more tasks. It was therefore AGREED that the Administrator's hourly pay would increase to £12.25 from November 2017.

*Steven Watson and Laura Walker-Knowles were thereafter invited to return to the meeting.*

Individual energy saving grants paid out in the last financial year were slightly lower than the previous year, not including the light bulb scheme. The actual expenditure for Group grants had been lower than the previous year due to some large returns of unspent grant monies. Individual grants were higher than the previous year. The forecast for this financial year in relation to individual grants has therefore been increased.

The Trust continues to hold funds of £20,000 previously awarded to Boleskine Community Care.

£50,000 has also been budgeted for any group who may want to apply under the larger grant scheme.

The apprenticeship scheme will continue to appear in the budget but, reflecting the same status as the previous two years, has had no recent payments due to there being no current apprentices.

It was proposed that the Foyers Bay budget for the next financial year be £75,000, the land at Riverside field project be £40,000 (the majority of the costs for pre-construction), a projection of £25,000 for Boleskine Community Care Hub and £20,000 for roll out of the Broadband Scheme. However an increase in the budget for the Broadband Scheme to £30,000 was suggested.

With regard to the Riverside field, the question was asked whether access costs had been included in the budget. Directors felt the issue of the new access should be dealt with this year. It was also considered that new fencing could not really be undertaken until such time as the better access had been installed. The Chair and Finance Director advised that a £10,000 element of the £40,000 budget was to deal with potential access costs. Directors agreed the question of the access should be dealt with as soon as possible by the architects and a planning application submitted.

In relation to other potential land purchases and equipment costs there is a budget of £1,000.

The Legacy Fund investment for 2017/18 will be £66,000 (being the agreed 25% of the Trust's projected income this year).

There will be a budget of £1,200 for Corporation Tax.

The total expenditure budget for 2017/18 would therefore be £423,000.

It was noted that the Trust's Financial Management Policy requires that the Trust holds a reserve of 120% of the budget. This would mean that the Trust would need to keep £507,600 as a bottom line figure. Based on the projected budget, and if expenditure was paid "equally throughout the year" the Trust would breach that Policy reserve floor in March 2018. From July 2018 onwards, based on longer term projections, the Trust would be out of the temporary breach (especially if Stronelaig is scheduled for completion at the end of 2018). It was suggested therefore that, prior to the Trust committing to any large construction costs on the Riverside Field the Community Benefit Negotiator needs to press on with the negotiations on Stronelaig. The Chair advised she had contacted SSE asking for an update prior to this Board meeting but had not yet had a response.

A discussion then ensued as to whether the Board should approve the budget and accept the temporary breach of its Financial Management Policy or whether we could temporarily amend the Policy. Within the Policy it is open to the Board to set the minimum reserve. It was noted that the monthly Legacy investment accounted for in the budget but the reserve to be held is strictly cash and does not include the Legacy Fund investments. There is a potential to not pay into the legacy fund for twelve months. However, Directors **AGREED** that those payments should continue. Frank advised the Board that the Trust has 120% reserve to cover running costs including "ordinary" grants, salaries and overheads and that should be sufficient to satisfy the financial policy.

Following the discussion, the Board **NOTED AND ACCEPTED** the potential temporary breach of the Financial Management Policy, but to monitor it as required. Julie Murphy therefore **proposed** and Ken Sinclair **seconded** the Trust's proposed cashflow and budgets for 2017/18 and these were therefore **AGREED**.

The following expenses/invoices were received:

- (b) Book-keeping invoice for June 2017 £235.00
- (c) Administrator expenses for June 2017 £85.24
- (d) Administrator Timesheet 1.4 hours overtime
- (d) Project Co-ordinator expenses £204.79
- (e) A9 Accountancy £204.00 tax investigation insurance
- (f) Property and Land Surveys at the Riverside Field £540.00
- (g) Insurance - Clark Thomson - £484.20

- (h) Newsletter printing - A4 Design and Print £899.11
- (i) Calico standard annual charges £210.00

The Board **APPROVED** the invoices (b) – (i).

The Chair raised the idea of a cash float for the Project Co-ordinator and Administrator to enable them to purchase stationery and other items without being out of pocket until the following month. After a general discussion between the Board, Project Co-ordinator and Administrator, the Project Co-ordinator advised that he does not find it an issue but the Administrator confirmed she would be happy to have a float. It was agreed that the Finance Director would provide a cash float of £250 to the Administrator and a spreadsheet would be kept to ensure continuing good accounting.

*ACTION: Arrange float for Administrator.*

FE

#### 4. **BROADBAND TEAM UPDATE**

The Broadband Team gave the latest update on the scheme. Interest continues to be noted from residents living in houses not in line of sight of the current project position. The Team is however trying to get as many people through the process as quickly as possible.

From the current installation it had been thought that the next repeater station could be located at the Whitebridge Hotel however it has been discovered that it is in fact the Corriegarth Estate House and not the Hotel that can be seen. Options are therefore being considered.

The discussions about the possible mast at Dunmaglass are still ongoing. Marianne Townsley at SSE is looking into the possibility of handing it over to the Trust. Alex Catto's offer of using his Easter Aberchaldar turbine site as a site is also being considered but at first look may not be quite as useful as it is in a lower position; it may however be useful at a later date as we look to bounce signals further around the area.

It was noted that one household has Connect Loch Ness (CLN) installed. CLN are taking a different route to Cromarty Firth Wireless Networks (CFWN) so will obviously get to some properties before each other.

The Chair asked about the Service Level Agreement between the Trust and CFWN. The Broadband Team thought this had been received but SF will look into it. The Chair advised she could draw up an Agreement if CFWN didn't have one.

The Trust Broadband Open Afternoon has been booked for 3pm – 8pm at the Stratherrick Community Hall on 13 July 2017. CFWN and several Directors will be in attendance. Marianne Townsley and Fiona Morrison from SSE and Councillor Margaret Davidson have also been invited. It was **AGREED** that SW would also contact the press to inform them of the event.

Directors then discussed the criteria for the project's expansion, ie. should it be based on where the demand comes from or should it be that the Trust attempts to provide a supply to those areas currently without a broadband network (being the criteria for the decision about the initial test phase). It was **AGREED** that the Trust would be guided by CFWN on this and the expectations of residents would need to be managed accordingly. It was also noted that an initial grant process also needs to be completed before an installation can proceed.

***ACTION: Contact Inverness Courier re Broadband Event.***

SW

## 5. COMMUNICATIONS TEAM UPDATE

As all Director members of the Communications Team had given their apologies, they submitted a written update to the Board and the Chair ran through the points in that report.

The Comms Team suggested that as neither Graeme or Fiona Ambrose were now directly involved with the Trust, Evergreen was no longer an appropriate Registered Office for the Trust and the Board should consider changing the Registered Office address to the Stratherrick Hall and to include a locked post-box in the entrance porch for secure delivery and holding of correspondence.

The Board discussed if the Registered Office should be changed now or once the repairs were carried out on the Hall and a secure box installed. The Board agreed to wait until such time as the appropriate work to provide a locked post-box had been carried out.

The Communications Team recommended that the Trust publish an annual list of all grants awarded. The Chair agreed she was happy to do this in the Chair's Annual Report and it could also be placed on the website. SF confirmed Fort Augustus did something similar and she would provide a suggested format.

It was suggested that the Project Co-ordinator should buy a supply of variously sized plaques to keep on hand for supported projects. The Board agreed that the Project Co-ordinator obtain quotes. The plaques should be straightforward saying "supported by ..." with Trust logo.

***ACTION: Quotes for plaques.***

SW

Some of the community notice boards need replacing and the Community Council have been considering applying for funding for this. The Communications Team suggested the Trust should purchase replacements. The boards are currently well used. Quotes for individual notice boards are around £2,000. Currently there are six aluminium notice boards which are in poor condition. In addition, there are a further two to four that should also be replaced. The Community Council have previously been responsible for the notice boards. The Board discussed replacing them a few at a time or all at once.

***ACTION: Quotes for replacement Notice Boards.***

SW

Finally, the Communications Team suggested the Trust should purchase a camera for the Project Co-ordinator. Currently the Co-ordinator is using his own camera which is now quite outdated however it is still working fine and the Co-ordinator is happy to continue using it for now. The Board **APPROVED** purchase of a camera should it become necessary (up to £200).

## **6. PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE**

The Project Co-ordinator updated that he is very busy, he has been busy finalising the June edition of the news and encouraging and assisting new grant applications. He has also been organising the survey of the Riverside Field along with attending various meetings.

The Chair advised that she and the Project Co-ordinator had been discussing a long-term Community Development Plan for the Trust. The Chair has been reading the Kyle of Sutherland Community Trust's Development Plan for guidance.

The Project Co-ordinator reiterated that if there is anything he can address for the Board to please just let him know. The Co-ordinator is expecting to be more involved as the lease investigations conclude over the Bay and the issue of access at Riverside commences.

Ken Sinclair mentioned the previous lightbulb and white goods schemes and how these projects still resonate a positive response through the community. It would be good if similar projects could be rolled out. The Project Co-ordinator suggested some kind of community event might also bring the community together. The Board discussed and it was considered a good idea. The Co-ordinator will come up with some more suggestions.

***ACTION: Community-wide project suggestions.***

SW

## **7. QUARTERLY GRANT UPDATE**

The Board noted the finalised report for the financial year. It was noted that 43 Grant applications had been considered by the Trust totalling £60,405.

## 8. FUNDERS TEAM UPDATE

The Funders Team are currently waiting for Corinna Scholes from SSE to update on funding negotiations in relation to Stronelairg windfarm.

In relation to Aberarder Windfarm site it was noted that the Trust's share is estimated to be around £24,000 p.a. The Chair has sent an introductory email to RES to open lines of communication.

## 9. TIMELINE REVIEW

The Chair ran through the Timeline. Other than one amendment previously suggested by the Finance Director, the Chair advised that the Riverside Field Project Team should also now be added to the Timeline to give quarterly updates. Other than those amendments/additions the Timeline was **NOTED AND AGREED**.

*ACTION: Riverside Team quarterly updates to be included in timeline.* ZI/LWK

## 10. AOCB

### (a) Riverside Field

It was noted that requests had been received to mow the Riverside field. It was noted that last year Stewart Macpherson had arranged to mow the field free of charge but it had taken him longer to mow than he had estimated. It was agreed that it would be unfair to expect Stewart to do this again. It was **AGREED** that arrangements should be made for the field to be mowed.

*ACTION: Arrange for the mowing of the field this year, once estimates of fuel cost, silage worth, etc. were obtained.* SW

### (b) Apprenticeship/Students

Peter Faye advised that he has recently been approached with two apprentice queries. The Apprenticeship Team confirmed they are aware of them.

Peter advised that he had also been approached by an Open University student to ask if they could apply for a Trust student grant. The Board discussed and were of the opinion that being accepted on a course with the OU is exactly the same as attending

any other academic institution and therefore the student would be eligible to apply for a Trust grant.

*ACTION: Respond to OU student with confirmation.*

*PJF*

**(c) Foyers Fire Brigade Fireworks Grant Application**

Directors discussed whether, rather than the Foyers Crew applying for a grant each year, whether there should just be a regular annual fund made available for the firework display. This was discussed but considered that the Trust should not do this as the group must comply with the agreed rules/guidelines and apply for a grant. It was noted that grant for this year's display is due for consideration at the next Board Meeting where it can be discussed in detail.

**(d) Friends of the Inverness Royal Academy**

The Board gratefully acknowledged the article submitted by one of the attendees of a school skiing trip and agreed it had been an excellent addition to the News.

**(e) Apologies for the Next Board Meeting**

Sharon Ferguson gave apologies for the next meeting.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 2 August 2017 at Stratherrick and Foyers Community Hall, Gorthleck.

*The Meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.*

Signed by Chair (ZI)

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Date

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