

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST LTD.



Chairperson's email bulletin
November 2014

Dear Member

This is our latest Chair's bulletin to keep you informed about what is happening and, as always, to offer ourselves up to answer any questions you may have.

AGM coming up

Here's one for your diary please. We are holding our AGM at:

**7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd December 2014
at Stratherrick Village Hall in Gorthleck**

As Members, you will soon receive a package through the post which will have the full details of the coming AGM but here is a sneak preview of what will be happening:

- Delivery of the Chairperson's report
- Voting on new Directors (4 places available)
- Question and Answer session with our Accountant, A9 Accountancy Ltd, on the End of year Accounts.....please note that these have already been ratified by the Directors and we have attached them to this email for your viewing.
- Voting on a couple of proposed Article changes.

With reference to the Article changes, these are purely administrative changes and, if you vote for them, then you will be helping your Directors to run the Trust more efficiently by saving us administration time and allowing us to bring on the full set of skills we need. One of the changes simply alters the definition of 'Co-opted Director' to include both members and non-members. At present, we are only able to appoint non-members into these positions and this is limiting our ability to appoint anyone who is a member who has the skills we need. The other change is to place a closing date for nominations for new Directors at 14 days prior to the AGM itself. This is to bring us in line with other Trusts around the country and to help avoid the high levels of administrative stress involved in trying to print out voting slips and sort paperwork on the night itself while everyone waits about.

So, it's an important meeting and, like our Open Evening back in June, it's also a great chance to ask questions and get to chat to your Directors. There are ambitious plans in the wings and some very large sums of money about to arrive so we strongly urge you to exercise your democratic rights and come along to play your part as a Member. Your Directors need you!

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED:

www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk

We are online at last. Go and have a browse. It's all there.

FREE MEMBERSHIP

I know I'm probably speaking to the converted here because those of you reading this are all already members. However, there has been a bit of chat in public over the past months about what becoming a Member actually involves and whether or not it is free to join so I thought I'd outline the issue and provide some clarity. The answer is **YES, IT IS FREE TO BECOME A MEMBER** and we have provided a Question and Answer session on our website on the Membership page, which I hope explains everything for anyone who is not sure of the detail.

Why have a Membership? Well, everyone should have a say in how the company is run and how the money is spent.....but you need to become a 'member' first. We cannot automatically give membership to the whole community because the law states that no one can be forced to become a member. By signing your form, you volunteer your membership and that's that.....simple.

For those of you who paid £1 with your membership application, this was in respect of your liability towards the company. Different companies manage their liability payments in different ways and, here at SFCT, it used to be custom to request the £1 liability at the same time as you became a member. However, we have recently clarified the situation and have determined that this is not now required. We would still encourage new members to pay their £1 liability up front but you don't have to. For those people who have already paid their £1 liability up front, we can hand it back to you if you wish.....please just contact our Administrator. Thank you.

Getting everyone in the Community to sign up as Members. It is our desire, and should be yours too as Members, that everyone in the Community signs up as Members. The Trust is just about as democratic an organisation that you will find and, with a portion of Directors stepping down every year and with Members able to use full voting rights on everything from voting on new Directors to helping make Article changes, it seems obvious to me that we should encourage everyone to join. We cannot force anyone to do so though so perhaps, as Members yourselves, you could speak to those who are not yet Members and encourage them to come on Board. Wouldn't it be great to get 100% of the Community signing up as Members and thereby having a full say in what's going on. All they have to do is sign a form.....available to print off our website on the 'Membership' page.

GRANT APPLICATION CLOSING DATES

For the next two rounds of Grant awards, the closing date for applications is as follows:

Grant meeting – 14th January 2015 - Applications to be received by 30th November 2015

Grant meeting – 4th March 2015 - Applications to be received by 23rd January 2015 please.

This gives us time to fully assess your application before the Grant meeting and thus avoid any delays.

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

We are currently debating whether we should employ a full time PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR to help implement the more ambitious projects currently in discussion. Many other Community Companies around Scotland have already moved down this path and those we have spoken with say that it has been a game-changer in helping to get things done.

We are pulling together our ideas and are keen to hear from anyone in the community who has ideas or suggestions of their own as how to best utilise this new position. The successful applicant would need to have excellent project management skills and be able to converse with a wide range of people and organisations. They would be paid a full time wage and, by hopefully winning substantial additional funding for some of the larger projects this community is keen to achieve, they will more than pay their own way.

We are developing our thoughts and have already written a full job description and justification document which we will make public, via our website, at some point in the coming weeks should we decide to proceed with this appointment.

SFCT Finances (at time of sending out this email bulletin)

Summary of current financial situation

Total community benefit money held by the Trust	
Current Accounts	£6,800
Deposit Accounts	£173,900

Please remember that, although the sums of money look large, we are also responsible for holding at least a year's reserve, for saving for future possible investments and for starting to budget for the possible Project Co-ordinator's role and for the higher value legacy projects that are starting to appear. This has to be achieved on top of our expected current annual expenditure of around £80k.

What is happening with community benefit income in the coming months/years?

With a growing number of wind farms at varying stages of either build or planning, we are building a picture of the potential income available over the next few years. With our expected budget spend of around £80k per annum, the annual income is not yet quite enough for us to provide very large sums for legacy projects.

However, in approx June 2016, a bit of a game changer takes place as Dunmaglass and possibly Corriegarh windfarms start to come online and our community benefit income takes a substantial jump.....several £100,000's.

During 2017 and 2018, depending on the outcome of decisions from Highland Council's planning department, other new windfarms may come online. Our income would then take another substantial leap.

So how are we preparing for all this?

- By ensuring our financial management is rock solid.
- By preparing to employ a Project Co-ordinator to help the community make things happen when the big money starts to arrive.
- By providing the community with information so that we can all manage our current expectations but also prepare some ambitious plans for the future.

That's it from me, I hope this helps keep you informed and if you have any queries then please do give us a call on either of the two numbers below at any time.

Don't forget.....Diary.....AGM, 7.30pm Wednesday 3rd December, Stratherrick Village Hall, Gorthleck. See you there I hope.

Kind regards



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