



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust held via Zoom on Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

Present	Peter Faye (PJF), Zoe Iliffe (ZI), Frank Ellam (FE), Garry Page (GP), Jillian Barclay (JB), Russell Bain (RB), Kirsty Balfour (KB), Gareth Jones (GJ), Lorraine Lewis (LL), Chris Finlay (CF)
Chair	Peter Faye (PJF)
In Attendance	Laura Walker-Knowles (LWK) (Trust Administrator) and Steven Watson (SW) (Community Liaison Officer)
Apologies	Olaf Olsen, Craig Lightbody
Members	34
Non-members	3

1. WELCOME

The Chair informed the meeting that as 34 members were present, the meeting was therefore quorate and **declared** the meeting formally **open**.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair referred to the letter and notice of meeting which had been circulated to members as required. The letter was taken as read.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair advised the attending members and non-members that an election was required this evening to choose six new Board members. There were six candidates for six vacancies and therefore there was no requirement for a vote.

The Chair thanked the current Board and staff for their help during the year.

The Chair read out his report to the floor.

The Chair gave special thanks to the time and commitment of the retiring Board members and in particular that of Zoe Iliffe.

PJF thanked the members for attending and their support throughout the year.

3. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE DIRECTORS' REPORT

FE, Finance Director introduced himself and presented the Finance Director's Financial Year End Report and Annual Accounts for year ending 30 June 2020. FE explained the statutory requirements for accounts for a company limited by guarantee. The Trust qualifies as a micro-entity allowing the accounts to run to only 8 pages. Given the brevity of the 8-page accounts Frank ran through the detail of the Management Accounts to 30 June 2020, with comparisons and explanations against the previous year's figures.

4. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The Chair explained again that, in accordance with the Articles of Association, a third of Directors had to step down each year from the Board. There were therefore six vacancies on the Board. Six Nomination Forms had been received and therefore there was no requirement for an election. Six Members Director Nomination Forms had been received from Jillian Barclay, Martin Donnelly, Catriona Fraser, Chris Gehrke, Gareth Jones and Lorraine Lewis. The Chair congratulated the new Directors.

The Chair therefore **declared** that Jillian Barclay, Martin Donnelly, Catriona Fraser, Chris Gehrke, Gareth Jones and Lorraine Lewis be elected to the Board of Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust.

Paula Page introduced herself as the outgoing Chair of the Community Council. Paula thanked the Trust for their work during the year especially given the challenges of the pandemic, which was overwhelming at times. The Trust has been working collaboratively with groups in the community and along with funding this has helped alleviate some of the worries of the community. Frank Ellam was instrumental in managing this swiftly alongside the Director-led Covid-19 sub team. Paula said that as Trust Directors they have given up great deal of personal time to support the community and thank you.

Paula thanked the Foyers Toilet subgroup committee and again thanked and passed on appreciation to those outgoing Directors and those incoming. Paula advised the meeting she had resigned as Chair of the Community Council at last night's AGM and introduced Patrick Haston to the meeting as the new Chair.

Patrick Haston introduced himself thanked the Trust for the help given to Paula Page through this crisis and was sad to say goodbye to those standing down and we owed the Trust a huge debt. Patrick is looking forward to supporting and helping the community.

The Trust Chair thanked Paula and wished Patrick all the best in his new role.

The Chair had received questions in advance of the meeting and proceeded to read them out.

QUESTIONS

Question from Mary Speight, Community Member

My question concerns the progress being made with the Hall at Gorthleck. I recall at the last AGM there was some discussion re the complexity of ownership of the hall and we were told the trust were looking into it.

I look forward to hearing what progress has been made and wonder whether, as the refurbishment of Wildside comes to its conclusion, now would be a good time to invest in a complete renovation / rebuild of the Gorthleck village hall.

Last month a poll was posted to the community on Facebook asking if a community building was needed at the Errogie area of the Strath. Have you now got the results of that poll?

Answer: Zoe Iliffe, Director

The Trust did look into ownership and an explanation of those findings was sent to the Hall Committee. There were some elements that required input from the Hall's solicitors and so, as the Trust was aware the Committee had insufficient funds, the Trust agreed to bear the Hall's legal fees for this work. The Committee decided it was appropriate to put the question of whether to transfer ownership to the Trust to the community which was scheduled for 29 March 2020. Unfortunately, Covid then struck and the country went into lockdown, so that public meeting has been unable to take place. The Committee has therefore not yet decided whether they wish the Hall's ownership to be transferred to the Trust but the Trust has already indicated to the Committee it will happily take ownership if that is the decision, but that they will of course continue to support the Committee and the Hall if ownership doesn't transfer.

PJF added that the roof repairs were underway.

Question from Mary Speight, Community Member

In the September Minutes mention was made of enquiring about the possibility to purchase the old church at Errogie. Our Community is small and I wonder if another building to renovate and up keep is spreading too thinly our man power to run, up keep and attend another community hall.

Answer: Gareth Jones, Director

The Trust's solicitor is currently in negotiation with the lawyers acting on behalf of the Free Church. It is hoped they will be concluded very shortly when we will brief the members on the outcome.

The rationale for acquiring the building is that it will provide a meeting place for the community in the north end of the Strath, which together with Stratherrick Public Hall

and Wildside completes a chain of properties that will provide community meeting space where-ever there is a concentration of households.

The role of the building will be to provide facilities for relatively small groups engaged in very specific activities such as cookery lessons, dance classes, film clubs, etc. and operate as an annexe to Stratherrick Public Hall.

The Trust Directors will establish a steering group with volunteers from the local community who will develop thoughts on how they want the building to be used. The role it plays will also be explored in the development of the Community Action Plan that is now underway

The decision to pursue the church was driven by consultations with the local community and Trust members. The majority of the households in the area were surveyed and 90% supported the idea of a meeting space on their doorstep. Most of the people interviewed said they would participate in an 'Errogie Church Support Club' helping to define the role of the building and to run it.

The Trust membership was also surveyed with a single question: The Trust currently owns sites at Whitebridge and Foyers and at the centre of the area is Stratherrick Public Hall. This leaves a gap at the northern end of the Strath to serve households in Errogie and Torness.

Do you agree in principle that we should provide a community meeting space in this area? It was a simple 'yes' 'no' response. The result was 70% in favour, 20% against and 10% who did not have a view. Those who were against the proposal wanted the wind farm funds to be spent on smaller benefits and expressed concern that the community will have too many meeting spaces that run the risk of being under-used.

Before considering acquiring the property architects and restoration specialists were contracted to assess the feasibility and cost of bringing the building back to life. They reported that the structure was fundamentally sound and is in reasonable condition for its age.

Guided by the enthusiasm amongst local residents, the Trust decided that, although an old building brings with it an element of risk, on balance it was an excellent strategic move to enable the vision of providing doorstep amenities in every part of the area. The developed building would also contribute to a property portfolio that will form part of the legacy fund. We would also add, in response to Mary's concerns about "manpower", that as Peter pointed out earlier, we will have our Manager in place next spring and this will greatly assist in progressing projects.

PJF added if there was anything else to please drop the Trust a line.

Question from Eneas Mackintosh, Community Member

In relation to smoke alarms, are you aware the Govt has passed legislation requiring all houses to install alarms for both smoke and carbon monoxide. From what I can gather it is no longer enough to have, e.g., one in the kitchen, but they will now be required wherever there is a heat source as well as a minimum of one on each floor. The whole project has been put on hold due to Covid but it is likely that it will be raised again next year. An average cost per house looks like being not less than £150. I believe the Trust should get involved in this, whether through economic assistance to households or by taking on a contractor to do all eligible properties (this is likely to cost less).

Answer: Peter Faye, Outgoing Chair

Thank you Eneas for what is a very topical question. You are not the only person to have raised this matter with me. This proposal, whilst one can understand the motivations, could place an onerous burden on many households. As you mention, the date for implementation of legislation is postponed and I believe it is currently anticipated to be February 2022. I personally feel that there is a degree of ambiguity when references are made to “linking the alarms” and they’re being “hard-wired”. I do not have the technical knowledge to know how this will work, but I note that the Government suggest a typical three bed semi would cost around £220.00 to be made compliant. I assume this means if there are no alarms present already?

I also note that the SFRS have received £1m in funding to install alarms in homes where folk are considered to be at high risk from fire. On a more local note, for several years the Trust has funded carbon monoxide alarms and provided these to the local brigade, who, to their credit, brought a lack of such alarms in some homes to our attention, following their home visits.

I certainly believe that this is a circumstance that the Trust should consider and it would be interesting to know exactly what the demand will be; as of course newer properties may already be compliant. There is time to give full and due consideration to the matter before the legislation is implemented and I feel sure the future Board of Directors will listen sympathetically.

Question from Eneas Mackintosh, Community Member

I have been asked to bring to your attention the fact that a number of residents, especially the more elderly and less computer-savvy, are effectively penalised in receiving information about the activities of the Trust and the CC because communication is now almost exclusively electronic. What do the Trust think about re-establishing a monthly printed newsletter which would go to all residents and members of the community?

Answer: Jillian Barclay, Director

The News is quarterly not monthly and it is too expensive and time consuming to do any more than that. There never has been a monthly newsletter. The old Boleskine Bulletin was quarterly and the bulletin folded because of the impracticalities of delivering paper

copies to all residents (400+ copies). It is too expensive to post even without costing the volunteers' time in stuffing into envelopes and addressing.

The news is published in both a digital and paper format, with 250 - 300 copies printed and distributed using a combination of post, hand delivery and left in public areas for collection - Post Office, Surgery etc. and this approach will continue for the foreseeable future. We have paid for, and use extensively, noticeboards - posters are regularly produced to advertise key events. The Trust has a list of members who do not have email and minutes etc. are posted out to them. We are now trialling the use of tablets for people who are living alone and don't have the technology with Boleskine Community Care and we will consider delivering the magazine via that. An enduring problem is that even for those that do have the technology we do not have a comprehensive email list but we will put that right early next year. If we have the contact details of the people you have in mind - we can arrange delivery.

Question from Craig Lightbody, Community Member

SSE said that the Energy Savings Grant system had to stop as it was not inclusive to the community. It's my view that this was as inclusive as the funding issued to the many old folks events, many of the school children events and any other of the events which are exclusive to other groups locally. Would the trust consider reinstating this important grant, taking the funds from any of the other funders so as not to upset SSE?

Answer: Zoe Iliffe, Outgoing Director

Energy Saving Grants have ceased, that is correct. When ESGs were first awarded, major amounts (as in tens of thousands) were paid out to individuals but, to ensure individuals who did not live in our area but owned property in the area didn't receive personal benefit, it had to be necessarily restricted to owner/occupiers so ESGs were never available to the entire community. The very large amounts being awarded couldn't be maintained with the level of funding the Trust received at the time so the amount available was restricted to £500 and so for many in the community ESG projects were unaffordable even with the grant. SSE's concerns were to ensure that the entire community benefits result rather than certain individuals and so this is why the decision was finally made that they be stopped. We did consider whether other non-SSE funds could be used but they also have different restrictions that meant that it wasn't possible to utilise those funds for ESGs. The only funds available from which they could be paid were two very small funds that total around £5,000 per year. As this is such a small sum, it was decided that this was too insignificant to have any useful benefit to the community and therefore the ESGs were ended entirely. If anyone has ideas for how ESGs could be replaced with scheme that encompasses the entire community, then please send suggestions to the Trust. We are often asked about the white goods scheme which was offered for a short period in the past, from a fund specifically available for those types of schemes. That funding is no longer available so that scheme cannot be repeated now.

Question from Craig Lightbody, Community Member

Why has there been no progress in the works for the Foyers Bay project? There have been no updates in many months regarding this and no forthcoming explanation. Could it be that all the Trust's efforts have been ploughed into the Wildside project which has been pushed ahead at pace, or perhaps the Riverside Field project which has a long, long way to go before even getting off the ground. The Bay project deserves more attention to get it finished.

Answer: Russell Bain, Director

We fully accept the point raised regarding the website not being updated and we will now put this right and ensure the information is brought up to date. The reason the bay project has not progressed as we would have liked this year is mainly due to the Covid pandemic. Most of our Directors were dedicated to responding to this and trying to think of ways to help minimise the financial impact on our community. We spent many meetings/weeks discussing options and ideas to agree the best way that we could offer assistance. As you will be aware there was a number of financial assistance packages offered as well as the delivery of food boxes and provision of the community larders that were supported by the Board. This coupled with the fact that for many months during lockdown many companies were unable to assist us due to the limitations placed upon their duties. However, we have recently started to focus on this project again, as you may have noticed within our minutes and we are confident that progress can be made to obtain the necessary SEPA and planning permissions for the work to start on site. Expenditure over the past few years has been spread around our area with significant sums being spent on the Lower Foyers Hub for our friends at BCC (not to mention significant financial support), and much funding being channelled toward Stratherrick Public Hall for a new kitchen, general structural and electrical repairs and most recently a grant to repair the badly deteriorated roof. Yes, expenditure has been incurred at Wildside, but this will benefit the while community and give them the sort of facility that they can utilise fully and take great pride in.

Closing Comments

FE thanked Garry Page and Peter Faye for standing up and returning to the Board in the spring when circumstances dictated more Directors were needed. GP, PJF and GJ stood up to help and FE highlighted that the Trust holds a huge debt of gratitude with their service being invaluable.

GJ then thanked Zoe Iliffe as the individual who stood in the way of anarchy and chaos, with great determination and it was no doubt Zoe had kept the Trust on the straight and narrow, at no cost to the Trust, potentially saving the community thousands. GJ gave

great thanks from the Trust and the community for everything Zoe had done over her time in office.

KB then thanked and wished Garry Page well on behalf of the Board for his commitment and in particular his questioning of matters, opinion, outspokenness, huge support and encouragement.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

The Chair **declared** the meeting **closed** at 9.10 p.m.

Signed by Chair	_____
Date	_____