



Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust

24th June 2024

Legacy Projects in Foyers, Inverfarigaig, Whitebridge, Gorthleck & Errogie

Dear Resident,

The Trust is constantly looking for more effective ways to keep the community well informed about the projects it has on the go. We use digital and printed media quite extensively but acknowledge that not everyone is connected to or even a fan of the internet. With this in mind we thought we would explore a more traditional method of communication – a letter. Much of the supporting information for the projects discussed in this letter can be found online, and the relevant links can be found at the end of the letter. However, if you would prefer printed copies, please phone us on 07300 562443 and we will arrange for the appropriate documents to be posted to you.

The purpose of this letter is to update you on where we are with the buildings either owned or supported by the Trust. The goal is to provide a meeting space of one sort or another in each of the six hamlets. Lower Foyers has the BCC Hub on the doorstep which is becoming a very busy place indeed, with regular social activities as well as the provision of footcare and earcare services, haircutting and nailcare. Alterations are being made to the far end of the building to make it more useable. If you want to get a snapshot of how the Chair, Kit Cameron, and her team are extending the services there, have a look at their website. Also in Foyers, there are two steering groups in place. The first, driving the development of Foyers Bay, is turning its mind to what facilities will be required to support community boating and water-based activities. The second, for the Riverside Field leisure amenities, is also working with the community to develop a richer and more detailed picture of what amenities they would like to see and use.

The main development for the Whitebridge community is the recent addition of a children's play park at the Wildside Centre. Other works are being discussed for improving the facilities in the building too, including upgrading the toilets, replacing the windows and installing solar panels to lower heating and lighting costs. These works will enhance the experience of the many active groups of all ages who currently use Wildside.

At the Trust's Board meeting earlier this month, the directors agreed to work with the community group at Inverfarigaig to develop a Men's Shed that will be built within walking distance of the main cluster of houses. There is widespread support for the facility (which despite its name will be gender neutral!) but requires input from construction specialists (architects, surveyors, builders etc.) to make it happen. Inverfarigaig is also the location of the first affordable housing to be owned and managed by the Trust.

In Gorthleck, the Stratherrick Public Hall committee is turning its attention to giving their building a new lease of life. A technical investigation into the condition of the building has revealed that it will require very significant investment to repair the timber structure and exterior cladding. A detailed plan is being developed, which will then be discussed with the Board of the Trust to identify the best way forward.

Errogie Church sprang back into life earlier this month with the sound of wedding celebrations. Decorated with bunting, flowers and atmospheric lighting, wedding guests were taken aback by the fabulous atmosphere inside the building (as 100 dancers expertly negotiated an Orcadian Strip the Willow). There was also a talk on swifts by John Parrott and a screening of Scotland the Big Picture's 'Why Not Scotland?' film, which was well attended. There are other plans being developed with members of the community for further events and activities here later in the year.

The building is now wind and watertight, the floor has been stripped and varnished and temporary heating installed. The services are rudimentary and there is restricted parking. We are delighted that several members of the original steering group, and some new additions, have come together to provide advice and guidance on the future use of the building. Over the last few weeks, the Trust has worked with the group to develop more transparent governance, improved project management and communications. A link to where the minutes of the recent steering group meetings can be found is at the bottom of this letter.

To support the concept of 'Educate, Entertain and Inform', the Group has agreed, in line with the original vision - formulated through a series of consultation events in 2021 and 2022 - that the long-term purpose of the building will have three elements:

- A heritage centre where locals and visitors alike will be able to explore the history of the area – and get involved in shaping its future
- An anchor building for the Strath's biodiversity groups. The area has a remarkably rich natural environment from some perspectives, and we are extremely lucky to have swifts, eagles, bats, owls and ospreys within striking distance of the church. However, on a wider level there is a huge amount to be done to improve the biodiversity of the hills and mountains surrounding us. This sounds grandiose, but the mantra is to start small and make a difference at a local level. Hence the campaign to attract more swifts to the area.
- A community space for everyone, but also a doorstep facility for people living in the cluster of hamlets that line the B862, Dhuhallow, Errogie, Torness, Carnoch for example. It will be a place for people to experience local culture over a cup of tea with friends, visit an art exhibition or listen to music by a Highland group.

With the doors to Errogie Church now open, I'd like to flag up very specific ways in which you can get involved there.

- Join the Steering Group to help drive the strategic direction of the facility
- Join the Biodiversity Group that will be working on making our part of the world more bio-diverse and sustainable
- Join the South Loch Ness Heritage Group to help preserve and protect the cultural and historic treasures of the area and work with an archivist to develop ways of bringing the history of our area alive
- Join the community and culture team who are working out how to make the building work as a social hub. 'It doesn't have to be any more than some sofas and a small kitchen' is the sound advice we have so far.
- Finally, simply become a friend of 'The Gathering Place', this is the working title for the building chosen when a name and address was required to enable high speed fibre to be run into the building. The role of a friend is to simply get involved when you fancy it.

Please get in touch, either by email or by phone, describing how you would like to get involved and then I will forward your details to the relevant organisation. This will help us build a contact list to enable us to circulate relevant news and information.

Meanwhile, keep an eye on social media, the Trust website, community noticeboards and the regular newsletters/ magazines to keep abreast of what is going on.

Kind Regards,



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Further information on the projects mentioned in this letter can be found from the following links:

Boleskine Community Care – www.boleskinecc.com

Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

Main website – www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk

Project pages - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/

Foyers Bay - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/foyers-bay/

Riverside Field - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/Riverside-Field-Foyers/

The Wildside Centre - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/Wildside-Centre/

Community Housing - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/Housing/

Errogie Church - www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/errogie-church/

Both Boleskine Community Care and Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust can be found on Facebook and Instagram.