

Contin Community Council Ordinary Meeting

19:30 Tuesday 06 February 2024

Minutes

Welcome and apologies

Present: Norma Ross (NR, Chair), John Heathcote (JH, Secretary), Simon Bates (SB, Treasurer), James Ruggles-Brise (JRB), Phil Baarda (PB), Frances Welton (FW), Cllr Liz Kraft (LK).

Apologies: Ronald Gall.

One member of the public was present.

Declaration of interests

JH declared an interest in Item 8.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with minor revision, proposed SB seconded JRB.

Matters arising

See updated action list for progress.

NR contacted Fairburn with respect to support with responding to the Democracy Matters consultation. The support they were able to offer was not appropriate for what needed doing. It was decided that we could not make a meaningful response by the 28 February deadline and the matter has been dropped.

Finance update

The finance update had been circulated.

Online access to execute payments from the existing Treasurer's account appears not to be possible. A new business account is being set up, with SB as the primary contact. We will not be charged for using this account.

We agreed to resolutions as follows:

This resolution must be passed at a Meeting of the relevant management committee of the Business/Organisation who holds the Bank Account cards are being requested for ("Customer").

It was resolved that:

- the Cardholders (who are also Authorised Signatories to the bank account) are authorised to request and be issued with Debit Card(s) and/or Debit Card details (including replacement cards, card details and security details) for use in relation to the operation and the giving instructions in relation to the bank account
- the Signing Rules contained in the mandate provided to operate the bank account be supplemented (but not replaced) by the additional Card Transaction Authorisation Rules which will apply to the operation of the bank account using a Debit Card or Debit Card details. The current mandate to operate the bank account shall accordingly continue as supplemented and amended
- the Customer agrees to the [Business account terms](#)
- the Customer agrees that all transactions authorised by a duly authorised Debit Card should be debited to the bank account and that the Customer accepts liability for any unarranged overdraft resulting from any such transactions
- the Customer agrees that Cardholders may use their Debit Card to order cheque books and statements and to obtain details of the balance on an account
- the Bank may continue to rely upon this Resolution until it is revoked in writing by a suitably authorised notice to the Bank.

3. Resolution

New accounts:

This resolution must be passed at a meeting of the members or relevant management committee of the organisation

It was resolved that a banking relationship will be maintained with the Royal Bank of Scotland Plc (the **Bank**) in accordance with this mandate and that:

- The individuals identified as **authorised signatories** may, in accordance with the **signing rules**, sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, Electronic Payments, Banker's Drafts and other payments on the accounts even if it causes an amount to be overdrawn or exceed any limit.
- Any **authorised signatory** may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the accounts; opening accounts with the same **signing rules** and **authorised signatories**; closing accounts; or other banking services or products.
- The Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written authorised signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions.
- The organisation will provide to the Bank a copy of its constitution and any amendment to the constitution, certified as correct by the Secretary.
- This mandate will continue until the organisation gives the Bank a replacement mandate.

Existing accounts:

This resolution must be passed at a meeting of the members or relevant management committee of the organisation

It was resolved that:

- the **signing rules** in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2, be replaced in accordance with section 4; and/or
- the **authorised signatories** in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 2, be changed in accordance with sections 5 and 6 and the current mandate will continue as amended.

RBS gives us two choices: either single authorisation for everything, or multiple authorisation for everything. We agreed to accept single authorisation for everything, on grounds of practicality. Currently, NR and SB are signatories.

SB and NR will progress the paperwork. **Action 2303-01 SB, NR**

Police report

Nothing reported.

Contin Forest Parking charges

Paul Hibberd from Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) updated the meeting on this. A national decision has been made to charge for parking at all sites where there are toilets, to help cover the cost of providing these. Charges will be introduced at Contin effective from 1 April. The charge will apply all year, even if the facilities are open only for a shorter season (Contin toilets open April 1st and close October 31st to prevent damage from freezing weather). Payment will be via the RingGo app. Payment can be made retrospectively if there is no mobile signal. Currently a region wide pass is available and FLS are working on the introduction of cheaper single site parking passes. FLS staff may issue 'reminders to pay' (not fines) to encourage payment.

Rogie toilets, operated by Highland Council, are open all year. The car park is owned by FLS but now leased to The Highland Council, who own the toilets and bridge. Highland Council will be putting a parking meter at Rogie, with revenue being shared between THC and FLS to help maintain the car park, toilets, paths and bridge.

The Loch Achilty car park remains free. It will be improved / enlarged at some time in the future; planning permission for the change has been applied for by FLS.

All were happy with how the Strathpuffer had gone.

The Snowman rally is planning to run in October this year, which may include the forests around Contin.

Paul clarified that no official permission was needed for smaller informally-organised events such as group walks, which can happen freely under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, but that it was advisable for event organisers to check with FLS that nothing else was arranged, including other events and forestry operations. Larger events do need to go through a formal permission system, details at [Permissions and permits - Forestry and Land Scotland](#).

Managing micro-grants

Currently applications and funding are roughly synchronised. The Council agreed some principles to govern future applications:

- The purpose of the grant should be the wider benefit of the community;
- The amount requested must be clearly justified – quotation or receipts;
- In the case of applications exceeding funding available, previous grants to the applicant will be considered in deciding priorities.

Subsidised energy reports

JH had declared an interest in this.

Some members of the community have requested help from the Council with energy bills. JH suggested that in such circumstances, the household should also be offered an energy survey resulting in an EPC, to understand if there are improvements to the building or heating arrangements that would reduce heating cost. JH is a registered Domestic Energy Assessor and offers EPC surveys to Contin CC residents for £20 (normal price £50+, it's typically 3 hours work), of which £9.52 goes to register the certificate. The Council agreed that it was willing to cover the £20 fee, at its discretion.

There is an issue with 'cowboys' offering energy services via social media. LK indicated that The Highland Council has a list of approved suppliers and trading standards will investigate. Complaints about poor service should be made to trading standards, mark.mcginty@highland.gov.uk

Contin's hidden history

The current stage of the project is complete. Geophysical surveys have found sufficient of interest to justify a further stage of investigation, involving the digging of trial pits, see report at <https://www.continvillage.org/contins-hidden-history-what-we-found-november-2023/>.

A budget for the next stage has been produced, £25k. Historic Environment Scotland is interested and will fund 40-50% of this, but we need to find the balance either in cash or kind. Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology will provide some input in kind. Various other sources of funding were discussed and PB will investigate. **Action 2303-02 – PB to investigate funding for archaeology project.**

Local Place Plan

The Local Place Plan provides an opportunity for the community to indicate its priorities in respect of what developments will be planned and permitted under the Town and Country Planning Act. Although there is no hard deadline, in developing higher-level plans, The Highland Council will take note of existing Local Place Plans submitted before 27 September 2024.

Community consultation will be needed in preparing the plan and it was not immediately clear whether it should be led by the Community Council or another community organisation (the Trust or CJT projects). We may also need to consider how our plan will interface with those of adjacent communities.

LK advised that our first point of contact should be Planning Aid Scotland <https://www.pas.org.uk/>.

Action 2303-03 – NR to make initial investigations.

We should also talk to Gairloch about what they did, using around £15k for some consultancy.

LK mentioned the Wester Ross and Lochalsh Biosphere. Details are here <https://www.wrb.scot/>. The boundary is between Contin and Garve.

Administrative measures affecting Contin

A new constituency boundary will be in place for the next UK General Election. We will be in the new Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency. This does not affect elections to the Scottish Parliament.

The application for a new national park covering Glen Affric to Ben Wyvis was discussed. It was clear that there was no consensus view within the Council area. The application has now been withdrawn.

PB described plans for another play at Coul House in the summer. The dates are fixed as 20-21 July and it will be recorded. The play will feature the rivalry between two 19th century Scottish plant hunters Archibald Menzies and his protégé David Douglas, concerning a Monkey Puzzle tree and a Douglas Fir. PB will request funding from EDF to cover the cost of two actors etc. The Council agreed to book and pay for the Hall for the two days, as a contingency measure against bad weather.

It was agreed to co-opt two Council members from Tarvie, one from each side of the A835, for the matter of the pylons only. They will be able to speak, but not to vote. **Action 2303-05 – NR Co-opt two members from Tarvie**

The meeting closed 22:00.

The next meeting is Tuesday 16 April 2024, 19:30 in the Small Meeting Room at the village hall.

Summary of actions

Action	By whom	What	Status
2301-01	PB	Spend balance of £107 in Gàidhlig fund	Ongoing
2301-04	SB	Change bank account address	Ongoing
2301-05	SB	Enable electronic banking	Ongoing
2301-08	NR	Address overhanging hedge	Ongoing
2302-01	JH	Generate a contact list of CC members	Complete
2302-02	NR	Progress contact with SSE/Fairburn over community engagement	Complete
2303-01	SB, NR	Complete RBS paperwork	New action
2303-02	PB	Investigate funding for archaeology project	New action
2303-03	NR	Investigate support to Local Place Plan from Planning Aid Scotland	New action
2303-04	NR	Advise SSE of blocked drain	New action
2303-05	NR	Co-opt two members to represent Tarvie on wind-farms and pylons	New action