

Contin Community Council Ordinary Meeting

19:30 Tuesday 16 April 2024

Minutes

Welcome and apologies

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

Apologies: Phil Baarda, Ronald Gall.

Two members of the public were present.

Declaration of interests

No interests were declared.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted, proposed FW seconded JRB.

Matters arising

See updated action list for progress.

The bank account with RBS has been transferred to Bank of Scotland.

Support to the Local Place Plan has been secured via Wester Ross Biosphere.

Minutes approval process

The agreed process is that:

1. First draft minutes will be issued to attendees within a week of the meeting;
2. These are open to receive comments and corrections for one week only;
3. A second draft will then be issued for approval, issued to all Community Councillors and with limited further circulation;
4. The second draft will be approved for issue as final at the following meeting.

Finance update

The finance update had been circulated.

The new bank account with Bank of Scotland is up and running and the RBS account is being closed. We received £50 compensation from RBS for inconvenience caused.

SB updated the meeting on how our sources of money work.

- EDF Microgrant funding top-up of £1648.62.
- SSE Microgrant funding top-up of £1000.
- Allt Dearg Hydro Project income of £360 top-up, with larger amount still to come (~£8K?). There has been some confusion about this income source. We will get similar money every year so long as we spend it every year on community/environmental projects.
- Winter Support Fund - 7 local community members supported to date.

We need to plan to spend our money on community benefit projects. The archaeology project and the community play are good examples.

Police report

Nothing reported.

Noted that no report has been received at our previous meeting either, and LK noted the other CCs had not received reports recently. JH will follow up.

LK is progressing whether there is any information available to us about traffic and speeds as a result of the recent monitoring programme.

Action 2304-01 JH to follow-up missing police reports

Broadband changes

Highland Broadband are installing fibre broadband in our area, involving some digging of roads and pavements to install the cables, but using existing Openreach ducts and poles where possible. Vouchers will be provided free to cover the cost of connecting into houses and the new router.

Questions were asked about cabling to the 3 houses still to be built in Woodland Park, and the 8 houses up Coul Road. Craigdarroch Drive is planned. Tarvie residents will need to demonstrate demand by applying for connection vouchers.

The cable needs to cross Moy Bridge, but this will be done during a closure for repairs scheduled by The Highland Council.

Highland Broadband will be following up complaints about the quality of footpath repairs.

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.

Terms of Reference have been produced and circulated.

There will be an article in the Contin Post next edition, including a tear-out questionnaire. The questionnaire will also be on-line. The questionnaire has four open-ended questions covering spaces, resources, movement and sense of belonging. A public drop-in meeting is to be organised.

Signage at Rogie Falls

The Highland Council is progressing with installing a sign at the exit of Rogie Falls car park reminding drivers to drive on the left.

Hazards from dead trees

LK will make enquiries about the dead trees at the A834/A835 junction, which appear to be on council land.

There was discussion about other dead elm trees around the village, with no clear conclusion being reached. They are the responsibility of the land-owner.

Resolving complaints

From time to time, members of the CC receive complaints about things that are not right. Agreed policy is:

1. Where possible, people will be encouraged to follow up complaints directly via established channels, e.g. blocked highway drains and empty grit bins;
2. The CC will engage with LK only where such direct action is not possible or practicable;
3. Although the CC does not intend to behave as a 'police force', discussions may take place with people who are failing to exercise their civic responsibilities.

SEPA consultation on potentially vulnerable areas (flooding)

SEPA maintains plans for managing flooding from rivers. The plan covering the Contin area is being updated and SEPA is consulting on the plan until 24 June.

We need to gather information from occupants on instances of actual flooding, or concerns about possible flooding. SEPA's on-line flood risk map indicates that the risk of flooding of the Island is fairly high, and there are a couple of properties at the north end of the village at risk. Contact will be made with those concerned, which can then be the basis of feedback to SEPA.

Action 2304-02 – JRB/JH to make contact with householders at risk of fluvial flooding.

Coul Road flooding

Persistent rain on 4-5 February caused flooding on the A835 and elsewhere. This was caused by:

- Blocked gullies, leaves or sediment
- Water running across the A835 from 5-Acre Wood;
- Water and debris flowing from Coul Road, including discharging from a gully.

There's not much that can be done about leaves, other than householders clearing their nearest gully if they note a problem. BEAR Scotland have been made aware of the sediment-blocked gullies and JH will pursue. The blocked drainage that was causing the discharging gully was reported to Scottish Water and has been fixed. (Subsequent to the meeting, Scottish Water confirmed that they have unblocked some drainage. They are planning further repair work.)

The root cause of the Coul Road problems is groundwater discharge in the vicinity of Southmost Cottage, causing the road to break up. There is no easy fix for this, since there is no longer a route for the water to flow away. A site meeting of relevant parties including the Council was suggested as the next step.

A statement was made that the mill lade flows close to capacity in wet weather. This early 19th century artificial channel is an essential part of Contin's drainage system and it may be necessary to formalise its maintenance

Action 2304-03 – LK to arrange a site meeting

Any other competent business

NR noted that she had given permission for a briefing note to be sent to our MSPs, prior to the debate on pylons in the Scottish Parliament on 2 May. This text has been agreed between Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon, and Garve and District Community Councils.

End of meeting

The meeting closed 21:05.

The next meetings are Wednesday 12 June 2024, 19:30 in the Large Room at the village hall, AGM followed by Ordinary Meeting.

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	Complete
2301-05	SB	Enable electronic banking	Complete
2301-08	NR	Address overhanging hedge	Resolved
2303-01	SB, NR	Complete RBS paperwork	Superseded
2303-02	PB	Investigate funding for archaeology project	Complete
2303-03	NR	Investigate support to Local Place Plan from Planning Aid Scotland	Complete
2303-04	NR	Advise SSE of blocked drain	Complete
2303-05	NR	Co-opt two members to represent Tarvie on wind-farms and pylons	Complete
2304-01	JH	Follow up missing police reports	New action
2304-02	JRB/JH	Make contact with householders at risk of fluvial flooding	New action
2304-03	LK	Organise a site meeting about Coul Road drainage	New action