

NIGG & SHANDWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

GENERAL MEETING at NIGG COMMUNITY HALL - 15th August 2019

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Attendees: Peter Grant, Christine Asher, Tony Ross, Helen Campbell, Veronica Morrison, Fiona Robertson (Highland Council)

Agenda item	Minutes	Action
1	Apologies – Stuart McLean, Alasdair Rhind (Highland Council), Derek Louden (Highland Council), Police Scotland	
2	Police Report: Police were unable to attend. TR read from a report supplied by Police Sergeant Ally Mackay. This report is attached at the end of these minutes.	
3	Minutes: The minutes from the last meeting on 11th April 2019 were approved. VM proposed; HC seconded.	
4	Matters Arising: None.	
5	<p>Treasurer’s Financial Report (CA) Since the last Community Council meeting in June 2019, the community council has held a historic photograph exhibition in Nigg Hall, led and arranged by Helen Campbell.</p> <p>This project raised £295, out of which £86 was paid in expenses, thus returning a profit of £209.</p> <p>The Community Council also retains project money in the bank from a previous photograph exhibition led by Helen in 2017, which returned a profit, after expenses, of £190.04. Added together the project money in the Community Council account is £399.04.</p> <p>Highland Council has now arranged for payment of the annual grant for 2019/20 of £399.65, which we should receive shortly. This is purely an administrative grant, awarded to cover the operating costs of the Community Council, and which should include: meeting expenses, postage, stationery, insurance (which the Community Council has now has to pay from this grant) travel, subsistence and a secretarial honorarium.</p>	

	<p>Today the Community Council bank balance stands at £667.72, which, minus the project money, is £268.68. This together with the Highland Council grant, will give an operating and administrative balance of £668.33.</p> <p>SLIPWAY PROJECT</p> <p>Nigg and Shandwick Community Council were successful in their application to SSE for funding and are to receive a grant of £50,000 towards the repair and restoration of the Nigg Slipway. This project, commencing during 2020, in partnership with Cromarty and District Development Trust, will upgrade the infrastructure of the ferry which should be an improvement for tourists and locals alike.</p> <p>FR informed us that we must complete an additional form to receive the extra money granted to us by our portion of the Ward Discretionary Fund. She confirmed that this was a short form, but that monies wouldn't be paid without this first being done. CA will complete this form to obtain these additional funds.</p>	CA
6	<p>Secretary report (TR)</p> <p>No notable correspondence to date.</p> <p>The main report is in two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Details of the forthcoming election process b) New process for streamlining the minute taking <p>These are supplied as documents at the end of the minutes.</p>	
7	<p>Community Update Reports:</p> <p>7a: Planning (PG)</p> <p>Ferry Slipways</p> <p>Beatrice Offshore Windfarm confirmed to Christine Asher that N&SCC had been successful in being offered a grant of £50,000 towards slipway costs. There had been over 55 applications to the panel to consider, at a total value in excess of £2.2 million.</p> <p>A condition of the grant is that we comprehensively monitor and evaluate the project, track its progress, and understand what direct impact it has on the local economy. This will require a great deal of time being spend by the Community Council covering 20 different aspects of the project.</p>	

Several current members of our Community Council had decided not to stand for re-election in Nov 2019 due to work and voluntary commitments, however two office bearers have in the interests of the community decided that they would offer their names for re-election for two years or so to ensure that the project goes ahead.

In the meantime, I can only hope some members of the community will either put their names forward now or during the four-year term of the Community Council which runs from Nov 2019 to 2023.

CA added that, once all of the correspondence had been received from BOWL to state that we had been successful in obtaining the grant, and this had been completely read through. It became clear that a lot of the conditions didn't really apply to our Community Council, because we are partnering with Cromarty that we have got no say over a large area of the project. Because of this, CA was reluctant to sign the form from BOWL, as it was committing NaSCC to tasks on a project, which we couldn't complete. CA then had a call with Fiona Morrison from SSE, and the outcome of that conversation was that the only thing which SSE are keen for us to do (as a Community Council) is to determine what economic benefits we have from increased ferry usage. To a large extent, we can obtain this information from Highland Ferries themselves, as they collate these statistics on a season-by-season basis anyway. If there aren't any changes, that's OK too. There is no need to worry, as SSE will keep in touch and do everything they can to help. There will be a big media event over the launch of the new slipways too. Therefore, all of our worries about signing and committing the Community Council to seeing the project through, are no longer valid.

** Red section = addition requested for clarification by PG ** Added 04/10/2019 TR.

B9175 Road from Nigg roundabout to Nigg Ferry

I wrote to the Scottish Transport Minister with copies to the Leader of Highland Council and Derek Loudon, our ward Councillor. Derek had found out for us that NEP paid over £600,000 per annum in business rates. Business rates are pooled throughout Scotland and divided to each Council based on population, so I thought it was worth including our Government. The road is, however, technically the responsibility of Highland Council.

Derek offered to come down and view some of the problems with the road. He took photos of blocked drains at two sites and emailed

Garry Urquhart and Donnie Macdonald HC Roads concerning the matter. I also met with Arthur Aldred to review the road either side of his residence.

In the case of the area in front of the entrances to NEP, and Repsol (was Ithica) virtually all drains and either blocked or totally inadequate. When there is a reasonable amount of rain both are flooded. There are numerous potholes over these areas and HGV's make an awful racket when driving along the road. There are other areas of the road which are bad but these two are by far the worst. I will not bore you with all the details of the overall road problems as I first have to speak to the HC roads experts to give me some answers. It may take a year or two to get some action on this matter so I will only report back to you when there has been substantive progress.

Nigg Energy Park – Construction of New East Quay

We responded to this application which include the following statement “There will obviously be some increase in noise with a new Quay at NEP, particularly for the properties near the development. However, we consider that NEP have taken all reasonable steps to contain the impact on our community. The construction of a 2m Bund along the Quay at Dunskeath and the fact that NEP Management advise us that the Quay will only be used for smaller vessels, with the existing south Quay used for larger vessels and rigs should help considerably.

Old Shandwick Estate

I received an email from Ian Gallie representing the family who own the remains of the Estate. They still have some two acres of land within the existing housing at Shandwick and are following Highland Council's “call for sites” to be included in the next Easter Ross Development Plan. Ian included a statement of intend to involve our CC in the process as well as Highland Council Planning.

I met with Ian to discuss the matter. He is using surveyors and Strutt Parker to draw up recommendations. After some discussion he was quite happy with my suggestion that he dealt with some of the residents of Shandwick as we currently have no CC member representing Shandwick. After phoning three people I know, I passed their phone numbers on to Ian, and sent his email to Pat Rae.

7b: External Meetings (PG)

	<p>Meeting was held on the 24th July</p> <p>Rather less business information. However, with Aberdeen building a new port this is going to take away about 15% of the port's business they think. It may impact on Global more as they will be able to do more Subsea work out of Aberdeen.</p> <p>The port does do a lot of work in the community holding mentoring course along with their partner Road bridge. One person from the group has a job within the port setup. They also are helping Alness Academy with practical work placements i.e. builders helping with the new school, engineering projects going on at the port, painting & decorating course. They did name all the community projects they have given money to, which included Nigg Hall and they will be giving practical advice to the Nigg & Cromarty Slipways.</p> <p>They are soon to release a new 5-year plan.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Ward matters (FR)</p> <p>Update on the Tain 3-18 campus - a Highland Council report will go to the Care, Learning and Housing strategic committee on Wednesday 21st August 2018. This is available to read and download from the Highland Council website. This report will recommend that the site for the campus be the Craighill site. This is following the consultation that has taken place, including consulting the public at Tain Gala in July. There still remains work to be done on the site to establish the suitability for the campus, including site analysis, drainage works, traffic reports etc. Highland Council need to allocate funds to this within the budget. Currently there isn't an allocation of capital funding for the building of a campus in Tain. There is £50m within the capital plan and 11 schools (which includes the Tain campus) needing replacement/refurbishment from this sum.</p> <p>Scottish Town Centre Fund - funding has been made available from the Scottish Government to councils to be used in Scottish towns to regenerate town centres. The focus of the funding is increase footfall within the town centre. Highland Council has divided this into areas and Ross & Cromarty has an allocation of £928k. This covers 5 wards with the R & C area. Tain has submitted 2 projects for consideration, with 17 in total from across the area. Recommendations for funding approval should be made by the end of the year, with the funds to be spent by next year.</p>	

	<p>Roads - there has been a change in the set-up of the senior executive level in Highland Council. New staff appointments are currently being made. Currently in charge of community services, which includes roads, is Carron McDermott. I have met with Carron to highlight our concerns over our roads in Tain and Easter Ross and in Ross & Cromarty in general. Carron has indicated that in order to maintain the roads in the current condition, we need a budget of £25m - we currently have a budget of £13m for roads. To improve our roads our back log would cost in the region of £190m - our capital budget is £6.2m. Without additional funds from the Scottish Government and new ways of generating income for Highland Council, the roads situation will remain a major concern.</p>	
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>Mobile Library van - Brian Rowe provided an update on the progress of the ongoing mobile library van issue. Skye are getting a new van and Catherine (the library lady) was hoping that the Skye van would come to our library, but it's going to Dingwall instead. Highlife Highland are looking to obtain a van. There is no specific date for this, but Brian will continue to provide us with updates.</p> <p>Awards</p> <p>Catherine Williams was proposed that we nominate for the Highland Council awards by HC.</p> <p>Scottish Water – Water pressure problems have been fixed in the last week, continuing from the previous meeting when John Mackenzie reported the trouble he'd been having.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam – HC asked that Highland Council dealt with the occurrence of this “weed” on the B9175 at the “waste” land near to Richard Cross’ property. FR took this on board but explained the proper reporting policy. It was also determined that, if this weed is on private land, it must be dealt with by the landowner, as Highland Council is not responsible for the upkeep of private land.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting – 10th October 2019 – this will be the final meeting of the Community Council in this election period.</p>	

Any supporting documents from the meeting are on the following pages.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORM

Command Area	North	Community Group	Nigg and Shandwick
Station	Alness	Officer	PS T1121 Mackay
Data of Meeting	15/08/2019	Location	
Meeting Attended	No	Meeting Not Attended (Contact Made)	Yes

Meeting Preparation

Ward and Local Policing Plan Priorities.	Activities conducted over the reporting period to support those priorities.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protecting People 2. Reducing Antisocial Behaviour 3. Reducing Violence 4. Tackling Substance Misuse 5. Making our Roads Safer 6. Tackling Serious Organised Crime 	<p>High-Viz mobile and foot patrols carried out in the area along with positive engagement with partners and members of the community.</p> <p>Several persons charged for a variety of Road Traffic Offences as a result of pro-active policing on our roads.</p> <p>Licensed Premises checks carried out to tackle violence and disorder in our licensed premises.</p>
Update on Previously Agreed Actions – See previous OP 55/8 & Relevant Reference on the Area Command Action Tracking Table	
No issues raised.	
Update on any local community safety issues / trends within the community and any assistance / information requested from the community. Review IMPACT / intelligence etc	
<p>POLICE REPORT 10/06/2019 to 15/08/19</p> <p>Between 10/06/2019 and 15/08/2019 police had cause to deal with no calls in the Nigg and Shandwick area.</p> <p>VANDALISM – 0</p> <p>DRUG OFFENCES: 0</p>	

DISORDER/ASSAULT: 0

DOMESTIC OFFENCES: 0

THEFT BY SHOPLIFTING: 0

ROAD TRAFFIC OFFENCES: 0

As the above shows this period was very settled. Hi-visible checks were carried out in the area in June, July and August but no offences were detected.

As a result of the high profile Greenpeace protest on board the BP/Transocean oil platform, Paul B Lloyd Jr in the Cromarty Firth there was an increased police presence for the week commencing 10 June 2019 in the Nigg area. A number of persons were arrested and reported to the Procurator Fiscal as a result of this.

If there are any issues you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact me.

Ally Mackay

Sergeant

Any local / Area Command / Divisional / Police Scotland updates / key messages

None this month

Secretary Report

1. Election process

Community Councils run on a four-year cycle; last elections were 2015 – this Community Council was elected following an interim election brought on by the previous Community Council going into abeyance and then, finally becoming dissolved. This Community Council was elected in March 2017, but the four-year cycle began in 2015, hence an election this year.

The process is, Highland Council will publish a notice of election of community councils. Likely to be 23/09 this year, but (like all dates I'm about to give you), is subject to possible change.

Nomination forms will be available from Highland Council by a specific date (not known at this point, but obviously will be sometime around 23/09) and, as they will send them to me, depending on the format, I may be able to provide it for download from our website.

Nomination forms are self-completed. At one point, they used to require a countersignature by someone, but that wasn't shown to be providing value as it was an easy thing to achieve, so the countersignature is no longer required. Anyone can simply nominate themselves. You just need to be over 16, resident in the Community Council area and named in the Electoral Register.

All nominations have to be with Highland Council by 4pm on Tuesday 8th October at the very latest. Any nominations arriving after this time will not be accepted. So, if anyone is going to self-nominate, it must be with Highland Council by that time.

Anyone wishing to withdraw their nomination, must do so by giving notice to Highland Council in writing by 4pm on Thursday 10 October.

Then there's a gap, school holidays between 14-25 October.

Now comes the interesting part. At some point after the school holidays, the nomination papers for each area will be checked. For ours, the following is what will happen:

- The rules of how many people can be elected state that each Community Council shall have a core membership of 7
- Each Community Council shall have one additional member per thousand of population up to the stated maximum
- In any Community Council area where the population density is less than the Highland average of 9.1 residents per square km, that community council shall have one additional member, subject to the maximum of thirteen members not being exceeded
- No Community Council shall have a membership greater than the maximum permitted membership of 13

For our population (approximately 382), we're permitted a maximum of 7.

The minimum quorum for any community council is 4, so we must have four people as a minimum to permit any decision to be quorate. It might seem that 4 is a number which could see votes on any subject becoming stalemate at 2 against 2, but if you recall that the chair has the casting vote, they would have the final say about which way any such stalemate went.

If we achieve less than 4 nominations, then no Community Council will be formed, and Highland Council will determine when to repeat the call for nominations at a later date.

The wording says, if we get more than half, but it means basically if we get four nominations or, indeed, anywhere between 4 and up to a maximum of 7, those members are basically elected...done and dusted.

If we get MORE than 7 nominations, then a postal ballot will be held. That would mean that postal ballot papers would be posted out to our electorate for them to vote. That would happen on or around 29 October.

On Tuesday, 19 November, all existing Community Councils will be dissolved at 23:59hrs

Wednesday, 20 November is ELECTION DAY. Any papers from the postal ballot (if one had to be held) must be received by Highland Council by 12noon. Any arriving after that time will not be accepted and won't count.

Thursday 21st (and possibly Friday 22nd) November – the votes will be counted. Depends on the number of elections as to whether the count will be done over two days or not.

Shortly after that, successful Community Council nominees will be advised that they've been elected.

By Friday 13 December, notification will be issued regarding the calling of the first meetings of the new Community Councils.

That's how the election process goes. The reason for telling you now, is that our next and final meeting (as this particular Community Council) will be on 10th October, and at that point, the entire nomination process will already be finished.

2. New method of working

The last few meetings have seen the minutes going out incredibly late and really close to the wire, based on the fact that I'm so stupidly busy that getting time to focus on these is difficult. This is one of the reasons why, when it came time to discuss whether or not I'd be nominating myself for re-election, I was adamant that I wouldn't be. I felt and feel that my being busy was and is holding the Community Council back and causing a bottleneck.

Some of the reasons for that are down to things like, because we, as a Community Council want and need to give our community a right to be heard at these meetings (and reflected in the minutes), I have a tendency to enter most things into the minutes, and that means going over the entire meeting recording again, picking out (trying to pick out from sometimes multiple simultaneous conversations) some salient points. It becomes a nightmare.

Going forward, to make things run more smoothly (and assuming I'm successful in becoming re-elected), we'd like to adopt a slightly different method. The most recent set of minutes goes some way towards the kind of output I aim to achieve. The majority of Community Council "reporters", as in those giving reports, have now kindly agreed to provide me with a written statement/summary of their contribution and that will be entered straight into the minutes. So, effectively a copy/paste operation.

Any points wishing to be raised by the community, I'd like to handle them in the following three ways:

- 1) Straight from the floor point raised about a specific subject – this can sometimes lead to overlapping discussions which are not really possible to minute properly. So, in the event of this, I'm going to ask the chair to bring the meeting back into line and then I'll ask for clarity on the question being asked/issue being raised, which I'll note. After any discussion, I'll ask for clarity on the points concerned and then ask whom, if anyone, will be taking actions from this. I'll then note that and we can move on.
- 2) The other way will be for anyone who has a topic/issue they wish to raise, to inform us ASAP before the meeting (preferably by email) about the topic/issue and I'll get it onto the agenda. The same process as I've just advised will apply, in terms of discussions, points and actions.
- 3) Straight from the floor discussion, but on topics not required to be minuted – these will just be listed as "a discussion ensued about blah blah"

Sound harder than it will be, but I'm confident that this will mean greater clarity, shorter and more meaningful minutes and the document out much faster. That will make my life a lot easier and means I'll be happy to nominate myself for re-election.

Tony Ross

Secretary