

Halkirk District Community Council

Minutes of HDCC meeting held on Monday 6th November 2024 held in Ross Institute, Halkirk at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Chairman Stuart Mills, Dave Busby, Katrine Coghill, Declan Gunn, Laura Coghill, Linda Levack,

In attendance: Cllr Matthew Reiss,

Foundation Scotland - Eilidh Gunn

Scottish Power - Craig Brown, Stakeholder and Community Manager

3 Members of the Public attended.

1. Welcome

Vice Chairman Stuart Mills welcomed everyone to the meeting including Foundation Scotland and Scottish Power representatives and the three members of the public from the district.

2. SPR Halsary Windfarm Fund discussion - Scottish Power Rep: Craig Brown

This part of the meeting was closed to public, a discussion on the Halsary Windfarm Fund Due Diligence Statement took place - HDCC Chairman had concerns on signing the Statement due to the content and asking matters of privacy of the members. Craig Brown Scottish Power understood the concerns but declared the position of Scottish Power and this was part of every Fund and a standard they sent out and had to be met, though he had cases of concerns arisen before. Following further discussions, it was decided that Chairman Stuart Mills would prepare a statement of what he felt he could sign and would email this to Craig Brown for approval. If approval was met the Statement would be signed at the next meeting. This was felt a compromise on both sides. Eilidh Gunn and Craig Brown left the meeting and the members of the public rejoined.

Action: Chairman Stuart Mills to email Craig Brown, Scottish Power on the Halsary Due Diligence Statement terms.

Action: Eilidh Gunn to send email contact for Craig Brown to HDCC.

3. Community Safety Report

No Police Scotland Community Engagement Report received for this meeting.

No concerns were raised. Cllr Matthew Reiss informed the meeting that a new Inspector had taken position, Insp Kay Macrae and had just started in the post.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st August 2024 were accepted as a true record.

Proposed by

Dave Busby, seconded by Declan Gunn

5. Matters Arising from these Minutes

Benches - it was felt it was too late in the year to ask Halkirk Football Club who had volunteered in the evenings to help. Contact had also been made with Community Payback Officer who were looking for projects.

Vacancies - there was still vacancies for Secretary and Treasurer - no update

20mph speeding - Chairman Stuart Mills had written to HC but no response yet.

Battery Storage Plant - Chairman Stuart Mills had written to them.
Chairman Stuart Mills had successful meeting with Edward Mountain.

5. Treasurer's Report

Bank balance a at £2521.50

Village Officer Award - £700 for next year - need to do report and send receipts to Liz Geddes

Payments due

- Data Protection Invoice - £40 - to pay
- Hire of Hall Invoice - £16 + £32 = £48

Payments made since last meeting

- Village Officer - £138.00 11/09/24
- Village Officer - £152.50 10/10/24

6. Village Warden's Report

The Village Officer has been working well and reporting back on a monthly basis. His work has been of a great standard. The work will finish at end of October.

An email came in from Highland Council indicating a grant of £700 for next year which means the work can start in May and continue till October. Julian will be asked to continue for next year.

Village Clean Up

A further 2 clean ups were arranged at cemetery and these both went well. It has made a huge difference and has been appreciated by the Village.

Numbers were slightly down and all agreed this would now stop and restart with a plan in May next year.

7. Area Representatives

Reports•

Forestry & SNH - Representative Linda Levack

- Replanting of sycamores to take place at west side of road at Dale.
- Meeting tomorrow for discussions = map has been sent out.
- Caithness Land Management Plan Amendment Consultation open till 10/12/24

Roads

- 20mph - Chairman Stuart Mills had written to HC but no response yet.
- There as a serious issue on the state of the Westerdale - Mybster road, the road was becoming destroyed with the number of timber lorries. It was in such a bad state that was becoming unsafe to drive and it should be repaired or a weight restriction put on this to stop it deteriorating further. As this was not on a priority list the Chairman will write to HC Head of Transport to report this.
- **Action: Chairman to write to HC Head of Transport on the serious state of Westerdale to Mybster road and ask for urgent repair or weight restriction to be put in place.**
- Glengolly junction new white lines yesterday.

- Dounreay Stakeholders

The minutes can be accessed from the Dounreay Stakeholder's Group website. <http://www.dounreaystakeholdergroup.org/>

- Health –

- Resilience group emails contain updated information on services and useful links

- Planning – Representative – Secretary

All emails from Planning are circulated weekly and any of interest picked out and brought to meeting. All planning applications can be accessed from the Highland.gov website.

- Altnabreac Wind Farm – Project Introduction
- Caithness Land Management Plan – amendment
- EIA Scoping Opinion – Land 2430M SW of Loch Buidhe Bonar Bridge – Construct and operate a 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line (OHL supported by steel lattice towers over a distance of approx. 167km between proposed substations at Spittal (Banniskirk), Loch Buidhe (Carnaig) and Beaully (Feallan), rationalisation and crossing of existing transmission infrastructure
- Goticlay Wind Farm proposal – RWE is offering the opportunity for Community Shared Ownership. Discussions ongoing with CVG. Objection letter already put in to scoping report.

8. Achlachan Microfund Applications

- Application from Halkirk Young Farmers for £300 for equipment for lamb dressing competitions – agreed by all and awarded. Morven Mackenzie from HYF was present and given the cheque. She was also interested in coming to the meetings and the HYF would join in any clean ups or help required in the village and district.
Action: Secretary to invite Morven Mackenzie to future meetings on behalf of HYF
- Application from Andrew Nicolson for Strongest Man competition for £300 towards costs. Further information requested and could be agreed by email if successful.

9. Correspondence

HC	Community Briefing See CC Fund – £500 for resilience planning available for schemes	
HC	Highland Local Transport Strategy 2025 to 2035 – Draft Themes and Policies Engagement	Reply by 3 Dec
Helen Crawford	UPDATE: Motion on Major Electricity Infrastructure & Community Engagement	The motion was passed – MAP to come from HC on all windfarm developments

10. Any Other Business

- 20mph review

Chairman Stuart Mills to write to Highland Council that 30mph should remain with 20mph at schools.

Windfarm applications websites

- A member of the public reported that he found the Halsary windfarm application website confusing - Dave Busby was interested and would bring to the next Halsary meeting.

West of Orkney surveys at Achalone

Complaints were made from public attendees on the survey work being done around Achalone, the mess on the roads and lack of respect to residents was highlighted, there are huge lorries moving around causing distress to residents day to day living. Complaints had been made but there has been no difference. It was agreed this was unacceptable and should be reported further, Cllr Matthew Reiss would look into contacts for this.

Updates from Cllr Matthew Reiss

- Glengolly junction has been white lined today
- Thor House closure - still in discussions
- A9 - Councillors are pushing for North of Tain roads being improved. Budget of 2Bn over next 2 years paid for by increasing council tax.
- Aviation lights to Camster - flashing and complaints received.
- New Health hubs in Thurso and Wick - councillors pushing to find out dates
- New Consultation on Place Plan - 43 page questionnaire
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11. Date of Next Meeting

- 11th December 2024 at 7pm

NOTE: rearranged to 18th December 2024