# Halkirk District Community Council

Minutes of HDCC EGM meeting held on Wednesday 12th February 2025 held in Ross Institute, Halkirk at 7.00pm

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

In attendance: Cllr Matthew Reiss,

Public:

Apologies: Linda Levack

1. **Welcome**

Chairman Stuart Mills welcomed everyone to the meeting including the members of the Banniskirk group who were all residents of Banniskirk and attending to discuss and ask for advice on the Planning Application for Banniskirk Substation which had gone in paper this week. This would be discussed first on the Agenda.

1. **Banniskirk Substation Application**

**The members who attended would like to discuss and raise their concerns on the current application and try to understand the planning process. They have several issues including but not limited to:**

* **Developers not engaging with residents properly**
* **Issues on dates for replies to applications**
* **Adverts were not placed locally**
* **Standard of documentation available to view was poor and there were also maps plus 140 documents to read through**
* **Worries about workers accommodation and where this will go**
* **The area is already busy with Lorries and A9 will be chaos with more – where is the Traffic Management Plan**
* **Flooding concerns**
* **Noise of blasting (87 hectares to dig up)**

**Discussions on the above and further concerns took place and the Banniskirk residents felt unfairly treated. Contacting Planning Officers and write to papers to voice their concerns was agreed.**

**Chairman Stuart Mills would write to Planning to ask for hard copy of the documents and an Extension to the deadline which would give more time to gather support for objections and raise awareness around the county of the size of the development and the effect it would have on the residents, their homes and their businesses.**

**Secretary would contact local reporter to contact the 5 local residents directly affected by this.**

**Public meeting could be arranged.**

**Clarification from Highland Council on the A9 boundary would be useful**

**It was also agreed that further developments should be considered and not this in isolation as Caithness could soon be destroyed with the amount being planned. Information is already being gathered by other groups and would be taken into consideration in action plan**

**Actions**

* **SDM – contact HC for hard copy of documents**
* **KC – contact local reporter to introduce Banniskirk**
* **HDCC – consider public meeting**

1. **Community Safety Report**

Report received and no concerns.

1. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2024 were accepted as a true record. Proposed by

Dave Busby, seconded by Stuart Mills

1. **Matters Arising from these Minutes**

Benches –Contact had also been made with Community Payback Officer Steven Macdonald who were looking for projects. Materials would need to be supplied and they could uplift some for refurbishment.

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

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

Halsary Agreement – all agreed and agreement now signed and will be sent back.

**5. Treasurer’s Report**

Bank balance - £2282

Awaiting Annual grant and village officer grant to come in

No payments since last meeting

**6. Village Warden’s Report**

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

Further clean up arranged in Spring by Clean up group.

**7. Area Representatives Reports**•

Forestry & SNH – Representative Linda Levack

* The shipping of felled timber continues on the roads.

Roads

− 20mph – Chairman Stuart Mills had written to HC but no response yet.

* Westerdale road has been repaired.

• 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.

**8. Achlachan Microfund Applications**

None

**9. Correspondence**

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| HC | * 20mph consultation – maps available on link |  |
| Tracey Urry (Roads & Infrastructure) | * Westerdale to Mybster road | Response |

**10. Any Other Business**

* Highland Fibre – concerns on amount of digging around village and who informs public

Updates from Cllr Matthew Reiss

* HC budget will be announced in February.
* Thurso High School – Block coming down at cost of £1M
* Roads – minimum spend still not enough – £33M needed
* NHS funding – Caithness General Plan paused
* 2% on council tax would raise money towards new High School

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

- 26 March 2025

- 14 May 2025

- 25 June 2025

- 20 August 2025

- 22 October 2025

- 3 December 2025