

Meeting Minutes

Meeting on Wednesday 27th September 2023 at Rafford Village Hall

FCC members present:

Howard Davenport (HD), Tom Hardie (TH)

Also present:

Juli Salt (JS), Anne Garrow, Mark Abbs, Graham Oliphant, Andy Munro, Carlo Miele, Joanna Taylor, Margaret Birnie, Ali McMorran, Kathy Priestley, Christine Davenport, Alex Walker (part time)

Apologies:

Tony Pinner (TP), Shirley Munn (SM), Stewart McCracken, Jude Pinner, Anna Gatward, Kathleen Robertson TMC (KR)

HD noted that as there was not a quorum of members at the meeting, that any decisions made need to be ratified by FCC members.

1) Presentation on Community Energy Moray

Alex Walker of Community Energy Moray (CEM) came along to talk about Community Energy Moray and its activities.

CEM was formed in 2019, following the Energising Communities forum in Elgin, initiated by the Joint Community Councils (JCC). It is now registered as a Community Benefit Society (BENCOM), a form of co-operative, and is run by 5 directors and a project administrator, all from the Moray Area. Funding so far has been provided by a grant from CARES. Advice has been provided by Energy4All, who have raised many millions for community energy projects.

Currently the main focus is to take advantage of a community participation scheme in the Clashgour Windfarm being developed by EDF renewables.

EDF proposes to offer a single organisation, CEM, an opportunity to invest up to £10m in the wind farm, and in return will receive a proportion of the profit from the wind farm. CEM would fund this by a share offering, to which individuals or organisations from Moray and East Nairnshire could apply. These shares would not be tradeable, but would pay a fixed dividend. The remainder of any profit after paying dividends would be used to fund community projects, to be decided by members. The details of this have yet to be worked through.

This community participation scheme is separate from the Community Benefits scheme which EDF have proposed. The details of how a Community Benefit scheme would be administered has not been established. The community benefits from other windfarms are administered in a variety of ways, some examples being the BerryBurn Fund, funding of Development Trusts, or through community councils.

Although the Clashgour Windfarm has received planning approval, it is still working through planning conditions. It is expected that the earliest a final investment decision will be made by EDF will be summer of 2024.

It was noted, that with increased construction costs, some windfarms are no longer financially viable, so Clashgour may not indeed go ahead.

For further information Alex referred us to communityenergymoray.org.uk.

Alex was thanked for coming along and providing an interesting update on the work of CEM.

2) Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes agreed.

3) Matters Arising

a. Passing places on Rafford – Dallas Dhu road

It was noted that there 2 issues here:

- i) **Missing Passing Place.** CM told the meeting that Moray Council had only in the last month determined where the passing place required by planning application 18/01583/APP should be located: opposite Stoneyford Cottage. He will arrange for the work to take place.
- ii) **Overgrown Passing Places and Dilapidated Signs.** Diane Anderson from Moray Council roads department had responded to query from Kathleen Robertson to the effect that we should use the Moray Council Online Services to report problems with passing places. HD reported that he had done this, and also asked that the Rafford-Dallas Dhu road should be signed as a “Narrow Road with Passing Places”. **(Action: HD to monitor response from Roads Dept.)**

b. A940 Road Junction at Edinkillie Church

HD reported that the response from Diane Anderson (DA), noted above, included an explanation of the Roads Department approach to this junction. She said that the central triangle currently grassed over would be tarmacked, that the approach to the junction from Forres would remain the same, and that the lines marked on the road indicated the new kerblines at Edinkillie Church side of the junction. **(Action: HD to forward the email from DA to AM)**

HD had asked for a sketch of this layout, to alleviate concern of those residents who frequently use the junction. **(Action: HD to follow up)**

DA also stated that there was no requirement for consultation on the new layout of the junction.

4) Current Standing Items

a) Traffic Safety in Rafford

• **Provision of a pavement in Upper Rafford**

HD had no further update from the previous meeting, when it was reported that the contract for pavement construction would go out for tender before the end of August, with contracts awarded by end of September. The work would most likely be completed by Christmas, depending on contractors and materials lead times.

• **Vehicle Activated Signs**

HD reported that one of the signs has failed again. SMcC has agreed to liaise with the supplier on a resolution to these issues. **(Action SMcC).**

SMcC is following up on maintenance costs and funding. **(Action SMcC)**

- **Village Entrance Signs**

HD reported that he had sent the agreed sign layout to Elaine Penny of the roads department.

(Action: HD to follow up)

b) **Broadband**

TH and HD agreed that the proposed Broadband Drop-in Event would be better held on separate evening rather than at the Village Café. HD had consulted with the Rafford Village Hall and the evening of Wednesday 25th October would be available. The suitability of Rafford Village Hall to be checked in terms of whether there was sufficient 4G mobile signal at the hall to enable an internet connection. TH agreed to co-ordinate the meeting. **(Action TH)**

HD reported that he had yet to receive a response from Richard Lochhead, to the question of the potential impact on R100 in Rafford from a 3rd party fibre rollout.

The previous meeting had approved the changes to the Broadband page on the FCC website suggested by TH. **(Action: TH to forward changes to HD to implement on webpage)**

c) **Brockloch Field Development**

FCC had received an update from Ian Chorlton of FDT, who reported that FDT had commissioned the architects to proceed with RIBA stage 2 in mid September.

The meeting agreed that communications with the community on progress was poor, and that we should ask if FDT would release the RIBA stage 1 report. **(Action: HD to contact Ian Chorlton)**

d) **Windfarm Developments**

HD reported FCC had received the following updates:

- Clashgour Windfarm was trying to resolve planning conditions relating to Air Space and the implementation of a TMZ (Transponder Mandatory Zone) to alleviate radar issues at Lossiemouth and Dalcross.
- Berryburn 2 update:
 - Temporary met mast to be installed w/c 28 August 2023 (next week)
 - Planning condition discharge work has commenced
 - Site investigation works to be undertaken in Q4 2023
 - Construction commencement anticipated Q4 2024

HD reported he had taken the opportunity to ask how the Berryburn 2 Community Benefit fund would be administered, and the reply was that it was not yet decided.

e) **Joint Community Council**

No JCC meeting since last FCC meeting. Next JCC meeting 9th November.

f) **Resilience Planning**

HD reported that Rhona McNicol from Moray Council had agreed to assist in facilitating a Resilience Workshop in Finderne, in order to identify risks and prioritise possible mitigations.

TH suggested that communications could be an issue in the event of a power blackout, and that funding a satellite phone connection at village halls could be a mitigation.

The FCC member need to discuss and agree the timing of a workshop. (Action: all FCC members)

g) **Forres Health Services**

TH attended a meeting of the Forres Area of the Moray Health Partnership, which meets every 2 months. TH stated he was seeing some progress in terms of an agreement that user groups were needed.

h) **Newtyle Access Road**

AG had sent a report saying that all funds were now in place, and the work on the road would take place on 3rd and 4th October.

FCC has received a note from Ruth Whitfield, on behalf of the Newtyle Residents group saying

“The residents of Newtyle send our grateful thanks to the Finderne Community Council for all the help you have given to enable us to resurface the access road. In particular, huge appreciation to Stewart McCracken who chaired our two decision meetings to discuss the planning and has been constantly available for advice. Also our big thanks to Anna Gatward who has overseen the financial details and kept efficient payment records. We could not have completed this project so successfully without your kind assistance.”

i) **Pending Items**

None

5) Planning Report (TP)

HD reported no new planning applications since the previous meeting.

Notes from previous meeting

- TP had raised concerns with TMC Planning Department on the potential impact of increased traffic on the Rafford Dallas Dhu road due to the proposed development of additional housing at Dallas Dhu. TMC yet to respond.
- TP has registered FCC’s interest in Local Place Plans, and TP and TH provided some examples. It was recognised that the development of a plan would take a lot of work, but that it may be better for the area if we were pro-active to avoid other parties taking the lead on development in Finderne. TP and SMcC to attend an information meeting on the subject on 28th September.
(Action: TP/SMcC)

6) Secretary's Report (HD)

HD gave a summary of correspondence received by email up to 26th September 2023:

- 25-Aug :- Update on Berry Burn Wind farm from Micheal O'Broin of Statkraft
- 28-Aug :- Update on Clashgour Windfram rec'd via FDT. They are working on TMZ to mitigate radar issues.
- 30-Aug :- Response from Micheal O'Broin on Community Benefit.
- 30-Aug :- FACT Activities Brochure
- 30-Aug :- reminder of 50 years of CCs event on 28th October
- 4-Sep:- Notice of Scottish Govt Council tax band consultation
- 5-Sep: - CARES bulletin
- 5-Sep :- TSI moray Volunteer hotlist
- 5-Sep :- Funding Scotland update including various funding opportunities
- 8-Sep :- Note from RVH on Richard Lochhead Surgery on 19th Sept.
- 6-Sep :- Moray Police West CSP newsletter
- 6-Sep :- Notice of Forres Schools group event on sustainability of the school estate
- 13-Sep :- ICO renewal confirmation
- 14-Sep :- Notice of m.connect Transport Survey
- 20-Sep :- Draft minutes from 10th Aug JCC meeting
- 21-Aug :- Note from Rurairaidh Milne and Howard Stollar on maintenance of wild flower area at Lower Rafford

7) Treasurers Report (AG)

AG provided the following update prior to the meeting:

- Bank balance Bank balance £36,219.80:
 - £20,000 SSEN resilient communities grant
 - £554.60 Moray Council Admin Grant balance
 - £240 Rafford speed signs refund
 - £15,425.20 Newtyle Residents Road re-Surfacing money

8) AOCB

Carried over from last meeting

Rafford Village Hall

JS reported that visibility was restricted when exiting Rafford Village Hall carpark in a vehicle. Others agreed. It was suggested that the stone pillar that restricts the view could be lowered. TP and SMcC suggested funds may be available from FDT Community Facilities Project. HD to contact Village Hall to discuss. **(Action HD)**

Mini Wetlands

TH has contacted TMC with a view to creating a mini-wetland project beside the burn to the north of Lower Rafford.

FDT e-Bulletin

HD reminded the meeting that the FDT had committed, in our joint FDT/FCC meeting in November 2022, to produce a monthly e-Bulletin to keep the community up to date on Brockloch and other FDT projects. Nothing had yet been issued. HD to send a reminder to Ian Chorlton at FDT.

Post meeting note: Ian Chorlton has said FDT would issue an update very soon.

New Items

Car Park charging in Forres.

TH had spotted a consultation proposed for car park charging in Forres. The meeting concluded that this was a waste of time as the car parks were not on council owned land, and charging would affect rural household and Forres businesses. It was agreed the FCC should respond to Roads Department. (Action HD)

A96

TH reported that FAADAG recently held their AGM and that they would continue with a watching brief on A96 Dualling developments.

Mundole-Dallas Dhu-Rafford road

It was noted that with the multiple road works in Forres, this route is being increasingly used as an alternative. The junction between the Mundole Road and the A96 at Findhorn Bridge was identified as a potential accident spot.

Village Hall Events

- Edinkillie Hall
 - Sunday Tea – Sunday 1st October – Official opening of new toilet facilities and chairs funded by FDT.
- Rafford Village Hall
 - Village Café – 7th October
 - AGM – 11th October
 - Scottish Music Evening – 13th October
 - Ceilidh – 25th November

FCC Membership

HD reported that SMC had requested a leave of absence for 6 months, due to illness. The Members present agreed to this.

9) Next meeting

Next meeting and AGM: 7:00 pm – Wednesday 8th November 2023, at Edinkillie Hall.