

## **Rogart Community Council minutes of meeting 31/3/2025 19.30hrs**

**Present:** Frank Roach, Rachel Allen, Carrie Hayhurst, Mathew Fox, Jonathan Hedges

Councilors: Richard Gale, Jim McGillivray

**1.Apologies:** Shannon Ross, Tommy Sutherland

**2.Declarations of interest:** to be declared in each item

**3.Minutes of previous meeting:** 3/2/25 proposed MF seconded FR

**Matters arising:** Davoch Bridge- Highland Council (HC) structural technicians are planning to assess the bridge. Pavement outside shop-who owns which section is being confirmed before work can begin. Potholes at Eiden-some have been filed, two remaining.

**4.Finance:** total CC funds-£12041

**5. The Hub:** funding has been secured for the next year through the Gordon Bush extension fund

**6.Place Plan:** SKS emailed to say the Rogart Place Plan is still not shown as being fully compliant on HC website. FR stated that all stages have been completed and was frustrated at the deadline being extended after Rogart had rushed to complete it on time.

**7.SSE Pylon line and Substation:** an information event been held at the hall.

Conflict: FR involved with rail transport planning for the project, asked JH to proceed with this item.

Alec Campbell had prepared a statement:

400kV Powerline 2025

In 1968 the proposed 275kv line was planned to cross over Morvich land but was stopped by Major Roberts as far as I can remember. It was re-routed to the most westerly point of Morvich Farm. The route missed Eiden Forest, then owned by the Forestry Commission.

Approximately 8 years ago SSE upgraded the 275kV line to 6 cables from 3, and this caused some construction problems. At one point over the 3-4 weeks, we had 17 vehicles a day going between our two steadings. But through cooperation we got through it all.

So fast forward to 2-3 years ago. SSE came to the house with a proposal for a new 400kV line. We did not grab this proposal with open arms, we simply looked at it and recognized we could not stop it but hoped we could negotiate. We proposed they go to the Reichalmie end of the holding near Torboll. Unfortunately, this would cut through the Mound

Alderwoods SSSI so we negotiated back to the western edge of the SSSI. SSE said they could not go there as it crossed Eiden forest plantation which belongs to Mr Vestie. I then proposed they go west past Pittentrail and up Acheilidh where there was a good valley on both sides of the A839. This too was rejected, and they settled with the current proposed route as their favoured option.

I still propose they go up to the western edge of the SSSI over the plantation as there are no trees growing on the top half of the hill and cutting a wayleave along the proposed route or one through where I suggest is the same length of tree cover, so would make no commercial difference to Mr Vestie.

I spoke on the phone to Mr Vestie on 25<sup>th</sup> March regarding the route, but he insists it should go where currently planned. He stated he is fighting for compensation as we all will be. I tried to discuss with him for the line to go over my turning head which would drive the route a little way east from where it is proposed but he insisted this would be a no go as it would cut his plantation in half.

I am proposing that if Mr Vestie will not allow SSE to route over the plantation then I will not agree to them crossing below or above the plantation as I own this ground. I believe this is the best proposal and compromise for both me and the community.

Alec Campbell March 2025

In the discussion that followed, the consensus was that the route should be as far east as possible for visual and noise considerations. Also route choice for construction traffic should avoid the village.

**8.Pollie Windfarm:** CC attended a meeting in Brora. The developers are ESB and Coriolis, 10 out of the 13 turbines are in Rogart Parish, the remaining 3 are in Brora. 200m height, 70MW output and battery storage.

**9.Acheilidh Windfarm:** a planning notice in the Northern Times proposed a Met Mast 2.3km NE of Garvary. FR to contact the Energy Consents Unit as this is misleading, it is for Acheilidh. The public enquiry is expected to take place next year.

**10.Chleansaid Windfarm:** has been consented and is expected to be completed by 2027. Rogart CC has met with Lairg CC and proposed a 70/30 split in community benefit; discussions are continuing.

Further windfarm developments have been announced for Balblair, Coille Beith and Allt an Tuir.

MF had contacted SSE after concerns about the number of windfarm service vehicle journeys through Rogart to Gordonbush, as it was believed that there was an agreement in place to restrict numbers. SSE had replied that this was an informal agreement which had ended but would investigate the matter.

**11.Rogart Community Forum:** This is progressing; the next stage is to agree the assessment criteria. The fund will be approximately £25k a year.

**12.Community Benefit Funds-Gordonbush Legacy:** one off £200k fund. Will be used to part fund the community purchase of St Callans and the replacement of the playpark in the village. These projects are progressing.

**13.Community Transport:** there has been an issue with a Rogart resident being unable to access the Laig Community Transport vehicle. Discussion around the need for a usable service for Rogart.

**14.Micro Grants:** microgrants for driving lessons have been reinstated and the amount was agreed to be increased to £350 (JH-conflict, did not participate). Rogart in Bloom application agreed. Karate in the hall application-concerns over liability if CC directly hires the hall, more information needed.

**15.Roads issues:** white lining, HC currently training staff. Pothole after St Callans at Little Rogart junction-RG to investigate. Burn behind 8 Macdonald Place is continuing to flood onto the main road-RG to investigate. Cattle grid railings Davoch.

**17.Planning applications:** extension at Highland Glen Lodges

**18.Correspondence and Communications:** Quote received for the scheduled cleanup of the War Memorial (every 20 years)-£5000. Agreement for CC to apply for windfarm grant to cover this. Transient visitor levy consultation ends 31/3/25.

**19.Newsletter:** thanks from Pete for people's contributions and the quality of the printing provided by CC. Thanks from FR and JH to Pete for his work on the newsletter.

**20.AOB:** none

**21.DONM:**2/6/25

