

# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWSLETTER

August 2022 Issue Number: 36

HIGHLAND  
GATHERING  
GOES DOWN  
A STORM



SSE GREEN  
LIGHTS  
COST-OF-  
LIVING  
CRISIS HELP

HISTORY  
LOVERS ON  
FIRST  
SUMMER  
DATE SINCE  
2015



and... to CAP it all... what do  
you want on your door step?

## CHAIR REPORT

As we head deep into the holiday season, we all should be enjoying a quiet and relaxed time. However, as you can see from this month's edition of the newsletter, life is busier than ever. The big news is the Highland Gathering, held in the Strath for the first time in many a year. Many thanks to Henry Fraser for contributing the games field and many hours of preparation work by staff at Corriegarth Estate.

It was a humble start – managing to attract a crowd of 400 or so – and many lessons were learnt! As ever it was only made possible by the volunteers who emerged on the day to oversee races, manage stalls, flip burgers, paint faces, run dog shows, manage competitions etc. etc. Our thanks go to you and the stalwarts who helped to set up and take down the equipment on the showground. Feedback from the people who attended the show has been very good and it is likely the event will be held next year. The most encouraging aspect was to hear people talk about meeting friends and acquaintances they hadn't seen for a long time. The

damaging impact of Covid 19 and the lockdown has a long tail.

On Thursday, August 18th an evening event is being held at Wildside, Whitebridge, to thank the volunteers who have helped with events such as the Jubilee Celebration and the Highland Gathering. An invitation has gone out to 40-plus people (volunteering is alive and well!). We know we have missed some people off the list – so if that includes you - take this as your invite to the event. We look forward to seeing you at 7.00pm.

Also, in this month's edition you will read about the final step in the consultation process to establish exactly how you want the community to develop over the next few years. The consultant, facilitating the development of the CAP, will visit each community in the area to ask what they want to happen on their doorstep. Please put the meeting date in your diary as soon as they are announced.

Investing our time and energy in fun events and planning the future is important. However, in the here and now is the cost-of-living crisis and the



invidious impact this is having on the quality of people's lives. We have been in discussion with SSE about using some of the community benefit money to alleviate the impact on the most hard-pressed individuals and families in the area. As you know, as a matter of policy, the funders want to see their funds invested in projects that will create a long-term legacy for the community. We have now received guidance from SSE that the money can be used to ease financial hardship over the next couple of years. We are now consulting with voluntary organisations to work out how best to manage this.

Gareth Jones  
Chair, S&FCT

## SOUTH LOCH NESS HERITAGE GROUP VISIT TO KIRKMICHAEL

For our first summer outing since 2015, the South Loch Ness Heritage Group had a field trip on the 2nd July 2022 to the refurbished Medieval Kirkmichael in the Black Isle. The Kirkmichael Trust under the chairmanship of Dr Jim Maclean have repaired the ancient and derelict buildings at Kirkmichael and created a unique display of local medieval ornamental crosses within the refurbished buildings. Jim met the group and explained the layout of the old and new parts of the adjoining graveyard, why the older part is raised a couple of feet in height above new, due to the density of interments over the last six hundred years in that part. Also explained and showed example of pre reformation flat grave stones, table stones and the upright gravestones. One of Jim's colleagues Davine showed

us the only Gaelic gravestone in the cemetery even though that was the language spoken in the district, all of the older gravestones were engraved with old Scots. Jim then took us inside the refurbished Chancel and Nave of the church and explained the reason for the symbols on the medieval crosses there, also regaling us with stories about some of the families within the area that were interred in the churchyard. The subject of photogrammetry was explained to us which is taking about 50 photographs of a badly eroded gravestone in various angles and in different lights and by a computer programme a more clear indication of what is carved on the stone can be obtained. The Trust has done a marvellous job at the site and are still actively repairing stones etc on site each Saturday. Our group were fascinated by the visit and of the restoration work that has been done, and still ongoing.

Locally in our district we have Boleskine cemetery which the earliest stone recorded to date is 1729, which within its boundary has a Mort House, one of only two in the North of Scotland. On seeing

what has been done at Kirkmichael surely there is scope for a similar project here.





# NEWFOUNDLAND FORESTERS IN SCOTLAND – TALK BY ALISDAIR CAMERON

During both World Wars, extra timber was urgently needed and thousands of lumberjacks were recruited by the UK from Newfoundland (Newfies) to help cut and process trees, mostly in Scotland.

Unlike the Canadian Timber Corps the Newfoundlanders were not military men (Newfoundland was not part of the Canadian Federation till 1949) and

volunteered to come to Britain. Generally the Canadians set up the camps and sawmills and moved on leaving them to be operated by the Newfoundlanders. The sawmills were set up all over the country where there was available timber, mainly in Scotland.

Remnants of the mill at Whitebridge, just north of the Wildside Centre was examined and photographed by Alasdair and featured in the presentation, where 35 people came to hear Alasdair's fascinating talk. He included slides of the crowded boats that crossed the Atlantic, foresters in action, maps of camps and a historic newsreel. Many Newfies stayed and married local lassies.

Alasdair brought his collection of old axes (including double-bladed) and tools, and our own Alister Chisholm

displayed his grandfather's Board of Trade purchase order dating from 1946 for equipment from the Whitebridge sawmill. On display was the large circular saw blade and rollers from the bench.

A Newfoundland man living in Invergarry came to the talk and brought his father who had arrived in Scotland the previous day to visit his family. They added greatly to the discussions afterwards. It was good to hear the noisy hubbub of a live interactive meeting.

£210 in donations were made for the Disasters Emergency Committee (Ukraine)

Alister Chisholm,  
South Loch Ness Heritage Group

# FINAL PIECE OF THE CAP JIGSAW

The development of the Community Action Plan, committed to paper at the end of last year, was only ever one half of the task of settling on how the community wants the 'wind farm money' spent.

This week the Trust commissioned the consultant who facilitated the development of the CAP, to produce plans illustrating what people in each of the six settlements in Stratherrick and Foyers would like to see happen on their doorstep.

If you recall, the CAP identified five priority areas: 1. Community Life; 2. Outdoors & Nature; 3. Organising Ourselves; 4. Getting About and 5. Our Homes. Action groups were set up to drive each one and you will see in a separate report in this newsletter, the progress that is being made in these areas.

Although the Community Action Plan identified priorities and illustrated how they might impact on individuals' lives, it stopped short of producing what in the jargon are called 'spatial plans.' These will illustrate how each settlement in the area (and the area as a whole) will look and function once the Plan has been implemented.

For example: Affordable community-

owned homes - where should they be built? Local community hubs, recreational facilities, and playparks - where are the gaps that need to be filled? After-school / nursery care - where should it happen? Walking and cycling networks - which routes should be the primary focus? Better community transport to schools, community hubs etc., what needs to happen, and where?

Stratherrick & Foyers has been divided into six settlements and these are: Foyers, Torness, Whitebridge, Gorthleck, Errogie and Inverfarigaig. Nick and his team will ask residents in each of these areas what specifically they want to see happen in their immediate area.

The aim is to:

- Help the local community explore and understand how 'their place' will look in the future once the Community Action Plan has been implemented.
- Engage community groups, public sector organisations, businesses, and landowners to incorporate their existing work and influence their future activity, where it contributes to the Community Action Plan action priorities.
- Inform where future Community Action Plan investments and improvements should take place
- Prepare a Local Place Plan document which can be shared with

the public sector to guide and influence their local planning and service delivery in the community's interests.

Technically, the data produced will be mapped spatially as digital layers on a Geographic Information System, which can then be combined, analysed and printed at different scales and styles for use in many different ways e.g., influencing Highland Council's local plans for housing, roads etc.

It will also help to drive the priorities for the community benefit fund spending decisions.

The Community Action Plan was prepared when the COVID lockdown was at its height. Much of the engagement necessarily had to take place online. The changed circumstances mean that there is now an opportunity to shift the primary emphasis of engagement from online to face-to-face, with the website there as a supporting resource.

The intention is to have the spatial plan completed in January 2023. Please keep an eye out for the consultation event in your area, the dates (it will be sometime in November) will be published in the monthly newsletter, on the Trust website and Facebook.

Gareth Jones  
Chair, S&FCT



# HIGHLAND GATHERING

After months of planning, it was great to see everything come together to create a fantastic community event. The day attracted many members of the community who got involved, either through volunteering, community group stands, taking part in the activities that were on offer or just coming along to enjoy the afternoon. New friends and old were able to see each other and connect again after what has seemed a long time coming. Thank you to everyone who has helped out along the way, and of course thank you to Henry and Molly Fraser of Corriegarh, as without their suggestion that we could hold the event on the estate, none of this would have ever come to fruition!

We hope to make this an Annual event and with such a great turnout and support this is the perfect way for our community to come together.

Here is some of the feedback from visitors:

*For the first event this was amazing. It allows opportunities to add more on in future as the foundation is strong.*

*The stone painting and cake competitions were brilliant and just perfect for kids to get involved!*

*The Falconry display and Fire Dept display were great to watch.*

*Pipe band and dancers provided good entertainment in the inner ring.*

*My son loved the old tractors and vintage machinery.*

*Was brilliant to see the traditional races and welly throwing and the tractor pull!*

*Having a dog event was exciting and families could stay longer as their 4 legged friend was out for the day too!*

*It was too spread out, next time it would be great to pull it in so that it feels a bit more intimate and cosy.*

Caroline Tucker  
Project Coordinator S&FCT





# BOARD REPORT

The Stratherrick and Foyers Board met on Wednesday 3rd August for a two and a half hour meeting.

Gareth Jones formally let the meeting know he had agreed to become Chair and wished Kirsty Balfour well for her upcoming pregnancy. Mark Sutherland took on the lead Director for Riverside Field project.

Maire Brown was co-opted back on to the committee and a general discussion took place about recruitment of Community Directors. Board Members are hoping to make the role more strategic, leaving some current actions to be supported by staff, and how better to support new Board Members of all ages.

The Trust Manager reported how he intended to monitor the work of the staff and report back to the Board.

Student Grants were awarded to Vaughn Devlin and Justin Sharp. A non-constituted grant was awarded to Alison Randall for Bowling for All and the Community Council decision would be by email. The Board were pleased to see the results of the work on the Wade Bridge.

Business included how the Trust could support the Trustees of the Stratherrick Public Hall to ensure they could make an informed decision about the future of the Hall and what would be required of community funding in the future.

SSE have informed the Trust that we share a policy with them on supporting individuals during the cost of living crisis. Once agreed we can support individuals with grants of up to £250 (£500 per household) on food and fuel over two winters. We will have discussions with SSE about the Boards suggested approach, using recognised local organisation to distribute the funds.

The board agreed to a subtle change to our legacy investment strategy following a review by the legacy fund sub-committee. The discussion has led to our investment advisors, Clarendon, recommending investments which could

lead to a better return. Thanks went to Ken Sinclair and Maureen McGuire for their work on this.

Through the Action Groups and from the Board there is general support for the second stage of the Community Action Plan. Nick Wright and his team will visit the recognised settlements in the area, Torness, Foyers etc. to discuss where suggestions from the Community Action Plan should go. This information will be provided to the Community Council and the Local Authority for their Local Development Plan. Work already done by community members through the CAP Action Groups will continue and feed into this work.

Ken reported on meetings he and Kirsty had with some of the immediate residents to Riverside Field which helped to answer some of their questions. A commitment was also made to keep them as informed as possible as the project gathers pace.

The AGM is fast approaching and any recommendations for changes to the constitution will come or can be suggested by the Board. Our fundraisers, working with outside groups, have suggested some changes that would be required to get external funding and staff will look at this and make recommendations as part of the Governance Review.

Dates will shortly be set for future events such as the Fireworks Evening and Winter Wonderland. A date will also be set for the Highland Gathering. It was recognised this year's Gathering was planned in only five months. A lessons learnt meeting will be held on August 18th.

The Trust will be holding 'thank-you' evening in the Wildside Centre on 18th August for those people who worked and volunteered above and beyond the call of duty for events such as Winter Wonderland, Jubilee and the Highland Gathering. Treat this as an invitation!

The work put in by community volunteers was recognised and thanked by the Board.

Tony Foster,  
Trust Manager, S&FCT

Thanks to the local businesses who donated fabulous prizes for the Dog Show and Hill Race at Highland Gathering at Corriegarth in July.



## Pampered Pets

Family run pet supply business in Inverness, Nairn and Aviemore coming soon.



## Pets at Home

The pet superstore in Inverness Retail Park including fish and small animal products. [www.petsathome.com](http://www.petsathome.com)



## Ellis Brigham

The mountain sports shop in the centre of Aviemore stocking equipment and clothing for skiers, climbers, campers, walkers etc. Phone: 01479 810175 [www.ellis-brigham.com](http://www.ellis-brigham.com)



Are you interested in local heritage?

Do you want to help plan future events and activities?

South Loch Ness Heritage Group is now looking for new Committee Members.

If you are interested please make contact with Alister Chisholm.

[www.southlochnessheritage.co.uk](http://www.southlochnessheritage.co.uk)

# CAP

This article summarises what has happened since our last Community Action Groups. You will recall that the Community Action Plan developed last year grouped the changes the community would like to see into the following areas:

## COMMUNITY LIFE

### RETAIN POST OFFICE & SHOP -

There is interest in this and the Trust has identified funding that could be utilised for the groups that are picking up this project.



COMMUNITY LIFE

**AFTER-SCHOOL / NURSERY CARE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY -** Following our second action group, a number of parents/carers and stakeholders are to meet to action suggestions from the group

### LOCAL COMMUNITY HUBS

Wildside Centre:

We have identified land for expansion of the outdoor facilities at Wildside and, once test digs have been completed, will purchase from the Local Authority which is preparing the legal papers

Errogie Kirk:

The consultation and design of the build are coming to the final stages and planning will follow. Wind and watertight work has been delayed due to a bat survey having to be undertaken meaning Phase 1 and 2 are likely to be run together. We are preparing for a draw down on SSE money but are actively working with the team and Heritage Group on funding applications.

Stratherrick Public Hall

The Trust has agreed with the trustees to appoint a surveyor to provide advice and indicative costs in the following three areas: How best to remove the mould and spores and make it a safe building to use; Decide what restoration work is required to return the interior of the building to its original state; Review the general state of the building and, working with the Trustees, decide what improvements are required to realise their long-term vision

### FOYERS SPORTS FACILITIES (RIVERSIDE FIELD AND BAY)

The Bay is in planning and we are responding to consultations. Latest

updates can be found here: <https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/foyers-bay/>

Riverside Field – ‘planning-in-principle’ has been granted and we are approaching people for the steering group. A planning application is in which will determine some of the conditions of planning in principle and then we can start having meaningful conversations with stakeholders about the next stage of the development. The Trust will work with a residents group that has been formed to feed their views into the detailed design of the project. Latest updates can be found here:

<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/projects/Riverside-Field-Foyers/>

## OUTDOORS AND NATURE PLAYPARKS

We have established what support is available from the local authority on playpark development and management of the playparks with an idea to develop one at Wildside. Parents/Carers/Children will be consulted on next steps



OUTDOORS & NATURE

### PATHS AND PLACES -

We are referred to in the Forestry Land Scotland consultation as a partner here – perhaps you'd like to comment on their proposals Communities - <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/communities>

Graeme Ambrose and Nick Wright did some work on paths and the action from the most recent meeting is to get a team of volunteers together to implement them.

Graeme Ambrose has suggested an audit of the existing paths which would then enable prioritisation of paths for investment and development. Nick Wright has done some preliminary work on map paths we have using Strava walking data. He has put together an editable Google Map, based on a Strava heatmap. <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1bVFzi9QtBFsEBp9WO1OCqU2SDcE6yoxD&usp=sharing>

He has also added another layer to the Google Map, showing off-road cycle routes from Strava data: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1bVFzi9QtBFsEBp9WO1OCqU2SDcE6yoxD&usp=sharing>

## GETTING ABOUT

Rob Mullen has made an initial investigation into a proposal to provide a bus. When you get into the detail there are several quite challenging issues that must be addressed. Rob and Tony are persevering and recommendations will be brought back to the Trust. Discussions are also ongoing with the schools. School minibuses aren't used for summer holidays (e.g., Millburn Academy has 2 minibuses which are parked up all summer) and might offer the opportunity for a trial, to test demand.



GETTING ABOUT

## OUR HOMES

Community Housing trust have planning and funding to build homes in Inverfarigaig. The Trust plans to do trial pits, costs approx. £4000, at Wildside for a proposed land purchase at a cost of £27,000



OUR HOMES

The Communities Housing Trust will charge approximately £3,000 to carry out a Housing Needs Assessment. This could include a question for local landowners to understand whether they have land or buildings which could be used. Funding is being sought from the Scottish Land Fund and a Rural Housing Grant.

Inverfarigaig Forest School  
There are two potential land acquisitions under discussion in Inverfarigaig. SFCT has agreed to purchase land on behalf of a local community group. Residents are also keen to progress the purchase of the forest school and the adjoining land.

## ORGANISING OURSELVES

The Skills Audit carried out by the Trust identified approximately 50 people in the Strath wanting to actively participate in projects. The Trust has been awarded funding, from the Stronelairg Fund, to take on a Communications Officer for 7 hours a week. The post has been advertised.



ORGANISING OURSELVES

## THANKS TO



Corriegarth Highland Gathering 2022 Raffle. Thanks go to the following businesses and organisations which donated a prize for the community raffle. The proceeds of the raffle have been split between local community organisations. Please remember the generous contribution these companies made when you are out shopping.

**Strathnairn Seafoods** - Seafood voucher. Please contact David Still on Facebook for local regular deliveries of quality seafood.

**Moray Coast Vets** – dog bed. With surgeries in Forres, Nairn, Balloch and Lossiemouth, choose Moray Coast Vets for all veterinary needs for commercial livestock and domestic pets. [www.moraycoastvetgroup.co.uk](http://www.moraycoastvetgroup.co.uk) 01309 672243

**Allan's of Gillock** – fleece, shirt & wire cutters. Allan's Inverness depot stocks garden maintenance products and services mowers. Fencing, agricultural supplies and advice are always available. For a local and responsive service call 01463 713270.

**Tiso** – 2 x vouchers for water sports equipment hire. Tiso is celebrating 60 years of outdoor adventure. Their flagship experience stores include equipment sale and hire, and Tiso also offers specialist services for mountain and cycling enthusiasts too. [www.tiso.com](http://www.tiso.com)

**Three Wise Monkeys** – Climbing Voucher. Three Wise Monkeys operate the climbing centre in Fassifern Road, Fort William. Bouldering and climbing are available. You can see what's on offer at [www.threewisemonkeysclimbing.com](http://www.threewisemonkeysclimbing.com) 01397 600200

**Dingwall and Highland Marts** – Beanie hat and bottle of whisky. Dingwall and Highland Marts runs the auction centre and also conducts livestock sales across the Highlands. Regular auctions include poultry, vehicles and household goods. Live and on line auctions for farm machinery and private sales of stock and property. Call in at Dingwall Mart for a coffee at the cafe and see what we offer. [www.dingwallhighlandmarts.com](http://www.dingwallhighlandmarts.com) 01349862252

**Highland Rural** - £50 voucher for Grahams of Inverness. Highland Rural is a firm offering professional advice to owners and occupiers of land. They are based at Dingwall Mart. [www.highlandrural.com](http://www.highlandrural.com) 01349 860409

**Woodwinters** – bottle of prosecco. Woodwinters has an independent wine and whisky shop in Inverness, one of just three they operate in Scotland. Woodwinters have been selecting special wines from around the world since 2005. As a retailer and wholesaler, Woodwinters is dedicated to consistent excellence in the products which it offers. The Inverness store is at 74 Church Street. [www.woodwinters.com](http://www.woodwinters.com) 01463 225656

**Kelpie Woodlands** – Bottle of whisky and box of chocolates. Kelpie Woodlands offers woodland management advice. Phil Di-Duca is a chartered forester based in Invermoriston and can be contacted on 01320366428.

**West End Garage** – MOT Voucher & car essentials West End Garage in Fort Augustus is the go-to place for practical and professional vehicle repair and recovery in the Great Glen. [www.westendgarage.org](http://www.westendgarage.org) 01320 366247

**Huntly Falconry** – Introduction to falconry voucher for 2. The Huntly Falconry Centre is just off the A96 between Aberdeen and Elgin is open to visitors and offers displays and tuition. Full details of their experiences are at [www.huntly-falconry-centre.com](http://www.huntly-falconry-centre.com) 07717 705994

**The Neil Mackenzie Trust** – family voucher for Dolphin Spirit cruise. The Neil Mackenzie Trust assists young people and adults to carry out skills training in non-competitive outdoor sports in Scotland and adventures and expeditions anywhere in the world. [www.theneilmackenzie.com](http://www.theneilmackenzie.com)

**Harbro** – vouchers, dog food and dog accessories. Harbro is a commercial producer of animal feeds and runs over 20 stores in Scotland retailing a range of dog, pony and poultry feeds and fuel. The Inverness Country Store can be contacted on 01463 701999 [www.harbro.co.uk](http://www.harbro.co.uk)

**Gilbertson and Page** – Dog food. Gilpa produces a range of great dog food. Harbro Country Store stocks the Gilbertson and Page products which bear the royal warrant. [www.gilpa.co.uk](http://www.gilpa.co.uk)



# WHAT'S ON IN AUGUST - UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AT WILDSIDE

SOUP TO GO!

PILATES

WILDSIDE BABY & TODDLER GROUP

MONTHLY SFCT BOARD MEETING

SPIN & CHATTER GROUP

NEEDLES & PINS

WILD CRAFTS

EVERY MONDAY FROM 12PM

EVERY WEDNESDAY 10AM

EVERY THURSDAY 9:30AM-11:30AM

WEDNESDAY 3RD AUGUST

TUESDAY 2ND, 16TH & 30TH AUGUST

TUESDAY 9TH & 23RD AUGUST

SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST

## AND IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

South Loch Ness Heritage Group will be hosting further talks this Autumn, further details to be shared once confirmed.

## JOIN THE TRUST

If you would like to become a member of the Trust then please go to.

<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/join-the-trust/>

## HIRE THE WILDSIDE CENTRE FOR YOUR SPECIAL EVENTS & GROUP MEETINGS

### 2 EVENT ROOMS

Each can hold up to 84 people, one with kitchen access

### 1 MEETING/TRAINING ROOM

For up to 29 people



**CONTACT [admin@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfctrust.org.uk)**

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS... AND PHOTOGRAPHER

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