

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWSLETTER

November 2022 Issue Number: 39

YOUR LOCAL
PLACE PLAN

You are invited to contribute to...

**THE
LOCAL
PLACE
PLAN**

Finding space for
our aspirations



KNOCKIE TRUST GRANT

COST-
OF-
LIVING
SUPPORT

FUNDRAISING
SUCCESS FOR
STRATHERRICK



and... save the date! Wednesday
23rd November- AGM

CHAIR REPORT

So there we have it; another year in the life of the Trust draws to a close. Once again, the focus has been on putting down firm foundations to ensure it continues to operate successfully for the next 25 years. There is now a great team on board with the wide range of skills required to support the complex task of running what is effectively a medium-sized business which is now among the larger employers in the area. This week we welcomed a new staff member Matthew Rhodes, from Gorthleck, who moved into the role of Buildings and Facilities Officer.

Members of the Trust (and if you would like to join, please contact Laura at admin@sfctrust.org.uk) are invited to the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 23rd November when we will report on the year's activities. In our commitment to openness and

transparency, we will also have the preliminary results of the annual survey we carry out to test the degree to which the Trust is perceived to be doing a good job.

Coming off the back of the pandemic and straight into a very difficult economic climate, it has been a challenging year for everyone. Applications to the Knockie Trust for financial help (reported on page 7) are starting to arrive. You will also read that SSE has agreed the 'Cost of Living' fund, using community benefit funds, can help local businesses provide activities that ease the impact of the financial crisis. It is a pilot for the Highlands that is being led by Bella and Lesley, owners of the Whitebridge Hotel.

It was great to see, illustrated by the wide range of activities covered in last month's Magazine Special, that the community is getting back on its feet. The news this month is that Stratherrick Public Hall is up and running and

everyone is invited to the re-opening celebration on Saturday 3rd December. Centrepiece is a cookery demonstration on the theme of a £10 three-course Christmas Lunch for Four Persons. Meanwhile the Hall's committee is developing a long-term plan for the building. If you have thoughts on this, please contact the committee chairman, Hugh Nicol.

Your input is also needed into the final stage of developing the Community Action Plan. On Page 4 our external advisor, Nick Wright, explains the consultation meetings that are being held to explore what you would like to see happen (funded by the 'windfarm money') on your doorstep. What's that saying: 'Speak now or forever hold your peace.' Of course, listening and responding never stops. However, this is a very important milestone.

Gareth Jones
Chair, S&FCT

MAUREEN'S TAKE ON BEING A DIRECTOR

I have only lived in the Strath for a few years, but my mum and I bought a house here almost 20 years ago so I have been coming on and off since then, more so when mum moved up here permanently after her retirement. I have been aware of the Trust since its inception, my mum was one of its earliest directors. Knowing the history of Scotland and how underfunded rural areas have traditionally been, I thought the idea of local communities benefiting from the resources in their area was a great one and had the potential to do a great deal of good for the community.

When I moved up here, I was aware that opinions were greatly divided about the trust but through my work with BCC I became aware that the trust was transforming the way it was ran and moving to themselves on a more professional and open footing. I was really inspired by the initiative to draw up the CAP plan, the many conversations we were having, and the projects being put forward. So, I applied to be a director!

For me working on a board is a way both to bring your own skills to the table but also to develop skills in areas you may be interested in. Your primary duty is to provide oversight and governance to the organisation as well as direct strategy, areas which as a Project Manager I can immediately provide input to. SFCT however is unique in that through our projects and relationships I am gaining exposure in a number of areas I have no previous experience of from planning to house building, land ownership and local government.

This isn't the first time I have sat on a board, so I knew what was expected. My background is in tech, largely in financial services and charity work for me, first in running a maths club and then as a board member, is a way to give back. I grew up on a council estate and was fortunate to do well through my education so largely the charities I have worked for are in the past are in field of education. But SFCT is a chance to build on that and work with a much broader range of initiatives many of which are close to my heart - affordable housing, community gardens, facilities (for care, childcare, isolation) and the natural environment.

Professionally, I think being a board member has its advantage, aside from the skills you can learn you are effectively responsible for the running a multi-million-pound organisation, something which can look more than impressive on a CV. I have taken a couple of sabbaticals in my time, and it has more than helped with looking for a job afterwards that I continued to work on Boards and with charities, indeed my history of working as a board member and with charities directly led to me obtaining my last job. I am not alone in this, working on a board is an excellent way of plugging gaps in your CV your current job can't provide that can help take you to the next level.

Continued on page 6

MARATHON SUCCESS!

STRATHERRICK NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL 5K FUNDRAISING

On Sunday 2nd October, 6 amazing young members of our community completed the Baxter's River Ness 5k to raise funds for their school.

After a surprise "Well done and good luck everyone" from Mr Graham as everyone was waiting for the race to start, the group went and found their spot on the line. The 5k race was started by Nessie and the team set off on their fundraising mission, a short distance along the river Ness before looping around Bught park on the roads, up & around a traffic cone before heading along the river bank path to the bridge across to the Islands. A gentle wobble later and off through the Islands they went, over bridges and past a large snake, then back over the the river bank on the other side.

They followed the river Ness back into town, listening to the music and cheers from the other side, then up and over the road bridge before heading back towards Bught Park along the river path and the finish line. Then hearing the cheers, shouts and clapping as they cross the line before going off to get their well-earned medal, t-shirt and goodie bag (& hugs from proud families!!)

The group included the youngest one to the oldest (almost) one in the school, and without a doubt all of them showed their determination and team spirit supporting and cheering each other on, as well as having a lot of fun!!

Quotes from the School team:

" I enjoyed doing the 5K because it was a long way and I managed to run for the whole time and I liked running with daddy and seeing all my friends run too. We raised lots of money and I would definitely do it again and do a longer run to keep me fit."

"It was good fun, liked running with my family and friends and raising money at the same time. Would do it again."

"Didn't enjoy falling over but liked being with family and friends. Happy to raise money for my school too."

"I enjoyed running over the bridges, because they were wobbly! I feel proud to raise money for the school and I would definitely do it again."

"Fun, can I do again. Like my medal."

"I enjoyed it especially as all my friends were there and proud that we raised money for the school. I also loved my first medal and want to get some more."

They have raised the grand total of £477.61 (between online and cash donations) so thank you all for the support!

Annelise Glew





OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE

THE LOCAL PLACE PLAN

Finding space for our aspirations



The Local Place Plan is the next step on from the Community Action Plan: Taking forward the themes and action areas set down by the community and beginning to visualise how priorities from the plan will land on the ground.

Drop in for a chat and a cuppa at any of the events listed below and help plan your community for the future.

Errogie, Gorthleck and Torness

Thursday 17th November 3pm-6:30pm
Stratherrick Public Hall

Whitebridge

Wednesday 23rd November 3pm-7pm
Wildside Centre

Inverfarigaig

Thursday 24th November 3pm-6:30pm
Camerons Tea Room, Foyers

Foyers

Friday 25th November 3pm-6:30pm
The Hub

Community-wide

Saturday 26th November 10am-12pm
Foyers Store and Waterfall Cafe

Close your eyes and imagine: what do you want your village, and your community, to be like in the future? What changes would you like to see?

Those are difficult questions, but we'll be helping you to answer them over the next few weeks.

The Community Action Plan prepared a year ago is a great starting point. Over a third of you, the local community, put forward ideas. They led to a plan that reflects your priorities as a community: things like better playparks, more affordable homes for those who need them, better footpaths and safer cycling, community hubs in each village, better community transport, a year-round ranger squad for visitor management, and much more. You can see all the priorities at a glance on this webpage: bit.ly/SFCAPposter



Lots of folk across various local organisations are working away to make these things happen. The Community Action Plan is like an agenda for the future, channelling funding to the community's priorities.

But there is unfinished business. The Community Action Plan doesn't say how playparks should be better or where new ones are needed. It doesn't say where those affordable homes are most needed. It doesn't say which footpaths and cycle routes should be improved. And so on.

So, in the second half of November we'll be running village events to find out what you think about all those things, and more. You can see the dates and locations on the left.



Example of what the event might look like: Large scale maps of the area, interactive activities for all ages and plenty of opportunity to share your thoughts.

At those village events, we'll help you to visualise what could happen and where, and to answer the questions at the beginning of this page. Your answers will give you real influence over the future of your community, because they will be the basis of what's called a Local Place Plan – a new feature of Scottish planning legislation that influences Council planning policy and public services. We want to share a first draft of that plan for you to check in December, based on what you tell us at the village events.

To achieve all that, we need you! Please drop in at one of the November events listed on the left for a chat and a cuppa. And then keep an eye out in December for the draft plan.

To find out more, please check www.communityfuture.net or contact me direct at:

nick@nickwrightplanning.co.uk or **07900 334110**. I'd love to hear from you!

For more information on Local Place Plans, visit this government website: www.ourplace.scot/local-place-plans

Nick Wright

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST

AGM

7.30PM, WEDNESDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2022 AT THE WILDSIDE CENTRE, WHITEBRIDGE

Further details to follow –
keep an eye on the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust website and Facebook page

MAUREEN'S TAKE ON BEING A DIRECTOR *Continued from page 2*

Socially being new to the area, joining the board was a way for me to make friends and meet people. I moved here from London (which was quite the shift!) but joining the board has meant I not only can meet people but can find out what is what and who is who! Being in a rural area brought a different and interesting perspective, working for a board in London, people may chat about what you do etc but here, with our community being so small, I do like the way people can button hole you when they find out you are a board member and give you a frank appraisal of how we are doing and what we should be doing. It certainly can be a conversation starter and I genuinely like hearing people's opinions and taking them on board so we can better serve the community.

As I mentioned before I was aware that opinions of SFCT were divided but I do believe the board I am now sitting on is unquestionably one where governance and openness are key. The scale of change involved is immense in terms of what they are trying to achieve operationally, I work in Business Chance so am aware these things are a marathon and not a sprint, but I genuinely do believe we are heading in the right direction. So please, please, please, do look us up! Large or small, all contributions are welcome.

If you fancy putting yourself forward as a director then email Laura at admin@sfctrust.org.uk for your nomination form. The deadline for nominations is 9th November 2022.

NEEDLES & PINS

Needles & Pins is a sewing group that meets fortnightly at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge.

Formed 18 months ago our group is continuing to grow. We have complete beginners, those who haven't sewn for years, and those that can turn their hand to most things.

We have made all manner of bags, i.e. shoe bags, tote bags, cosmetic bags, purses and pencil cases. We have also made various tops, dungarees, dresses, pyjamas, a baby's changing mat and even a dog coat!

If you would like to learn to sew, or would like to improve your sewing skills, or have a needlework project you've started but not finished, why not come along. We are a friendly group who enjoy a chat and a laugh while we sew.

Meetings are on Tuesday nights at Wildside Centre, Whitebridge from 6pm-10pm but you can drop in when you like and stay for as long as you like.

Our next meetings are:
Tuesday 15th November
Tuesday 29th November



BOARD REPORT

This week's Board Meeting was three hours but whizzed by with a full agenda.

A small number of grant applications were put through which led to a discussion on how we can do things differently, from supporting community and business during cost of living to supporting children activities in the area.

We also ran some scenarios to help inform a new matrix for assessing projects, ensuring they met the test for funding and criteria established through the Community Action Plan.

A few housekeeping discussions ended the meeting, including establishing regular steering group meetings to



ensure we keep people informed about projects and giving people time to plan ahead for any help we get from volunteers.

The Place Planning and Pulse engagement work was reported on, and we welcomed new staff member Matthew Rhodes as our new Buildings and Facilities Officer. He will hopefully meet the Directors over the next few weeks.

Tony Foster
SFCT Manager

REMEMBER REMEMBER TO TAKE THE STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS COMMUNITY PULSE SURVEY

From today (5th November) until the 21st of November we are taking the pulse of the community via our first 'Taking The Pulse' survey and will benchmark the results every year.



This is to assess impact of the Community Trust and work done by the community for the community.

The Community Trust is a vehicle which can assess the need and direction of where funds coming into the community go. It maintains our sense of financial and legal obligations.

The work it does along with other volunteers and groups is a reflection of our own community.

From time to time it's good for us all to see where we can improve or, in some areas, keep doing what we are doing. This helps us direct all our resources in a more meaningful way.

The survey takes about 4/5 minutes of your time but will be invaluable to volunteer Board Community Members on the Trust and work going forward.

Please take the Pulse survey here and thank you for taking the time to participate
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SFCTPulse22>

COST OF LIVING

We have agreed with SSE to take the unusual step this and next winter to support individuals and households with food and fuel. This is individual benefit, previously a 'no no' with the funds we get from the energy companies, but current circumstances have meant a short term fix to support those who need it at this difficult time. SFCT has asked the Knockie Trust to look after this fund, as they have had many years of experience in this area, and they will administer the funds to people's bank accounts. You can apply for up to £250 per individual or £500 for a household of two or more. SFCT has budgeted £10,000 towards this, with up to £15,000 to come if there is a need. This will not stop you from applying to the Knockie Trust for any additional funds they administer. These are unusual circumstances, and we appreciate you may find yourself in a situation you have never experienced before. All applications are treated in confidence so please, if you need a little help financially for food and fuel, don't be afraid to ask for it.

If you would like further information, or a paper copy of the application form, please get in touch with Fiona Bateman or Alistair Colquhoun by calling 07707611742 or 01456 486369 and leaving a message with your name and telephone number. We have also opened up our grants to support local business

who can provide a valuable service at a local level. That may be subsidised meals and/or additional activities in their facilities so you don't have to stay at home and cook/heat your own home even for a few hours. More details to come. The Wildside Centre is also open on a Warm Wednesday for people to come in, work from home, meet friends and once again turn off the heating at home. To further support businesses you may also want to put your details on our website Business Directory so, if people need a local service, they can contact you first.

The Trust Communications Team are using social media and the website to tell you more about the activities across Stratherrick and Foyers. Once again you can participate in activities you may not have done before and keep the heating off at home. We aren't just sharing events at a Trust location, but across the whole of Stratherrick and Foyers.

Details of all this, along with other support available in the Highlands, can be found here – please let our Comms team know of any further help that may be available if you hear of anything. www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/help-with-cost-of-living/

Tony Foster,
SFCT Manager

The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge

9th & 10th Dec 4-8pm

Winter Wonderland & CHRISTMAS MARKET!

Spectacular Light Show ~ Santa's Grotto ~ Raffle ~ Carol Singing ~ Mulled Wine ~ Refreshments

Santa's Grotto Bookings are LIVE!

To book your slot head to the website:
www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk
 Click on 'Santa's Grotto Bookings' and select your preferred date and time.

If you require further information please contact
pc@sfctrust.org.uk

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SFCT

WINTER WONDERLAND!

We are looking forward to seeing you at this year's Winter Wonderland! We have an exciting range of stalls confirmed for our Christmas market, including:

- CAROL'S SEW GOOD CREATIONS
- COSINESS
- FLOWERS BY THE LOCH
- JINTY'S JAMS & JELLIES
- LYN MHOR CROFT
- MARTIN'S SWEETS
- MORAG'S CRAFTY BOTHY
- RIVER CROFT
- THE NEIL MACKENZIE TRUST
- KINDNESS GLASS
- RACHEL MCINTYRE PAINTING
- STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL
- FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL
- RAFFLE RUN BY STRATHERRICK & FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCILS

There are still a couple of spaces available, so please get in touch if you would like to join us. Booking for Santa's Grotto is now open, please visit www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/santa-s-grotto-bookings/ to book your slot!

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/>

MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS... AND PHOTOGRAPHER

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