

Strathard Strategic Partnership

Notes of Meeting held on Monday, 18 June 2018

Present:

Anne Ferguson (SC)
Fiona Jackson (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority -LLTNPA)
Jane Fifield (Strathard Community Trust - SCT)
John Hair (Forest Enterprise Scotland - FES)
Katinka Dalglish (SCT)
Maria Lucey (SC)
Simon Jones (LLTNPA)
Steve MacDonald (Stirling Council - SC)
Susan Brooks (LLTNPA - Chair)
Trevor Geraghty (Strathard Community Council – SCC)

Apologies: Paul Roberts (Scottish Natural Heritage); Colin Smith (Strathard Community Council); Stewart Carruth (Stirling Council); Louise Bond (SEPA)

1) Welcome

The Chair, Susan Brooks welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Minutes and Actions of Meeting on March 26

- a) Minutes were approved for accuracy.
- b) Matters arising were on agenda

Action carried forward Stewart Carruth: to approach Scottish Water, Scottish Power and other energy networks over issues raised by the CC at Inception Meeting.

3) Purpose of Strathard Strategic Partnership

- a) The Purpose and Role of the SSP were approved.
- b) Simon Jones explained that the Strathard Initiative continues to evolve and is currently pausing to review and assess its progress and role.
- c) It was noted that community members are there to represent the views of their respective bodies, i.e. SCC, SCT, Aberfoyle Traders Assc.

Action ALL: SSP Purpose/Role and notes of meetings are public documents and in the interests of transparency should be shared widely.

4) Economic Development and Infrastructure

- a) Business Development Officer
 - i) The post is funded by Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER and will be managed by the SCT, with advice from a Steering Group comprising SCC, SC, LLTNPA.
 - ii) Post now filled and two people have been hired with excellent experience and qualifications.
 - iii) Post will work with businesses and community to improve and market the economic potential of the area.

- b) Business Hub
 - i) Managed by SCT with aspiration to develop a 'tourism tech hub', attracting green technology, supporting remote working and rural business growth.
 - ii) The Hub needs only 5 more members to 'break even'.
 - iii) Hope to launch the Hub officially at local events and in tandem with the Business Development project.
- c) Enterprise Day
 - i) Steve MacDonald proposed an Enterprise Day as part of a programme of activities to align with the Business Hub and Business Development project. The event will invite a variety of stakeholders, funders and business support agencies to showcase Aberfoyle, Strathard and its business potential, people, and natural, cultural and tourism assets – to ultimately attract investment.

Action Steve MacDonald: share draft plan for Enterprise Event with SSP members and stakeholders.

- d) Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund
 - i) This Scottish Government Fund is managed by Visit Scotland and aims to relieve extreme tourism pressure points by funding infrastructure such as toilets, caravan sites, car parks etc.
 - ii) There was discussion about possible projects to disperse tourists throughout Strathard and at different times of the day/year, rather than the certain hot-spot areas being under pressure at peak times.

Action All: RTIF project ideas to be forwarded to Fiona to share with LLTNPA/SC lead staff.

- e) The new Regional Director of Visit Scotland is keen to assess visitor issues, review the use of the Tourist Information Centre, and attend future SSP meetings to progress conversations with stakeholders.

Action Fiona Jackson: invite Visit Scotland to next SSP meeting.

- f) Giving Communities a Voice on Brexit
 - i) Any community/business group interested in this fund, please see guidelines on the Scottish Government website.
- g) Broadband
 - i) A meeting took place regarding installing a cabinet in Kinlochard.
 - ii) 4G coverage and connectivity for visitors is a priority.
- h) Flood Issues
 - i) SC updated on the flood plan progress. Design options are currently being worked up and consultation with the community will progress; options will continue to be considered throughout the project.

Action: SC representatives: continue consultation with partners and the community and feed back to SCC as appropriate.

- i) Flood Monitoring Project
 - i) The Conservation Volunteers is a charity that has been funded by SC to support community involvement in flood monitoring in Aberfoyle as part of a citizen

science initiative to capitalise on local knowledge and offer training in flood monitoring and other environmental issues.

Action TCV: approach SCT and SCC to discuss next steps and volunteer recruitment.

j) Local Development Plan

- i) Susan Brooks said LLTNPA is keen to work with local people to develop planning guidance for the wider Strathard area – particularly in the dispersed rural communities.
- ii) Susan shared a sample ‘rural development framework’ for East Loch Lomond, which is used as Supplementary Guidance to the Local Development Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- iii) SCC and SCT representatives said Kinlochard and Stronachlachar residents had planned to consult and create a similar plan, so there is potential to work on the project together, aligning with the existing Community Action Plan.

Action Jane Fifield: to engage with community contacts and feed back to Susan, with the potential to start in Autumn 2018.

k) Scottish Power Energy Network View/Vista Project

Action: Fiona Jackson to invite Grant Douglas to provide an update on funding to progress the Stronachlachar and Glen Gyle view-mitigation projects.

l) Feral Goats

- i) The wandering of feral goats throughout Strathard has positive and negative impacts on residents and the tourism economy. Community concerns have been raised recently over the negative impacts, including access to private land and road safety.
- ii) Trevor Geraghty advised that members of the community had considered several potential solutions. Simon Jones explained that SNH is taking the lead on developing an action plan to manage the population through a sensitive programme of humane culling delivered by wildlife rangers/contractors deployed by Forestry Commission Scotland (when on FCS land). Cooperation with private landowners would also be required to ensure effective management takes place.
- iii) Over time (possibly taking years), this approach will produce a more sustainable population of appropriate numbers. Patience and understanding from the community is requested to enable this management programme to take its course.
- iv) SCC and SCT representatives accepted the specialist advice on the matter.

Action Trevor Geraghty, Katinka Dalglish, Jane Fifield to inform the wider community of the SNH’s management approach. Any further comments should go to Paul Roberts, SNH to inform the Action Plan.

5) Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Update

- a) Anne Ferguson explained that a CPP is developing, it comprising a Leadership Group made up of all relevant public sector partners providing strategic direction; it has recently been focusing on developing the ‘Stirling Plan’ (Local Outcome Improvement Plan). A Working Group implements the Plan.

- b) Stirling Council area has been divided into four areas: Rural North, Urban North, Rural South, Urban South and eight Locality Plans are being developed.
- c) Local village/community/place-based plans and forums, like the SSP, will feed into this structure.
- d) The CPP is committed to meeting with, understanding and being influenced by the views and knowledge of local communities; Stirling Voluntary Enterprise advocates for the interest of the third sector in the CPP.
- e) SC's evolving Participatory Budgeting process is another way of local voices influencing decision making.

6) Partner Updates

- a) John Hair said the Forestry Commission wants to involve the community in designing a new Forest Plan for Achray Forest – after the very positive similar project in [Beinn Bhan](#). John also said that timber haulage will increase over the next 6 months.

Action John Hair will discuss Forest Plan approach and volunteer recruitment with SCT and SCC.

- b) There was a discussion about the importance of engaging with the *wider* community of Strathard, including young people, and those who do not ordinarily volunteer on committees or voice their opinions, because their views are equally important in decision-making processes. It was recognised that this takes time, effort and funding to support different engagement techniques. SC supports a Youth Forum and LLTNPA is in the early stages of evolving a Youth Committee, both of which could support engagement with young people.

7) Date and Time of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on **Monday, 29 October 2018 at 7.30-9.30 pm in Strathard Business Hub.**