

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held On Teams on Wednesday 11th January 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Andrew Mackay, Acting Chair and Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), Sandy Allison (SA), Donna Gilchrist (DG), Catherine MacDonald (CM), Steven Maclean (SM)

Apologies: Iain Thomson, Chair (IT), Jamie Dick, Vice Chair (JD), Louise Skinner, (LS) John Sutherland (JS),

Also attending: Highland Councillor Marianne Hutchison, (MH), Highland Councillor Michael Baird (MB), Kaye Hurrion, Chair LDCI, Alison Magee, LDCI (AM)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair opened the meeting. Thanks were expressed to Keith Williams, Chair Creich CC, who had set up the meeting on Teams. No police report was received.

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of November meeting. The Minutes of the November meeting were proposed by Jackie Young; seconded by Sandy Allison.

Item 3. Matters arising from Minutes. (1) Speed indicator signs. After years of attempting to have speed indicator signs erected it appears that Lairg is one of the villages to be included in THC's roll out of 20mph limits. Cllr Baird indicated that the timescale of the roll out is unclear but due to start soon. Cllr Hutchison offered to source costs for life-sized cut-out figures of a police officer with a speed gun, made for outdoor use.. These could be erected in the meantime to encourage adherence to the speed limits. **MH Action.** (2) Ferrycroft jetty. The issue with the permanently moored boat has been resolved. The small jetty needs maintenance/upgrade work. AM advised that the jetty was installed by the Army for the then Sutherland District Council and is therefore owned by THC. Cllr Baird will check on ownership and also of the land from Ferrycroft cottages to the football pitch. **MB Action.** (3) Overgrowth around Loch Shin. JY advised that certificates are required from SEPA to cover the work on the loch sides. These would be beyond the budget of Lairg in Bloom but as owners Lairg Estate should get the licences. Local people should direct their complaints regarding the condition of the banks to Lairg Estate. (4) Suggested Local Improvements Fund. Foundation Scotland will be requested to help set up this fund which could be used for local works as required. Discuss with Chris Lee in March at review meeting. **MG/CL Action.**

Item 4. LDCI update. (KH) (1) Care and Well Being - December Albyn were on site doing more soil sampling. Update awaited. (2) Winterfest – the event was held on December 3rd, the support received from a few of the local estates along with a number of the Wind farms that are going to be coming to our area was gratefully appreciated and helped secure the Reindeer and Children's entertainer along with many of the other costs. It was a very successful day with a really high number of visitors. The craft stalls, were fully booked. A massive thank you to anyone who came and helped setting up, on the day, and the clearing up afterwards. It was a really great community day, which would not be possible without the massive amount of help received, along with the generosity shown by the local business in giving raffle prizes. (3) Playpark. THC has confirmed that maintenance of approved equipment will be carried out. A Ferrycroft group has been established to co-ordinate and oversee the project. It is hoped to provide new and different equipment to appeal to all ages. (4) Information leaflet.

LDCI offered to produce a leaflet for local distribution to publicise local help contacts/telephone numbers. If a major incident/emergency occurs calls for help should be made to 999. The Lairg Community Centre is the base from where the Resilience Plan actions would be co-ordinated. (5) Food Larder – LDCI continues to collect food weekly from the KOSDT larder. Also partnering with Brora Development Trust which manages two separate Food poverty funds on behalf of Anne the Duchess of Westminster and the Westminster Fund. Over Christmas and working with THC Ward Discretionary Fund, food parcels were offered to anyone in the Lairg community area who found themselves in need of support. (6) Helping Hands Fund – The number of households applying for the grant has increased again, in the light of the current energy crisis. It is not only financial help required as some cases require referral to other agencies for specialist assistance. The level of pastoral care is on the increase. (7) Magazine –now in its third year, this goes from strength to strength. The magazine is now produced monthly and is of great benefit to those who do not/cannot access the Internet. It is hoped to find funding to increase the hours spent on production. (8) Lunch Club – is running weekly during term time and on the whole is working well. The grant from the CC for the Dial a Bus etc has been greatly appreciated. Cllr Hutchison stated that there is money left from the Covid Resilience Fund which might be accessed via the Sutherland Cost of Living Fund to help with current issues. MH/KH will liaise. **KH/MH Action.**

Item 5. LCA update. LCA representative unable to take part in tonight's meeting. Encouraged to send a report if appropriate.

Item 6. Financial report. (DG) The balance in the Treasurer's account stands at £4,053.90 with the Windfarm account at £1,542.97. The outstanding invoice from Lairg Estate regarding the tennis courts has been paid. Chair to advise regarding further discussions with the Estate. **IT Action.**

Item 7. Planning applications. Nothing relevant in this area.

Item 8. Bird hide. A site meeting was arranged for Saturday 14th at 10am to take photos and assess the work required. Quotes will be sought to carry out the work with a report back to the CC for further action. **SM/JY/AMK action.**

Item 9. Windfarms. (1) Dalnessie. SSEN plan an exhibition on 24th January. (2) Lairg 2. Scheduled for possible connection in 2025 with other local developments aiming for 2027. (3) MB advised that hook up for Sallachy may be earlier than expected.

Item 10. Highland Councillor's report. (MB) (1) TECS. Road surfaces and approaches at the Tirry bridge are in a critical condition. He will report and chase this. (2) MH advised that the Sutherland Community Planning Partnership works towards prioritising homes and infrastructure along with sourcing warm spaces, food banks, hot meals, etc. Anyone in urgent need should contact her. Discussion covered the unacceptable condition of much of THC housing stock with people being offered properties in shocking conditions. An independent review of the stock was recommended with urgent action to follow. This is discouraging for any prospective tenants, whether local or wishing to move to the area. MH will take this to the new SCPP group. MB confirmed that rents/community charges will be rising and an urgent THC meeting should be held to address investment in the existing stock as well as providing more affordable housing. (3) Local bus contract. Following the introduction of the new timetable by Rapsons which removes the Saturday services. A short term contract is in place with Ronnie MacNeil's taxi but users must contact the company to book spaces. Details

available from THC/Mr McNeil. (4) MB still monitoring use of the Strathy Ward in Migdale Hospital suggesting that it is not fully operational. It was understood at the meeting that all 22 beds in the ward would be in use by the following week. The return of outreach clinics to the hospital would be of great benefit to the community.

Item 11 Correspondence. All correspondence had been circulated by email.

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) CC logo. The funding provided from the Micro Grant to LDCI to produce a design has been returned. Three suggestions for a logo have been sent to the CC. CCs should decide if they want one of these or make suggestions for another. A vote should be taken at the next meeting with the logo agreed. **Action All.** (2) Bridgend House. MH indicated that the owner search continues. If it can be agreed that the property is long-term empty or derelict THC should take action accordingly. Discuss at next meeting.

Agenda items.

Item 13. Date, time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held in the Kinvonvie Suite, Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7.30pm

Item 14. Applications to Lairg Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. No applications were discussed.

No feedback as yet from Foundation Scotland regarding the CC's request to consider a fund to assist with transport costs for trainees/apprentices working outwith the area. This will be referred to Chris Lee with a request that a decision/way forward be discussed at the annual review meeting which is due in March. **MG/CL Action.**

Discussion with Chris Lee took place regarding the possibility of wind farm funding availability for assistance with transport costs for trainees/apprentices travelling out with the local area. Foundation Scotland will look into how this might be set up. Approval of the wind farm landowner and community benefactor will be required. **CL Action.**

Meeting closed 9.00pm.