

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 6th April 2016 at 7.30pm

Present: Jeff Norrie, Chair (JN), Andrew Mackay, Vice Chair (AMK), Hector MacLennan, Treasurer (HM), Jackie Young (JY)

Apologies: Iain Mackay (IM), Sandy Allison (SA)

Invited guest: Maimie Thompson, NHS Highland (MT)

Police Scotland: Sgt Ian Sutherland (IS)

Also present: Highland Councillor Hugh Morrison (HMN), Gary Thompson (GT)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report.

JN welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Sgt Sutherland to give his report. Two reports received in the last month regarding the mauling of sheep, the most recent being at Tirryside. A vet report stated the injuries were unlikely to have been inflicted by a dog. CCs were aware of two other incidents which had not been reported to the police. An attempted theft took place at the recycling centre on 14th March. Missing people and vagrant reports received in the last week or so. With no other relevant items to discuss, IS left at 7.30pm.

Item 2. NHS Highland discussion. Maimie Thompson is Head of PR and Engagement for NHS Highland. She attended to update the CC following the visit last May by the Director and Area Manager for the North, Caithness and Sutherland. The main challenge facing the organisation is recruitment of medical staff at all levels. Countrywide issues regarding patient transport, long distances from medical facilities, out-patient appointments and parking (at Raigmore) are all areas of concern. Patients' care at home requires high levels of support. Care of the elderly in homes or hospitals is also an issue being addressed. Modern thinking is to provide centrally located, purpose-built facilities which although not always the most popular solution are more sustainable in terms of service provision. A scoping exercise with local consultations is to be carried out with regard to the north coast this summer. Social isolation and loneliness issues affect many, not only the elderly or rural residents, and can lead to higher figures for deaths from all sorts of conditions. Difficulty placing patients requiring respite admissions was highlighted, often with people only finding a bed many miles from home and family support. Care at Home packages are improving and payment of the Living Wage is slowly helping recruitment. With a view to the building of new care homes, these would be designed as larger establishments as small units are no longer sustainable. Strong pressure exerted by the CC that Lairg is placed at a physical crossroads and is ideally situated for a new care home which could serve a wide area of population. Such a facility would also offer much needed employment opportunities locally. Discussion covered wide ranging topics such as possible bed numbers, flexibility in use of single rooms, etc. MT agreed to discuss, with the Operational Department and the District Manager, the possibility of intelligence gathering with regard to all aspects of a Lairg care home facility. On patient transport issues it was stated that the current system of handling bookings in the Central belt does not work for Highland users. MT advised that several options are being looked at in hopes of improving the structure of out-patient appointments, one being that of using Skype, or phone consultations to negate the need to travel to discuss issues with consultants. The system must be overhauled and made to work using modern technology and advances. Evidence is also currently being gathered regarding the parking problems at Raigmore where it is appreciated that the car parking space is seriously misused by people not

attending the hospital at all. A knock-on effect can be that appointments are actually missed by patients who are unable to find parking within walking distance of the clinics. The condition of the space presently available is to be improved. The discussion was felt to have been very positive and the CCs were encouraged to contact MT directly with any ideas, suggestions or information they may have on the subjects covered and she agreed to keep the CC posted on any developments. With thanks from the CC members, MT left at 8.25pm.

Item 3. Adoption of Minutes of March meeting. With one small amendment the March Minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Andrew Mackay; seconded: Hector MacLennan.

Item 4. Matters arising. (1) Drainage beside Lairg Cemetery. HMN has been pursuing this matter and understands a survey is to be carried out by THC. He will report again next month. **HMN Action.** (2) Loch Shin Sailing Club. A formal invitation will be issued to the committee of the club to come to the May meeting of the CC to give an update on the ongoing projects of the club. The Project Officer of LDCI will also be invited. **MG Action.**

Item 5. LDCI update. JN read through a two page report which included a list of meetings attended by the Development Officer and an update on current projects. These included SSE Resilient Communities Fund, Fitness Room, Church Hill woods, new telephone directory, path to station, community broadband project, youth activities and Lairg website. A Lairg clean-up day is scheduled for 30th April. JN and HMN will liaise to arrange provision of skips, gloves, bags, etc as before. **JN/HMN Action.**

Further details of all projects are available from the Development Officer.

Item 6. LCA update. It is understood a meeting was held last night but no report is as yet available.

Item 7. CALL update. No update available. MP Paul Monaghan is expected to have a meeting in Lairg with SSE and interested parties at the end of April/early May.

Item 8. Lights for Air Ambulance update. The invoice received from SAAS was incorrect. HMN will contact Andy Moir to have this supplied as soon as possible. He will also confirm if the £1,000 allocated from the Ward Discretionary Budget is still available for this project.

HMN Action.

Item 9. Falls of Shin update. Ongoing.

Item 10. Financial report. (MG) Treasurer's Account balance stands at £2,351.22; two payments made in the last month: to Lairg Community Centre for room hire for CC meetings, one to Faclan Word Service. An additional charge is expected from LCA for the March meeting which ran to just under three hours rather than the two charged. Windfarm Account balance stands unchanged at £1,289.76, which reflects the receipt of £1,000 payment from Foundation Scotland as this year's payment to the Micro Grant Scheme. Projects Account is unchanged at £104.73. It was confirmed that John Forbes has kindly agreed once again to act as auditor and to prepare the accounts for annual submission to THC. **MG Action.**

Item 11. Planning applications. Nothing relevant in Lairg. HMN will try again to change the named person to receive Planning notifications from SA to JN. **HMN Action.**

Item 12. CASPLAN. This item can now be removed from future agendas as the appropriate submissions were made by the Chair ahead of the deadline.

Item 13. Community Council website. IM has indicated that due to pressure of work he will not be able to take on maintenance of the site. The Project Officer at LDCI, has agreed to take it over. MG will arrange for introductions between Magda and Emma Armstrong to facilitate handover. The invitation to Magda to attend the May meeting will indicate this item also for discussion. **MG Action.**

Item 14. Windfarms. Asked by GT what is the CC position on windfarms, the Chair indicated that the policy is to view each case on its individual merits, remaining neutral where

possible but ensuring CC involvement in discussions regarding possible community benefit payments should a development go ahead.

Item 15. Correspondence. (1) Rhionna Mackay of Cosy Homes East Sutherland Scheme has enquired if she might attend a CC meeting to appraise members of the work of the project. Due to existing commitments the first 'speaker's slot' on the agenda will be in August. Rhionna will be invited to attend then. **MG Action.** (2) Collapsed bridge at Culmaily. HMN advised that THC engineers will assess the condition of the bridge. GT will send his email correspondence in this regard to HMN. **GT Action.** (3) NC 500 Route. Representatives of North Highland Initiative will attend the 4th May meeting.

Item 16. Any other competent business. (1) **Ward Manager.** HMN confirmed that following the retiral of Andy Mackay, Garry Cameron will remain in post meantime. (2) **Condolence.** It was agreed that a letter of condolence should be sent on behalf of the CC and community to Mr Hudson, Dunroamin Caravan Park, following the sad loss of his wife Margaret who had served the local community in many capacities over a long number of years. **MG Action.** (3) **Unsightly Forestry land.** A letter will be sent to the Forestry Commission regarding the unkempt land between their Lairg offices and the sewage works. **MG Action.** (4) **Station yard.** This area was also highlighted as being in a disgraceful condition, apparently being used as a dumping ground for pallets, gravel bings and rubbish. HMN will make contact with Network Rail requesting this eyesore be tidied up as it presents an appalling view to anyone arriving in Lairg by train. **HMN Action.** (5) **Resurfacing.** Thanks were extended to THC for recent resurfacing on the roads at Sallachy and in Glen Cassley.

Item 18. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th May 2016 in the Lairg Community Centre. The invited guests will be North Highland Initiative, Loch Shin Sailing Club and the LDCI Project Officer. The room is already booked.

Item 19. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. At private session, a Micro Grant award of £250 was made to Lairg Primary School to help with travel costs incurred when attending sporting events outwith the area.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm.