

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 4th April 2018 at 7.30pm

Present: Jeff Norrie, Chair (JN), Andrew Mackay, Vice Chair/Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), John Sutherland (JS), Eilidh Price (EP), Jamie Dick (JD)

Apologies: Sandy Allison (SA), Louise Skinner (LS), Project Officer LDCI (MM)

Also present: Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM)

Police Scotland: PCs DaveThompson (DT) and Tracy Murray (TM)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair Jeff Norrie welcomed everyone and invited the police officers to give their report. This was made up of four road traffic incidents, five advice calls, two vulnerable person calls, one suspicious person, one sudden death, two thefts, three planned shoots, one vandalism and one communications matter. SA, via JN, reported four scamming attempts on his bank account. Caller claimed to be an insurance company. The public is reminded to be on the alert for any such calls. LM advised the officers that she is compiling information to assess how much police time is taken up by dealing with mental health problems. The officers confirmed that when called on to take a vulnerable person to hospital and all that is involved, this can take them out of regular duties for several hours depending on individual cases. The police left at 7.40pm.

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of March meeting. The Minutes of the March meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Andrew Mackay; seconded: Eilidh Price.

Item 3. Matters arising. (1) Waste ground by Masonic Hall. AMK still to make enquiries as to who owns this ground. **AMK Action.** **(2) Water issues at Lochside.** LM has raised this matter with the appropriate THC department and will report back asap. **LM Action.** **(3) Archiving.** JN and JD hope to work through the files from the old filing cabinet in the next couple of weeks. **JN/JD Action.** **(5) GDPR.** CCs were reminded to send Secretary consent to hold their personal contact details. LM will forward further information on the regulations when she can. **Action ALL/LM Action.** **(6) Bird Hide update – volunteers/date.** Brought forward from agenda late last year. A clean-up/repair day will have to wait for better weather. Agenda item for May meeting. **MG Action/Agenda item.**

Item 4. Discuss ideas re the late Hector MacLennan. JN will have further discussion with the family to ascertain if there is an acceptable action to be taken.

Item 5. LDCI update. Email report received from Project Officer. (1) Care & Well-Being Centre. Talks held with the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT). The steering group meeting is expected to be held in May. (2) Police station. In discussion with Police Scotland Estates Department regarding the asset transfer procedures. CCs recorded that a large amount of tax-payers' money was spent on the fairly recent extensive upgrade of the building. LM was asked to find more details on the asset transfer process. It is thought that community interest in such a property would give it first refusal. Becoming a community asset is probably the best option for some return. (3) Bus shelter. Funding applications have been successful. Consideration to be given to local opinion as to the best position for the shelter which when completed will provide an attractive, colourful and informative addition to the village with local schoolchildren providing the artwork. (4) Ord Place carvings and sitting area. Ongoing – hoping for completion before the summer. (5) Station path. Sources of funding being sought to cover costs of a highway engineer. If successful, then the next stage will be to apply for capital funding for the construction of the path, including route plans,

detailed drawings, outline specification and budget costings as well as consultation with statutory bodies.

Item 6. CALL. It is understood that SSE's application will go to Planning in June. Work is expected to start in June 2019 as a three-year programme.

Item 7. Financial report. (1) Treasurer's account balance stands at £2,927.26 reflecting outgoing payments in the last month and the receipt of the admin grant from Foundation Scotland. The Windfarm account balance is currently £1,500 due to the in-payment of the annual Micro Grant funding from Foundation Scotland. This fund is therefore once again open to applications. The Project account remains at £4.73. Rev John Forbes has once again agreed to conduct the audit of the annual accounts and prepare them for submission to the CC at the AGM in June after which they will be submitted to THC. **(2) THC Budget Cuts to CC annual grants.** It is understood that Creich CC is calling a meeting for 30th April inviting all local CCs in Ward 1, THC officials, MSPs and the Northern Times to discuss how THC expects Community Councils to continue to operate without sufficient funding. CCs confirmed that they will stand with Creich and Ardgay on this issue. The secretarial service is an essential component of the functioning of this, and the two local CCs, and must be financed to continue. All members of the three local CCs are invited to the meeting. Those intending to attend should contact the Chair. Car sharing should be arranged.

Item 8. Planning applications. None relevant locally.

Item 9. Windfarms. Sallachy. JN and AMK plan to attend a meeting on 9th April if possible.

Item 10. Correspondence. All email correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting. Reply will be sent to LCA regarding the public toilets issue. (see Item 11). **MG**

Action.

Item 11. Any other competent business. (1) Public toilets. Cllr Munro advised that all THC public toilets will remain open until 31st August this year. She apologised on behalf of THC for the complete lack of consultation and lack of proper planning ahead of the closures announcement. She has a meeting scheduled with the Director of Community Services, William Gilfillan, on 12th April. It is clear that the provision of public toilets is not a statutory requirement for THC however much discussion and planning will be necessary before any alternative schemes can be made to work. THC hopes to introduce a 'Comfort Scheme' whereby local businesses/groups/individuals would be paid a fee ranging from £100 to £300 per month for three years to operate the facilities. Another possibility could be the change of ownership under a transfer of community assets plan. This could lead to a local group being free to seek funding to operate, and also greatly improve the amenity, however in Lairg such a move could only be undertaken if the fabric of the building was brought up to an acceptable standard first. Public conveniences are essential to provide for the needs of tourists but also for the many people who travel long distances through the area for many different work and social reasons. Thought must be given by THC to communities where it is not possible for local people to take on this extra burden. CC will write to Mr Gilfillan expressing the very great local concern. **MG Action.** (2) Old kitchen materials left lying at 3 Ord Place following the installation of a new kitchen approximately five weeks ago. THC has not responded to requests to have it removed. At 8 Ord Place old fencing has been left following a repair last July. (3) The daily morning Achany bus service has failed to operate during the recent bad weather. The service has not been up to standard. It was also questioned if an approved bus stop is now in place opposite Costcutters. LM will check all items with appropriate THC departments. **LM Action.** (4) Old fencing has been left by Forestry workers on the old road at Dalnessie bridge. Fears expressed that this could lead to fly-tipping. CC will write to FCS.

MG Action.

Item 12. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd May at 7.30pm in the Lairg Community Centre.

Minutes approved 02/05/2018

Item 13. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. A micro grant of £230 was approved for Lairg Community Association to help towards the purchase of a new mobile projector. LDCI was awarded £244 to help fund a feasibility study with a view to converting the Police station to a community hostel. **MG Action.**

Meetings closed 9.30pm.