

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Jeff Norrie, Chair (JN), John Sutherland (JS), Sandy Allison (SA), Eilidh Price (EP)

Also present: Jamie Dick (JD)

Apologies: Jackie Young (JY), Louise Skinner (LS), Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), Project Officer LDCI (MM)

Police Scotland: PCs Angus Morrison and Steven MacKenzie

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair Jeff Norrie welcomed all present, especially Jamie Dick who attended with a view to co-option. PC Morrison gave the reports for the last two months as officers had been unable to attend last month. October to November was a busy month with twenty-one reports: one disorderly conduct, one suspicious person, two advice calls, one road safety issue, five false calls, one theft, five road traffic offences, one fraud, one police matter, one serious assault, one neighbour dispute and one road traffic matter. In contrast in November to December only four reports were received: two neighbour disputes, one road accident and one missing person, later traced. Chair passed a letter to PC Morrison from the GP Practice in Lairg which has been experiencing problems each time there is a dance at the community centre. People hanging around the doorway to the surgery, drinking, smoking etc, which can make any on-call staff who need to enter the building feel very vulnerable. Broken glass is often found after such an event, also litter and vomit. The surgery requests that when possible a police presence can be made to discourage this behaviour. PC Morrison will submit the letter with his report and secretary will also pass it to Police Scotland with the CC's request that this be followed up with the surgery staff.

MG Action.

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of November meeting. The Minutes of the November meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Sandy Allison; seconded: John Sutherland.

Item 3. Matters arising. (1) Forestry entrances. AMK has discussed this issue with FCS with particular regard to the north Dalchork entrance. Investigation reports that a Lithuanian contractor was responsible for leaving the area in this untidy state and that FCS had not inspected it until it was too late to call the contractor back. FCS will spread the brash and tidy when time allows. The practice of leaving odd dead trees standing in felled areas is part of the biodiversity protocol and will not be altered. CC noted that these and the general untidiness give a very poor impression of the area to visitors. **(2) Tennis courts.** SA received assurance that the email from Lairg Estate to the CC stated that maintenance of this sort is the responsibility of the CC. SA will proceed but with a representative of the Estate present. **(3) Lochies bump.** John Clark, THC Roads Dept, has passed on this issue within THC but is not hopeful that any money will be found to take action. SA will enquire again. **SA Action. (4) Water damage at library.** After work was carried out after the last flooding/ sewage issue there has been no further report of ingress at the library. **(5) Water at cemetery.** Email was sent to Ewan Marsh THC, identified by LM as the contact, but no reply or action as yet. LM to be asked to stress how important an issue this is, causing totally unnecessary distress to mourners. **LM Action. (6) Toilets.** The immediate repairs have been carried out but there is no indication that anything will be done about the disreputable condition of the building. Although windfarm benefit is not allowed to be used for any purpose which falls within the

remit of THC, CC pondered that if THC would allow, the CC might seek funding to effect simple improvements such as tiling/painting. Once again it was stressed that the caretaker does an excellent job in keeping the facility clean but the overall impression is very poor. **LM Action. (7) Bus shelter.** LM has advised that if the shelter is weatherproof, Councillors could provide money for decoration materials for a school project to be undertaken. If it is not fit for purpose LM will request repair or replacement. **LM Action. (8) Waste ground beside Masonic Hall.** No report available from AMK as to who is responsible for maintaining this piece of land. **AMK Action.**

Item 4. Suggestions re memorial for the late Hector MacLennan. JN hopes to meet with Carol Elliot of Foundation Scotland in January to take this forward if possible. **JN Action.**

Item 5. LDCI update. Email report received from Project Officer. Clean up day in November saw a good turnout with eight big bin liners of litter cleared from the Churchill Wood paths and village centre. Winterfest was once again a popular success with stall-holder capacity reached and some turned away due to lack of space. There should be no need to seek outside funding for this event next year. A very positive community event. The NHS meeting re the Care Home Project has been postponed until January. Project Officer funding is being sought. Further meetings will be held with housing and 3rd sector interests in December.

Item 6. CALL. SSE held a consultation event today in the community centre at which their latest proposal for the pylon route was explained. While it is an improvement there are still some questions from the community. The route passes too close to residential properties in Tomich and CC will write to SSE requesting that it be moved further away. **MG Action.** The lengthy zig-zag route now proposed was questioned with the explanation being to avoid blanket bog on the more direct route. Local information states there is no blanket bog at that point on the route and the direct line would be easier and cheaper. CALL is expected to arrange a public meeting in the near future and that date will be publicised locally. SA will liaise with Emma Armstrong meantime. **SA Action.**

Item 7. Financial report. Treasurer's account balance stands at £2,555.05 reflecting outgoing payments in the last month. The windfarm account has a balance of £250 reflecting the micro grant awards made last month. Project account remains unchanged at £4.73.

Item 8. Planning applications. No relevant applications.

Item 9. Community Council vacancy. Jamie Dick was welcomed to the CC and following proposal by SA and seconded by JN he accepted co-option to the CC. This brings the CC up to its full complement of members.

Item 10. Windfarms. Croick. Representatives of Muirden Energy which wishes to develop the Meall Buidhe windfarm on the Croick Estate gave presentations recently to both Creich and Ardgay CCs. Much local opposition was registered, particularly from residents of Altas, Rosehall and Linside which will suffer the most visual impact. If all proposed developments go ahead the area will be surrounded by windfarms which will do nothing to enhance the areas tourism businesses nor property values. Braemore has received Scottish Government approval and the CC will seek to establish any rights to a share of whatever community benefit arrangements are reached. An accurate up to date map of the boundaries of Braemore is to be sourced to establish exactly where the site is in relation to the local CC boundaries. JN stressed the need for positive discussions amongst the three local CCs with regard to fair distribution of community benefit from all windfarm developments in the local districts to bring equal improvement opportunities to all three areas.

Item 11. Correspondence. All relevant correspondence had been circulated by email. The Police Scotland consultation regarding the closure of local stations appears to be an exercise only in public relations with the decisions to close already in hand. CC will take no further action. Scottish Government Land Survey – JN will complete and return by the deadline of 15th December. **JN Action.** Email from Citizens Advice Bureau regarding oil purchasing

clubs will be passed to LDCI. **MG Action.** JN will reply, by the deadline of 19th January, to Brook Forestry Ltd regarding its plans for long term forestry at Craggie and Baddhu Forests. One resident affected will be asked for his comments especially in regard to the road conditions which must be maintained to a high standard. **JN Action.**

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) EP showed photo of the newly installed Mackay Memorial at the cemetery. Gruids Marriage Stone plaque is due to be in place before long. All recent projects by the Lairg History Society will then be complete. (2) JN raised the ongoing safety issue of the coned-off footpath opposite the chemist shop. The constant flow of water onto the road at this point will become more dangerous as winter freezing occurs. SA will take this back to TECS. **SA Action.** (3) Secretary to enquire of LCA as to the date of its AGM. **MG Action.**

Item 13. Date and time of next meeting. There being no meeting in January the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th February at 7.30pm in the Lairg Community Centre.

Item 14. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. In private session, a grant variation submitted by LDCI regarding funding for the Project Manager post was approved. Foundation Scotland will be advised. **MG Action.**

Meetings closed 9.20pm.