

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 2nd May 2018 at 7.30pm

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

Apologies: Eilidh Price (EP) Louise Skinner (LS)

Also present: Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), Debbie Sutton, Highland Council Amenities Manager Community Services (DS), Andy Summers, Highland Council Community Services (AS), Magda Macdonald, Project Officer, LDCI (MM)

Police Scotland: None present (report submitted by email)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Item 2. Debbie Sutton, Highland Council, re public toilets provision. Chair Jeff Norrie welcomed everyone and invited the guests from Highland Council to address the meeting regarding the proposals for provision of public toilet amenities following recent budget announcements. Debbie Sutton explained that THC has a three-fold approach – rationalisation of existing sites, a Comfort Scheme and instigating charging at the sites. The attendance tonight was as a direct result of the CC expressing concerns about the Lairg amenity and its future. The suggestion, apparently made by THC that Lairg Community Association could operate a Comfort Scheme in the community centre, is a non-starter for a number of reasons including the fabric and security of the building. The Comfort Scheme will provide grants to existing businesses willing to open their toilet amenities to the public. A scoring matrix will be applied depending on the facilities provided with grants ranging from £100 to £300 per month for at least two years. JN stressed that if any community group were to consider taking over the existing amenity THC would have to make substantial improvements to its condition. DS agreed that at present this is in a very poor condition. If an asset transfer were to be agreed the already identified repairs/renovations would be carried out at an estimated cost of £3,000. All present agreed that this amenity in Lairg is essential to the community and must be maintained as a year-round, 24 hour open-access provision. Various ideas were put forward for an upgraded new toilet block in the future should an operator for such be identified but the main concern is that the existing amenity does not close on 31st August. If an asset transfer is agreed Cllr Munro indicated there would be some support from the Ward Discretionary Budget. A meeting is to be arranged with the CC, LDCI and LCA at which this issue will be a priority agenda item. MM will arrange the meeting date. **MM Action.** DS was encouraged to liaise with Highlife Highland and other local businesses with information on the Comfort Scheme in hopes that there may be interest which could result in an increase in toilet amenities in the village. All enquiries should be directed to DS. She and AS left at 8.10pm. AMK will arrange for local tradesmen to assess the work required on the existing amenity, get written quotes and copy them to DS. **AMK Action.** Thanks were expressed for the current maintenance operator who provides a very good service in a building of such poor standard.

Item 1. Police report. Received by email with apologies for not being able to attend, the report indicated fifteen incidents consisting of five road traffic accidents, four thefts, one death, one drink driver, one child protection, one vandalism, and two other force requests. Slight concern was noted that this is the second time in recent months there has been a child protection incident.

Item 3. Adoption of Minutes of April meeting. The Minutes of the April meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Andrew Mackay; seconded: John Sutherland.

Item 4. Matters arising. (1) Waste ground by Masonic Hall. AMK has ascertained that the ground in question is owned by the Masonic Hall therefore the responsibility for tidying it up remains there. He will encourage members there to have this done. **AMK Action.** (2) **Water issues at Lochside.** LM advised that Joanne Sutherland, THC, is not available until 8th May. She will follow up on this after that date. **LM Action.** (3) **Archiving.** JN and JD have nearly completed the assessment of the files. Anything of interest will be offered to the local History Society with essential documents passed to MG to add to the archive she holds. **JN/JD Action.** (4) **GDPR.** CCs were reminded, if they have not already done so, to send Secretary (MG) consent to hold their personal contact details. LM will forward further information on the regulations when she can. **Action ALL/LM Action.**

Item 5. Bird Hide update – volunteers/date. First priority is to treat the hide with wood preservative. SA will seek quotes for hiring a sprayer; local businesses could be asked to donate to the overall cost of equipment hire and Cuprinol. Also LDCI could apply for a micro grant to help fund this project. Lighter evenings now allow for this work to go ahead. Date and volunteers yet to be arranged. **SA/MM Action.**

Item 6. LDCI update. (1) Bus shelter upgrade. Discussion covered the suggestion to resite the shelter at the foot of the village. While there are advantages to the move, the overall opinion of CCs is a preference to keep the shelter in its current position. MM will report back to LDCI directors. (2) Police station project. 450 surveys were hand delivered around the village and an online survey set up to gauge local opinion regarding acquiring the building by asset transfer and turning it into a hostel. Closing date for surveys is the 9th of May. Responses so far have been very positive. (3) Care project. The proposed meeting with NHS and others will now be held in June. Application has been submitted for the next stage of funding. LM advised that Scottish Government has released funding for housing in projects such as this. (4) Ord Place picnic area. Still waiting to meet with Forestry Commission. Chainsaw Creations will not be available to take on the work until July. (5) Station Path. Funding applied for to cover highways engineer involvement, required due to the extent of the project.

Item 7. CALL. Nothing further this month.

Item 8. Financial report. Treasurer's account balance stands at £2,679.56 reflecting outgoing payments in the last month. The Windfarm account balance is currently £1,026.00. The Project account remains at £4.73. Rev John Forbes has returned the audited accounts prepared for submission to THC following adoption by CC at AGM next month. His voluntary work on this for the CC is very much appreciated.

Item 9. Planning applications. None relevant locally.

Item 10. Windfarms. Strathy South windfarm has received approval from THC. Caplich was refused permission by Scottish Government.

Item 11. Correspondence. All email correspondence had been circulated prior to the meeting. Email from Jean Laura, Isle of Mull, regarding details of the presentation by FCS last October was discussed. She will be referred to Roddy Macleod who made the presentation. **MG Action.**

Item 11. Highland Councillor's report. LM confirmed that the committees on which she serves are Health, Education, Social Work, Investments, Highlife Highland and Children's issues. 23rd May will be the next Sutherland County Committee meeting with the Road Report a main agenda item. LM will pass on local reports to TECS regarding outstanding road repairs, potholes and the Lochies bump. **LM Action.**

Item 13. Any other competent business. (1) JY has been asked to inform the CC of a proposed meeting to be called by Visit Lairg and Rogart regarding funding issues. It is hoped that two members from each of Lairg and Rogart CCs will attend. JY can go, **one other requested**. Visit Lairg and Rogart is not part of Heart of Sutherland Tourism (HOST) which is based in the Kyle of Sutherland area. Funders will only support one such group in any one area. It is feared that overlapping between the two groups will cause one or other to lose out. (2) Achany Glen bus service. LM has so far had no reply from Stagecoach. She will advise the CC when she has heard. **LM Action**. (3) Acoustic issue in Community Centre. Ongoing acoustic problems were raised. It is hoped that this can be discussed further at the three-way CC, LCA and LDCI meeting soon to be arranged. (4) Lairg Sailing Club. The current status of the club was discussed with no-one clear as to whether or not it is currently functioning. SA will report back at next meeting. **SA Action**.

Item 14. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6th June in the Lairg Community Centre. This meeting will commence with the AGM at 7.30pm with the regular business to follow.

Item 15. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. Application by LDCI to the main grant for £2,460 was approved to meet costs of hiring a highways engineer to carry out preparatory/design works on the station path project. Application by Lairg in Bloom received an award of £2,000 to purchase staging for shelving inside a polytunnel and for hanging baskets. A micro grant application by LDCI on behalf of Lairg Primary School was awarded £250 towards the costs of taking the children to the Highland Wildlife Park in Kingussie.

Meetings closed 10pm