

Lairg Community Council

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

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

Also present: Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM)

Apologies: Iain Mackay (IM), Louise Skinner (LS)

Police Scotland: None present – email report received from PC Thompson

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/Apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair Jeff Norrie welcomed everyone after the two-month summer recess with a particular welcome to Cllr Munro who will be the regular Highland Councillor at Lairg CC's meetings. The Police Report had been received earlier from PC Dave Thompson as he was unable to attend in person tonight. Over the last month six incidents were reported; one stray animals, one medical matter, one wildlife crime, one courts/warrants and two advice/assistance calls. SA raised a complaint that there had been no Police Scotland representatives at a recent meeting held in Caithness at the Aberdeen Northern Marts base at Quoybrae. Around one hundred people had travelled from all over Caithness and Sutherland specifically to hear from Police Scotland regarding the high incidence of drivers with trailers being booked for infringements of the laws governing towing. The public is very concerned as there seems to be much confusion as to what the current legislation is and clarification is urgently sought. Great disappointment was registered that there was no police representative nor any apology received. LM offered to take this matter directly to Police Scotland on behalf of the CC and MG will pass this issue back via PC Thompson. **LM/MG Action.**

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of June meeting. With one amendment, the Minutes of the June meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Jackie Young; seconded: Sandy Allison.

Item 3 Matters arising. (1) Ferrycroft paths. (LM declared an interest as a Director of Highlife Highland.) Nothing further noted regarding the issue raised in June of a drainage trench right across the path or of the surface having been washed away by heavy rains. It was reported that amounts of horse dung are being deposited on the paths which is entirely unacceptable for all other users. The anomaly was noted that dog owners face fines for not picking up waste but there is no deterrent for horse owners. The difficulties are understood but such public walkways should not be used by responsible horse owners. LM will discuss the issue with Highlife Highland which operates the Ferrycroft area and also check with Access Officer Matt Dent. **Agenda item/JN/LM Action.** **(2) Bird Hide.** FCS has supplied two loads of scalplings as a goodwill gesture. Charlie Smith has two SSE volunteers willing to help with the project. SA and JN will liaise regarding a possible work date - 21st, 22nd or 29th September - and will arrange with Charlie Smith. **JN/SA/ Action. Agenda item.**

(3) Overgrown trees. Nothing further this month. **Agenda item.** **(4) Tennis courts.** Lairg Estate maintains that this drainage issue is a matter for the CC as lease holders. SA and HMN were attempting to establish where the water is coming from and the condition of the drains. This matter was not discussed this month. **SA Action.** **(5) Lochies bump.** Not discussed. **SA Action.** **(6) Forestry replanting.** Previous correspondence regarding attendance by North Highland Forestry failed to arrange this. New invitation will be sent for October meeting. **MG Action.**

Item 4. Suggestions re memorial for the late Hector MacLennan. JN has not yet put the request in writing to Foundation Scotland to allow for a sum to be taken from the windfarm funds to support a small annual award. **JN Action.**

Item 5. LDCI update. The report received from Project Officer stated that the feasibility study regarding the proposed Care and Wellbeing Centre has been completed by Athena Solutions. Stage 2 funding application to the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) has been submitted with a decision due on 14th September. LM hopes to meet with the Project Officer before the next CC meeting to discuss NHS involvement. The PO's report also updated the CC regarding the Visit Lairg and Rogart Tourism Group which it assisted with successful funding applications, and the LDCI preparations for this year's Winterfest. The next joint meeting of LDCI with LCC and LCA is due later this month and a volunteer is sought to attend on behalf of the CC. Project Officer is ensuring all agencies are invited to the next Resilience Group meeting which will seek to establish the siting of the emergency phone in the community centre.

Item 6. CALL. Nothing further this month.

Item 7. Financial report. Treasurer's Account balance stands at £3,045.03 reflecting receipt of the annual admin grant from THC. The balances in the Windfarm Account and Project Account remain unchanged from the last report.

Item 8. Planning applications. Two applications locally noted but no objections raised. The weekly list is still not coming to JN. LM will attempt to reinstate the sending of the list to JN. **LM Action.**

Item 9. Community Council vacancy. CCs will continue to seek another member from within the community. **Action All.** LM advised that THC is looking at ways to give greater support to CCs; one suggestion might be to have people join for the duration of projects with which they involved, another is perhaps to invite CC members to attend relevant THC meetings to promote a better understanding in shared issues. LM will keep CC informed. **LM Action.** JY stated that the public is not aware that the CC has no funds to get things done, but high expectations remain that once reported to a CC member issues can be corrected.

Item 9. Windfarms. The Altnaharra proposal has been approved with the appeal window closing on September 8th.

Item 11. Correspondence. (1) Letter received from Rotary Clubs East Sutherland (RCES) regarding the reinstatement of the maze at Ferrycroft with provision of a bench. Thanks will be sent. **MG Action.** (2) Ward Manager Garry Cameron has advised regarding the changes to the provision of dog waste bins.

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) CC Logo. EP is happy to design a logo for the CC when time allows. (2) Snow ploughs. SA has heard that THC is considering reducing the number of Lairg based vehicles from three to two. This is unacceptable as many essential routes will remain impassable if not cleared of heavy snow. LM and HMN are both arguing the case with THC. CC will write to William Gilfillan, Director of Roads. **MG Action.** (3) Historic map of Lairg. EP advised that 1800 copies of the map have been distributed and the map has been well received and used by both locals and visitors. The plaque for the Gruids Marriage Stone should be in place in October thanks to the History Society. The ground around the stone may require some clearing to show the stone to good advantage. (4) JY asked if there was any sign of the cones opposite the chemist shop being removed or is the drainage problem a long-term issue. AMK reported blocked drainage at the back of the hall which could lead to internal damage, with the library also threatened. SA will take both issues to John Clark, Roads Department. **SA Action.** (5) JY commended Highlife Highland for the activity day held during the summer and suggested that more of this type of event should be held. The admission was perhaps expensive but discounted to Highlife Highland members. (6) AMK asked if there was any outcome of Cllr Morrison's efforts regarding the

drainage issues at Lairg graveyard. Lairg Estate gave permission for THC to deal with this but meantime pumps are often still operating during interments and water can be seen lying in newly prepared graves; both situations are unacceptable. LM will follow this up. **LM Action.** (7) LM advised that THC is due to discuss the present arrangements for Ward Managers which may lead to changes. Garry Cameron is still in temporary post for this Ward. She will keep CC informed. **LM Action.** (8) Appoint new TECS liaison rep. Until recently CC has always had a designated contact point for these issues. This should be re-instated at next meeting. **Agenda item.**

Item 15. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th October 2017 at 7.30pm in the Lairg Community Centre.

Item 16. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. In private session, an application by the Friends of Bradbury Centre was awarded £485 towards music therapy and reflexology sessions. Application to the Micro Grant by Lairg Baby and Toddler Group was awarded £200 towards renewing essential craft materials. This award closes the Micro Grant meantime until further funding is received from the developer.

Meeting closed 8.55pm.