

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 1st March 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Jeff Norrie, Chair (JN), Sandy Allison, (SA), John Sutherland (JS), Louise Skinner (LS)

Apologies: Andrew MacKay, Vice Chair/Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young (JY), Iain Mackay (IM), Highland Councillor Hugh Morrison (HMN)

Police Scotland: PCs Angus Morrison and Steve MacKenzie

Also present: Martin, Barbara and Mollie Clyne, Morag and Leila Dalton till 7.40pm, Sanna MacLeod (SM) till 8pm, Magda MacDonald (MM) and Charlie Smith (CS) both LDCI till 8.40pm

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 which included six incidents – one child protection issue, one suspicious person/vehicle, one littering, one vulnerable person and two of speeding. PC Morrison confirmed that the vulnerable person case was dealt with and is now closed. The officers left at 7.35pm having been made aware of the 8pm start time on 5th April.

Item 2. Saltire Awards. JN invited SM to give a brief outline of the work done by the two recipients present in connection with these awards. Both Mollie Clyne and Fiona Dalton have worked in Lairg Library on the Summerteen Volunteer programme, Mollie for the last two summers and Fiona for one. Both girls have proved to be of great help to the staff and customers of the library, improving their own skills in communication and customer services. JN then made the presentation to Mollie who gained three awards. Leila Dalton accepted the certificate on behalf of her sister Fiona. SM confirmed that it is hoped this scheme will continue as it is very beneficial in improving life-skills for the youngsters involved.

Item 3. Adoption of Minutes of February meeting. The Minutes of the February meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Louise Skinner; seconded: John Sutherland.

Item 4. Matters arising. (1) Ferrycroft paths. JN will continue to monitor this situation. No change this month. **Agenda item/JN Action.** **(2) Bird Hide.** A letter has been received from THC indicating that the CC is entitled to 100% relief on the rateable value of the Hide which clearly means that the CC is responsible for it. Taking responsibility for the access path and the maintenance of the structure, the CC will try to find volunteers to supply materials, scalplings etc, and to examine the roof in particular as a leak is suspected. SA offered to provide the use of his digger for half a day's work on the path. CS will try to find out if SSE still operates its volunteer work day scheme, which previously saw another path in village restored to a good standard. LDCI will enquire and report back. **LDCI Action.**

Item 5. Suggestions re memorial seat/other ideas re the late Hector MacLennan. CC members agreed that some form of local memorial should be erected in recognition of the many years of service by Hector to the community and the CC since its inception. JN will ask the family if they approve and if they have any ideas of how they would like to see this idea carried out. A seat, with a plaque, on the paths at Church Hill Woodland was one suggestion which met with approval. JN will liaise with the family and report back. **JN Action.**

Item 6. LDCI update. MM had circulated an updating report, the new business plan and an action plan today; not yet seen by most CCs. The main item refers to the proposed **Care and Wellbeing Centre.** The first of three public meetings was held on 6th February and was well

attended. Athena Solutions has been commissioned by LDCI to conduct a feasibility study and a further survey on care provision within the district is also ongoing with a paper survey being delivered to each household in the area. An online version is available at <https://www.surverymonkey.co.uk/r/Lairg> Surveys are to be returned to Costcutters and Spar by Friday 3rd March. A housing need survey is also being carried out by Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) to assess the demand for extra-care houses. This survey may also help to inform future residential development need in Lairg. Deadline for this survey is 24th March. Another meeting is currently scheduled for 16th March. All survey work should be completed by the end of March with the outputs of the consultants' work informing the Stage 2 application to the Scottish Land Fund toward land acquisition and two year revenue costs to allow LDCI to take the project forward. Following up on HMN's suggestion last month, JN approached the CCs in the north and west to gauge support, but so far has received no response. Similarly MM tried to make contact with KLB but no reply has come from there either. The strategy for funding applications should indicate the need for this facility as a central point of care provision for Sutherland and the north and west. The strongest case must be built to present to potential funding sources.

Church Hill Woodland plans include wooden carvings to be installed along the path as well as at the picnic area at the entrance. Installation is scheduled for 11th March when it is hoped to run a clean-up day. All residents are invited to take part; tools etc will be provided as will hot tea/coffee and sandwiches.

Asteroid Exhibition. Funding has been secured and the exhibition will take place in Ferrycroft Visitor Centre, running for two weeks from the beginning of May. The Sutherland Transport site has been suggested as a possible permanent home for the exhibition. As the only asteroid site in Scotland there is great potential to attract visitors for this.

Central Sutherland Tourism Group. A new group has been established, 'Visit Lairg and Rogart' comprising tourism related members from both CC areas. LDCI will not be heavily involved but will assist at the outset until funding is in place and helping design the group's strategy.

Resilient Communities. The satellite phone has been delivered and will be permanently stored in the Community Centre once a special cabinet has been installed. The next meeting for this group is expected to take place on 21st March.

Business plan. The new plan, circulated today is aimed at the coming five years to 2022 but it is understood that many plans may change/develop within such a period. It forms an outline of what the present hopes are and includes budgets and projections for running costs and project costs. This plan will probably be updated in about three months' time. CS clearly stated the huge workload that is being placed on the Project Officer and it is hoped that further funding will be forthcoming to provide a second person either full or part-time to assist. Praise came from around the table for the amazing amount of work already carried out by Magda in getting all projects to their current stages with thanks expressed on behalf of the wider community.

Item 7. CALL. SA advised that SSE is looking at an alternative pylon route but it is perhaps still not far enough east of crofts etc. SSE have been working in local fields without notifying crofters which has caused difficulties and disturbances to livestock.

Item 8. Falls of Shin update. Ongoing; work proceeding well and on time.

Item 9. Financial report. (MG) A full report was not possible as MG had not received an updated internet access card from Bank of Scotland. This was available tonight. Due to the lack of signatories at last month's meeting no cheques were pre-signed therefore no outgoing payments have been made during this time. All present approved the use of BACS transfers for payments whenever possible from now on. MG will ensure this facility is set up. In the meantime any outstanding payments can be made by cheque. **MG Action.** The bank has

confirmed that the signatories have now been changed to current post holders. It was also noted that correspondence from Bank of Scotland is being sent to two different addresses, one of which being the home of the late Treasurer. It was agreed that one address should be on all documents. JN will liaise with AMK and the local branch to rectify this as soon as possible. **JN/AMK Action.**

Item 10. Planning applications. On relevant application but no objections/issues raised.

Item 11. Community Council vacancy. One person had been approached but declined to take up the offer to join the CC. Other enquiries will be made between now and April. **JN Action.**

Item 12. Windfarms. Nothing new this month.

Item 13. Correspondence. (1) Relevant correspondence mostly circulated by email. (2) Letter concerning THC's CC insurance read, signed by Chair and will be returned. It is understood that as of next March THC will no longer operate the insurance and CCs will be approached directly by Zurich Insurance. **MG Action.**

Item 14. Any other competent business. (1) Right of Way past Ferrycroft Cottages to the Sailing Club pier, running adjacent to the loch is heavily overgrown and the path surface in poor condition. Also the signpost indicating the footpath has been removed. To be passed to HMN and Matt Dent. **MG/HMN Action.** (2) SA complained about mobile phone signal coverage in Ord Place and other parts of the area. He was advised to contact his provider. The internet connection locally is also exceedingly erratic and constantly dropping out. CC will write to MP to ask him to add this area to his already lengthy discussions with BT regarding the dreadful service provision in Sutherland. **MG Action.**

Item 15. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th April 2017 in the Lairg Community Centre. This meeting will commence at 8pm following a private meeting at 7pm for the CC with Foundation Scotland.

Item 16. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. In private session an application by LDCI was awarded £2,000 towards running costs. The previously approved Micro Grant awards to LDCI and Sutherland Sessions will now be paid as expected funding has arrived.

MG Action.

Meeting closed 9.15pm