

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held on Zoom on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: Andrew Mackay, Chair/Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), Sandy Allison (SA), Iain Thomson (IT), Louise Skinner (LS)

Apologies: Jamie Dick, Vice Chair, (JD), John Sutherland (JS), Brian Martin (BM)

Also attending: Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), Graeme Ross, High Life Highland, (GR) Kaye Hurrion, LDCI Chair (KH)

Police Scotland: Report by email

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report. This meeting followed immediately after the private annual review meeting for the Lairg Windfarm with Eilidh Coll of Foundation Scotland. Police report noted eight incidents – one non-suspicious death, three weather-related incidents/road closures, one planned shoot, two Covid-related incidents, and one road traffic - abandoned vehicle.

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of February meeting. The Minutes of the February meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record; proposed: Jackie Young; seconded: Iain Thomson.

Item 3. Matters arising from Minutes. A reply received from Phil Tomalin, THC Ward Manager, regarding the possible siting of speed indicator signs on the approach to the village from the south indicated that this can be achieved if the CC purchases and maintains compatible signs and the locations are approved by THC. Creich CC is in the process of costing similar equipment for Bonar Bridge. The information they have received will be shared with Lairg and might lead to a joint order if this could result in reduced expenditure. An agenda item for March meeting. **MG Action/agenda item.**

Item 4. LDCI update. (KH). KH's report covered five ongoing projects – Care & Wellbeing project, Church Hill wood signs, Helping Hands Fund, Aires and the Ferrycroft playpark. Delays with the Care & Wellbeing project have been due to changes of personnel within Albyn Housing. A meeting is due to be held with the Scottish Government and THC. Funding is still being sought. Further information on all projects is available from LDCI. Graeme Ross, High Life Highland, attended to discuss the playpark. LDCI is not currently able to take this project forward but would willingly assist and support a new group to do it if one can be established. GR stated the High Life Highland would willingly work with LDCI or any new group wishing to replace equipment, which would have to meet THC safety standards. LM suggested an application to THC Ward Discretionary Budget could be made to assist with costs. GR confirmed that the recent burst pipe/water damage at Ferrycroft was due to the extremely low temperatures. Historically the water has not been drained and heating has been switched on in the centre as it is used 'out of season' for meetings, etc, though not this year due to Covid -19. LM expressed her support for young parents locally to become involved in a new playpark group.

Item 5. Financial report. (MG)The balance in the Treasurer's account stands at £3228.52 with only two outgoing payments since the last meeting, to Faclan Word Service and Zurich Insurance. The windfarm account is unchanged at £3478.10.

Item 6. Planning applications. Nil of note.

Item 7. Proposed foot/cycle path. Talks with SSE regarding this project have stalled therefore the plan has been dropped, at least meantime.

Item 8. Bird hide. With spring approaching it is hoped to carry out basic maintenance to the building and the paths. SSE will be approached to ask if a contribution might be available to assist with materials and labour costs. **MG Action.**

Item 9. Windfarms. (1) A request from SSE to attend a CC meeting regarding the Achany Extension (previously Glencassley) windfarm was rejected. It is understood from Creich CC that SSE is not prepared to enter any discussions regarding possible community benefit, unlike all other local developers. Such discussions are a major factor for local people to consider their opinions regarding the development proposals. Without this input it was considered unnecessary to hear the company's presentation. SSE will be advised. **MG Action.** (2) Sallachy. EIA is expected to be submitted to THC in the next 2-3 weeks.

Item 10. Highland Councillor's report. (LM) (1) £20m will be ring-fenced for roads, ditching, drainage, sightlines, and later resurfacing, etc. Also the Sutherland Area Committee has allocated £100k to develop positive places, e.g. playparks, green spaces, etc throughout the county. Any Covid-related/welfare projects or people facing difficulties can apply to another funding source via THC Ward Manager, Phil Tomalin, or to THC Ward Discretionary Budget. Highland Council annual budget is due on 4th March.

Item 11. Correspondence. All email correspondence had been circulated.

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) TECS. Complaints received from residents regarding Scottish Water vehicles missing the junction to the water treatment plant at Saval and instead taking the dead-end road where there is little opportunity to turn large vehicles. This is occurring in the middle of the night. Appropriate signage is required to assist the drivers to use the correct access road. Also south of the railway level crossing a damaged grating at the culvert is a danger and needs urgent attention. **LM Action.**

Item 13. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th April at 7.30pm on Zoom.. Members of the public with points to raise should do so with any CC member prior to the meeting at which issues will be discussed.

Item 14. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund. In private discussion during the meeting with Foundation Scotland earlier, five applications were considered. Light up Lairg was awarded £1500 towards maintenance and future use of the lights. Lairg Crofters Show was awarded £3186.88 towards completing the upgrading of equipment as per an earlier award in March 2020. Lairg Gala Week was awarded £2000 towards lockup rent, insurance and the projected event for this year. LDCI was awarded £4897 towards core costs for the 2021-22 period. LDCI's application regarding new signs for Church Hill wood was deferred pending more information.

Meeting closed 9.00pm