

## Lairg Community Council

### Minutes of meeting held on Zoom on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 8pm

**Present:** Andrew Mackay, Chair/Treasurer (AMK), Jamie Dick, Vice Chair (JD), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), Sandy Allison (SA), Louise Skinner (LS)

**Apologies:** Brian Martin (BM), John Sutherland (JS)

**Also attending:** Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM), Mark Cummings (MC), Kirsty O'Brian (KO) REG Power Management, Paul Adkins (PA) Strath Tirry Woodlands; Kaye Hurrion, LDCI Chair

**Police Scotland:** Report by email

**Minutes Secretary:** Mary Goulder (MG)

**Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report.** AMK welcomed everyone. Police report indicated fifteen calls received including one phishing/scam (telephone/Internet), one lost dog with subsequent enquiry by unknown person seeking reward, two road traffic tickets, one neighbour dispute, one failure to report a road traffic collision, one breach of bail conditions. Also local licensed premises inspected in line with current Covid-19 restrictions/upcoming festive period. No issues found.

**Item 2. Strath Tirry Wind Farm developer update.** MC introduced KO and PA followed by a background to the proposed development. Difficulties caused by the pandemic included no public consultation but online events have been held along with regular ongoing liaison with the residents neighbouring the development. The proposal is for four turbines with a thirty year lifespan. Full information is available via the website <https://strathtirrywindfarm.com/> where contact details can also be found. The main concern of residents appears to be the expected noise impact. EIA is prepared and will be submitted along with Planning application soon. The offer of a single hard copy of the EIA is available to the CC to be held locally should there be interest in seeing the actual document. There are no environmental designations on this site. The transportation route for turbines will be from Invergordon via Golspie to Lairg. Community benefit is proposed at £5,000 per installed megawatt, ringfenced for the Lairg area only. Further discussions are welcomed if required. The Planning application should be submitted before Christmas with determination expected by summer 2021 leading to construction commencing in mid 2022. It is hoped that the development will be operational by 2023. PA advised that he and his family are moving to live permanently in the area with the children attending the local primary school. He hopes the development will be able to support/provide benefits to the immediate area. The reps left the meeting at 8.05pm.

**Item 3. Adoption of Minutes of October meeting.** The Minutes of the October meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record; proposed: Sandy Allison; seconded: Louise Skinner.

**Item 4. Matters arising from Minutes.** None raised

**Item 5. LDCI update.** (KH). LDCI Chair gave a full update on the work of LDCI over the last few months. Covid-19 has hampered progress on some projects but all main projects are progressing. The Care & Wellbeing Project has received Planning Permission subject to survey requests. Albyn Housing has a temporary project manager in place with recruiting in place for the permanent appointment. Many letters of support were received regarding the station path project. Funding is currently being sought. Working with Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (KoSDT) is going very well and has helped deliver important projects during the pandemic. The Community Magazine is delivered to Shinness, Dalchork, the

village and out as far as the railway station. Seeking funding to continue the magazine as a monthly publication. Activity packs were supplied to sixty-six local children. Other ongoing projects include the Church Hill Wood where the signs are in disrepair and the possible siting of an air/chemical point in the centre of the village. More information on all projects is available direct from LDCI.

**Item 6. Financial report.** (MG) Report not available at the time. Forwarded post meeting it shows the balance of the Treasurer's account is £3553.05 with the Windfarm account balance at £3478.10.

**Item 7. Planning applications.** Nil of note.

**Item 8. Windfarms.** (1) Sallachy. Scoping report submission behind schedule. AMK will report again at next meeting. **AMK Action.** (2) Glencassley will be renamed as an extension of existing Achany windfarm, moving two kilometres from the original site. Existing infrastructure will be used. Twenty turbines of 150m height. (3) Lairg 2. New Planning proposal to be submitted. Revised plan for seven turbines at 210m height and three at 150m.

**Item 9. Highland Councillor's report.** (LM) (1) £750,000 funding is available to Sutherland from the Crown Estate. Criteria can be found on the Scottish Government website. There are a number of different funds also available from THC particularly for welfare issues. Low earners in employment should be encouraged to apply. Scottish Government has £300,000 (approx.) available to assist with fuel poverty – food/heating – issues. Many people and businesses have been badly affected by the pandemic situation and now find themselves in need of seeking financial help. (2) Boundary Commission proposed changes in Sutherland will see the amalgamation of the existing Wards in to one with a reduction of Councillors from six to four. A lengthy consultation form is available online to submit CC opinions. LM will establish if a letter can be submitted instead of undertaking the completion of the consultation. **LM Action.** (3) Three gigantic freezer stores are being established within Highland to accommodate the roll out of the Covid vaccine throughout the region.

**Item 10. Correspondence.** All email correspondence had been circulated. LS expressed thanks from the Children's Xmas Party committee for the recent grant award to help provide gift bags for local children.

**Item 11. Any other competent business.** (1) TECS. AMK advised that the potholes at the road end by the new sub-station have still not been fixed despite previous assurances that the work would be done. **LM Action.** (2) The condition of the derelict Bridgend House (Cottage?) was raised again. Dangerous and an eyesore. LM said the owner could gift it to the community but this is thought unlikely. A formal complaint could be made via Environmental Health. Crown Estates funding might be accessed for an area improvement project. LM will make some enquiries. **LM Action.** (3) Ferrycroft playpark. LS asked what is happening here, only the zipline and four swings are currently in use. THC has no money for new equipment and will simply remove anything damaged/dangerous. A new Playpark group could be established and seek funding to greatly improve and maintain the facility. Various funds could be accessed. LS will discuss this further with KH and report back. **LS Action.** (4) Proposed foot/cycle path. Those on the Community Liaison Group (CLG) are unhappy with the way the meetings are progressing. There appears little interest from SSE to take this proposal further. Most of the meetings are taken up with other business leaving only five minutes or so out of ninety to discuss this. No THC representative has ever attended. It has been stated that the number of participants on TEAMS is limited but others understand that this is not the case. It is essential to get the backing of the community for this project and a campaign should be started in favour of it. It meets many criteria, health and fitness, all ages/families inclusive, environmental benefits, etc. LM will liaise with JY and will also attend the next meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January if the link is provided. **JY/LM/IT Action.** (5) JY queried when the Strathy Ward at Migdale Hospital would re-open. LM to provide NHS

contact to MG to enquire. **LM/MG Action.** (6) JY advised that community groups can apply in the usual way via the Lairg Windfarm Fund for assistance to help cover basic costs due to difficulties caused by the pandemic. (7) It is understood that the new owners of the Lairg Caravan Park will run it as a residential facility with no provision for touring caravans, campervans or tents. If this is the case then LDCI's plans for an aires/chemical waste site could be much needed.

**Item 12. Date and time of next meeting.** There will be no meeting in January therefore the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 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. **MG Action.**

**Item 14. Lairg Windfarm Ltd – Lairg Community Fund.** Application by LDCI seeking funding for the project management of the Care & Wellbeing Project was unanimously approved with an award of £5,000. (JY had left the meeting due to technical issues just before this item.)

Meeting closed 9.35pm.