

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 4th May 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Iain Thomson, Chair (IT), Jamie Dick, Vice Chair (JD), Andrew Mackay, Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), Sandy Allison (SA), John Sutherland (JS), Catherine MacDonald (CM), Steven Maclean, (SM), Donna Gilchrist (DG)

Apologies: Louise Skinner (LS), Outgoing Highland Councillor Linda Munro (LM)

Also attending: Kaye Hurrion, Chair LDCI (KH), Lorraine Boshoff, Lairg Community Association, (LB), Caroline McMorran, Northern Times

Police Scotland: Report received by email

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair Iain Thomson opened the meeting which commenced immediately following the AGM. The police email noted eighteen reported incidents between 4th April and 3rd May: two road traffic collisions, three alarm activations, four road traffic matters, one drugs related call, one false call, four police information, one assist member of the public, one suspicious person and one theft. Locals are asked to be on the lookout for suspicious vehicles due to the possibility of a rise in fuel thefts.

Item 2. Adoption of Minutes of March meeting. The Minutes of the March meeting were proposed by Andrew Mackay; seconded by Iain Thomson.

Item 3. Matters arising from Minutes. (1) Speed indicator signs. On receipt of an email from Stuart Bruce, THC Lighting and Communications Engineer, requesting comments on proposed upgrading of street lamp columns, the CC agreed to make direct contact with him regarding not only local opinions on the changes but also urging that this initiative must incorporate the installation of speed indicator signs on the village approaches. IT will reply and liaise with Mr Bruce. **IT Action.** (2) The new noticeboard should be in place by the end of May. (3) Ferrycroft jetty. The Sailing Club will be asked to request funds for directional signage in an attempt to reduce traffic taking the wrong route in the residential area. (4) Waterside clearing. Lairg in Bloom would work with any other organisation/company. Struggling to get quotes for the work. Traffic management is an issue, especially in the summer months, and appropriate fee would be incurred. Land ownership around the loch is still unclear. Small trees were sprayed some twenty years ago to good effect. The need for this work is becoming greater and should be addressed.

Item 4. LDCI update. (KH) (1) Ferrycroft Play Park. The LDCI Board is still very supportive of this project, but has still not received assurances from Highland Council about its willingness to maintain any equipment purchased. Nor have we received assurances about LDCI's (or any community group's) ability to apply for funding which THC itself might have available, for example if it gets money for playparks from the Scottish Government. As long as Ferrycroft remains within the Education Department, which has no playpark budget, and THC manages and funds all its other playparks through its Amenity department and has so far refused to transfer Ferrycroft, this inequitable anomaly will continue and Ferrycroft will be uniquely disadvantaged. The Board does not feel it should begin fundraising until these problems are resolved. LDCI continues to press THC for a response. A community buyout has been discussed in depth, but the conclusion is that it would be a huge burden for any community group to take on, especially as THC do still cut the grass, provide insurance, etc. (2) Care and Wellbeing. Susan Clark gave an update at the AGM; those who attended left with a good understanding of where we are up to and why a MOU cannot be rushed.

(3) Food larder. LDCI is still supporting over 20 people by delivering food to them from the KoSDT Larder. Meetings held with Michael Sutherland from Cfine/Fair Trade. The outcomes were that with the increasing numbers of people from Lairg using the KoSDT larder that maybe there should be a food larder here in the community, but all avenues regarding trying to find a suitable, available property have been exhausted. LDCI volunteers will continue to collect the food from the Barn. Contributing to funding of the KoSDT larder may become necessary as normally communities fund their own larders. (4) Helping Hands Fund. This continues to be supported by the Robertson Trust. A number of new applications received recently and more are expected as the energy crisis hits harder. (5) Church Hill Wood improvements. KoSDT kindly offered its underspend on the CRF2 fund which has allowed the completions of the shelter. Without this help, or other funding, the project would not have been completed. The Bike Repair Station has now been installed, the carvings are being regularly cleaned and oiled. It is hoped to get benches and tables to complete the project for the school and all other community groups to use. The community payback team to see if they will come and do a day strimming and tidying again. (6) Magazine. The circulation has increased since the school has a page; the library has reopened and also has copies available. (7) Queen's Green Canopy / Tree Planting Scheme. Following discussion regarding suitable land and appropriate trees Ferrycroft land was considered and surveyed by Nature Scotland but this is not suitable for the trees available through the scheme. Nature Scotland recommended small enclosures of suitable native trees. Funding is available through The Woodland Trust's tree planting scheme. Nature Scotland is liaising with the RSPB on behalf of LDCI re potential impact on wetland birds. (8) War Memorial Centenary. Hoping to finalise the plans for the day in the coming week. There has been a great response from different parts of the community offering to get involved, from knitting Poppies to sorting out the order of service. (9) Luch Club. Asked to try to restart the club, replies received from the NHS and THC to say they will continue to support it in its original format. (10) AGM. Held recently the meeting was successful and office bearers were elected. KH remains as Chair, Robert continues as Treasurer/Secretary. Alison Magee was appointed Vice Chair. The Development Office continues working on all projects.

Item 5. Financial report. (DG) The balance in the Treasurer's account stands at £2,456.63. Outgoing payments were for secretarial and treasure work and the auditor's fee for the end of year accounts. These will now be submitted to THC to trigger the annual admin grant payment. The Windfarm account balance is £2,978.10 following payment of the two awards made at the last meeting. Chair has advised Lairg Estate that the CC will not continue annual payments for the tennis courts without an agreement. He will also query the rates on the bird hide. Checks will be made in back accounts regarding the funding from Lairg in Bloom (via THC Ward Discretionary Budget) which has not been spent. **MG Action.**

Item 6. Planning applications. No action required.

Item 7. Bird hide. It was suggested that the Community Payback Team might take on maintenance. Contact details will be supplied by KH. Chair will contact Morgan Sindall and others who may be approachable seeking funding/volunteers. **KH/IT Action.**

Item 8. Windfarms. Altnaharra. Road trials due.

Item 9. Highland Councillor's report. None available. Local council elections on 5th May. TECS. Road chippings have been dumped on corners on the Lairg to Dalnessie road. Stones are unsuitable, too large and too sharp. Recently resurfaced roads require chippings to avoid dangerous icy conditions. Signage is required at the foot of the Torroble road to indicate the narrow awkward bridge ahead. Not suitable for HGVs. Also potholes on this road in need of attention. **MG Action.**

Item 10. Correspondence. All correspondence had been circulated by email. Email received concerning the proposed distillery at Mid Fearn. The CC understands that SEPA and Nature Scotland are supportive of the project and will monitor all waste issue concerns.

Item 11. Website update. The site is functioning well, thanks to JD. This item will be removed from future agendas. **MG Action.**

Item 12. Any other competent business. Lairg cemetery clean up day. Another clean up day was proposed with the hope that it might attract more volunteers than last time. This is an ongoing issue perhaps requiring the creation of a seasonal job. Lochview Training was mentioned and could be contacted.

Item 13. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th June at 7.30pm in the Kinvonvie Suite in Lairg Community Centre. **MG Action.**

Item 14. Applications to Lairg Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. Application by Lairg Community Centre was awarded £15,000 towards costs of the part-time administrator's post from September 2022 to August 2025. LDCI was awarded £5,000 to cover running costs for 12 months. Lairg Gala Week was awarded £2,088 to help with field drainage costs and the purchase of picnic benches.

Meeting closed 9.30pm.