

Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 7th September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Jamie Dick, Vice and Acting Chair (JD), Sandy Allison (SA), John Sutherland, (JS), Louise Skinner (LS) Donna Gilchrist (DG), Catherine MacDonald (CM)

Apologies: Iain Thomson, Chair (IT), Andrew Mackay, Treasurer (AMK), Jackie Young, Secretary (JY), Steven Maclean (SM)

Also attending: Highland Councillor Marianne Hutchison, (MH), Highland Councillor Michael Baird (MB), Kaye Hurrion, Chair LDCI (KH), Alison Magee, LDCI (AM)

Invited Guest: Kate Kenmure, NHS Operational District Manager (KK)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report. Acting Chair Jamie Dick opened the meeting. No police report received.

Item 2. Kate Kenmure, NHS. Ms Kenmure advised that she is conducting a consultation via CCs, GPs, NHS Staff, other organisations and the public as she works towards a new 'Together We Care' strategy. She is asking which NHS services currently work well in the area, which do not, and what the community wants from the services. Once complete she will present the strategy to the Board of NHS Highland. Strathy Ward, Migdale Hospital, has four beds open at present and it is hoped to reopen more. Kylescu Ward was previously used primarily for mental health support but this is no longer appropriate and services are conducted at New Craigs Hospital in Inverness by specialist staff. It has proved impossible to recruit such staff for the outlying community hospitals. She hopes that outreach clinics such as physiotherapy, audiology, orthopaedic, etc can be established at Migdale as things slowly return to normal post-Covid. Asked about the current waiting times for physio appointments she advised that staff shortages have led to a prioritising system beginning with in-patients and care homes. There are vacancies for two full time physios. It is hoped to re-establish wider services for out-patients at Migdale. Several of these are continuing at the Lawson Hospital in Golspie. A new Senior Charge and Liaison Nurse would improve the assessment for transfer of hospital in-patients to the community hospitals. The critical issue remains the staffing shortage with recruitment very difficult. Filling consultant and other posts in Highland is difficult with one factor being that locums are paid at a higher rate than permanent staff. KK will keep the CC updated as/when any changes to services come on stream.

Item 3. Adoption of Minutes of June meeting. The Minutes of the June meeting were proposed by Jamie Dick; seconded by Sandy Allison.

Item 4. Matters arising from Minutes. (1) The new noticeboard is in place and in use. (2) Speed indicator signs. MB advised that Cllr McGillivray is looking into provision/installation of equipment. Several local villages are seeking to have speed lowering measures put in place. Traffic in Lairg has increased significantly in recent years, especially HGVs which often speed through early in the mornings. MH advised that THC will install equipment if CC purchases it and funding is available via the Ward Discretionary Fund. Traffic speed monitoring can also be set up by THC. The CC has been trying to take this forward for over two years, is happy to seek appropriate funding, and MH and MB were asked to push for urgent action to see a system in place asap. **MB/MH Action.** (2) Ferrycroft jetty. The

privately owned boat which has been moored to the jetty for some time remains in place despite several requests for it to be moved. It blocks the use of one side of the jetty for any other users, causes problems and safety issues especially for the Sailing Club and the youngsters attending sessions. MH offered to request the owner to remove the boat. **MH Action.** (3) Lochside clear up. SM has sent an enquiry to the CC with a view to requesting funding to have a reliable company take on the work required. JD was unable to open the links in the letter and SM will be asked to resend. JD then to respond. **SM/JD Action.** (4) Bridgend House. If the property is unsafe a demolition order could be raised but an owner contact would be required. The fencing is not securing the property allowing easy access for vandals or inquisitive children. LS stated that vermin are now seen at the site. MB will take these points. **MB Action.**

Item 5. LDCI update. Report from the Chair. Playpark. AM update. Once the playpark issue has been moved to the remit of THC Amenities Department, plans can move forward. Consultation will end 31st October. Plan is to make Ferrycroft a state of the art facility. The Ord Place park equipment will be removed but THC will continue to cut the grass. If the swings are in good condition these will be resited in Lochside. The Ward Manager and John Mackay at THC have been very helpful and supportive of the proposals. Other updates given regarding the food larder, Care & Wellbeing project, Helping Hands Fund, Lunch Club, Health Walks and the War Memorial Centenary Day. All of these are ongoing with the food larder, Helping Hands Fund and Lunch Club providing help and assistance to residents. Full details of how each project is progressing and how to be involved can be had from LDCI.

Item 6. Financial report. (DG) The Treasurer's account balance stands at £3,309.13 with the Windfarm account at £1,756.06. It has been confirmed that THC will refund Rates Fees paid on the Bird Hide since 2017. Thanks expressed to MH and DG for working through to this resolution. Tennis courts. Further demand for payment received. No update in IT's absence.

Item 7. Planning applications. Nothing of note in this area.

Item 8. Bird hide. No update in IT's absence.

Item 9. Windfarms. (MB) Schedules for movement of turbines with escorts should be made available. Alerts to be posted on the noticeboard at The Mound. Police have confirmed that officers undertake escort duties on rest days therefore there is no reduction in on duty staff.

Item 10. Highland Councillor's report. (MH) (1) Action is being undertaken to remove rubble etc on the roads around Creag Riabhach construction site. (2) New Housing sub-group set up to look at short-term letting control, new legislation and support for those in need. More affordable house building to be encouraged. (3) Recruitment issues in Social Care and Road Maintenance departments highlighted. The cost of living crisis is overwhelming. KH advised that much of the work of LDCI is now helping those struggling with costs. (4) TECS. Very high tree with ivy at 68 Ord Place is now dangerous. MB is aware of another and will report both. **MB Action.**

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

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) MG raised the issue of attendance by CCs at meetings. In line with the constitution any member failing to attend throughout a period of six months (unless for a reason approved by the CC) will cease to be a member. SA will look into this and advise. CM indicated she would accept co-option should a vacancy arise. **SA Action.** (2) It was agreed that changes to the secretariat will go ahead with DG taking over the correspondence while MG will continue as Minutes Secretary, arranging meetings and handling windfarm fund applications. Correspondence concerning windfarm developments is already directed to the Chair. JD, MG and DG will liaise on setting up the new contact arrangements on the website. **MG/JD/DG Action.**

Minutes approved 2/1/2022

Item 13. Date and time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd November at 7.30pm. It was agreed that winter meetings should be held on Zoom and it is hoped that this can be arranged through KoSDT. **MG Action.**

Item 14. Applications to Lairg Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. No applications discussed.

Meeting closed 9.10pm.