



Lairg Community Council

Minutes of meeting held

in the Shin Suite, Lairg Community Centre

on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at 7.30pm

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

Apologies: Louise Skinner (LS), John Sutherland (JS), Donna Gilchrist (DG), Kaye Hurrion, Alison Magee and Robert Johnstone, LDCI

Also attending: Councillor Michael Baird (MB)

Minutes Secretary: Mary Goulder (MG)

Item 1. Welcome/apologies (as above)/Police report. Chair opened the meeting which followed immediately after the AGM. The police report received by email indicated five categories with incidents: concern for persons x 3, assist member of the public x 3, theft x 2, road traffic collision x 1, abandoned vehicles x1. The report had been circulated by email ahead of the meeting. It also requested the highlighting of recent thefts, many of scrap metal from unlocked sheds or buildings. Reporting of suspicious looking vehicles is strongly encouraged and all reports will be collated. Contact the police on 101 or use the contact form on the Police Scotland website.

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

Item 3. Matters arising from Minutes. (1) JY asked MB about the costs of new signage for all the villages affected by the incoming 20mph speed limit. This is a Scottish Government initiative and no figures are available to THC. £7m is allocated for road maintenance, £2m of which is ring fenced for Inverness. Discussion again covered the exceedingly poor condition of all roads in Sutherland though it is understood that Caithness will receive more financial input as it has more roads than Sutherland which can expect approximately £800,000. THC is responsible for all categories of roads with BEAR Scotland responsible for main trunk roads. It was stated that windfarm developers in the area are, and have in the past, improved the condition and width of public roads for access to their developments but that they are required to return them to single track status on completion. All agreed that this is ridiculous situation which should be seriously reconsidered and remedied.

Item 4. LDCI update. (KH) Notes submitted by KH ahead of the meeting included an invitation to CCs to attend a meeting at the Care & Wellbeing houses site. This will provide an opportunity to meet the site manager and ask questions regarding the project and progress. CCs agreed on 20th June. KH will be advised. **MG Action.** Other items in the notes covered

the Helping Hands Fund, the Lunch Club, the magazine, Health Walks, the Food Larder and the Play Park. LS was not available to update on the Play Park project. Further information on all projects is available from LDCI.

Item 5. LCA update. Nothing received from LCA. A representative had planned to attend the 3rd March meeting which was postponed to tonight. She had indicated that she would not be available for this date. As no update has been received this item will be removed from the agenda meantime.

Item 6. Financial report. (DG) The balance in the Treasurer's account stands at £4,576.75. Outgoing payments were for secretarial and treasurer work, accountant's auditing fee, and logo design fee. The Windfarm account balance is £806.67 reflecting awards paid to Lairg in Bloom, Lairg Gala Week and the Badminton Club. Owing to THC's re-evaluation of rates the CC will have to contact THC to reassert its non-payment status. **DG Action.** During the AGM JY donated the £800 which remains within the Treasurer's account ringfenced for Lairg in Blook to the CC for the Bird Hide repair and maintenance project. SM should liaise with DG when wishing to access this donation. **SM/DG Action.**

Item 7. Planning applications. IT listed recent applications within the CC boundaries none of which was considered contentious.

Item 8. Bird hide. This item had been discussed at the AGM. MB was thanked for the award from the THC Ward Discretionary Fund towards costs for repair and maintenance of the bird hide. It was agreed that this work should be carried out every at least every two years with a review at one year. DG to contact THC re the rates. (noted in Item 6).

Item 9. Windfarms. (1) (IT) Most of the proposals for new developments, and upgrading of existing ones, are now covering a forty year period. IT restated his view that Lairg CC should have been included in community benefit agreements for the Creag Rheabhaig windfarm, which is now being extended to a forty year life. Major works will be involved. He proposed an objection by the CC to Planning approval unless the CC is included in all such benefit agreements from now on. **IT Action.** (2) The 19 turbine Achany Extension (Glencassley) application has been approved by Scottish Government. Community benefit will be managed by the Achany Panel where discussion are required regarding appropriate distribution.

Item 10. Highland Councillor's report. (MB) (1) A public enquiry is scheduled for 24th October in Rosehall Village Hall for the Strathoykel windfarm. No progress to report regarding Meall Buidhe.

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

Item 12. Any other competent business. (1) JD raised the issue of the increase in rent to Lairg Rovers Junior Team for use of the gym hall and football pitch. The charge is now £60 for two hours. Cllr Baird requested to investigate this. (2) The mess left in the cemetery after recent grass cutting is unacceptable. MB to ask for immediate clean up and plan for future incidents. **MB Action.** (3) Tennis courts. Regular use of the courts is ongoing. IT/DG to check when the lease is due for renewal at which time negotiation with the Estate should be considered. (4) Recycling point. Once again non-commercial users are being challenged at Lairg's centre. MB confirmed that there is no charge for non-commercial users.

Item 13. Date, time of next meeting. The next meeting will be held in the Kinvonvie Suite, Lairg Community Centre on Wednesday 5th July 2023 at 7.30pm. MG to book the room. **MG Action.**

Item 14. Applications to Lairg Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. Applications made to the soon to be established Village Improvement Fund were transferred to the Micro Grant Fund to enable projects to proceed without further delay. Lairg in Bloom was awarded £400 towards pre-seeded and planted baskets, Lairg Gala Week was awarded £83.60 to facilitate new signage for the Broons' Hoose and Lairg Badminton Club was awarded £250 towards equipment for the continuation of the club. **DG Action.**

Meeting closed 9.30pm.