

GARVE AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at Achnasheen Community Hall on Tuesday 2nd June 1998

Present: Uisdean Menzies, Lady Eliza Leslie Melville, John Bedwell, Einir Hughes Winship, Brian Denoon, Pat Campbell, Andrew Allan, Pam Morrison, Marianne Mackenzie, Sheree Grant, Dena Ross and 21 members of the public.

Apologies: Alex Mackenzie, Lorenza Macrae, Doug Winship.

The meeting was opened at 20.08 by chairman Uisdean Menzies, who named the officers, and welcomed Highland Councillors Norman Cameron and Roy MacIntyre.

The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, and approval was proposed by Andrew Allan and seconded by Dena Ross.

Matters Arising:

Blowbacks - The blowback problem in Garve council houses should now be a thing of the past as all houses have now been finished.

Little Garve Bridge - Uisdean Menzies explained how David Jardine of Forest Enterprise, in partnership with Garve and District Community Council, proposed to have this historic bridge repaired. Grants have been applied for from Historic Scotland, who are holding back on the grants currently. This could be because the proposed contractors are unable to take on the job until 1999, however it is understood that grants are secured.

Unofficial car park A835 - John Bedwell has been having talks about this, with Jim Yuill of Highland Council roads departments, also with Brian Guthrie of The Scottish Office.

Rabbits - The "tame" rabbits from Garve Hotel continue to be a nuisance. It is proposed that another letter be sent to David Urquhart about the problem.

Speeding - The problem of speeding through Garve village, ie Stirling Drive and Matheson Road has been causing concern. Lady Eliza has dealt with the matter, and it is hoped there will be no recurrence. Secretary will write again to Highland Council roads department about excessive speed through Achnasheen, and on the A832 between Garve and Achnasheen.

Playparks - The proposal to move the Garve playpark equipment to the council playpark in Matheson Road, leaving the playpark beside the school free for sports, has met with almost unanimous approval in Garve. David Gilbert of Highland Council has confirmed that regular safety checks are made on playpark equipment, and that the roundabout is condemned. He was requested to have it removed soonest. The other equipment is antiquated (it came originally from Achanalt). If improvements are to be made, then there will have to be a sub committee and commitment and enthusiasm from everyone. Pat Campbell said there will be more help once people know. Pam Morrison asked: "You mean fundraising?" Yes. To meet safety standards, the ground under equipment would have to have a safe surface, and rubber matting would cost around £50,000 while bark would be around £20,000. And that is before any equipment was purchased.

Playparks continued -Councillor Roy MacIntyre said he would ask David Gilbert for costings etc. Both Pat Campbell and Betty Macleod stated that the fence would have to be heightened. Uisdean said that plans need to be made as to how the playpark can be improved, as Highland Council are unlikely to be able to help

Achnasheen does not have a playpark, and this is something the community consider is necessary, especially once the new road is complete. The problem is to identify a suitable area. Ronnie Ross was asked to speak to Mr Wilson and see if there is some of his ground that he might be willing to have used as a playpark.

Councillor Norman Cameron said that when roadworks took place in Shieldaig, the contractors had the area looking like a bomb site, just as Achnasheen does currently. However, it is understood that RJ Mcleod are likely to be helpful, perhaps with earthmoving/levelling, if asked, and the Secretary will write to the site manager.

Councillor Cameron said he will support the project at Council level.

Trees at Garve -After some research, it is understood that the beech trees, which the community fear are unsafe, do not belong to Forest Enterprise, and Highland Council say they are not theirs either. Betty Macleod remembers that the trees were sold to the Forestry Commission when Mrs Stirling died. Highland Council is responsible for the trees around both Old and New cemeteries. The "squeaking" trees by the school have been identified.

Achnasheen Community Hall -No reply has been received to the letter sent about the state of the outside, another letter will be sent. It is understood that when the old station building was renovated to become the Community Hall, (1986?) the Achnasheen community would be responsible for interior decoration, but Ross and Cromarty District Council/Highland Regional Council, were to be responsible for the exterior. Tommy Ross said that the toilets, which are part of the building, although not accessible from inside the building, belong to Highland Council. Pam Morrison pointed out that Highland Council want communities to take over the running of public toilets.

Garve Hall -The Community Council, if they should have sufficient funds, are offering to assist Garve Hall Committee in the repainting of the hall, and volunteers are needed. It is suggested that perhaps RJ Mcleod, and David Urquhart Travel, might assist with the costs. Secretary to write.

Achnasheen Hotel site -The site is unsafe and unsightly. Secretary to write again to Mrs Abraham asking what she plans to do, and requesting the site is tidied up. Councillor MacIntyre suggests writing to the planning department, Councillor Cameron agrees.

Newsletter -The first edition has been well received. Contributions for the second issue are coming in, and it is felt that there should be more copies this time so that people outwith the area may have the opportunity to purchase.

Grass cutting -In Achnasheen is a disgrace. Who is doing it? Grass is not being picked up and some areas not done. Write to David Gilbert. Also, the pond. Who should maintain it?

Finances -The Treasurer reported that the senior citizens' fund stands at £236, while the main Community Council bank account has £845 in it.

Children's Outing - Last year it was a struggle to get parents to help, to allocate a suitable date for all children; in fact organising it was a nightmare - although the eventual outing to the Aquadome was much enjoyed. This year it is hoped the event will take place during the school holidays, and it is up to children and parents to tell Community Councillors where they would like to go, and when.

Public Transport -Visitors frequently ask where the bus stop is, and when there will be a bus. Suggestions that a formal bus stop should be situated outside the Community Hall. The Bluebird bus stops by the Craft Shop. And that up to date timetables are displayed.

Street Lights - Secretary to ask the Roads Department where the new street lights are to be situated. Will there be lights in the centre of the village? It seems that The Scottish Office have approved lights on only one side of the main road, if lights were placed on both sides, then Highland Council could impose a 30mph limit - which should help to cut the speed of traffic through the village.

Phone Box - No light in there - people even take candles when making calls. Contact BT. How about moving the phone box to the centre of the village, especially if, as it seems, it is not possible to get light in it where it is currently situated.

Achnasheen and Garve Railway Stations -Why are there no platform signs indicating "up" and "down", or better - "Inverness/Dingwall" and "Kyle of Lochalsh"? Also, shelters are required for the platforms. Secretary to write Railtrack.

There being no further business, the chairman Uisdean Menzies thanked everyone, especially Councillors Norman Cameron and Roy MacIntyre, for coming to the first Community Council meeting to be held in Achnahseen.

Michael Tierney proposed that alternate meetings should be held in Garve and Achnasheen for a trial period of a year. This was agreed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

The next meeting will be held in Garve Hall on Tuesday, 4th August at 8pm.