

GARVE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting Held on the 7 February 2006

Garve Village Hall

Present: Helen Grainge, Donald Northwood, Jim Ruggles-Brise, Kenneth MacLean, Pat Campbell, Sheree Grant, Alex Mackenzie, Uisdean Menzies Cllr Ewen Mackinnon and 17 members of the public.

Apologies: Lady Eliza Leslie Melville, Ian Dickinson, Marian Taylor.

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting was proposed by Pat Campbell and seconded by Sheree Grant.

The Secretary stated that there had been two public objections to the minutes; the first was from the owners of the Aultguish Inn complaining that we had called it 'Hotel' instead of 'Inn' and apologise were given. The second was from Mr Doug Winship who objected to point one paragraph three of the December meeting in as much that he contested the statement made saying that we should read the constitution, as in his opinion the council was still in place until the AGM in October 2005; at which point it resigned for the newly elected members to take their place. The statement from the minutes was read to the meeting by the Secretary, who then asked other members for their interpretation of the August 2005 meeting where the whole Community Council offered their resignation; the Secretary further stated that the constitution makes no mention off protocol for the resignation prior to election. Other members concluded that they were under the impression that at the end of the August 2005 meeting they had resigned to offer themselves for re-election and that the statement in the minutes was correct. The Secretary did offer Mr Doug Winship the Community Councils apologise if there had been any misunderstanding on the issue.

Matters Arising from last meeting: The bridges previously reported as unsafe by Harry Goudie have now been removed on the grounds of safety, it was further confirmed by a member of the public that the bridges had originally been built by the Hydro Electric companies on the Lochluichart Estate and they in turn had, had them removed.

There was still no word from BT on the telephone service or broadband issues however the secretary had been told that private companies could not use the BT exchange in Garve as it only carried 512K broadband service and did not allow for data streaming.

The Chairman introduced Lloyd Gudgeon from the Wester Ross Alliance who gave a short talk on the work and services his organisation provide. He explained that they work towards developing partnerships to provide

funding for various projects that benefit the communities; these had included the crofting initiative, working together with tourism and environmental projects. There were further projects for waste recycling that included, working with fish farms, catering establishments and hotels. He confirmed that there are still funds available though some of the monies run out this year. They have a Webb site and suggested that if people are able, contact them via this site. Kenny MacLean said that both he and Lady Elisa were members of the Alliance and people could contact them for more information.

The outcome of the wind-farm ballot was given; with the result being 261 forms sent out 201 returned of this 4 were spoilt 33 were undecided 77 for the development and 87 against with 60 unreturned.

There were a number of questions from the public as well as criticism of the system used; Donald Northwood explained that given the time scale and complexity of the issue the Community Council had chosen what they deemed the fairest method which was to purchase the available Electoral Roll from the Highland Council and send out a simple document to give the best information possible. The council acknowledge that no system was perfect and that not all the community are registered on the electoral roll made available for public use.

One member of the public asked why some people had not received the ballot papers and again it was explained that this was due to the Community Council not having the details available and further explained that there are two electoral rolls, i.e. the one made available to the public for purchase and the main one that is not available for general use. The second list is made up of all the names and addresses of people who returned electoral registration forms and ticked the box, for not making their name available for public use.

Another member of the public asked why some people had been sent ballot forms who were not on the electoral roll and was explained that a number of landowners had requested to be included in the vote as the wind-farm directly effected them. Therefore the Community Council found it prudent to send the form to all those landowners who would be directly affected by the proposed projects in the interest of fairness. One other member of the public did not except this, claiming that it was unfair for absent landowners to have a say on this issue and that the ballot was a fraud and he could have asked any of his six girl friends to take part. The Community Council rejected this statement saying that it had done every thing in its power to give a balanced and fair say to the whole community on such an important issue, especially with the tools it had available to them but did admire the stamina of the member.

Mr Kenny MacLean said that having taken two separate votes at public meetings there was no need to take another through the ballot form, yet

the council felt it was important to do so. Mr Jimmy Ruggles-Brise made the point that the Community Council had invited the public to all the meetings, taken a vote, explained issues to those who asked and been more open and transparent on the subject of wind-farms since elected in October then at any other time in the past two to three years when the developer had been working towards the projects. He also questioned the wisdom of a developer who applies for planning permission and then gives a public presentation to the community. The subject was then closed

Financial report was given by the Secretary in the absence of the Treasurer; The War Memorial Account as at the 30 December 2005 was £123.47 that included 13p interest. The Senior Citizen Fund as at the 20 December 2005 was £967.76 from this had to be deducted £695.53 for the Christmas meal and £90.00 for the transport that left a balance of £182.23. The main Garve & District Account as at the 23 December 2005 held a balance of £2345.62 with an out standing expense of £263.72 leaving a balance of £2081.90. There were request for two other payments for approval theses being the cost of the new Webb page and the electoral roll that had been paid by a community councillor. It was noted that fund raising would need to be discussed at the next meeting to ensure funds available for the forthcoming financial year.

The secretary reported that there had been no new issues with regard planning in the direct area and that all the notifications given by the Highland Council represented interests in other areas. Cllr Ewen Mackinnon advised the council that if an issue appeared on this listing then it would be acceptable to lodge an acknowledgement by E-mail until the full Community Council were able to meet and discuss the issues.

Correspondence received included, TFN Paper *noted*, Shildaig Community Council minutes *noted*, E-mails from Robert Barns re employment issues *noted*, J Urquhart re wind-farm *noted*, H Goudie re wind-farm *noted*, Letter from Dog Trust re dog welfare *noted*, Highland Council re community benefit funds *noted*, Highland & Islands Fire & Rescue Service re integrated risk management *noted*, Gairloch Community Council re joint community council group *noted*, Highland Council planning agenda *noted*, letter from the Highland Camera Partnership re speeding in the area *notes* and a letter of thanks from Doug and Einir Winship.

The chairman asked for any other business; Uisdean Menzies reported that the Garve & District Webb page was now up and running and would include a number of items including details on bed & breakfast accommodation, Race Funding and Wester Ross information; he further told the meeting that business could link to the site for a small fee.

Cllr Ewen Mackinnon was asked about the proposed charges that had been rumoured to be proposed from the Highland Council for the

removal of large items of waste and white goods, he said these issues had been discussed but that there was no firm plan as yet. Uisdean Menzies said he was concerned about the increase in fly tipping and produced photographs of the old quarry in Little Garve wood that had recently been the target for fly tipping by an unknown person. Donald Northwood agreed to contact the Forestry Commission to discuss the issue and ask for their help in stopping this practice. It was acknowledge from the public that waste removal was an expensive issue and greater use of recycling should be looked at and that transient people through the area should be targeted to take their rubbish home for disposal rather than throw it out of their car windows as seems the practice of many.

Uisdean Menzies suggested that a ranger scheme be introduced were by a young person or senior citizen be employed to collect rubbish and check on the tidiness of the villages. This was felt to be a good idea and that he should look into this; it was questioned as to the cost and how this would be funded but could be looked into.

Complaints had been received from a number of residents in Garve over the hedge cutting undertaken by 'Bear' and the methods employed as these had left hedges and verges looking more unsightly than before and while the contractor was cutting had failed to place warning signs out; Cllr Ewen Mackinnon would take issue with the Scottish Executive, but felt that there was little that could be done now.

Pat Campbell informed the meeting that Silver Bridge and Wade Bridge was now open and a member of the public raised the issue of the toilets being closed at Rogie Fails which was inconvenient when walking in this area. It was explained that they were closed for the winter due to them freezing up but the Silver Bridge facility was open.

A suggestion was put forward by the Chairman that as an aid to environmental issues that a full range of recycle bins be placed in Achnasheen to make a recycle point and it was generally accepted as a good idea and perhaps be discussed at the next meeting.

The Chairman further raised the issue of the sewage problems in Achnasheen and Cllr Ewen Mackinnon said he had talked to Scottish Water and the Highland Council who have stated that it was a private matter of the residents of Achnasheen.

Date for the next meeting – Tuesday 4 April 2006 at Achnasheen Village Hall
Public meeting to start at 07:30