

GARVE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

AGM

Of meeting held in Garve Village Hall on 2 October 2007

Present: Helen Grainge, Marion Taylor, Alex Mackenzie, Sheree Grant, Lady Eliza Leslie Melville, Donald Northwood, Jim Ruggles Brise, Jean Hollingdale, John Urquhart, Sue Tarr, Uisdean Menzies.

Apologies: Mr R Matheson.

The meeting was opened by Mr Robbie Bain ward manager of the Highland Council, for the purpose of electing the officers of the newly elected Community Council.

Chair person: Helen Grainge was proposed by Marion Taylor and seconded by Jim Ruggles-Brise and agreed.

Vice Chair Person: Uisdean Menzies was proposed by Jim Ruggles-Brise and seconded by Helen Grainge and agreed.

Treasurer: Marion Taylor was proposed by Helen Grainge and seconded by Sheree Grant and agreed.

Secretary: Donald Northwood was proposed by Uisdean Menzies and Seconded by Alex Mackenzie and agreed.

Robbie Bain then handed the meeting to the newly elected Chair; Helen Grainge who began by reading a statement explaining that the Community Council had been elected to represent the whole community and that it had limited powers. At this point she was interrupted and barracked by several members of the public complaining they could not hear what was being said. The secretary suggested that there was seating at the front which may help them hear better; the offer was declined and the Chair was asked if she could speak up. Helen then proceeded with her statement and was again interrupted by a member of the public asking if she could speak up, another member suggested that they move closer to the front. She went on to explain that the Community Council make no planning decisions and have no say in any outcomes only to pass on the communities wishes, or concerns over issues that would affect the community. Helen went on to state that we are all volunteers and given the amount of people who voted, the community seemed to want a council; yet there had been a number of meetings where the integrity of the councillors had been attacked by a minority who had belittled and seemed to be making a concerted attempt to destroy the Community Council. Again she was interrupted and asked if she could speak up. She went on to explain that any meetings outside the normal bimonthly ones had been minuted and could have been questioned; for any group to work together there has to be communication and it is necessary for members to talk to each other and that individual councillors may have concerns and ideas they do not want to address to the public before talking with other council members. She hoped that the newly elected community Council could work together and put to one-side any differences they may have.

- 1) Minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Sheree Grant and seconded by Marion Taylor. Sue Tarr said that there was an error with regards the section on the advert in the News and Views for the re-election. The Secretary said that his understanding was that Marion Taylor who was the Treasurer had been asked to agree the content and spent time with you, i.e. Sue Tarr sorting this out and that the instruction was to print the same advert as per the 2005 election paper with just the name and address changed on the copy. Following this arrangement you sent an e-mail to myself, i.e. Secretary asking what was needed and my reply by e-mail was that Marion had already arranged this and stated that the election form should be the same as before and that the only change was the address, i.e. the Secretaries address. You then approached the previous Chairperson, i.e. Pat Campbell who we are lead to believe re-confirmed what both Marion and I had said; however as Pat was not re-elected and not present we are unable to confirm or deny what went on and must therefore bow to your interpretation of events.
- 2) **Matters Arising:** The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from the housing manager regarding the issue of council housing in Garve; this followed the telephone calls he had received late at night from a Tracy Cummins asking for help on housing and why a council house was being let out while the tenant was away. It had been explained that a council tenant does have the right to sub-let their house for a two year period and that the council allocate houses based on people's needs and circumstances. The secretary was lead to believe that Tracy Cummins had now been housed and the issue of the sub-let house in Garve resolved.

There was still no news on the playing field issue and this had been handed over to the school to liaise with the Highland Council.

The Secretary had also received a letter from Mr Mackenzie regarding his letter sent to the Community Council on the 1 August 2007 which he read out including his reply. Mr Mackenzie had questioned Mr Northwood's use of Community Council headed paper and if he had the right to send the letter as the Council had stood down. It was explained to Mr Mackenzie that the passed Chairperson had asked him to send the letter at the last meeting and as Secretary he had a duty to conclude unfinished business, during the period of re-election, just as members had done so for the past ten years

- 3) **Treasurers report:** Marion Taylor gave her yearly report stating it had been a mixed year and while the Community Council had not been able to raise funds in the normal way due to a number of issues the council had received donations from several individuals including, Fannich and Strath Bran. There had been a total of £1120 raised through the year. The current account stood at £2278.57, War Memorial £125.61, Senior Citizens £1293.34. There had been a number of additional costs for the Community not least for the two ballots held regarding the Lochluichart wind farm. The annual accounts where presented to the members these were proposed by Donald Northwood and seconded by Jim Ruggles- Brise. Lady Eliza asked what the mileage expenses were for in the accounts; Marion Taylor explained that she did not know as this was during Lady Eliza's time as treasurer prior to her resignation from the Community Council and Marion

becoming treasurer. Marion further explained that the accountants had suggested moving the year end date to 31 August each year rather than the 31 March so it could fall closer to the AGM, this was discussed and agreed to leave it as it was.

- 4) **Secretaries Report:** Donald Northwood concurred with the Treasurer that it had been a mixed 12 months, yet he had now put in place the new filing system and archive files and that they were now up-to date following the purchase of new files etc he was further able to report that while the Community Council no longer had a computer he was using his own and that all the documents were backed up on a USB. He went on to say that the task of Secretary had been made difficult at times by the personal attacks and disruptions made by a small minority of people intent on disrupting the Community Council; at this point Lady Eliza interrupted the Secretaries report saying that while he was on the subject of personal attacks she had an e-mail her son had acquired, she said was a personnel attack on her; she then produced a photo copy of an e-mail dated 6 September 2007 purportedly sent by George Seligman from his office and sent to a small number of people. It listed, who he personally felt should be supported in the Community Council election and who supported the community views and those who were possibly for a wind farm in the area. The copy was circulated to Community Council members who were surprised by the e-mail as it bore their names. A member of the public said she was up set that this may have affected how people had voted for her in the election and how did he know if she supported a wind farm or not. Uisdean said he did not think that the e-mail would have affected the way people would vote especially as the list of recipients was so small. Another member of the public said that he was shocked by the content and that the sender had been allowed to use his companies e-mail system for such things and if he had experienced this when he was in practice would be grounds for dismissal. Mr Ed Tarr then accused the Secretary by name of receiving a copy of the e-mail as his name was on it and that the document was illegal and people should be prosecuted. The Secretary asked to see the photo copy and pointed out that he had not seen the content of the correspondence; Mr Tarr then suggested this was untrue as his name was on the document and that this could have affected the outcome of the election and that he had only got in by the skin of his teeth. Donald Northwood made clear both to Mr Tarr and the public that his name was not on the e-mail as a recipient, his company was listed and it would have gone there, so it was possible that they had received it but he had not seen it. This did not seem to satisfy the member of the public and asked what office. The Secretary explained that it had most certainly gone to one of his offices in Bedfordshire and as he had not been there since the middle of August and that he was on holiday from the beginning of September would not have seen it anyway; he then suggested that if people were unhappy with it they should take it up with the originator. Uisdean Menzies said that there was nothing that could be done as it was an individual writing the e-mail and suggested that members of the public take issue as they see fit and that he did not see it as a personal attack on any one. Jim Ruggles-Brise said he had been sent a copy in the post and viewed the document as one person's observation and that the public would not have been influenced by it and that individuals should take issue with the document not the Community Council. Robbie Bain was asked for his opinion and he stated that there was nothing illegal with an individual supporting people or sending out literature and as stated people should take this up themselves. The secretary then said he would try to complete his yearly report that had been interrupted and side

tracked; he went on to finish by saying that the Community Council had overcome adverse conditions and comments updated the administration systems and put a number of issues on a more positive footing and that with the election of the new Community Council hoped we can all move forward, work together, and work on issues that matter to the whole community and not be bogged down on one subject that drains valuable resources and reflects personal interests.

- 5) **Planning Issues:** There were no planning issues that directly affected the community.
- 6) **Correspondence:** Letter from Strathgarve School re Closure of school gate; Noted. Summary Document from Highland Council of Elections, Noted. Minutes from Torridon & Kinlochewe CC, Noted. Several notifications from Highland Health Care, Noted. Letter from Scottish Water re upgrades, Noted. E-mail from Wester Ross Alliance re public presentation, Noted. E-mail from Harry Goudie, re article from Western Morning News, Noted. Notification from MOD on Exercises, Noted. Letter from Gordon Mackenzie re disclosure of who gave him the constitution before publication and Secretaries reply, Noted. Sue Tarr suggested that some of the correspondence could be published in the News and Views; the Secretary said this would be a good Idea and he would drop them of at her place so that they could be photo copied when he had recorded them, she then retorted that she did not want the Secretary coming to her place or using the photo copy machine. A member of the public suggested that she take them down on behalf of the Secretary. The Secretary said he was surprised at this response from Sue in light of the statement made by the Chairperson about all working together.
- 7) **Any other business:** One member said that a letter of thanks and a gift be sent to the Past Chairperson for all the work she had done over the years. Lady Eliza suggested a bottle of brandy; Marion Taylor said that she would arrange gift vouchers. It was further suggested that a gift of flowers be sent to Christine to wish her well and thank he for her work.

Marion Taylor suggested that now would be a good time to discuss fund raising and suggested that Community Council Members form committees for the War Memorial, Senior Citizens and News and Views and ask for volunteers to join the committees, Sheree Grant said this would be a good idea and all agreed. Nominations were sought and committees formed; **War Memorial:** Uisdean Menzies, Alex Mackenzie, Jim Ruggles-Brise, Jean Hollingdale, Marion Taylor, Jennifer Haslam. **Senior Citizens:** Sheree Grant, Marion Taylor, Donald Northwood, John Urquhart, Uisdean Menzies, Lady Eliza Leslie Melville. **News and Views:** Helen Grainge, Donald Northwood, Sue Tarr; Sue suggested Katrina MacKenzie, Dena Ross, and Pam Morrison. Katrina and Dena were not at the meeting and would have to be asked.

Concern was raised over the grass cutting and bushes at the side of the roads, plus the general safety of the roads in the area. These were issues that Transerve deal with and it was suggested that they be invited to explain what they do. The Secretary was asked to invite them.

Sue Tarr said that she had spoken with the Easter Ross Ranger on issues of green space and diversity in the area, she went on to explain what was happening on these subjects and said she would keep everyone informed and updated.

- 8) **New Constitution:** The Secretary said that the Highland Council had now approved the constitution the Community Council had proposed during the last term and made the alteration suggested at the public meeting; Robbie Bain presented the New Constitution a member of the public asked for clarification on one issue and this was explain by Uisdean Menzies that the clause covered the removal of employed persons or members of sub- committees. The constitution was then proposed by Jim Ruggles-Brise and seconded by Helen Grainge and carried; the document was then signed by the officers of the Highland Council and the Community Council.
- 9) The meeting was closed by the Chair and the next meeting set for the 4 December 2007 at 07:30 in Achnasheen village hall.

Foot note: *Mr Ed Tarr has sent an apology in an e-mail dated the 8 October 2007 to the Chair via the Vice Chairman for his comments made at the meeting in mentioning Mr Northwood by name when referring to the possible influence of an e-mail (see Secretaries report item 4)*

The newly elected members had been invited by the previous Vice Chairperson who had been re-elected to attend an informal get together at 07:00 before the 07:30 AGM, so that new Community Council members could meet each other and answer any questions on procedural matters. One member sent his apologies as he would be unable to attend, three members did not attend with one stating this was a secret meeting. Helen Grainge introduced all new members and answered any question and an agenda for the forth coming meeting was handed out. Other members said they were sad that three members did not attend as it would have been nice to meet them.