**Minutes of the Garve & District Community Council ordinary meeting**

**held on 7 March 2017 in Achnasheen Village Hall**

**Community Council members present:** Kenny Maclean (Chairman), Jennifer Haslam (Secretary), Eliza Leslie Melville (Treasurer), Caroline Gamble and co-opted member Moragh Wylie.

**Also present:** Grant Folley (EDF) and Val MacIver (Platform PR).

**Apologies:** Community Council member Bob Moir, co-opted member Joe Stewart and Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn. Cllr Cockburn has provided verbal updates via the telephone to our Chairman who will bring them to the attention of the members during the course of the meeting.

**The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm** and welcomed everyone and then went on to explain that members of the public are most welcome to attend Community Council meetings and listen in to our discussions. Members of the public would only be able to ask questions or raise issues during agenda item AOB (Public) as per Constitution point twelve.

**Declarations of Interest:** None. Community Council members confirmed that they had read all draft minutes, consultations and planning applications due to be discussed tonight before the start of this meeting. For the benefit of newer Community Council members, the Chairman explained that decisions should be based on the paperwork on the table. If an issue is raised during AOB that they do have an interest in, that interest must be declared before the issue is discussed.

**Chairman’s Comments:** At a full meeting of the Highland Council on 16 February 2017, Councillors agreed that the Council Tax would increase by at least 3% from April 2017, the first increase in nearly ten years. 10% discount off Council Tax on second homes would end. 10% cut to the customer service centre budget. Total number of Councillors will be reduced from 80 – 74 at the elections in May thus less wages, travelling expenses etc … (this ward will still elect four Councillors but will be renumbered ward five). All Community Council elections and training sessions will only be available online from now on saving the Highland Council £3,800 per year. A full report on the budget cuts is available at [www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3814/highland\_council](http://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3814/highland_council)

A Message from Cllr Dr Audrey Sinclair … *“Thanks for draft minutes – they must be a record for the length and size of minutes for a community council meeting! But perhaps also an indication of the work going on in your patch”.* We thank Cllr Sinclair for her kind words.

All G&DCC agendas, minutes and dates of future meetings are available on the Community Council website [www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict](http://www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict) or by contacting the Secretary. They are also available on the Achnasheen Village notice board and via the Community Council emailing list. Additional copies of the minutes are available in Garve Post Office so members of the community can take them away with them. The Community Council website still receives around 150 hits per month and we now have 65 people on the emailing list.

**Approval of minutes** of the last ordinary meeting held on 7 February 2017 were proposed by Caroline Gamble and seconded by Kenny Maclean.

**Matters arising** – The Chairman started this agenda item by taking members through some older topics that we had received updates on before taking them through topics directly stemming from the last ordinary meeting. **Canopy at the old Filling Station, Achnasheen** – The Canopy has suffered further damage during recent high winds resulting in sections hanging off. A similar problem occurred in February 2015. The Chairman has alerted the owner to the situation who will attend to the problem.

**Green Energy** – We received correspondence recently from a local resident who was unaware the £250 rebate had ended. This was discussed at Community Council meetings at the time (July 2015) and our disappointment was noted at that time. Our understanding is that the 10% discount off Green Energy’s standard tariff is still available and perhaps “rebate” and “discount” has confused some people. The local resident sends her thanks for our time and clarification on this matter.

**Achnasheen Recycle Bins** – The Chairman was sorry to inform Community Council members that another incident of illegal dumping took place recently. Hoovers, toilet bowls and cisterns were all dumped next to the bins along with cardboard. This has been reported to the Highland Council and the Police with photos supplied. The Highland Council made arrangements to clean up the rubbish which they did a few days later. We thank Katrina Taylor and her team for all their help in this matter. June Ross was unavailable at the time. Community Council members fully agreed that local residents would not be behind such an act.

**A890** – At the Highland Council’s North planning applications committee meeting held on 21 February 2017, planning permission was granted for a new section of road between Lair and Balnacra. Although this road is out with our Community Council area, we take an interest as the road affects both local residents and tourists alike. It was felt an appraisal report on the Stromeferry Bypass would probably not be published until after the Highland Council elections on 4 May 2017.

**Proposed changes to local bus services** – There is currently a bus service from Applecross

to Inverness three times a week. As the service has continued into 2017, it was presumed the contract had been renewed. We have now leant this is not the case. It would appear the service has been running on a temporary contract instead. Officials at the Highland Council apparently wish to stop the service altogether to save subsidy costs. Lochcarron Community Council and Cllr Biz Campbell are not best pleased to say the least, especially as there has been a distinct lack of information! Our Chairman asked Cllr Campbell for an update. Cllr Campbell informed our Chairman that at the Highland Council’s Community Services meeting held on 15 February 2017, the committee agreed to give Officials the authority to receive quotes to run the service once or twice a week. Something would be better than nothing however, this will depend what prices come back. When Cllr Campbell hears more, she will be back in touch. We thank Cllr Campbell for the update and clarification on this matter. The Chairman has asked for exact passenger numbers of users from this area. Cllr Cockburn confirmed that local Councillors have also asked for exact passenger figures. Some Community Council members were unaware of this service. Perhaps if it continues, some publicity would not go amiss!

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**EDF** – Grant Folley and Val MacIver were asked to update Community Council members. Grant started by explaining that electrical compliance works continue on site with the windfarm capable of generating full power at times. There have been two faults found on GE components. This has caused circuits to “trip”. Perhaps something was damaged in transit to the site or not installed properly. Not all turbines are affected and like all new things, there can be “teething problems” to iron out. All issues are being dealt with.

Wildlife studies continue with ornithologists on site. The replacement/creation of bogs and mini dams on site continue to enhance the environment of the site for the local wildlife. The tender for forestry works has gone out, first job will be to fence the areas where planting is due to take place. In the meantime, clearance of the old trees and brash is ongoing moving it to the sides of the on-site roads to make it easier to load the Lorries. It is expected that tree planting will start later this year, due to be completed by 2019.

SEPA/Highland Council/SNH have now all visited the site and they took the opportunity to also visit the Eneco Lochluichart site.

The Secretary wondered if turbine movements seen in the area a week last Sunday were to do with EDF. Grant confirmed it was not and Val wondered if it was sections going to Ullapool to catch the ferry.

The windfarm is still to be formally opened and a date in June has been suggested. This will be confirmed in due course.

With regard to the Education & Training fund, another meeting took place yesterday which our Secretary attended. She felt it was a constructive meeting, more focused on fewer issues and was attended by 14 people. Grant was sorry that information for the meeting was not sent out 14 days’ prior, this was due to illness. The Chairman confirmed 10 days was still better than before and was appreciated by all. Part of the discussion focused on the awards panel. Perhaps it should be made up of one representative from each Community Council area plus five people from agencies such as Skills Scotland, young person rep, business reps etc … It could be up and running by the end of April, quorum five, total of ten on the panel. There is still some work on the application process which Foundation Scotland and EDF are currently discussing. Grant confirmed he was happy for the draft fund framework to be put on the Community Council website. It was also acknowledged that marketing the fund in the area of benefit would be needed. Grant also confirmed that the fund would be reviewed every three years to ensure it is doing what it’s meant too. EDF are looking at opportunities to offer work experience on their sites.

Grant now has a copy of the final report by Foundation Scotland into the activities of the LCT. The report contains recommendations and issues that EDF will discuss with the LCT Directors shortly. Legal issues would need to be resolved and governing documents updated before any money could be paid into the fund such as the narrow remit of what can be funded by the LCT. EDF’s preference is to pay legal costs to get the LCT changed in consultation with LCT Directors, Highland Council, LZN and Eneco. At this stage, the articles are less of a concern. EDF would pay out once or twice a year, nothing is set in stone.

It is hoped the final EDF Liaison meeting will take place sometime in April, TBC. This will be an opportunity to tie up any loose ends and for EDF to get final feedback from the members of the project as a whole. Grant Folley and Val MacIver were thanked for their detailed updates.

**SSE** – Grudie Power Station upgrade works. The mess reported at the last ordinary meeting beside the road and in the roadside ditches has still not been cleaned up. It has been reported to SSE’s head office in Perth. They were horrified when they heard the story and the matter is to be dealt with shortly. The Secretary will keep an eye on developments and keep the Chairman informed.

**Development Company** - Legal advice has been sought on the approved articles, no objections raised. The Company could invest in projects that furthered the Company's objectives.  Any profits resulting from this could NOT be paid out to members, the profits could only be used to further the Company’s objectives even further or help meet the Companies day to day running costs. We thank DTAS for the clarification and help in this matter. The Company is now beginning to be registered with Companies House after the name of the Development Company was approved by them (we had to make sure nobody else was using the name or had registered before us). Company’s limited by guarantee cannot be registered online so this has slowed the process down, especially as the registration form runs to some thirty-five pages. It costs £40 to register a company limited by guarantee which will come out of the community fund. Draft membership forms/Director forms and Flier have been reviewed by Community Council members and will be used once the company is fully registered. An application to the LCT to help fund the new Development Company with a “start-up fund” has been suggested and has already been under consideration by Community Council members. The draft application was discussed and a sum of £250 was agreed to be applied for. Once the board has been elected, they will be in a position to apply for further funding based on their future plans. The Chairman will finalise the application and send it in to meet the next LCT deadline of 31 March 2017.

**HC/BEAR updates** - No further news on **Silverbridge toilets**. They were closed on 25 May 2016. The Chairman visited the site last Sunday to find the six-foot metal fencing still blocking off the car park and the toilets still padlocked. Cllr Cockburn has told the Chairman that it is still the Highland Council’s intention to reopen the facilities.

We note that **verge cutting** took place throughout February between Gorstan and Achnasheen. The brutal way the trees and bushes have been cut back has not gone unnoticed by the Community or the Community Council members. Extreme cutting to the max. As the Chairman noted, it will grow back … eventually!

**Garve Bus shelters** – we have written to Eneco and the Highland Council seeking clarification. Something in writing from Eneco regarding funding is felt to be needed but has not been forthcoming so it was agreed that adoption is a non-starter. We will now press Highland Council to finally come out and fix the yellow shelter that they once claimed weren’t theirs! Martin Macphee has been in touch to say he is still working for Eneco and hopes to start attending our meetings again. The Chairman has sent him dates of future meetings and minutes of meetings held over the last six months so for now, he has some bedtime reading!

**Joint Community Council meeting** – No further news and it is now rather late to be organising a meeting for later this month.

**Fencing in Matheson Road** – the damaged fence beside the football pitch still hasn’t been fixed. Pictures taken by Bob have been passed onto the Ward Manager and all four Highland Councillors. Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn doubts anything will be done before the start of the new financial year in April.

**Proposed Phone box removal** – awaiting final decision by BT however, the matter was discussed at a Highland Council Communities & Partnership meeting held on 8 December 2016. Background papers for the meeting now available on the Highland Council website would suggest our objections to the three phone boxes being removed from our Community Council area have not been noted. The Chairman is looking into this matter urgently and has already asked the Ward Manager to explain where our emails have gone! Community Council members agreed that copies of the emails should be sent to the author of the report that was presented at the meeting and BT.

**Polling Station review** - <http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections_and_voting/718/reviewofpollingplaces> The Highland Council has now confirmed that the new Polling Station in Garve will be in Strathgarve Primary School. As noted at our last ordinary meeting, there will be no changes to the Polling Station in Achnasheen.

**Trunk road flooding** – Bob took pictures of the “lakes” on the road on 20 February which we have passed onto Cllr Greene and BEAR. The Secretary travelled up the road on 22 February and reported to the Chairman that … *there is a rather large lake at the Village Hall, then two rivers across the road between the Hotel and Hazelbrae, but adds to that on the corner before Hazelbrae coming from Garve … another lake!* We note the “Flood” signs keep appearing and the gully sucker has already been. Cllr Richard Greene emailed us on 24 February … “*Had an update from BEAR today in which I am advised that the problem of drainage opposite the Village Hall are being addressed and it is planned to schedule works probably late April or May. Flows of water running from the railway embankment further west are also being investigated”.* We thank Cllr Greene for his update. He agrees with the Chairman that the entire length of railway embankment should be inspected. Bob did notice they were inspecting the railway embankment and in particular the runoff from the embankment in recent weeks. The Community Council members are very concerned about this ongoing issue. It was suggested an urgent on-site meeting with the agencies involved and Community Council members would be very welcome. With cars and trucks now driving on the wrong side of the road trying to avoid the “lakes”, this situation is becoming more dangerous, let alone the risk of the whole embankment collapsing. There have been two landslides in the last two years at this location and we don’t want it to become three in three years. The Secretary will write a letter to those concerned.

**Network Rail** – We have sent a letter raising our concerns about the damaged fencing east of Garve Village, a problem that keeps repeating itself. It was suggested an on-site meeting may be useful between the Community Council, Network Rail, BEAR and the Highland Council. Ref 170213-000380. Perhaps the on-site meeting for this and the flooding on the truck road could take place at the same time? We are pleased to note a new gate has been fitted at the Garve Railway Station carpark.

**Broadband** - The Broadband working group, a completely separate group to the Community Council have learnt in recent weeks from HIE that Achnasheen will now be included in the Broadband upgrade by way of a green cabinet. The cabinet is scheduled to be installed within the next twelve months. We asked HIE for further information and received the following from Nick Scroggie at HIE … *“I am pleased to say that we have reached agreement with BT and BDUK to add additional roll out to our current contract with BT. As part of this agreement it is our intention to install a cabinet to serve the village of Achnasheen before the end of the project in March 2018. At this stage BT has not undertaken the detailed survey and planning work required and so we are not currently in a position to confirm details about the exact location of the cabinet or the date that the service is expected to go live. More information will be available later in the year once BT has undertaken the additional work”.* The Community Council are pleased that the working group’s campaigning along with our own seems to be getting somewhere. With improvements also currently occurring in the Garve exchange, we only have the Aultguish exchange to go!

**Benches** – The benches have already been paid for and are at John Grant’s house for assembly. The Chairman spoke with John on the telephone last Thursday evening. Liaison is taking place and it is hoped the benches will be installed shortly. John’s invoice will follow due course.

**Defibrillators** – a flier was delivered in mid-February advertising the training sessions available. We had nine people come forward to take part in the training session in Achnasheen and twenty-nine people came forward to take part in the training session in Garve (total 38). That’s a bigger response than in the Community Needs Survey for Defibrillators (21). The volunteers are from all corners of the area and range in age. Six out of ten volunteers are female. Volunteers were contacted on 4 & 5 March with the dates of the training sessions. Two volunteers can’t manage the Garve training session so will attend the session in Achnasheen instead. Once volunteers have been trained, the Chairman will seek permission from the volunteers to publish a list of names so everyone in the community will know who to call in an emergency. In the meantime, Barry Peters has been in touch directly with the Chairman to say he is already Defibrillator and First-aid trained and when his works vehicle and he are at home, he would be happy to be called upon in an emergency. We send him our thanks. There will be press coverage in due course once the volunteers have been trained and the Defibrillators are in place. Emergency services and the Mountain Rescue will also be notified.

**Old AGNV** email account, blog, google drive and dropbox have now been closed/cancelled.

**Over 60’s dinner/Community Ceilidh** – Community Council members were asked to think about this topic at our last ordinary meeting however restarting an event just for the over 60’s would be difficult as the Community Needs Survey only showed support for an event for ALL age groups, the last three dinners were poorly attended (2/3 did not attend), little feedback received from the over 60’s after the last dinner and under the Highland Scheme for the Establishment of the Community Council point 3.3 … *“Community Councils must comply with equal opportunities legislation that makes it unlawful to discriminate against persons or groups on the grounds of … age”.*

In light of all this, it was felt it would be difficult to show a funding body such as the LCT that there was a demand or need for such an event. 69/107 respondents to the Community Needs Survey agreed or strongly agreed that dividing factions split the community. We as a Community Council should be holding events that bring ALL of the community together such as the Community Ceilidh’s. Such an event meets Community Needs Survey results and also meets Community Council Constitution objective “Fostering Community spirit”. It was suggested if anyone was interested in forming a 50+ club they should, in the first instance, contact the Secretary who would then put then in touch with one another. The club would be completely separate to the Community Council. Community Council members were asked to think about the next Community Ceilidh for discussion at the next ordinary meeting.

**Police report** – no report received but the Chairman noted press reports that tell us that since Wednesday, 1 March 2017, the penalty for using a mobile phone or hand-held device whilst driving a car has doubled, increasing from £100 fine and three penalty points to £200 and six penalty points. For new or young drivers who have held their license for less than two years and who are caught for such an offence, it could result in them losing their license!

**Treasurers report** – The Treasurer confirmed the figures as follows … Community fund was £1,054.28 minus £40 to register the Development Company = £1,014.28. Community Council admin fund was £421.81 minus £36.99 ink and minus £34.00 Garve Village Hall hire for our February meeting = £350.82. Community Newsletter fund stands at £875.11. Defibrillator fund stands at £13,020.00. Total in bank = £15,260.21.

Community Council Insurance renewal will be £84.70 which will be deducted off the grant money as usual. There were some additional questions attached to the renewal notice which will be attended too by the Chairman.

Eliza Leslie Melville proposed Ann Macrae as auditor, seconded by Kenny Maclean with all Community Council members present agreeing. It was also agreed that the Secretary fees for the past year will be £400.

**Correspondences** received by Email – Claire Blackwell, Highland Third Sector Interface – Strengthening Engagement event; Sue Tarr – Development Company; Tracy McCollin, Scottish Government – Pentland firth spatial plan update; Kerrie Doswell – Green Energy; Network Rail – Fencing complaint (Ref 170213-000380); Maureen Mackenzie, Highland Council – Planning list at 10 February 2017; Q Banting – Draft Lochcarron Community Council February minutes; Kristoffer Boesen, Improvement Service – Tree Charter Survey (Received via HC Policy); Jackie West – Broadband update; Moira Harris – postcodes in the area; Maureen Mackenzie, Highland Council - Planning list at 20 February 2017; Claire Blackwell, Highland Third Sector Interface – Strengthen Engagement event; Cllr Richard Greene – Trunk road flooding; Two emails from Tom Black, Foundation Scotland – EDF Education & Training fund updates; Nick Scroggie, HIE – Broadband update; Lynn Sharp, Improvement Service – Twitter hour for Community Councils (Received via HC Policy); Two email from Dr Bruce Ryan, Edinburgh Napier University – Information literacy research (Received via HC Policy); ePlanning, Highland Council - Planning list at 24 February 2017; Colin Mackenzie, Highland Council Insurance – renewal for 2017/2018 (£84.70); Lindsay Dougan, SSE – Resilient communities fund consultation; Highland Council Policy – Local fire plan review; Trevor Hunter, Coriolis Energy – Introduction and update; Pauline Howie OBE, Scottish Ambulance Service – Resuscitation campaign (Received via HC Policy); Orange – Email service closing down on 31 May 2017;

ePlanning, Highland Council – Planning list at 3 March 2017; Claire Blackwell, Highland Third Sector Interface – Upcoming events.

Correspondences received by Post – one letter from Forest Enterprise Scotland regarding the sale of Grudie Woodland (same information as previous email received on this issue).

We also received twenty-two emails and four letters in the post all requesting Defibrillator training.

The Community Council email service is currently provided by Orange. It has been in use for over 10 years. We have learnt in recent days that all Orange email accounts are to be closed on 31 May 2017 as a result of a decline of users. The Chairman will set up a new email account for the Community Council with another service provider. The new email address will be advertised in future minutes and on the Community Council website.

**AOB from Community Council members** - The Secretary brought to our attention that the SWI will be 100 years old this year. The Federation are planning a garden party in Contin. The Garve & Lochluichart SWI’s ten members are planning an afternoon tea in Garve Village Hall. Everyone in the Community would be welcome to come along and help the ladies mark the centenary. A date of Saturday 24 June, 2pm-4pm was suggested, subject to confirmation.

The Secretary raised the issue of the Postbox at Lochluichart – should it have been relocated by now? This issue was discussed in January, September and October 2016. In October 2016, it was noted that the relocation was *“subject to planning surveys which ensures there are no underground cables that would impact on the installation.”* The Chairman will go back through the files and find the contact at Royal Mail who dealt with this issue and ask for an update.

**AOB from members of the Public** - No issues rose.

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** - Four Consultations have been received since the last ordinary meeting. First consultation received via the Highland Council is from the National Association of Local Councils regarding trees. The online only consultation closed at the end of last month and was intended for individual Community Council members only. Members were informed by email and had no comments.

Second Consultation is from Scottish and Southern Electricity Network - Future of the Resilient Communities Fund. The Fund is a grant-giving fund open to not-for-profit community groups and charities in both SSEN's electricity distribution network areas in central southern England and the north of Scotland. After a successful two-year pilot, SSEN has confirmed they will continue support for the fund until at least 2023. To ensure the fund continues to meet the needs of communities, SSEN seek the views of stakeholders to set the criteria and scope of the future rounds of the fund. Deadline for comments by email only is 22 March 2017. Community Council members had no comments but suggested that if a 50+ club was set up, it may be able to apply to the fund.

Third Consultation is from The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. They are currently reviewing the Local Fire Plan for Highland.  The review will consider the priorities and objectives set within the existing plan and how well the service has performed against them.  The review will also seek to understand areas for improvement and opportunities to change to meet the needs of communities. The review will be informed by a number of different strands which includes an online survey to gather the views and opinions of communities.  Feedback as a result of this review will help to inform the new Local Fire Plan for 2017-2020.  There will also be a further process of engagement between April and June and a period of formal consultation on the new plan in late summer. Community Council members had no comments at this stage.

Forth consultation is from Dr Bruce Ryan at Edinburgh Napier University. Dr Ryan is working on a project to understand whether information literacy contributes to Community Council members work. The main tool is an online survey. The survey is only intended for current Community Council members. Participants' anonymity is guaranteed. He expects to report on the findings towards the end of next month.

In recent days, we have learnt of another Consultation from Police Scotland. The link will be sent to Community Council members to read before considering the issue at the next ordinary meeting on 4 April as the deadline for comments is not until 12noon on 8 May 2017.

**Building warrants, planning issues and licensing issues** - There were no new building warrants to note.

No previous planning applications have been determined by the Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting.

One new planning application has been received by the Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 17/00810/FUL is for the erection of an eighty-metre-high anemometer mast at Corriemoillie Forest. Community Council members had no comments.

There were no new licensing issues to consider this evening.

**Dates of future meetings**

Tuesday 4 April 2017, 7.00pm, Garve Village Hall

Tuesday 2 May 2017, 7.00pm, Achnasheen Village Hall

Tuesday 6 June 2017, **AGM** followed by an ordinary meeting, 7.00pm, Garve Village Hall. Old minute books will be available to view.

Tuesday 4 July 2017, 7.00pm, Achnasheen Village Hall

Tuesday 1 August 2017, 7.00pm, Garve Village Hall

Tuesday 5 September 2017, 7.00pm, Achnasheen Village Hall

Tuesday 3 October 2017, 7.00pm, Garve Village Hall

Tuesday 7 November 2017, 7.00pm, Achnasheen Village Hall

Tuesday 5 December 2017, 7.00pm, Garve Village Hall

Members of the public are very welcome to attend Community Council meetings and listen in to our discussions. Members of the public will only be able to ask questions or raise issues during Agenda item AOB (Public) as per Constitution point twelve. A copy of the Constitution that every Community Council in the Highlands has to work to is available on the Highland Council website.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and thanked Community Council members for their help and support not just tonight, but over the last few weeks. He closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….