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

**held on Tuesday 2 May 2017 in Achnasheen Village Hall**

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

**Also present:** Val MacIver (Platform PR) and Natasha Hutchison (Wester Ross Biosphere).

**Apologies:** Eliza Leslie Melville (Treasurer), Community Council member Bob Moir, co-opted member Joe Stewart, Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn, Grant Folley (EDF) and Fiona Milligan (Infinergy).

**The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm** and welcomed everyone. He pointed out the fire exits and requested mobile phones be put on silent mode. He reminded members of the public that they 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 -** Moragh Wylie declared an interest in the Infinergy project and the Secretary declared an interest in the licensing application regarding Garve Hotel. Community Council members confirmed that they had read all draft minutes, scoping reports and consultations due to be discussed tonight before the start of this meeting.

**Chairman’s comments –** Congratulations to Paul MacRae, Strathviach Estate who recently received a bronze medal for bravery from the Order of St John in London after he endangered his own life to save an injured unconscious individual.

The Chairman attended the Marybank, Scatwell & Strathconon Community Council meeting on Tuesday 18 April 2017.

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 on garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com or at Broadoaks, Grudie Bridge, IV23 2QB. 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 receives around 150 hits per month and we now have 69 people on the emailing list.

**Approval of minutes** of the last ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 4 April 2017 were proposed by Caroline Gamble and seconded by Kenny Maclean.

**Matters arising** - **Wester Ross Biosphere** - Natasha Hutchison has recently been appointed the Project Officer. Natasha has been a resident of Lochbroom for around 12 years and became involved with the Biosphere project after completing her postgraduate studies in Sustainable Mountain Development with Perth College, UHI. As the Project Officer, Natasha's primary task is to create a 10-year development plan for the Biosphere, based on community and stakeholder input. In order for her to do this, she will be attending various community meetings and events, along with chatting to any interested individuals along the way! A Biosphere Reserve, commonly known as Biospheres, are learning sites for sustainable development where communities collaborate to live in harmony with their world-class living environment. Wester Ross Biosphere representatives including Natasha were invited to speak at a Scottish Parliamentary reception recently celebrating the success of Biospheres in Scotland (the other Biosphere being in Galloway & South Ayrshire). 60 people attended in total. Both [Maree Todd SNP MSP](https://www.facebook.com/MareeToddMSP/) and Gail Ross SNP MSP attended the event along with eight other MSP’s. The Scottish Government are supportive of these projects. At this stage, Natasha is interested to hear what people think should be in the 10-year development plan. She will then collate the information from each area before writing up the plan. There are to be short term goals (1-2years), mid term goals (3-5years) and hopefully a sustainable project after 10 years. Biosphere plans have three main functions; conservation, learning & research and sustainable development. Suggestions for inclusion in the plan so far include Hydro schemes, tourism, crofting, fishing, heritage and publicity. Garve is still thought of as the eastern gateway, Ullapool as the northern gateway and Kyle of Lochalsh as the southern gateway into the Biosphere area. Suggestions at this meeting included Apps, tourist signs or information boards, perhaps liaison with NC500 and sustainability projects (windfarms). Parking is an issue that would need careful consideration. Wester Ross Biosphere are keen to recruit new members (not board members, but ‘supporters’ of the initiative) and joining is free. Forms can be found at [https://www.westerrossbiosphere.com](https://www.westerrossbiosphere.com/) Natasha was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7.20pm.

**EDF** - Val MacIver gave updates on this topic tonight on behalf of EDF. Carol Smith, LCT Secretary has been in touch with the Community Council regarding the draft minutes of the Director’s meeting held on Friday 17 March 2017. She writes … *“On behalf of LCT could I please clarify that the comments in the LCT minutes relate only to Eneco not wishing to amend the Articles of Association and the Community Benefit Agreement in relation to the appointed director role.  The draft wording of the LCT minutes have been amended.”* We thank her for the clarification. EDF met with the LCT Directors on Monday 24 April 2017 and found the meeting useful. A summary of Foundation Scotland’s report into the LCT’s work will follow in due course.

The EDF Education & Training awards panel were seeking applicants to the panel. An advert was put on the Achnasheen Village Noticeboard, in Garve Post Office, on the Foundation Scotland website and on the Community Council website. The closing date was Monday 24 April 2017. Claire Green from EDF wrote on Thursday 20 April 2017 to say … *“At our last Steering Committee (held 6 March 2017), members agreed that Foundation Scotland would be responsible for panel recruitment, and that the only requirement for the community representatives would be that they resided in the Community Council area, rather than having a specific connection to the local Community Council. This was mainly to encourage those perhaps already involved in the training and education sector – or possibly younger people.”* We thank Claire for the update. The Community Council did not receive any enquiries into this opportunity directly but it is understood interest has been expressed by individuals from this area to Foundation Scotland. There is still a space on the board for a young person and a Strathpeffer resident. Val was able to confirm that names have already been suggested and passed on accordingly.

The final EDF Liaison group meeting took place on Tuesday 25 April 2017 in Garve Village Hall. It was noted that transportation of the turbines effected everyone west of Invergordon, not just west of Contin/Garve and the regular updates were appreciated by all. It was also noted that liaison and appropriate action thereafter was key to the project. The work between contractor and developer was also noted and commended. Overall, it was felt the liaison meetings had been worthwhile.

On site, general tidy up continues but the chipper still isn’t fixed! Val was thanked for the updates.

**SSE** – The mess around Grudie Power Station has slightly improved. The signs laying on the grass verges have all been collected and taken away.  The roadside ditch next to the Power Station has been cleared of rubbish however, the rubbish is still down the embankment opposite the Power Station.  Plastic bags, cement bags and general rubbish all blown from the site. Val will again contact SSE on our behalf.

Verge reinstatement works continue between Grudie and Achnasheen. The improvement is already noticeable and appreciated. Cllr Greene spoke to our Secretary recently about some other top soil verge work required in the Grudie area.

**Highland Council updates** – **Garve bus shelter repairs** – apparently, replacement panels have been ordered by the Highland Council. No word as to when they might be installed!

**Silverbridge toilets** – these facilities are open again and all but one of the roadside signs has been uncovered.

**Lochluichart roads**– this was last raised in May/June/July 2015 and at the time we were told the resurfacing of the road down to the Railway Station was on the “to do” list by Cllr Cockburn. The road surface has continued to get worse which is now resulting in great difficulty in using the road especially at its junction with the A832. One resident has asked the Community Council for assistance in resolving this matter. Cllr Richard Greene writes … *“This road was in the 2015/2016 programme but because of more urgent repairs required at other sites, it had slipped down the order. It is in the present programme, and it is intended to use a recycled material method of repair which is presently being tested on other low traffic volume roads.”* We thank Cllr Greene for the update. We have suggested to the Highland Council that this method of repair could perhaps also be used for the side road near Gorstan Junction along with the potholes in the laybys between Gorstan and Achnasheen. The local resident has been informed of the above information.

Cllr Greene also tells us that Highland Council Officers are aware of the potholes on the **A832 at the Lochluichart bends** and they, as with other main route defects, will have priority on repair. The Secretary was able to confirm this work was completed in recent days.

An issue was also raised about the **school bus** and the lack of a shelter for the Children at Lochluichart. Funding may be available through the “Safe routes to Schools” program available via the Scottish Government but we understand from Cllr’s Cockburn and Campbell that the application must come from the Parents via the Head Teacher.

The **704** Applecross – Lochcarron – Achnasheen – Garve – Dingwall - Inverness **bus service** will continue! The service currently runs three days a week and there had been fears it would stop altogether. The operator has now confirmed that the Highland Council will continue to support the service but it will only run on Wednesdays and Saturdays from Saturday 1 July 2017. The current timetable is already on the Achnasheen Village notice board but the Chairman will make sure that from 1 July, the new timetable is put up in Garve as well as in Achnasheen and on the Community Council website.

**BEAR updates** – Investigative works regarding the flooding on the A835 at Garve are ongoing. Drainage works in Garve near the Village Hall are due to start shortly. Val is chasing the issue regarding flooding east of Killin Farm and Caroline has the check rail corner issue in hand.

**The Garve & District Development Company update** – Paperwork was sent back to Companies House a few days after our last ordinary meeting. It has since been returned requiring further updates. The time it is taking Companies House to process this application is concerning – three months and counting! However, once everything is in place at Companies House, the Community Council will be ready to start the process of seeking members for the new company. The election of Directors will follow after that. Our application to the LCT for a small “start-up fund” of £250 for the new company has recently been granted. These updates have already been made available on the “CC News” page of the Community Council website to help keep the community updated. Community Council members present agreed that further updates should also go on the website as there is particular interest in this issue in the Community.

**Broadband** – according to HIE’s website - [http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/digital-highlands-and-islands/can-i-get-it.html#](http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/digital-highlands-and-islands/can-i-get-it.html) some properties in and around Garve (mainly Gorstan) are now able to get fibre broadband with predicted speeds of between 15-80Mbps depending how near your property is to the green cabinets. The website goes onto say that i**f you can get the new service, you need to order it from your Internet Service Provider. Fibre broadband is entirely separate from current ‘ADSL’ services, so you won’t just be automatically upgraded.** Please be aware that even once the first homes and businesses in an exchange area can get fibre broadband, it may be some time before it is available to most, or all properties in an exchange area.

A question has been raised about the Achnasheen Exchange. Two months ago, we learnt that faster Broadband was coming by March 2018. Last month the HIE website was reporting that it wouldn’t be coming until July-December 2018. What is going on? Nick Scroggie at HIE has provided the following clarification … *“The information on the HIE website is directly linked to the Openreach website – Openreach tend towards caution so they are saying the second half of 2018. However, we are keen to have the programme wrapped up before then and so are pushing for the cabinet to come in earlier, and back in February I was maybe being a little optimistic about the timescales required to bring in a number of the extra infrastructures. The reality is that until the planning and local survey work is complete and work actually starts there is no date. If you want to err on the side of caution, then go with the second half of 2018 on the understanding that if it is possible, it could come in earlier.”* We thank Nick for the update.

The Chairman noticed on Saturday evening that his Vodafone mobile was picking up a 4G signal outside the Aultguish exchange.  It also picked up the signal in the Inchbae area.  Perhaps this signal is coming from the EDF Corriemollie wind farm? If this is the case, could the signal be used to provide faster broadband to those on the Aultguish exchange? He has passed the suggestion onto HIE and EDF. Nick Scroggie at HIE has informed the Chairman that if you are able to receive a 4G signal, then you can buy something called a MiFi which you can then put a 4G network card in and it gives you a local wifi network for computers and other devices. You can generally buy them off the shelf in mobile phone shops. Like satellite, data limits and costs can be an issue but as always it is worth shopping around. The Vodafone website has since confirmed that the Chairman’s mobile was indeed picking up a 4G signal. <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/explore/network/uk-coverage-map/index.htm>

At the Marybank, Scatwell & Strathconon Community Council meeting held recently, there seems to be progress being made towards building their own wireless solution for better broadband coverage apparently by using a signal from the “Garve mast”.

Now that the local Broadband group have a constitution, the Chairman suggested all further broadband enquiries should be sent directly to them. Community Council members present fully agreed.

**Proposed Community Ceilidh** – “*The Captain Stupendous Ceilidh Band*” are happy to return to Garve once again (back by popular demand!) The band have pencilled in Saturday 19 August 2017 into their diary’s and the Secretary has been looking into catering costs. There will be a stall to raise funds for Lucky2behere and it has been suggested we also have a bottle stall to raise funds for the Community Council **BUT** the ceilidh can only go ahead if funding is found to put on the event. An application to the LCT has been drawn up by the Chairman for Community Council members to review. Community Council members were happy with the contents of the application. The application will be sent in by the end of this week.

**BT Phonebox removal** – Press reports inform us that 72 Phoneboxes are to be removed from across the Highlands by the end of 2020 following the consultation held last year. 98 Phoneboxes which were on the list will be retained. At this stage, nobody seems to know which 72 Phoneboxes are to be removed. The Chairman has made several enquiries into this matter, yet nobody can find him an answer! <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-39564790>

**Benches** – no objections received to placing a bench at the Gorstan Layby from either BEAR or the Highland Council. John Grant has been informed and will attend to the installation for us. We send him our thanks. We are pleased to hear the benches and picnic benches that have already been installed are already being well used.

**Relocation of Lochluichart Postbox** – Jake Diamont from the Royal Mail has been in touch to say *…”The Highland Council have now given us permission to go ahead with the installation of the postbox.  However, we’re now conducting planning surveys to ensure there are no underground cables, water or gas pipes that would be affected.  This is a 20-working day response time. Assuming a satisfactory response, a job would be raised for the relocation with our street works engineers.  The standard completion time would be 6 weeks, but I expect this to be quicker as we’ve prioritised the job, and no new postbox is required.”* We thank Jake for the update.

**Defibrillators** – the second and final emergency life support training session took place in Achnasheen Village Hall on Friday 28 April 2017. The electrician hopes to start installing the Defibrillators this week.

**2017 Joint Community Council meeting** – discussions around the arrangements are ongoing. It may be left until the autumn.

**Public Rights of Way and Core Paths** within the Community Council area – Phil Waite at the Highland Council has supplied a map showing where all these paths are. The map is available in the library section of the Community Council website.

**Police report** – no report received but the unmarked car was seen earlier this evening. Press reports inform us that a biker who was clocked doing 107mph has escaped a driving ban. The individual admitted the speeding offence on 29 July last year as he travelled on the A835 at Achnaclerach by Garve. The Sheriff endorsed the individual’s licence with seven points and fined them £600 as they had a clean licence, guilty plea and the impact the loss of his licence would have on his family.

Further press reports tell us that another individual was stopped by Police at Gorstan due to the manner of his driving. The driver was unfit to drive due to drink and drugs. He was fined £800 and disqualified from driving for 15 months.

**Treasurers report** – In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman noted that as at 19 April 2017, there was £14,842.98 in the bank. Following the audit for year end, our accounts start the new financial year as follows … Treasurer’s account £-26.00. Community Fund £1,073.52. Newsletter fund £900.11. Defibrillator fund £13,020.00. A full report will be available on the Treasurer’s return.

**Correspondences** received by Email – Tom Black, Foundation Scotland – EDF Corriemoillie Education & Training fund update; Di Agnew, Highland Council – Beating retreat details; ePlanning – new planning applications at 7 April 2017; Phil Waite, Highland Council – Public Rights of Way and Core paths within the Community Council area; Four emails from Marlies Koutstaal and Fiona Milligan, Infinergy – Lochluichart extension two scoping report; Quentin Banting – Draft Lochcarron Community Council minutes for April 2017; Carol Smith, LCT Secretary – LCT draft minutes amendment; Susan Gray – Lochluichart roads; Lynn Sharp, Improvement Service – Scottish Government consultation on improving parking in Scotland (received via HC Policy); ePlanning – new planning applications at 14 April 2017; Cllr Richard Greene – road repairs; Two emails from Claire Green, EDF & Tom Black, Foundation Scotland – Education & Training fund panel appointments; Fiona Milligan, Infinergy – Lochluichart windfarm extension two update; Joyce Melrose, Scottish Government – Scoping opinion for the Lochluichart windfarm extension two; ePlanning – new planning applications at 21 April 2017; Carol Smith, LCT Secretary – Application successful; Jake Diamont, Royal Mail – relocation of Lochluichart Postbox; Nick Scroggie, HIE – Achnasheen fibre broadband update.

Correspondences received by post – hard copy of the Infinergy scoping report and a letter from HC Licensing regarding Garve Hotel’s bar opening times.

**AOB from Community Council members** - Following the zero attendance of public at the ordinary meeting held in Achnasheen on Tuesday 7 March 2017, some Community Council members have questioned whether it is still worth holding meetings in Achnasheen. All Community Council meetings used to be held in Garve but a decision was taken in the spring of 1998 to alternate between Garve and Achnasheen. The first Community Council meeting to be held in Achnasheen took place on Tuesday 2 June 1998. 21 members of the public attended. Alternating the meetings between Garve and Achnasheen has continued ever since although since December 2011, all winter month meetings (December/January/February) have been held in Garve. The chairman has looked at the attendance figures of public attending ordinary meetings in 2015, 2016 and so far this year. They show an average attendance increase in Garve (4 rising to 6.5) and an average attendance decrease in Achnasheen (3.8 falling to 0). The zero attendance here again tonight was noted. Bob (via email) noted that the majority of the public who attend in Achnasheen are usually the same individuals who attend in Garve, something which is not shown in the statistics. The Chairman felt the Garve & District Community Council should still visit the “district” from time to time but perhaps less often. A suggestion was made that we visit Achnasheen three times a year instead of five (May/July/September).  **Community Council members would welcome feedback from members of the Community on this issue. Please send your thoughts in writing to our Secretary to be received no later than 12noon on Friday 26 May 2017.** Community Council members will take a final decision on this matter at next month’s AGM.

The Secretary and Caroline Gamble both noted the fence at the football pitch in Matheson Road, Garve and beside the railway below Lochview are both still in need of repair. Both fences were reported some time ago.

**AOB from members of the Public** – No issues raised.

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** - We have received a scoping report from Infinergy regarding their proposed extension to the Lochluichart windfarm. Moragh Wylie declared an interest and left the room at 8.45pm. This meant we were not quorate to consider this item. Statutory bodies have until 15 May 2017 to make any site-specific comments or observations which can include advice on methodology. Fiona Milligan has written to say … “*Our website is live* [*www.lxxwindfarm.co.uk*](http://www.lxxwindfarm.co.uk/) *and the Scoping report and supporting docs are all on there. Community Open Days in Garve and Achnasheen have been provisionally booked for late June and a newsletter will go out by post in the run up to those dates”.* We thank Fiona for the update. We noted the update and Moragh then returned to the meeting at 8.50pm.

Consultation from the Scottish Government - Improving Parking in Scotland Consultation. On Friday 31 March 2017, Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for Transport and the Islands, announced the launch of the public consultation on improving parking in Scotland. The consultation explores how parking is managed across the country, and invites views on how the Scottish Government can deliver a consistent approach to managing and enforcing parking on public roads, including trunk roads, while improving accessibility for all. The consultation is open to all and everyone is encouraged to take part in the consultation via the Scottish Government’s consultation platform, Citizen Space, at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/road-policy/improving-parking-in-scotland/> and will run until Friday 30 June 2017. The consultation paper can be found at - <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/road-policy/improving-parking-in-scotland/user_uploads/improving-parking-in-scotland.pdf> Community Council members had no comments.
**Building warrants, planning issues and licensing issues** - There is one new building warrant currently being shown on the Highland Council website for our area. 17/00848/DOM4 is for the fit out, line internally and replacement of roof at Achanalt House. This related to planning application 16/05065/FUL from late last year.

No new planning applications have been received by the Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting.

One new licensing application has been received regarding a variation of premises licence at Garve Hotel. The Secretary declared an interest in this item and left the room at 8.55pm. This meant the meeting was again not quorate so the item could only be noted. The applicant wishes to amend the on sales hours on Fridays to Sundays from 11.00am until 1.00am the next morning. They wish to amend the off sales on Sundays from 11.00am until 10.00pm and change the premise Manager’s name on the licence. A copy of the application can be viewed at Dingwall Service Point and any objections must be submitted in writing to the Licencing Board by 5.00pm on Wednesday 24 May 2017. The application was noted and the Secretary returned to the meeting at 8.58pm.

**Dates of future meetings**

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

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 closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

 Date ………….………………….