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

**held on Tuesday 3 August 2021 via Zoom webcam**

**Community Council members present on webcam**: Kenny Maclean (Chairman), Bob Moir (from 7.35pm), Sadie-Michaela Harris and co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville.

**Also present on webcam**: Andrew Hughes and Greig Templeton (Intelligent Land Investments Group from 7.15pm until 7.50pm), Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC), Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) and Ewan Bush (TG&DDC Energy Officer from 7.15pm until 8.40pm).

**Present on conference call**: Jennifer Haslam (Secretary).

**Apologies**: Community Council members Caroline Gamble (Treasurer) and Joe Stewart. Apologies also noted from Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.15pm following some technical difficulties (the joys of online meetings!) and welcomed everyone and explained that this meeting was being held via webcam due to the current Coronavirus situation. He reminded members of the public that they were still very welcome to attend Community Council meetings even on webcam and take part in the discussions under his guidance. Those who can’t attend our meetings can, as always, write to the Secretary with any issues they wish raised.

Clarification was sought as to why the Secretary was still a member of the Community Council as she had moved out of the area. Our Chairman explained that following a rule change by The Highland Council in 2019 following their own public consultation on the matter, Jennifer was able to stay on but only until the next Community Council election (see 6.1.2 of the scheme). This question was covered at the start of our AGM in June 2021.

Since our last ordinary meeting in June 2021, Jackie Macdonald, a former Achnasheen resident has passed away. Known to many as “Jackie the milk”, Jackie was a resident in Isle View Nursing Home in Aultbea for the last few years. Our thoughts are with the family. Joan McPake from Garve has also passed away. Joan was often seen walking her dog in The Avenue or out and about on her bike. Our thoughts are with the family especially her brother Lawrence who has been unwell recently. Joy Fraser-Hall, a former resident of Ault Dearg and later Achanalt passed away after a short illness. Our thoughts are with the family.

**Declarations of Interest** – Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in the Infinergy project and the proposed battery storage facility. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris is a Director of the LCT. Community Council member Bob Moir is a Garve Public Hall Trustee. Community Council members confirmed that they had read all documents due to be discussed tonight before the start of this meeting.

**Matters arising** – **Proposed Battery Storage facility** - Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in this project and took no part in the discussions. Andrew Hughes (Press Relations) and Greig Templeton (Planning Manager) at Intelligent Land Investments Group based in Hamilton explained that their proposed project would connect into the existing Grudie Bridge electricity substation.  The site would be on land 705metres north west of Grudie Cottage (up the Fannich Road). The project could store up to 49.9MW comprising fenced compound of battery containers, power converters, transformers, security cameras, access track, drainage pond and be surrounded by landscaping and new planting of native trees. The idea is that there will be power in the system when the turbines don’t turn or the hydro scheme is low of water, a backup system to keep the lights on. The developer has set up a website with information about the project. This is just a consultation and engagement process at this stage and a planning application would not be submitted before October 2021 at the earliest.  A grid connection date would also determine when the proposed project was built. Events are proposed to present the project, engage with the community, answer questions and seek feedback.  In normal times this would have been held in a local venue.  Given the Covid situation, this will instead be an online interactive event to be held on Tuesday 10 August 2021 6.00pm – 8.00pm at <https://meetings.ili-energy.com/lochluichart-energy-storage-project/> A screening report and pre-planning application notice have been lodged on The Highland Council’s planning website for this proposal and an advert placed in the newspapers. The company are happy to help with any other projects the community has in mind and examples elsewhere include water taxis and improvements to existing walks/tracks. Discussion turned to EVC’s that have been an ongoing agenda issue for this community for some time. The latest update from The Highland Council is … ***Achnasheen******EVC*** *– The Highland Council did look at the old School site in Achnasheen as a possible location, unfortunately the access to the school (and a few other factors) has ruled that option out.* ***Garve EVC*** *– The Highland Council haven’t been able to proceed with Garve as land ownership records have not been traced. The Highland Council are now in the process of preparing a briefing note for senior managers to lay out clearly the history of the jobs at the two locations and the options they’ve exhausted …* It was felt perhaps the time had come to look at this out with The Highland Council scheme also, could the local power network support these machines and air source heat pumps? Way leaves were still an ongoing issue in Achnasheen. Ewan Bush, TG&DDC Energy Officer recently met with SSE and noted that local issues would need addressing eventually. Andrew and Greig were thanked for their time and it was hoped they could join us again at a future Community Council meeting.

Community Council member Bob Moir joined the meeting at 7.35pm.

**Infinergy** – Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in this project and took no part in the discussions. [www.lxxwindfarm.co.uk/](http://www.lxxwindfarm.co.uk/) Nick Sage has been in touch to say … “*The new planning application for Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II is to increase the tip heights of the consented wind farm, from 133m to 149.9m tip height. This means a larger bladed model turbine and increase in MW output, and small changes in foundation and crane pad size. In all other respects the new application remains the same as the consented wind farm, i.e., turbines and related infrastructure remain in the same positions. Applicant will need to complete additional surveys this year in respect of bats and birds, this might mean additional environmental information is submitted before the end of the year subject to discussions & agreement with NatureScot and The Highland Council”.* We thank Nick for his update. Details on planning application 21/02985/FUL are noted later in this minute.

Andrew Hughes and Greig Templeton (Intelligent Land Investments Group) left the meeting at 7.50pm.

**Approval of draft minutes** of the last ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 1 June 2021 via webcam were proposed without amendment by Sadie-Michaela Harris and seconded by Bob Moir. Minutes are available at Garve Post Office, Achnasheen Village Noticeboard, on our website or via email. Minutes will be signed by our Chairman and Secretary in due course.

**Matters arising continued … Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – A few days after our last ordinary meeting, the Secretary met up with one of the **Seasonal Access Rangers** to show them first hand our “hotspots” including Loch Chullin and Little Garve. He was already aware of several of the locations and will keep an eye on things. The Secretary found all dealings with the Access Rangers pleasant and helpful. Our thanks to the Secretary for her help in this matter and to the Garve Litter Busters Group who keep in touch with us and have been out and about across the area doing their bit! **Fly tipping** incidents should be reported on <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1054/rubbish_and_recycling/89/litter_and_fly-tipping>

In other news, reports of **dead Deer and missing signs** have all been reported to The Highland Council. **Grass verge** cutting took place between Gorstan and Achnasheen during w/c 7 June 2021. **Potholes** have been filled on the Strathgarve road leading up to Wade's Bridge in early July 2021. Little Garve to Silverbridge potholes are on the list to be done. The re-occurring pothole on the Corriemoillie straight has also been highlighted once again. Potholesshould be reported directly to The Highland Council at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/96/road_faults> **Surface dressing works** took place south of Achnasheen on the A890 during w/c 12 July 2021. We are very grateful to Mackenzie Sutherland and his teams for all their help, especially as some members of the team only work 4 days per week at the moment. **Stromeferry Bypass - new start date – Friday 10 September 2021.** Geo-Rope Ltd has been awarded the contract for the next phase of maintenance works at the Stromeferry Bypass. They will move onto site to set up from Saturday 4 September 2021. The bulk of the works are located high up the slopes above the road which means there will be limited traffic disruption and no road to rail diversions which we have had in previous years. Traffic management will still be required for key elements of work and therefore some queuing may be expected. Community Council member Bob Moir asked about the **dip in the road** in Stirling Drive and the **white lines** we had requested before. We will seek an update.

**Traffic Survey** - the requested traffic survey’s for Lochluichart and Achnasheen, which this Community Council requested over a year ago, are still awaiting to be completed by The Highland Council’s technical team. As there are only two members of The Highland Council’s staff that can do the surveys, they are currently overwhelmed with work so it is not possible to say when this work will be done however, we are on the list. Legally, road speed restrictions can not be altered until a survey has been completed first. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris wondered if The Highland Council planned to train more staff or could private funding be sourced to commission the work? *(Post meeting note – The Highland Council are looking at taking in agency workers to try and get through the list of around 90 communities wanting a speed survey carried out).* In other news, a suggestion has been received as to how **“Smiley Signs”** could be purchased and installed in the community. We have passed the suggestion onto the appropriate group to consider as Community Councils have never been advised to own assets. Perhaps smiley signs could be part of the Sustaining Choices Project final outcome?

**Lochluichart speed cameras** – The Lochluichart Estate has privately funded two speed cameras in the Lochluichart area. They have already seen a lorry travelling at 72mph! It was suggested that the Police may not accept the evidence from the cameras as they are not calibrated to legal specifications unlike police traffic cameras. That said, they may still be interested and possibly either have a word with the driver or pass their details to the traffic commissioners. It was felt that to obtain that speed they will probably have tampered with the tachograph and most certainly the vehicle speed limiter, both of which are prosecutable. It was agreed the video should be handed over to the Police to view. Lochluichart Estate are happy for the speed cameras to be used in other parts of the community from time to time. Our thanks to them for such a generous gift to the community. There are also press reports on speed cameras - <https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/police-scotland-to-target-speeding-motorists-246102/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook> *(also see Police report below).* We were also shocked to learn that today a **cyclist was knocked off** their bike by a passing car in the Lochluichart area. The driver failed to stop.

The Highland Council notes that **residents should report issues directly to them** by calling The Highland Council’s Call Centre on 01349 886606 or via [www.highland.gov.uk/report](http://www.highland.gov.uk/report) In all cases, you will be given a reference number. The Highland Council also appreciate photos showing the actual problem. Highland Council Councillors can be contacted directly. Contact details are available on The Highland Council website. Our nearest Highland Council Councillor is Ian.Cockburn.cllr@highland.gov.uk

**Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via <https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/> Community Council member Bob Moir noted a verge marker east of Garve on the A835 had been knocked over. It wasn’t the best place to stop to photograph the problem though. *(Post meeting note - the verge marker on the trunk road has been moved so perhaps BEAR have already seen the problem).*

**Network Rail** – the **broken fence** east of Garve was reported after our last ordinary meeting and repaired. The work on **accident prevention for cyclists** at Garve Level Crossing appears complete following recent works on the crossing. Network Rail were going to install VeloSTRAIL matting at the crossing following the number of cyclists falling at the crossing over recent years. Transport Scotland were funding these works, Network Rail would undertake the works on their behalf. “Cyclists Dismount” signs remain in place and it should be noted that it will still be mandatory for cyclists to dismount and walk over the crossing (see Highway Code rule 82).

**Achnasheen Post Office Outreach Service** re-opened on Tuesday 15 June 2021 from 2.30pm until 4.30pm in Achnasheen Village Hall and has been open every Tuesday since.  **Garve Post Office** remains open every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 3.30pm until 5.30pm. It was noted that with the closure of the TSB branch in Dingwall, TSB customers can use the Post Office for their banking.

**Benches** – the picnic benches in Achnasheen and benches in Garve which were purchased in late 2016 and gifted to the landowners as Community Councils have never been advised to own assets, were in need of a little TLC. Community Council members spent to last few weeks attending to them, our Chairman thanked all involved. It was noted these benches in both Garve and Achnasheen are well used!

**TG&DDC updates** –Sue Tarr and Tina Hartley from the Development Company were able to update us as follows … The Development Company and indeed this area were lucky to be chosen as 1 of 9 locations across Scotland to take part in the **Sustaining Choices Project** funded through Paths for All’s Smarter Choices Smarter Places fund.  It aims to develop an increased evidence base to support sustainable transport interventions and build engagement capacity at local level. It is hoped an online meeting can take place next week with community stakeholders such as the Community Council to review feedback received and prioritise the issues raised.

**Garve Hotel land** – The Development Company in conjunction with community stakeholders are discussing the possibility of purchasing some of the land around the Garve Hotel for community use as indicated in the Community Development Plan. Several issues including access to the plots and pre-planning advice is currently being sought. More details at <https://garve.org/community-land-ownership-aug21>

**Achnasheen Amenities** is not part of the Development Company or the Community Council.

**Community open day** took place on Saturday 24 July 2021 at Ledgowan Hotel. 54 people attended and the sunny weather helped to make it a great day. Full story at <https://garve.org/community-event> It is hoped another open day can take place later this month and possibly another event in September, details tbc.

**Green leaves group** – the Development Company have been awarded £4,885 by the Think Health, Think Nature group to run a local green health project. The event will look at the health benefits of working outdoors with nature and gives you the opportunity to not only plant winter and spring bulbs for community planters, but also to get a taster of other well-being activities including activities for the kids. The group need broken crockery! More details at <https://garve.org/broken-crockery>

**The “On Ya Bike” group** are looking at various ways to help cyclists in the area. Their main aim is an all-access path from Garve to Contin. They are also looking at other projects including bike racks. Is there a need for bike rakes in the area? It was felt train/bus stations, Halls and playparks might be good places.

Sue Tarr and Tina Hartley were both thanked for their updates.

From Contin Community Council’s minutes of their meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2021 … “***Parking at Rogie Falls -*** *Forestry and Land Scotland will be charging for parking at Rogie Falls, with the money going towards the upkeep of the parking area and the toilets”.* On making our own enquiries, it seems they hope to install a parking meter later this year. Contin Community Council are already very aware of the rubbish being dumped in the area and of cars pulling straight out onto the A835 from the Rogie Falls car park. We are happy to help support them address these issues if necessary.

**Garve & District Community Council currently has a vacancy on the Community Council.**  The Community Council members consider it to be very important to have as broad a representation of our community as possible, as we cover a wide variety of community issues and to do this well, we need members from all corners of our large area.  We usually meet on the first Tuesday of the month.  If you are aged 16 or over, live in the Community Council area and are on the electoral roll and would like to be considered for co-option onto the Community Council, please email garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com with your name and contact details.  Your nomination will be considered by Community Council members at their next ordinary meeting. This update has already appeared on our website.

**Police report** – no formal report received but several cars were stopped for speeding by marked and unmarked Police cars on several occasions since our last ordinary meeting in the area including in Achnasheen itself. As reported at previous Community Council meetings, anyone who witnesses speeding or inappropriate speed is asked by the Police to **call them directly on 101** at the time of the incident and make a witness statement.  Video or photo evidence is also welcomed by the Police. Achnasheen Amenities, who run the Village Hall in Achnasheen will support the Community Council on this matter by encouraging anyone who contacts them about traffic issues to report the concerns **directly to the Police by calling 101.** We welcome and appreciate such help. Phoning the local Police Station is not the way to report issues anymore, as has been the case for some time.

Ewan Bush (TG&DDC Energy Officer) left the meeting at 8.40pm.

**Treasurer’s report** – In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman updated Community Council members. The Bank balance currently stands at £2,303.78 although most of that is ring-fenced (Treasurer’s fund is less than £100.00). This is less £60.00 from last time as the Auditor has now been paid. The Highland Council yearly grant of £445.20 appears not to have been received yet. We will check to see if it has been paid out yet. *(Post meeting note – The Highland Council grant was signed off by the Senior Ward Manager on Wednesday 4 August 2021 so should be on its way!).*

**AOB from Community Council members** – no issues raised by those present.

**AOB from members of the public** – no issues raised by those present.

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – we have received notice of one screening report - 21/02940/SCRE - Energy Storage facility of up to 49.9 megawatts output comprising fenced compound of battery containers, power converters, transformers, security cameras, access track, drainage pond on land 705metres north west of Grudie Cottage, Grudie Bridge. Community Council members had no comments.

All Highland Council consultations are available at <http://consult.highland.gov.uk/portal> All Scottish Government consultations are available at <https://consult.gov.scot/consultation_finder>

**Building warrants, planning issues and licensing issues** - There is one new building warrant currently being shown on The Highland Council website for our area. 21/01142/DOM2 is for a new dwelling house with associated drainage and site access on land 45metres south east of Hillcrest, Gorstan.

One previous planning application has been determined by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 21/01163/FUL was the proposed siting of a holiday letting unit with associated shed structures on land 20metres south west of Ghillies Rest (Old Post Office) in Achnasheen. Planning permission has been granted by the Case Officer with four conditions. More details are available on The Highland Council’s planning website. This update as already appeared on our website.

Two new planning applications have been received by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 21/02985/FUL is in regard to the already consented Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II. This application is a slight redesign - erection and operation of a windfarm for a period of 40 years, comprising of 5 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building and ancillary infrastructure on land 1.9km south west of Aultguish Inn. Community Council members were informed by email and raised no objections. This update has already appeared on our website.

21/03360/FUL is the proposed erection of a house and workshop on land 75metres south west of Strathmore House. Community Council members were informed by email and raised no objections. This update has already appeared on our website.

We have also received notice of one Prior Notification Order - 21/03305/PNO is a peatland restoration plan above Loch Glascarnoch on the Strathvaich Estate. Community Council members raised no questions or objections.

All planning applications can be viewed at [www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning\_-\_applications\_warrants\_and\_certificates/143/planning\_permission/4](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/143/planning_permission/4)

**Dates of future meetings**

*(Ordinary meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of every month unless stated otherwise)*

Tuesday 7 September 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 5 October 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 2 November 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 7 December 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

January 2022 – no meeting

Tuesday 1 February 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 1 March 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 5 April 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 3 May 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 7 June 2022, **AGM** followed by an ordinary meeting, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Our Chairman hoped that, in time, we may be able to hold some Community Council meetings in person with winter month meetings held on webcam but time will tell depending on official guidance which is yet to be published.

Members of the public are very welcome to attend Community Council meetings and take part in the discussions under the guidance of the Chairman. A copy of the Constitution that every Community Council in the Highlands has to work to is available on The Highland Council website - [www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/21179/scheme\_of\_establishment\_final\_sept\_2019](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/21179/scheme_of_establishment_final_sept_2019)

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.  He also thanked Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris for hosting the Zoom webcam session.  The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

[www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict](http://www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict)

garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com