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

**held on Tuesday 2 February 2021 via Zoom webcam**

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

**Also present on webcam**: Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC), Yvonne Boa (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC), Ewan Bush (Energy Officer, TG&DDC – 7.00pm until 7.20pm), and two members of the public.

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

**Apologies**: Community Council member Joe Stewart, Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn and Fiona Milligan & Nick Sage (Infinergy).

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm 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. Community Council members were saddened to learn that Dylan McWhinney from Inchbae passed away in December 2020. Our thoughts are with the Laura, Abby and the wider family.

**Declarations of Interest** – Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in the Infinergy project and the Drovers Road. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris is a Director of the LCT.

**Approval of draft minutes** of the last ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 1 December 2020 via webcam were proposed without amendment by Sadie-Michaela Harris and seconded by Hamish Leslie Melville. 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** – **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/) Infinergy held their two webinar sessions on Thursday 3 December 2020 as planned. One member of the community joined them at their 2.00pm session, six members of the community joined the 7.00pm session. Nick Sage at Infinergy updated us the following day as follows … *"Following the meeting between Infinergy and Eneco this morning, we discussed at length the potential for the local community in buying a stake/shared ownership (of up to 10%) of Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II.  The onus is now on Infinergy to put together a proposal to Eneco, for Eneco to consider and provide feedback"*.  On Monday 18 January 2021 we received a further update from Nick … *“Following the scoping responses from Nature Scot and The Highland Council, the applicant will be conducting additional bird and bat surveys to support the planning application. The full extent of these surveys is something which still needs to be discussed & agreed upon. Based on above, I would expect the planning application to be determined by The Highland Council at end of 2021 at the earliest”*. Our thanks to Nick for his updates. This update has already appeared on our website. Community Council members had no further questions for Nick or Fiona at this stage.

**SSE** – no further update on their Deer fence at Grudie. Perhaps a local fix might be possible.

**Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – at the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh area committee held on Thursday 14 January 2021, it was agreed, subject to funding, that as well as the resurfacing works south of the Achnasheen roundabout, sections of the A832 at Corriemoillie and Lochluichart will also be resurfaced in 2021/2022.

The Highland Council’s Housing and Property Committee have approved at their meeting held on Wednesday 27 January 2021 the preferred option of tenants following consultation of a **2% increase in council house rents**. This means that the average weekly council house rent will rise by £1.55 per week, from £77.70 to £79.25. The rent increase will come into effect from April 2021.

**EVC’s** in Achnasheen and Garve – The Highland Council’s legal services department are now involved as there appears to be questions over land ownership. Ewan Bush (Energy Officer, TG&DDC) had no further updates at this stage but noted these machines can require a lot of electricity so grid capacity needs looked into. Perhaps a tie-in with a local windfarm might be possible, perhaps chargers at homes might be a way forward, discussions are ongoing. Ewan has been concentrating on improved heating of homes recently. Anyone who might be interested in this is asked to contact Ewan directly. Ewan was thanked for his updates.

Ewan Bush left the meeting at 7.20pm.

**Tyres** in “jock’s layby” - these may be on private land in which case it is the land owner’s responsibility. Further rubbish has been found by the Secretary in the laybys which she has attended too. Thanks to the Secretary!

**The Highland Council’s winter service** started on the 14 October 2020 and continues until 14 April 2021. More details including the Winter Service Policy is available at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/107/winter_road_maintenance>

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.

**Little Garve working group** – the group have met online and discussed various issues. Our thanks to Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) who has been keeping the Community Council updated. Community Council members had the following thoughts … **Public toilets** - there are already public toilets at Silverbridge, Achnasheen and Rogie Falls. Would signage at Garve and Little Garve advertising this help? Perhaps Covid funding could pay for such signs. Could a refurbished Hall in Garve also accommodate public toilets – one for the Hall Trustees to consider but running costs and finding a cleaner would also need to be considered. **Chemical toilets** – these are already been looked into by The Highland Council. Perhaps worth contacting NC500 who are also looking into infrastructure issues with The Highland Council. **Rubbish** – there is already a sign encouraging people to take rubbish home from the Wyvis Natural Playpark and litter picks also take place. Several local residents in Garve/Strathgarve/Little Garve do their own litter picks which is very much appreciated. It was acknowledged that the wider litter problem is not caused by the Wyvis Natural Playpark. **Remove some signage** – who owns the signs? An audit of signs was suggested. **Speeding** – speeding or inappropriate speeding should be reported to the Police by calling 101. Video evidence would be helpful. Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn is aware of the concerns and is also aware of the **poor state** of the roads in Little Garve and Strathgarve but The Highland Council look at main roads first and traffic volumes are also taken into account.

Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in the Drovers Road and took no part in the discussions.  Murdo Maclennan at Forestry and Land Scotland wrote to the Community Council on Monday 25 January 2021 as follows … *“I noted in the minutes for the Garve & District Community Council meeting held on the 3November 2020 that the* ***Drovers Road between Little Garve and Aultguish*** *was mentioned in relation to it being overgrown. The responsibility for this lies with Forestry and Land Scotland. I would like to reassure you that Forestry and Land Scotland do not object to the path being used by the public. The objection in question was to the status of the path being changed to a core path, this was for operational reasons and not in any way related to discouraging use. I have walked this route and think it a very pleasant route with a really interesting history. However, it is indeed completely overgrown in places so the Contin squad will be working on clearing it this month. Going forward, I would welcome community involvement in maintenance and making improvements to the route so please feel free to get in touch.”* If anyone is interested in helping, please let our Secretary know and your contact details will be passed on. This update has already appeared on our website and has been passed onto the Little Garve working group.

In relation to the **Drovers Road**, it is currently classed as a “Right of Way” but it has been proposed by The Highland Council that it be re-designated a “Core Path”. Phil Waite, The Highland Council’s Outdoor Access & Long-Distance Route Manager tells us … *“As FLS objected, this had to be considered by the local access forum and area committee. Both LAF and area committee disagreed with the objection, so after another short consultation, the objectors are offered the opportunity to withdraw and if not is sent to Scottish Government with them remaining. Then a Reporter is appointed to conduct a public local inquiry to decide.”*  We thank Phil for the update. Community Council members were in general agreement about the proposal but felt the path crossing the busy A835 truck road needed addressing. Also, parking in the Little Garve area was causing problems at times.

**Scottish Water** - In Little Garve, they had another burst water main on Friday 1 January 2021 and again last week which caused some disruption to supply, initially due to reduced water pressure, then a switch off when they were fixing it and lastly followed by cloudy chemical tasting water. It was noted a plan to replace pipes was on Scottish Water’s long-term plan and perhaps the number of bursts might help this program of works be brought forward. All those effected are encouraged to report directly to Scottish Water each time there is an interruption of supply by calling 08000 778778 or going to <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/help-and-resources/contact-us/contacting-us>

**The Garve & District Development Company** are looking for a new part time Secretary. More details at <https://garve.org/new-company-secretary-jan21> We wish the outgoing Secretary Sheila Mitchell well.

**Police Report** – no report received but we note the following from the Lochcarron Community Council meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021 *… “4 Persons charged with breaching lockdown restrictions (travelling to Achnasheen area from out with local authority area in contravention of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020).”* This may relate to concerns raised by some Achnasheen residents at New Year about the number of cars parked in the Village centre (around 40) while skiing on the hills. Community Council members noted press reports of similar instances where people were fined for travelling out with their local authority area.

**Treasurers report** -Treasurer/Admin Fund minus £35.00 Data Protection = £603.58. Overall bank balance is now £2,886.53. Next month we will need to appoint an auditor for year end and pay the Secretary’s fee.

**AOB from Community Council members** – The Treasurer wondered if we could get **grit boxes** for Little Garve as the grit is going into the ground. Anyone can request grit boxes at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/99/roads_information/7> The Treasurer also raised concerns again about the **low walls on Wades Bridge**. If icy, someone could fall over the side of the Bridge. Are railings of some kind required? We will ask Historic Scotland for their views on the matter.

**AOB from members of the public** – Yvonne Boa (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) updated this meeting that Megan Urquhart from Silverbridge has been appointed Covid Community Recovery Response and Joe Mulreany from Achnasheen has been appointed Community Janitor. Funding for these posts is in place until May 2021 from HIE. Seven sanitisers are available but where should they be placed? Suggestions included Garve Post Office, Village Halls, Church, Railway Stations and bus stops. Yvonne would welcome feedback on this and what the community needs to help it recover from Covid. More details as always on garve.org Our Chairman thanked Yvonne for her updates.

A member of the public asked if the **40mph zone** in Garve could be extended to the east and west of Garve. It is dangerous at Gorstan Junction and Killin Farm as cars are overtaking at these locations. Those using the small Killin Farm railway crossing are having to wait on the crossing before joining the trunk road, not ideal if there is a train coming! Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn is already aware of the issues and this was highlighted before but we will again write to BEAR and Transport Scotland about extending the 40mph zone. Acts of dangerous driving should be reported to the Police by calling 101. Video evidence would be helpful.

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – we have today received one scoping report – Long Term Forrest Plans for Strathbran Forest. Community Council members were asked to feedback any comments to our Chairman by the end of the week.

We note one consultation via press reports from the Crofting Commission. Catherine Ann Macrae has registered Croft 2, Gorstan on the Crofting Register. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by Wednesday 1 September 2021. Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home) The croft registration number is C7348. 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. 21/00044/DOM3 is an extension to dwelling and replace existing heating system at the Dorran Cottage, Ledgowan Estate. It is also known as Stalkers Cottage and is located behind Ledgowan Lodge.

One previous planning application has been determined by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 20/04346/OHL was the proposed conversion of the existing 11,000-volt overhead line to 33,000-volt with no additional apparatus and the installation of a two span 33,000-volt overhead line to connect a mast site above Grudie Power Station. The Highland Council planning officers have raised no objections to this application. This update as already appeared on our website.

Two new planning applications have been received by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 21/00316/PNO is the proposed formation of a private way by Forestry and Land Scotland on land 345m South East of Silverbridge Lodge. This update has already appeared on our website.

21/00298/PNO is the proposed formation of three private ways by Forestry and Land Scotland on land 1935m North West of Silverbridge Public Toilets. This update has also already appeared on our website. In both planning applications, Community Council members wondered if access gates would be locked to ensure the new ways wouldn’t become race tracks for quads/motorbikes. Clarification will be sought. Our Chairman asked for any other comments from Community Council members by the end of the week please.

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 2 March 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 6 April 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 4 May 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 1 June 2021, AGM followed by an ordinary meeting, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

July 2021 – no meeting

Tuesday 3 August 2021, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

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

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 8.40pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

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

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