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

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

**Community Council members present on webcam:** Kenny Maclean (Chairman), Bob Moir, Sadie-Michaela Harris, Caroline Gamble (Treasurer from 7.30pm) and co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville (7.00pm until 7.35pm).

**Also present on webcam:** Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn, Nick Sage (Infinergy), Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC), Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) and one member of the public.

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

**Apologies:** Community Council member Joe Stewart and PC Kelly Murray.

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.

A few days after our last ordinary meeting, around 40 people were caught up in 10foot snow drifts at Loch Droma, having to spend the night in their cars. Several people from this community including those from Strathvaich Estate and Aultguish Inn assisted the emergency services. The Highland Council also assisted on what is a BEAR trunk road. There were also power cuts in the Achnasheen area lasting around 12 hours. A big thank you to everyone who helped out, a real community effort!

Community Council members were saddened to learn of two deaths of residents. Fiona Ballantine and Alan Illingworth, both of Lochluichart. Alan was well known in the area for his big hats and was a former Elected Director of TG&DDC. Our thoughts are with both families.

It is also perhaps worth noting that it was exactly one year ago tonight that the Community Council last held a face-to-face meeting. How times have changed!

**Declarations of Interest** – Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville declared an interest in the Infinergy project and the Drover’s Road. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris is a Director of the LCT and a member of the Little Garve working group. Community Council members confirmed that they had read all documents due to be discussed tonight before the start of this meeting.

**Approval of draft minutes** of the last ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 2 February 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 – 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/) A screening report has been uploaded to The Highland Council’s website regarding a powerline for Lochluichart Extension II (21/00381/SCRE). Nick Sage at Infinergy wrote to us on Monday 8 February 2021 with the following update … *“As part of any sale process of the Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II (Consented Development), Bluebell Wind Limited will need to deliver a s37 Planning Consent for the wayleave from the Consented Development to Corriemoillie substation. This will allow for the export of electricity from the Consented Development. The Screening request is to confirm that this wayleave will be ‘non-EIA’ development; the Scottish Government is due to come back start of next month to give this opinion. The Applicant has already instructed a consultant to commence bird survey work on the wayleave route, which will be approx. 5km in length. It is anticipated that further environmental survey work will be required until late summer this year and an application ready to submit to the Scottish Government as a s37 application shortly after this. The Applicant, via Lochluichart Estate, is very much aware of the flooding event which occurred in August 2017 and will ensure the flooding risk is fully taken into account in the design of the wayleave route”*. We thank Nick for his update who has also confirmed that this new cable is required as the existing cable between the Lochluichart windfarm and the Corriemoillie substation is already running to capacity. This update has already appeared on our website. Tonight, Nick confirmed that Infinergy hope to apply for the S37 in the Autumn of 2021 and that discussions with NatureScot and SEPA are ongoing regarding the new bird surveys which will also cover the proposed powerline route. A site walkover is due to take place shortly. Nick also confirmed that proposals for community ownership are still being worked on, apologies for the delay and he hopes to have more details soon. Nick Sage was thanked for attending and for his updates.

**Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – **EVC** – an offer of private land at Grudie and in Achnasheen has been made to locate these EVC’s but private land means it’s going to be complicated legally. A suggestion by a member of the public has also been made, would locating an EVC at Strathgarve Primary School be an option?  At least the EVC would be on The Highland Council owned land. The Highland Council’s EVC department reply regarding the School suggestion is as follows … “*This has been looked at but the space is restricted and there were valid concerns raised about the impact on availability of parking spaces for visitors to the cemetery and the proximity to such a sensitive site”.* Our thanks to all at the EVC department for their continued updates. Community Council members felt more traffic through the village of Garve would also lead to problems. Garve Public Hall Trustees are still in discussions with the EVC department to see if a EVC can be locate at the Hall. Nick Sage from Infinergy confirmed that Aultguish Inn was considered but grid capacity is an issue there. Ewan Bush, the local energy officer is already aware of these updates.

**Tyres in “Jock’s layby”** – this matter has now been attended to, our thanks to all involved. The Secretary noted that there has been a lot of **patching** of potholes at Woodside, Mossford and near Lochluichart Lodge. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris also noted patching near Strathgarve Primary School. It is hoped that The Highland Council budget from April 2021 (due to be agreed later this week) will allow resurfacing works to take place, time will tell.

**Wades Bridge** – Historic Scotland have confirmed that they do not own this bridge. They did give a grant for renovations in 2006 but they believe the bridge is managed by The Highland Council. We have asked Dot Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager at The Highland Council to pass on our concerns to the relevant department about the lack of railings on the bridge. We await a reply …

**A joint online meeting** of all ward five Community Councils took place on Thursday 18 February 2021 hosted by The Highland Council. This was to discuss the waste and public convenience arrangements being put in place for this season.  The meeting was attended by three out of the four local Councillors, two Highland Council officers, Dot Ferguson (Senior Ward Manager) and 14/20 ward five Community Councils. The main points from the meeting were that The Highland Council will try and fund extra crews/vehicles to help keep on top of known “hotspots” for dumped waste/overfilled roadside bins but hopefully more people will take their rubbish to the Recycle Centres or take it home. Recycle Centres may become the place to empty chemical waste along with existing camp sites due to the restrictions placed on The Highland Council and others by SEPA. Education/leaflets/social media would all be needed to help people do the right thing with their waste. It was also suggested that all the Development Companies in ward five should also meet up. Wester Ross Biosphere could also be included. Notes from the meeting are available in the library section of our website.

**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.

**Trunk roads (A835)** – BEAR have advised us that they are to carry out vegetation works and will then look at potential options to install some **pedestrian crossing signs** where the Drover’s Road crosses the A835. It was also noted that there has been patching on the trunk road in recent weeks. Regarding **parking** for those using the Drovers Road, Phil Waite, The Highland Council’s Outdoor Access & Long-Distance Route Manager wrote to us on Friday 5 February 2021 as follows … *“Unfortunately, there is little I can do at the present time regards improving parking in the area. It is not unusual for a path not to have a dedicated parking area and it has to be expected that users of the path use their common sense and consideration if needing to park safely. There is of course the forestry car park less than 500 metres away which is a short distance when considering the length of the path”*. We thank Phil for his update which we have passed onto Land & Forestry Scotland to see what plans, if any, they have to extend their car park in Little Garve and to TG&DDC. In the meantime, the Treasurer has noted **clearance work** to cut back bushes and undergrowth on the Drovers Road has taken place.

**Extend the 40mph zone in Garve** – we raised this issue with BEAR who advised we contact Transport Scotland which we have done. We have also raised the matter directly with the Transport Minister. Yesterday afternoon, we received a reply from Transport Scotland and on behalf of the Transport Minister which read as follows … *“A Speed Limit Review was undertaken in 2012 and more information on this and the factors considered is available at: https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170327094907/http://www.transport.gov.scot /road/road-safety/speed-limit-review The review concluded that, given the character, mean speed and accident rates, the national speed limit is appropriate for the stretches to the east and west of Garve on the A835, including at the right of way at the Drover’s Path. We are not aware of any change in the accident rate, mean speed, or the number of junctions and accesses in the area, or other material change since the review was undertaken that would lead us to revisit the findings of the Speed Limit Review. We are also currently engaged with Network Rail on reviewing the risk to vehicles and trains due to the proximity of road and rail and expect to bring forward in the coming year a scheme to install some lengths of crash barrier between the two on the eastern approach to the village. A speed limit reduction will not address concerns regarding waiting on the* ***Killin level crossing*** *as traffic joining the A835 has to give way, there will always be a need for drivers to check and wait for an appropriate gap in traffic to allow a safe merge regardless of the speed limit on the A835”.* We thank Marco Bardelli at Transport Scotland for his reply which we have passed onto TG&DDC, the Police and the owners of Killin Farm. Network Rail are concerned to hear that vehicles with trailers are having to wait on the Killin Farm crossing to access the road. Their local level crossing manager has visited the crossing and will look into the matter urgently and is willing to talk to Transport Scotland and users of the crossing if necessary. Again, we have passed this update onto the owners of Killin Farm. PC Kelly Murray has confirmed that she has logged our concerns on the Police Scotland system. Community Council members felt nine years since the last speed limit review is a long time, especially with the increased volume of traffic since the Ullapool ferry capacity was increased and NC500 was created. Perhaps a review after lockdown is required? We will request this and more details on exactly where the barriers are to be located east of Garve.

Caroline Gamble (Treasurer) joined the meeting at 7.30pm.

**Public toilets in Garve** – Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) advises us that Garve Public Hall Trustees are open to the idea but more details would need to be ironed out first including the problems with the drains as raised in 2015. Our Chairman has put Tina in touch with Scottish Water to see what, if anything can be done and shared with Tina what paperwork we have from 2015. A member of the public has suggested that to help keep costs down, those who want to see public toilets in Garve could volunteer to clean them for free. Perhaps this could be a role for the Community Janitor? Tina noted that the funding for the Community Janitor is Covid related only until the end of May 2021 but perhaps further funding could be sourced if required.

Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville left the meeting at 7.35pm and was thanked for attending.

Community Council members, along with LCT & TG&DDC Directors have been invited to an online meeting about **“Sustainable Choices”** on Tuesday 16 March 2021. TG&DDC have been successful in their application to be part of the Sustaining Choices project - <https://www.pas.org.uk/sustainingchoices/> The aim of the project is to develop a Community Action Plan to address sustainable travel options for the Garve and District area – so walking, cycling, public transport etc... Our Chairman, Treasurer, Bob and Sadie all hope to attend.

**Police reports** received over the last three months are now available in the library section of our website. The main point raised in the latest report is to be aware of bogus doorstep callers. We also note a scam where people are receiving emails reportedly from Royal Mail asking you to click on a link to pay a fee. Royal Mail NEVER send such emails as has been reported before at our previous ordinary meetings. We will also seek exactly which area (Community Council or Postcode) these Police reports cover.

**Treasurer’s report** – expenses in the last month were £86.00 for Insurance. Overall balance now stands at £2,800.53. The Treasurer, seconded by our Chairman proposed Ann Macrae be once again appointed as auditor for year-end accounts – unanimously agreed. The Secretary took no part in the following discussion … Sadie-Michaela Harris, seconded by Bob Moir proposed the Secretary fee remain at £350 plus expenses, all agreed.

**AOB from Community Council members** – Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris asked what support was available to B&B owners who had been forced to close due to lockdown? Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn informed the meeting that further information had been made available today on The Highland Council website [www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus) or anyone can call The Highland Council Coronavirus helpline on 0300 303 1362 for any help/guidance they require.

Community Council member Bob Moir asked our Chairman to put his other hat on … Bob has recently returned from Egypt with work and had to do a Covid test at home. He was advised the nearest priority Postbox was Contin, why not Garve? Our Chairman thought it made very little difference which Postbox was used as both are emptied by the same lorry each weekday evening after 5.00pm.

Several Community Council members have noticed a blue van parked in the layby east of Garve for around two weeks. It appears to have a puncture and perhaps other problems. Enquires will be made.

An Achnasheen resident has asked our Chairman about **cold weather payments**. You may get a cold weather payment of £25 from the UK Government if you meet the eligibility rules for certain benefits such as Pension Credit. The average temperature in your Postcode area must be recorded as zero degrees Celsius or below for seven consecutive days. The cold weather payment scheme runs from 1 November to 31 March each year. According to <https://coldweatherpayments.dwp.gov.uk/>, those living in IV23 (Garve) should have received seven payments so far this winter as their trigger Met Office weather station at Loch Glascarnoch has recorded low temperatures. Those living in IV22 (Achnasheen) have received ZERO payments so far this winter as their trigger Met Office weather station is thought to be in Aultbea, some 40 miles away on the west coast. Even Lochcarron (IV54) has received one payment this winter. It was noted Achnasheen is some 200metres above sea level so will be colder than what a weather station in Aultbea would be recording. This has been raised in the past when Charles Kennedy was the local MP but Achnasheen residents were advised at the time that it’s the way the system works. Community Council members fully agreed that this should be raised again with the current MP.

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

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – At our last ordinary meeting we noted the Long-Term Forest Plans for the Strathbran Forest. Community Council members have now had time to study the documents and have no comments at this stage on the plans. This update has already appeared on our website.

We note the one screening report discussed earlier tonight at this meeting - 21/00381/SCRE, installation and operation of 33kV overhead electric line to connect Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II to the grid.

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** – At our June 2020 ordinary meeting, we considered 20/01795/DEM to demolish “Druimdhu” house, one mile east of Achnasheen. Community Council members raised no objections at the time and permission was later granted by The Highland Council. The works to demolish the house are now complete.

At our last ordinary meeting we noted two planning applications 21/00316/PNO & 21/00298/PNO both regarding new forestry tracks. John Yells from Forestay & Land Scotland has been able to clarify that the access tracks would only be accessible by vehicles of Forestry and Land Scotland staff and their contractors. Based on this, Community Council members had no objections to these applications which have now both been granted planning permission by The Highland Council. This update has already appeared on our website.

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 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 8.05pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

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

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