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

**held on Tuesday 7 September 2021 via Zoom webcam**

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

**Also present on webcam**: Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn (from 7.12pm), Nick Sage (Infinergy from 7.00pm until 7.25pm), Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC), Yvonne Boa (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) and one member of the public.

**Apologies**: Community Council member Joe Stewart.

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.

We were sad to learn recently that Marybank, Scatwell & Strathconon Community Council has collapsed. We hope they will be able to be reformed in due course. Many Community Councils have come to us over the years for advice and help and we would be happy to help them again if asked.

On Thursday 2 September 2021, the local Posties were privileged to have Simon Thompson CEO of Royal Mail visit them in Garve Delivery Office before going out on a delivery with George the Postie along with Royal Mail’s inhouse film crew. Our Chairman can’t remember a CEO of Royal Mail ever travelling further north than Inverness so our local Posties are certainly helping to put Garve & District on the map!

The Secretary recently visited an old friend of the community, Val MacIver. Val was a regular attendee of the Community Council meetings over many years before Covid. Val is well and was asking after everyone.

**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. The Treasurer is a member of the Garve Litter Busters 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 3 August 2021 via webcam were proposed without amendment by Hamish Leslie Melville and seconded by Kenny Maclean. 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 via post.

**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. <https://meetings.ili-energy.com/lochluichart-energy-storage-project/> The second online public consultation for the proposed battery storage facility took place on Wednesday 10 August 2021 as previously advertised. The main points were that **power surges** shouldn't happen from the proposed facility.  The computers know when there is a demand/shortfall of electric to ensure a consistent and flexible supply in the network. **EVC's** were discussed at our last Community Council meeting.  Since then, it has been suggested that "Jock's layby" at Grudie be used for EVC's, campervan overnight stays (to take the pressure away from Garve and Achnasheen) and be a place for a chemical toilet emptying facility.  The developer acknowledged that they have been contacted by the Development Company on this matter and have agreed to meet with them.  *(Both Yvonne and Sue felt the contact was probably with Ewan Bush, TG&DDC’s local energy officer but were unaware of the outcome of the meeting).* The EVC proposal does interest the developer but they would need to see if it is technically possible.  They will look into this at a much later stage as their only priority at the moment is to secure planning permission for their proposed facility.  They also confirmed that they were very happy to attend future Community Council meetings when they have more news on their project. It is perhaps worth noting that even if the developer gets planning permission, it could be 2-3 years before the developer gets a grid connection and the facility built so EVC's won't be installed anytime soon. However, following our Chairman making some enquiries of his own and by contacting LCT and other funding bodies, grant funding is available for local residents to install EVC equipment at their own homes now. More details at <https://eviuk.co.uk/home-ev-charging-stations/> or <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/grants-and-loans/domestic-charge-point-funding/> Our thanks to the LCT for their help in this matter. The Highland Council planning department recently confirmed that the proposed battery storage facility will not require an EIA at the planning stage. More details on the reasons behind their decision are available on The Highland Council’s planning website. As regards **overnight campervan facilities** … Forestry & Land Scotland are now allowing campervans to stay at Rogie Falls overnight. More details at <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/staythenight> We also note that **Rogie Falls footbridge** has been closed to the public for safety reasons. Works will be required and the structure will remain closed until further notice. Barriers and closure signs have been placed at the bridge. It is our understanding that the rest of the pathways remain open. It was also noted that the bridge over the Corrieshalloch Gorge is also closed for repairs.

Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn joined the meeting at 7.12pm.

**EDF Education & Training Fund** is still up and running. The latest round of applications saw two individuals from the Garve area receive funding. £1,500.00 to fund travel and laptops relating to HNC in Childhood Practice and £1,436.00 to fund laptop and travel costs relating to Level 6 NC in Social Science. The next deadline for applications is Monday 4 October 2021 and more details can be found at <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/corriemoillie-education-training> This update has already appeared on our website. It is good to see that our hope of educational bursaries from windfarm funds was possible in the end.

**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 from Infinergy updated the meeting that Infinergy will shortly be submitting a S37 planning application to connect the proposed Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension II to the National Grid at the Corriemoillie substation. This line is required as current lines to the Corriemoillie substation are at near capacity now. The line which will be partly underground, might be moved slightly once peat and ecology surveys have been completed. The S37 application route will be within a 100m ‘Line of Deviation’ corridor, which allows flexibility when coming to construction in case of unexpected environmental or technical constraints (e.g., rock). The 33kV cable width will be approximately 5-6m. The overhead line poles will be approximate 12-16m in height. Poles will be spaced apart according to elevation & steepness of slope. Current signed grid connection offer is 31 October 2024. Expected construction of extended wind farm would commence Summer 2023 and last 14 months if planning permission granted – construction of grid connection would tie in with this timeline. Infinergy hope to submit an EIA later this year covering updated bat and bird surveys. The proposed extension will probably be determined by The Highland Council at a spring 2022 planning committee meeting. Infinergy will keep Community Council informed as the meetings are fun to attend! Nick has also asked Eneco and EDF if they have any updates from their windfarms for us.  Our thanks to Nick for all his updates.

Nick Sage left the meeting at 7.25pm.

**Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – at the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh **Area Committee** on Thursday 19 August 2021, the Winter Gritting Policy was agreed. It is basically the same as last year expect the Silverbridge Highland Council Depot will be more operational than in previous years as it will be fully staffed this winter and facilities upgraded. This along with a 5.00am start during the worst of the winter weather on the A832 and the possible use of the snowblower contractor from the windfarm sites should all help keep the roads clear. All these points have been raised by this Community Council over the years so it’s good to see the Area Committee taking our concerns on board. More details at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/13887/winter_maintenance_plan_approved_for_wester_ross_strathpeffer_and_lochalsh> This update has already appeared on our website. The same Area Committee agreed £100,000 funding for further road repairs such as extra passing places and improving verges - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/13888/additional_investment_in_wester_ross_strathpeffer_and_lochalsh_roads_approved> The Area Committee cover most Highland Council issues and have the power to order officials to attend their meetings. 47.5% of roads in Ross & Cromarty are in ward five but before now, most of the road money was going elsewhere.

**“Trench” in Stirling Drive –** Cllr Cockburn confirmed that the hotbox is due in the ward so Community Council member Bob Moir will keep in touch with Cllr Cockburn and Mackenzie Sutherland to ensure we are not forgotten. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris noted a car had been damaged by the “trench”. *(Post meeting note from Mackenzie Sutherland – “The Hotbox and crew are in ward five, but not your part of ward five at the moment. As soon as we can attend to it, we will, it has not been forgotten about”).*

**White lines at Gorstan Junction –** still awaiting an update, Cllr Cockburn to chase again as there is no white line machine just for this ward.

There were still outstanding works required at **Ledgowan Junction**. Mackenzie Sutherland confirmed to the Community Council that these works were set aside as they were pressing on with the capital works (bigger schemes). This is now drawing to a close so will get back to fix this and other snagging works very soon. *(These works and smaller potholes in and around Achnasheen were all fixed today, just in time for this meeting!)* **Little Garve potholes** have recently been filled in, our thanks to Mack and his team for all their hard work during their four-day week.

**The grass in and around the Achnasheen roundabout** had not been cut for some time. Concern had been raised in the past how “unsightly” this made the entrance to the village from the west. Our Chairman raised this with The Highland Council and the grass was cut the very next day along with grass verges between Gorstan and Achnasheen and on up towards Kinlochewe. This is the second cut of the year! Our thanks to all involved. This update has already appeared on our website.

**Speed Survey’s for Lochluichart and Achnasheen** – our Chairman has found a possible way forward away from The Highland Council. Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer) is making enquiries for us following a similar problem in the Lochalsh area. Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville asked that the Lochluichart Estate Manager be put in touch with Tina as their speed camera evidence may help Tina’s case for funding/surveys. All agreed.

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.

**Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via <https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/> Press reports inform us that resurfacing works are due to take place in the Silverbridge and Inchbae areas this week. Traffic will be guided through the works by convoy. Expect some minor delays.

A huge “well done” to the **Garve Litter Busters Group** who have been very busy most weekends keeping our community tidy. Their photos on social media tell a story of their own. Garve Litter Busters next big pick is planned to be on Sunday 3 October 2021. They are now moving to a pick every four weeks. They are still appealing for more volunteers to join the group. Our Chairman has put the new Seasonal Access Ranger Rachel Campbell in touch with the group directly. The Treasurer wondered if we could get an extra bin in the Little Garve area. It was suggested the busters group liaise with Katrina Taylor at The Highland Council.

Garve & District Community Council have received verbal complaints from neighbouring properties to the **Garve Hotel** regarding the untidy state of the grounds. We have asked if the owner has any plans to cut the grass which, in turn, may help with the sale of the building. The selling agent has passed on our concerns to their client and the grass was cut a few days later. Our thanks to all involved. This update has already appeared on our website.

**TG&DDC updates** – Sue Tarr and Yvonne Boa took Community Council members through their various updates … **Sustaining Choices project final plan** – an online meeting involving various local stakeholders including the Community Council took place on Monday 9 August 2021 to discuss the findings so far. A final plan will be published in due course but the chair of the meeting, Paul Ede from PAS (<https://www.pas.org.uk/sustainingchoices/>) said it had been a “delight” to work in this area and with such “passionate people”! One point that came up on several occasions was that windfarm money cannot be spent on issues that The Highland Council have statutory responsibility for such as potholes. These “prohibited uses” have been in the legal agreements (clause 1.3) since the windfarms were built. The legal agreement is available to view on the LCT website. Carol Smith, LCT Company Secretary gave examples of applications that had to be refused because of this legal clause. Different funding sources can help though and path funding both through The Highland Council and The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) may have been identified by our Chairman. Tina Hartley is making enquiries. Networking with other communities is also useful. **Community Open Day** took place on Saturday 30 August 2021 at Lochluichart Hall & Church. It was a sunny day with about 35 people from the community in attendance with lots of activities and music. The next event is planned for Saturday 25 September 2021 - tbc but all Covid rules will again be followed. **Speed signs** – our Chairman has sourced a possible supplier of speed signs and Tina is making further enquiries. Both our Chairman and Community Council member Bob Moir felt these signs should be a top priority for both Garve and Achnasheen. **Signage** across the whole area is also being considered in conjunction with the Wester Ross Biosphere group. **TG&DDC’s activate project** is coming to an end. They need to plan phase two and ideas would be welcome. Lynn Frost based in Shieldaig was recently appointed **Community Support Co-ordinator** for Wester Ross, Lochalsh & Strathpeffer by The Highland Council. Her role covers many aspects of supporting communities to recover from Covid and to be able to do things for themselves. Our Chairman has put Lynn in touch with Tina. Sue acknowledged that it has been quieter than normal this past month or so at the Development Company as many people are on holiday but it is hoped there will be more news next time. The Treasurer asked for an update on the **proposed land purchase** at Garve Hotel. Yvonne and Sue confirmed they were awaiting updates as there are various issues still being looked into. Sue Tarr and Yvonne Boa were both thanked for attending.

**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.

In other news, **LCT** are currently looking for new Directors for their board as elections are due shortly. More details at <https://www.lochluichartcommunitytrust.com/news/> and the **Ross and Cromarty Citizens Advice Bureau** are looking to recruit additional Directors to their board. If you would like more information, please contact Mary MacDonald by e-mail mary.macdonald@alnesscab.casonline.org.uk or telephone 01349 883333.

**Police report** - no formal report received but 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 and encouraged by the Police. We note from the latest minutes of the Lochcarron Community Council meeting held on Monday 9 August 2021 that PC Allan stated … *“the Police have to follow guidance from the Lord Advocate in relation to speeding”*. A police presence was noted in and around Achnasheen in the last few weeks which we welcome.

Press reports inform us that an individual was caught speeding at 107mph and without insurance on 8 August 2020 in the Achanalt area. Sentence has been deferred.

Our Chairman has also been made aware of an individual working in this community who has been caught speeding. We must all keep within the law.

Chairpersons from Easter Ross Community Councils were recently invited to a Cyber Crime online discussion (Police see Garve as part of Easter Ross). Our Chairman attended and the main points were that individuals should change passwords on a regular basis. Three random words in a password such as *“forkmirrordoctor”* were harder for scammers to crack. The National Cyber Security Centre ([www.ncsc.gov.uk](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk)) has lots of advice on this matter. Phishing emails are on the increase again covering topics such as investments, romance and invoices. Never click on a link in an email if you are not sure. Forward such emails to report@phishing.gov.uk It was also noted that mental health issues after falling for such scams are also on the increase.

In other news, doorstep crime is on the rise with people using fake ID badges and fake uniforms to gain entry into your property. Don’t let them in!

**Treasurer’s report** – The Treasurer updated members that the bank balance as per the latest bank statement dated Monday 9 August 2021 was £2,748.98. The breakdown is as follows …. Newsletter fund £744.50. Reserve £1,538.45. Admin £466.03 - this includes The Highland Council grant of £445.20. There were no questions for the Treasurer.

**AOB from Community Council members** – Community Council member Bob Moir noted there appears to be less traffic going to the Wyvis Natural Playpark through Garve but perhaps that reflects the holidays are over for most people. If anyone asks him for directions, he sends them up to Silverbridge. Bob also noted that apparently the Manager’s house at the Garve Hotel has been sold to a family. It is understood the local school role will rise to seven which Community Council members welcomed.

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

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – we have received notice of two consultations – the first is from The Highland Council who are encouraging individuals and community groups to take part in a national consultation which is currently underway on how flood risk management will be carried out over the next six years. The second National Consultation on the Future Management of Flood Risk in Scotland began on Friday 30 July 2021. For a period of three months, until Sunday 31 October 2021, the draft ‘Flood Risk Management Plan’ and ‘Local Flood Risk Management Plan’ for the Highland and Argyll Local Plan District will be available to view and comment on. More details at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/13878/opportunity_for_public_to_take_part_in_national_flood_risk_consultation> Community Council members fully agreed with Garve’s inclusion in this plan.

The second consultation was only received late yesterday from the Scottish Government regarding Highland Council ward boundaries. It is still planned to move Contin, Strathpeffer and Marybank into the Dingwall ward leaving us with three instead of four Highland Councillors. If agreed, this would start at the next Highland Council elections due next year. The Scottish Government would like to hear what people think about the suggested changes and is carrying out a survey at -

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IEEL0U/> **Responses to the survey need to be submitted by Monday 13 September 2021.** Responses which are sent after this may not be considered. Our chairman has already put this information on our website to help spread the word and has forwarded the details on to all ward five Community Councils. It was noted that the west coast would loose three Councillors and the east would gain three based on population only, distances have not been taken into account. The Scottish Islands Bill encourages one councillor per 400 people, this proposal is based on one per 1,200 people including the Isle of Skye. The tight deadline for responses is also concerning. Community Council members agreed that these various points which we have already raised before with the Scottish Boundary Commission should be raised again both by individuals as well as the Community Council.

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** – no new issues to report. 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 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

The latest guidance received from The Highland Council on Tuesday 17 August 2021 is that Community Councils should still meet virtually for now. The latest figures show Coronavirus cases are rising is all areas of the Highlands at the moment including in this area which is part of Ross & Cromarty Central on the Public Health Scotland website. Stay safe!

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 8.35pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

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

garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com