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

**held on Tuesday 2 August 2022 on 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**: Cllr Liz Kraft, Richard Maclennan (Local Seasonal Access Officer from 7.00pm until 7.20pm), Ewan Bush (TG&DDC Community Energy Officer from 7.10pm) and four members of the public.

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

**Apologies**: Community Council member Joe Stewart, Tina Hartley (Principal Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) and Maree Todd MSP.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed everyone. He reminded members of the public that although our meetings are not public meetings, they were still very welcome to attend Community Council meetings even on webcam and take part in the discussions under his guidance (see section 12 of the Constitution). Those who can’t attend our meetings can, as always, write to the Secretary by post or email with any issues they wish raised.

Community Council members were sad to learn that Val MacIver’s husband Alex, an old friend of this community passed away last week. Our thoughts are with Val and the family. Best wishes to Cllr Biz Campbell, Tina Hartley and our own Community Council member Joe Stewart who have all been unwell since our last ordinary meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2022. Community Council member Bob Moir noted that he saw Joe a few days ago and he was doing well, back to work and some local rumours of the accident had been exaggerated. Happy belated birthday to Ilsa Jack, one of our older members of the community who celebrated a special birthday recently. Through our Treasurer, Ilsa wished to thank the Community Council for her card.

**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 Bob Moir is a Garve Public Hall Trustee. The Treasurer is a member of the Garve Litter Busters Group and declared an interest in the Scottish Water project. The Treasurer and Community Council members Bob Moir and Sadie-Michaela Harris are all members of the Traffic Calming 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 7 June 2022 in Garve Public Hall and on webcam were proposed without amendment by Sadie-Michaela Harris and seconded by Caroline Gamble, unanimously agreed. Minutes are available at Garve Post Office, Achnasheen Village Noticeboard, on our website or via email. Hard/electronic copies are also available on request from the Secretary. Minutes will be signed by our Chairman and Secretary in due course via post. We note the Secretary’s suggestion of a 14-day deadline for submitting amendments to the draft minutes is something other Community Council’s in ward five will also be introducing.

**Matters arising** – Richard Maclennan is the Local Seasonal Access Officer for our area this Summer and joined us this evening to update us on his work.  Richard patrols his area (Braemore-Garve-Achnasheen) on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and spends Mondays and Tuesdays doing administration and repairing gates, paths etc …  He visits forty sites each week.  Silverbridge toilets are out of action again.  Richard spent 90 minutes there the other day tidying up around the building.  He hopes to see the toilets open again soon.  Richard has also dealt with fire pits in Achanalt and discovered the boathouse gate off its hinges.  He secured the gate as best he could.  Richard is keeping an eye on the Grudie laybys, no major issues so far this season.  In general, the A835 is tidier than the A832, less “hotspots”.

Ewan Bush (TG&DDC Community Energy Officer) joined the meeting at 7.10pm and apologised for being late, computer problems!

Richard went on to talk about Little Garve and the picnic area, Wades Bridge and the Wyvis Natural Playpark.  He has noted people camping there sometimes with children.  Concern was raised about the deep water in the Blackwater River at this location.  The Treasurer will (offline) explain land ownership in this area to Richard.  Richard is happy to be contacted if there are any issues or problems, he is happy to try and help.  In questions, it was noted that most people do act responsibly, campervans have stayed in Garve Village overnight before now and that there has been rubbish in the Grudie woods, below the laybys but cutting trees down has made the laybys less of a hidden location to dump rubbish, but rubbish does build up at times.  Sue Tarr (with her Development Company hat on) suggested using [www.garve.org](http://www.garve.org) to get information out to the community.  The Secretary felt Richard and his team were doing a good job and alongside the local litter picking group (Garve Litter Busters) we were very lucky and to keep up the good work.

Richard Maclennan left the meeting at 7.20pm, wished our Chairman well and was thanked for attending.

Ewan Bush is the Community Energy Officer (EO) for our area, employed by The Garve & District Development Company.  Ewan then gave us his update.  His monthly reports are available online and cover three main areas – Home Energy, Community Energy and Community Transport.  Ewan is happy for people in the community to contact him about home surveys and he, in turn, can help with paperwork for funding bodies to help people improve the energy efficiency of their homes.  Charity rules to give payments to individual households has held back funding a Community Grant for Home Energy Efficiency.  Perhaps Kirkan (if approved) might be a way of channelling money into a suitable grant scheme but would need further work and support from stakeholders. Ewan suggests Solar PV panels on the community land to reduce running costs of a community building or facilitate EV charging might be an option, discussion ongoing.  Achnasheen Amenities had asked Ewan to look at a community energy scheme but as there are difficulties/feasibility identifying viable schemes in the area they have requested Ewan instead focus on Home Energy Efficiency and support the community to explore options.  Ewan will be in Achnasheen Village Hall on Saturday 27 August 2022 from 2.00pm until 4.00pm to speak to any resident with energy needs/concern, all welcome. EVC’s – suitable sites may use solar panels.  Looking into funding, some funding for solar panels, not so for battery storage which, in the scheme of things, is the more expensive part of the equipment. Transport – The EO is applying to LCT to purchase a small electric vehicle plus funding to support paid/volunteer drivers and general running costs. A business plan is being prepared. The congregation is supportive of the proposal to provide transport to and from Kinlochluichart Church when needed.  Other options need to be explored to make it viable such as supporting active travel, getting bikers, hillwalkers about the area and connecting with other transport services.  Ullapool and Gairloch community car schemes have links so perhaps we could all work together.  Section 19 or a PHC licences are being considered.  Strathgarve school run is being explored (Ewan will discuss offline with Cllr Kraft, the contract may tie parties up for three years).  Cllr Kraft is meeting with Highland Council Transport tomorrow to discuss issues around the Contin Community Council area who were looking into a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service.  Perhaps the service could extend into Marybank and Garve?  There are some funds available just for remote services to help local residents get to appointments. Sue Tarr (with her Development Company hat on) noted there is a lot still to be looked into but an update would come back to the Community Council when more is known.  Ewan Bush was thanked for his update.

As reported at our last ordinary meeting in June 2022, a **new shop bus service** has started, funded by LCT but you need to book in advance. The service is open to everyone in our community but may need to be a more targeted priority service in the future depending on demand. Shopmobility have asked our Chairman if posters can be placed in local noticeboards to help advertise this service which our Chairman has already done for them. The shop bus runs from this area (Garve & District) into Dingwall every second Thursday. Book your seat by calling their Dingwall office on 01349 866040. Bus times will be confirmed when you book. This update has also already appeared on our website.

**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/> No further news.

**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/) No further news.

**Achnasheen EVC** – the latest update we received via Cllr Kraft on Tuesday 14 June 2022 and again on Sunday 10 July 2022 was that Achnasheen should be operational in the very near future. On Thursday 28 July 2022, The Highland Council confirmed to us that they had accepted a quote for the work to be done on the unit to bring it up to current standards and expected the commissioning to be complete in August. They also apologised for the further delay and inconvenience to our community but also wished to assure us that they were speaking with the contractors regularly to ensure that Achnasheen is commissioned as soon as possible. Our thanks to all concerned.

Press reports inform us that an EVC will be installed at **Aultguish Inn** as part of an insurance company’s drive to install more EVC’s across the UK however, the press report seemed to suggest the EVC is already in place, this is not the case and the picture used of the Aultguish Inn in the press release with a charger outside the Inn was in fact made up. The owners tell us that they hope the engineer will be out soon to survey the site.  They've asked about power connections following our Chairman’s previous chat with them about the ongoing issues in Achnasheen and were told that it's only a small low power charger of 7kw so there shouldn’t be any local power supply issues.  No date set yet when the charger might be installed and commissioned. Ewan Bush has also spoken to the owners about this issue.

A few hours ago, our Chairman tested positive for Covid and was not feeling very well during this meeting. It was unanimously agreed by the Community Council members that as we had heard from both guest speakers, this meeting should now be adjourned until our Chairman is feeling better. Some members of the public also felt it was the right thing to do so our Chairman thanked everyone for their understanding and good wishes and adjourned the meeting at 7.45pm.

*On Thursday 4 August 2022 we advertised through our normal channels (Garve Post Office, Achnasheen Village Noticeboard, on our website and via our emailing list) that the meeting would be resuming on Friday 12 August 2022 at 6.00pm online.*

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

**Also present on webcam**: Cllr Liz Kraft and three members of the public.

**Apologies**: Community Council member Joe Stewart and co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting at 6.00pm and welcomed everyone, noting this is not the first time the Community Council has met at 6.00pm on a Friday night, the last time being in December 2010. He reminded members of the public that although our meetings are not public meetings, they were still very welcome to attend Community Council meetings even on webcam and take part in the discussions under his guidance (see section 12 of the Constitution). Those who can’t attend our meetings can, as always, write to the Secretary by post or email with any issues they wish raised.

**Declarations of Interest** – Community Council member Bob Moir is a Garve Public Hall Trustee. The Treasurer is a member of the Garve Litter Busters Group and declared an interest in the Scottish Water project. The Treasurer and Community Council members Bob Moir and Sadie-Michaela Harris are all members of the Traffic Calming group. Community Council members confirmed that they had read all documents due to be discussed tonight before the start of this meeting.

**Matters arising then continued …** **Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – **Trees in The Avenue** – Cllr Kraft and Nick Richards, The Highland Council’s Forestry Officer have both confirmed that it will be for The Highland Council’s Road’s Department to fund any work needing doing including tree surveys as The Highland Council owns the land, our thanks to them. On Tuesday 14 June 2022 we received reports (thanks to Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris and Murdo Maclennan) that one of the leaning trees in The Avenue was leaning more following high winds the previous day and was now leaning onto a neighbouring tree over the road. There is also a long split in the tree trunk that you can get your hand into. We reported this urgent matter directly to The Highland Council (Case - FS429594788) that day. Nick Richards confirmed that he had been discussing The Avenue with his road’s colleagues and understands that they are going to appoint a consultant to carry out a full survey of all the trees and recommend any work which may be required. He noted that while it would be more convenient to wait until this survey is complete and to carry out any work after as one operation, he has seen the leaning tree and would recommend that it is felled as a matter of urgency. An on-site meeting took place on Monday 20 June 2022 which the Community Council were not invited to as they wanted the survey to be conducted autonomously however, we are told the meeting went well and they are now going to conduct a survey on all the trees in The Avenue and draw up a planting plan. The leaning tree in question will be felled. Our thanks to everyone for their continued help on this matter. We understand the survey work is/near complete. We have asked, if possible, if we can see the survey, awaiting a reply … This update has already been posted on our website and the Lord Lieutenant has been kept informed. Cllr Liz Kraft noted that a falling tree which could block a main road into/out of a Village would affect emergency services, something that we are all aware of after the tragic incidents in Sleat and Dornie earlier this week.

We asked The Highland Council’s Road’s Department for updates on the following … **white lines** in Garve Village - Garve Village Road markings have been added to the list of jobs. **Potholes** in Matheson Road and around the Garve Recycle bins/Strathgarve Primary School – Cllr Kraft has been chasing this up and spoke to the Road’s Manager this week, potholes in Matheson Road have been filled in, she will again chase other issues with Road’s Department. **White lines** at/near Gorstan Junction – Cllr Kraft has referred this to the MSP’s office as The Highland Council insist it’s BEAR, not them. In regards to the fatal accident at the Gorstan Junction on Sunday 15 May 2022, we are told that Transport Scotland met with Police Scotland and BEAR to obtain more information on the incident and to identify if there was a need for a further road safety investigation. This discussion concluded that no road-related issues were identified which could have been a contributory factor in this accident. Cllr Kraft informed the meeting that the MSP is aware of the situation and that a joint meeting has been requested with Traffic Scotland and the community. Our Chairman mentioned the importance of having the police present at such a meeting.

There are four **blocked drains** beside the A832 at Mossford. Local residents have informed our Chairman that they reported this to The Highland Council in October 2021 but nothing has been done. Our Chairman has photographed the drains and reported the matter himself. Case-426753469 reported on Wednesday 1 June 2022. Our Chairman asked Cllr Kraft to clarify if there really was only one gully sucker. Cllr Kraft confirmed that there is one Gully Sucker for ward five and it is shared with other wards. The Mossford drains are still blocked but we have been assured they are on the list to be done, it’s just a case of hoping the Gully Sucker gets to our area (Garve & District) before getting sent to another ward.

Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris had asked previously via email about **deadlines** in respect of standard email/letter response times to a customer enquiry. Do Highland Council Councillors and Officials have to respond to emails within a certain time? Cllr Kraft does not believe such timescales exist and an “complaint” is treated quicker than an “issue” but it is the Council that decide which is which. It seems it is very much up to individual Councillors how they deal with emails. Cllr Kraft has already learnt to check “Quarantine” (spam) folders, and explained the difficulties around lack of guidance and systems for managing a caseload -especially noted from people who have worked outside of The Highland Council. The only guidance given to Cllrs is around holding personal information; - to destroy any correspondence which contains personal identifiable information when the Cllr leaves office. Cllr Kraft offered to feedback to Highland Council Joint Administrative Group on this issue. Sadie explained that she had actually asked with regard not to Cllrs but to other people who worked within The Highland Council services be it heads of departments or anyone else. Is there any mission statement on response times for general enquires; - not complaints coming from either the public or community groups in order to set customer expectation. Such as in industry the usual these days is a 5 working day response time. Cllr Kraft confirmed that there is and she will send these details to our Chairman and Secretary. Cllr Kraft shared she felt everyone deserved the same service, however she had noticed since becoming a Cllr, enquires are answered more quickly than when she has asked questions prior to becoming a Cllr. Adding that from personal experience the public facing department is not great, it does not work as it should. They have a system where by issues should be logged and people should be given a case number but it is clumsy and definitely not working well. Sadie thanked Cllr Kraft for her full and honest answer and said that her question arose because as volunteers we are sometimes chasing people on The Highland Council payroll three times over. Community Council members wished to note how much they appreciate the timely updates from Cllr Kraft, responding so promptly, sometimes even on a Sunday!

**Kinlochewe Primary School** (who’s catchment area includes Achnasheen Village) has, according to press reports been mothballed. We asked The Highland Council’s Education Department for clarification on this matter. They told us that the roll at Kinlochewe Primary School was going to drop to just two children. After discussions with the parents, it was agreed that one child will transfer to Gairloch Primary School and the other child will be home educated.  Therefore, Kinlochewe Primary School has been mothballed. There are currently no nursery children. Whilst the parents accepted that mothballing was inevitable, we are told they were keen that the door was left open for a future re-opening of the school if the numbers of local children increased and the school was once again viable.  The Highland Council gave parents the commitment that re-opening in the future was a possibility, although they also advised that the majority of schools that are mothballed end up closing eventually as we saw in Achnasheen around 15 years ago.

**In slightly related news**, our Chairman was contacted directly on Thursday 4 August 2022 (while in his sick bed) from a very upset mother who lives in the Lochcarron Community Council area who had been informed (we presume by Highland Council Education) that her five-year-old daughter can't get school transport to Lochcarron Primary School from the start of the new term. They live around 15 miles away from the school and are in the school’s catchment area and have lived at the same address for the past 18-months or so.  Our Chairman passed the issue on directly to Cllr Biz Campbell who confirmed there is a shortage of drivers at the moment due to Covid and to do a school run you have to fit The Highland Council Framework which is public liability of £5million pounds and P.V.G. checked which can take up to 6 weeks. In the meantime, the mother has agreed to take her daughter to School herself, with The Highland Council covering petrol costs. The Mother concerned is very grateful for our Chairman’s help, she is sure he has helped get the ball rolling in the right direction as she felt she was getting nowhere.

**Traffic issues** - an Achnasheen resident has expressed concern to our Chairman about **parking** on the main road and side roads down to the Railway Station in Achnasheen. They feel it is an accident waiting to happen. Our Chairman has sought advise which is to call the Police on 101 at the time with photographic/video evidence if you feel parking may be causing an obstruction.

Lynda Hill has written to the Community Council in recent days asking for our advice. She is finding it increasingly difficult to park in the public layby outside **Bignold Place in Achnasheen** due to other vehicles and privately owned cones. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris mentioned there is guidance under the Highway Code for parking both on roads and in laybys. After some discussion, we concluded that the Police would be best placed to advise.

Local residents and others have raised complaints about the rubbish laying along the **verges through Achanalt** including old bags, bikes and signs. The matter has been passed onto The Highland Council to investigate. Cllr Kraft was surprised to learn the rubbish was still beside the roadside and would chase up.

Tina Hartley (Principal Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) has advised us via email that the latest update from the **Traffic Calming group** is available at <https://garve.org/traffic-calming-aug22>, our thanks to Tina for the update.

**Achnasheen Amenities** have received correspondence from The Highland Council which confirms our understanding that Coeval [https://www.coeval.uk.com/](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.coeval.uk.com%2F&data=05%7C01%7CLisa.Mackellaich%40highland.gov.uk%7C7a8c52ae552d4511fa5a08da5ab291bf%7C89f0b56e6d164fe89dba176fa940f7c9%7C0%7C0%7C637922020243004894%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CiKxfWbdWcHQNj2R0znXOwr88zhY2HSwuFBzLYVkI1Y%3D&reserved=0) supply signs.  We had already passed this information on as noted in the minutes of the Traffic Calming group. Vehicle activated signs (VAS) are generally used on more open rural roads with speed limits higher than 40mph and are generally used as warning signage to advise motorists of upcoming hazards for example VAS sharp bend warning signs.  Speed Indication Device Signs (SIDs) are used in more urban areas where the speed limit is 40mph or below, see [https://www.elancity.co.uk/evolis-radar-speed-sign/attached](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.elancity.co.uk%2Fevolis-radar-speed-sign%2Fattached&data=05%7C01%7CLisa.Mackellaich%40highland.gov.uk%7C7a8c52ae552d4511fa5a08da5ab291bf%7C89f0b56e6d164fe89dba176fa940f7c9%7C0%7C0%7C637922020243004894%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=mEq0MnkBtNQzs%2FxevW1TCvRFVmtfQiMdAB11IK%2B1als%3D&reserved=0) for the supplier/sign details, street lighting team would install signs for around £200 plus their travel and all sites are subject to an assessment to ensure the use of a VAS/SID sign is an appropriate solution for the location, this involves gathering existing data e.g. speed, collision history etc. Our thanks to Achnasheen Amenities for sharing their information.

We note a **“flashing” smiley speed sign** has appeared on the A834 in Strathpeffer, on the A832 in Kinlochewe and three such signs on the A896 through Lochcarron, all on Highland Council roads. Cllr Kraft was asked why the A832 in Achnasheen hasn’t got one? Cllr Kraft wondered if these were installed as part of the “Safer Route to Schools” program, she will make enquiries. *(Post meeting note – Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris noted on Sunday 14 August 2022 at 10.30am that the smiley sign in Strathpeffer was in operation even though the primary school is closed for the summer holidays and never opens on a Sunday!)*

In conversation between our Chairman and the **Road Safety Team** at The Highland Council, it has been confirmed that it will be the case that they will need to carry out a traffic survey first before recommending what signs/measures or new speed zones, if any, are required. Cllr Kraft spoke to the Road Safety Team recently who acknowledged the issues in our area however, nothing seems to be happening yet. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris felt positive talk was good, realistic timescales would be even better as without such knowledge community volunteers are continually chasing issues via email and this would be not be necessary if we had some realistic expectations on measures awaited. This would prevent precious time being wasted from all concerned. Former Cllr Ian Cockburn has confirmed he raised all this on our behalf years ago with Iain Moncrieff, especially about Lochluichart/Mossford.

Transport Scotland have confirmed to us (via Cllr Kraft) that they have asked their operating company BEAR to undertake speed measurements on **the A835 in Garve** to identify typical speed profiles and consider if traffic calming measures would be appropriate. Whilst they recognise the local willingness to fund the purchase of traffic calming signs, it is important (they tell us) that these signs or other measures are only deployed at locations where there is evidence to support their use. This approach they feel ensures that such measures are able to remain effective where there is a need for them, since over-use of any traffic calming measure in inappropriate locations can diminish its effectiveness across the wider road network. We await their results with interest but have also asked that they consider lowering the 40mph zone in Garve Village to 30mph and extend the zone east of Garve and that following discussions with the owners of Killin Farm, that the beech hedge at the eastern end of Garve be cut down to aid sightlines for those using the Killin Farm railway crossing. **Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via <https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/> Our Chairman noted the word *“measures”* rather than *“signs”* in Transport Scotland update. It may be the case that if the speed survey does show the need for measures, these might not necessary be signs but perhaps traffic islands or speed bumps.

**Maree Todd MSP** was in Garve on Friday 22 July 2022 holding a constituency surgery. Community Council members Bob Moir and Sadie-Michaela Harris and Flora Smith **as members of the Traffic Calming Group** attended the surgery and found their hour or so with the MSP very useful and helpful. A suggestion of a public meeting between MSP, Cllr Kraft and Transport Scotland was suggested. We would welcome this along with Police also in attendance. Maree Todd’s Office has already written to Transport Scotland to see if they would consider attending (as have we), awaiting a reply ...

Flora Smith updated us that BEAR visited the Killin Railway crossing this week and hope to carry out works on the hard standing this autumn. They noted how much traffic use the A835 but as Flora noted, their yellow jackets only slowed traffic down! They also told Flora that the hedge will be cut back in the autumn to avoid nests and the barriers between the Farm and *“Check Rail corner”* beside the A835 were also due to be installed over the Autumn. Our thanks to Flora for her updates.

The Highland Council has applied to the **UK Government levelling up fund** which, if successful could result in road improvements across the Highlands. It should perhaps be noted that although The Highland Council has a slightly increased budget for the roads, this won’t cover everything that needs doing and the issue now is supply of product needed to repair the roads. Cllr Kraft noted the brilliant job done by Highland Council Officials in applying for such funding, we hope for a positive outcome.

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.

As reported at our October 2018 ordinary meeting when works were taking place on the **Stromeferry Bypass**, a number of our trains were at that time getting delayed because of the works.  We suggested at the time a temporary signalling system be brought in so the section from Strathcarron to Kyle of Lochalsh was split in two so delayed trains could effectively follow each other up or down the single line to help reduce delays.  This was put in place at the time and was a great help. We have now leant that our suggested temporary system has been introduced on a permanent basis. Our Chairman went to Stromeferry Railway Station recently to see the new radio mast and signal boards for himself. He thought it all looked very shiny and new and should be a huge help for the future be it regarding delayed trains or any future works on the Stromeferry Bypass.

Before moving on from Traffic related issues when asked… Kim Bannister, a Mossford resident asked if it could be added that trying to walk to Lochluichart Railway Station is a very dangerous feat having done so twice herself recently. This is not only due to the fast-moving traffic but also not having a reliable walkway. The B&B along the road advertises that you can walk to Lochluichart Railway Station and their guests quite often do meaning we all have to cross the busy road to get to the station.

Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris added that during the meeting with Maree Todd MSP, Maree had mentioned that even if in the past a speed reduction request had been refused; - with climate change and carbon reduction now being of importance to us all the request might be viewed differently these days.

The Treasurer mentioned wire hanging from the fencing along side the railway line and A835 east of Garve. Cllr Kraft confirmed her understanding that it is Network Rail who are responsible for maintaining fencing/hedges and she will look into that raising it through her dual role with Maree Todd’s office.

Community Council member Bob Moir recalled a previous meeting years ago where Network Rail were present and that it is Network Rail he sees working in the area from time to time.

**Future of Achnasheen Hall** – as reported at our December 2021 Community Council meeting, the communities of Achnasheen and Achanalt decided against taking over ownership of the building. Our Chairman’s understanding is that Wester Ross Biosphere was made aware that The Highland Council was considering letting the building go and as a result, they communicated with TG&DDC to get more details on the matter as they wouldn’t want to take on an asset without financial security to maintain and operate it properly. Our Chairman has asked that they keep him informed directly when more is known.

**A joint meeting** of all the ward five Community Council’s was to have taken place yesterday to discuss road maintenance but as a mark of respect to those affected by the tragic incidents in Sleat and Dornie on Wednesday, the joint meeting was postponed for now. Our thoughts are with all concerned.

**Scottish Water update** - our Treasurer declared an interest in this topic. Installation of new water pipes for the Little Garve/Gorstan area are/appear complete, plenty water pressure in Little Garve. A member of the public noted another burst today at Killin Farm, east of Garve. They were advised to report directly to Scottish Water which they do every time it happens. Our Chairman has asked if rural communities such as Garve and Achnasheen are going to get **“top-up taps”** like you see in larger towns/cities like Inverness as people out here need a drink too - <https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/your-home/campaigns/top-up-tap-map> Gavin Steel at Scottish Water has confirmed there are currently no plans for our area and demand/usage is a factor however, The Midge Bite Café in Achnasheen have confirmed that they will top up water bottles … if people ask nicely!

The Secretary had asked about **Monkey pox**? We are not aware of any cases locally, press reports suggest there are around 67 cases in Scotland. Our Chairman noted that there aren’t the updates we used to hear about so much like the number of cases and even things like the war in the Ukraine. Cllr Kraft mentioned that there are a number of Ukrainian refugees currently being temporarily homed at the Highland Hotel in Strathpeffer.

A question was raised recently about the possibility of a sign to encourage traffic to the **Wyvis Natural Playpark** to go via Little Garve rather than through Garve Village itself. We have put the group in touch with Cllr Kraft to see what can be done. **In relation to this**, the Treasurer informed the meeting that she had suggested to TG&DDC and Wyvis Natural Playpark that chippings currently on the community land in Garve could perhaps be donated to the playpark. Unfortunately play chip for play parks have to meet certain very strict specifications and the ones on community land do not meet the criteria. Sue Tarr (with her Development Company hat on) confirmed the Company would have been delighted to let the Playpark have the chippings had it been possible.

Murdo Maclennan at Forestry & Land Scotland has been in touch to tell us that instances of **unauthorised vehicles (mainly motorbikes and quads) on Forestry managed ground** are increasing again including recent motorbike activity on our waymarked trail at Little Garve. He has stopped the motorbikes a few times and asked that they do not go on the waymarked trails but they have continued to do so. Murdo asks that we help him to remind local residents to report off road vehicles such as motorbikes to the police if they see them as it’s a risk to the responsible walkers, especially when on waymarked trails. It is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 for motorised vehicles to be driven on off road land without the land owner’s permission. This includes forest roads. We have posted this information on our website and thank Murdo for bringing the matter to our attention.

Tina Hartley (Principal Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) advises via email that the **latest community land** update is available at <https://garve.org/community-land-update5> Our thanks to Tina for the link and to Sadie for copying us into her personal emails between herself and Tina on various matters which Sadie raised as a private individual. SKS Scotland and John Gilbert Architects will be running a drop-in session in Garve Public Hall on Saturday 27 August 2022 from 10.30am until 12.30pm so the public can see the Community Land survey results. They will also be in Achnasheen Village Hall from 1.30pm until 3.30pm that same day. Sue Tarr (with her Development Company hat on) encouraged everyone to attend and see how the plans might look based on the survey results. Feedback/comments are welcome indeed encouraged as this was a key stage in the project. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris asked if the overall results on the various questions would be shared too; - as to how many people voted in favour of each question section on the survey. Sue said she didn’t know the specific details but she though that those results would be shown.

It should be noted that the **Lochluichart Defibrator** is located in IV23 2PZ, not 2PS as advertised elsewhere.

**Yvonne Boa** has left the employment of the local Development Company; we wish her well.

The first issue of the **new community newsletter** was published in mid-June 2022 and will hopefully be published every two months. Although nothing stays the same forever, our Chairman noted how many people in the first edition from 1998 were no longer with us or had moved away. The newsletter group had asked for feedback. Our Chairman thought the format was clear and not to small and was easy to read. He suggested a stag head would be a more suitable logo for the front page and would be a nod to the old newsletter heading. It was a shame there was no general update from TG&DDC or LCT after their latest boards meetings. As regarding the Community Council update, we haven't held a Community Ceilidh since 2019 and a number of funders won't consider us as we already receive funding from The Highland Council. In reply, Heather Donaldson thanked our Chairman for his encouraging comments.  Regarding format, Heather was conscious of the fact that some of our community might need this.  She liked the idea of the stag head and noted they have had quite a few suggestions in this respect. Heather agreed with our Chairman about updates from the other organisations but thought for the first issue that the introduction was probably best with possibly half-page updates from the three organisations every time thereafter. Our thanks to Heather for the update. Community Council members had no further comments to add. Our Chairman was grateful for a preview of the next issue sent to him yesterday by Heather to ensure the Community Council page was correct.

Five days after our last meeting, we received an email from Sue Tarr as Chair of TG&DDC thanking us for considering their **partnership request** at our last meeting.  Sue went to explain that Tina Hartley has over the last four years worked very hard to secure large sums of money for this community from both LCT and external sources, that the G&DCC might have been interested to have been involved in the project and that topics raised at the last meeting such as location of our office and consulting the community in planning matters might be something we want to discuss further with the community.  Our Chairman noted that Tina has indeed helped to secure funding from various sources over the years and that he didn't hear anyone say otherwise at the last meeting.  Our Chairman asked at this meeting had anyone heard anything said against Tina at the last meeting? Nobody who attended could say they did. Sue in attendance at this meeting just thought her letter would let the Community Council see what work goes on at the Development Company and that the Development Company accepted our decision. Our Chairman noted again the tight timescales would, in his opinion have been an issue. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris felt the financial risk/liability/governance for The Garve & District Community Council Office Bearers, brought to our attention by our Chairman when we initially discussed the partnership request, was not shared by TG&DDC in their public synopsis, even though we had shared our concerns at the time with them. Equally it was very much a last minute very rushed request from them given the application criteria and guidance notes were known a number of months before we were asked to partner with TG&DDC. However, Sadie expressed how pleased she was that LCT as a company had accepted an offer to partner with TG&DDC as they were better placed to do so, in that LCT Directors do not have the same limits of liability that Community Council Office Bearers do. Our Chairman recalled a special meeting of the Community Council from October 2010 that covered some of this along with conflicts of interest in relation to planning. Our Chairman confirmed that there is no guidance on where a Community Council office should be located.  It is usually the Secretary's home as is currently the case.  Both LCT and TG&DDC offices are also currently located out with this area.  As for planning, we follow 2.1 of the Scheme (ACE or ascertain, co-ordinate and express) though various channels available to us as we have done since our Chairman came back to the Community Council in June 2010. Our Chairman has asked all Community Councils in ward five how they deal with planning matters.  It appears we do more than most, some just note the applications in their minutes, others do nothing.  Our Chairman also asked Dot Ferguson, senior Ward Manager at The Highland Council about this particular point on planning as she deals with many Community Council’s across the Highlands, not just ward five.  Dot felt we did a really comprehensive job of dealing with planning applications and were probably an example of very good practice however, we would be happy to hear from anyone in our community if they felt there was anything more we could/should be doing.

Garve & District Community Council currently has **one 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 would like 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](mailto:garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com) with your name and contact details. We note both the LCT and TG&DDC have vacancies on their boards. Please contact them directly for more information. This update has already appeared on our website.

**Police report** - no formal report received and we are still asking who our Liaison Officer is, even Police Scotland HQ haven’t been able to tell us or Cllr Kraft who has tried but and no response even from the Chief Constable but as reported at previous Community Council meetings, anyone who wishes to raise an issue with the Police is asked to **call them directly on 101** at the time of the incident and make a witness statement.  Video, dashcam or photo evidence is also welcomed, indeed encouraged by the Police. Police patrol cars have been noted in the area over the last few weeks, especially in the Achanalt and Achnasheen areas. It was thought the van is also still active. Cllr Kraft felt community policing would be a topic high on many people’s agenda after the events this week in Sleat & Dornie.

We have been made aware of a **scam** which is targeting people who may use the NHS Highland telecare service. Scammers are telephoning individuals asking for payment to provide them with their new digital alarm. This scam relates to the digital telephone switchover where telecom providers are replacing analogue phone lines with a digital equivalent. This will affect delivery of telecare as the current system uses an analogue phone line to connect alarm calls to the monitoring centre. NHS Highland are upgrading all telecare alarms to a new digital box over the next two years – this new box will be provided free of charge. This update has already been posted on our website.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) is warning the public about the continued increase in reports about scams where victims are targeted on **WhatsApp by criminals** pretending to be someone they know – typically their children. Criminals will usually begin the conversation with *“Hello Mum”* or *“Hello Dad”* and will say that they are texting from a new mobile number as their phone was lost or damaged. They will then ask for money to purchase a new one, or claim that they need money urgently to pay a bill. The criminal will provide bank details for the payment to be made to, with some coming back with further demands for money. Between Thursday 3 February 2022 and Monday 21 June 2022, there have been a total of 1235 reports made to Action Fraud linked to this scam, with total reported losses exceeding £1.5million.

**Additional agenda item – Wades Bridge –** Community Council members were shocked, disappointed and angered to receive reports on the morning of Wednesday 3 August 2022 that graffiti had been sprayed onto the side of Wades Bridge in Little Garve, a most historic structure in our community, thought to be around 260 years old – see <https://www.ambaile.org.uk/asset/32503/1/> Pictures received a few hours later hardly lightened our mood or lowered our Chairman’s blood pressure in his sick bed! We passed the photos onto Richard Maclennan, Local Seasonal Access Officer and Cllr Kraft and reported the issue directly to Environmental Health case reference FS441785620 later that same day. We were grateful to Murdo Maclennan at Forestry and Land Scotland who updated us next day that he was (at the time) waiting on input from a national archaeology colleague who, in turn, had been in touch with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) about the situation. Murdo felt the key thing was to not rush into trying to get the Bridge cleaned as this risks causing more damage to the Bridge and even the cleaning of a scheduled monument may require consent from HES, which was one of the issues Murdo was waiting confirmation on. Murdo also confirmed the Police were being brought in. We thank Murdo for his update and **would encourage anyone with any information about the graffiti to speak to the Police directly on 101, quoting incident number 1480 from Friday 5 August 2022.** This update has already appeared on our website. Most Community Council members have visited the Bridge in recent days to see the vandalism for themselves. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris had spent time researching the graffiti and found that it is of the type used by the Union Bears a fanatical faction of Rangers Football Club supporters. She also remarked that trees/foliage does help to hide the worst of it and given that typically Union Bears do not tend to hide their destruction, perhaps this is a copycat incident. Bob Moir (with his Garve Public Hall Trustee’s hat on) noted that CCTV at the Hall does see which vehicles enter/leave Garve Village so if the Police get a lead, CCTV footage may help them. Some people attending this meeting recalled when the Bridge was refurbished in 2007-2008 it was done with lime mortar and horsehair.

**Treasurer’s report** - The Treasurer updated the meeting that the most recent bank statement she received dated Friday 24 June 2022 showed a balance of £1,134.97, down from £1,289.05 last time as we have had expenses of £80.00 to auditor, £29.95 ink to Chairman and £44.13 to Secretary expenses. The Secretary felt most strongly that as digital banking is still a work in progress, the Treasurer should get petrol money for coming into Dingwall specially to meet up with her at the bank to try and resolve the issues. A claim will be made. The Treasurer is unsure if we have received our Highland Council grant yet, tbc. The Chairman suggested we talk about funding raising at next month’s meeting, all agreed. There were no questions for the Treasurer. Difficulties in securing online banking were expressed and Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris suggested perhaps a change of bank should be considered as the old traditional banks are exceptionally slow and require constant chasing for the simplest of requests – whereas the newer online banks are not and do not!

**AOB from Community Council members** – no issues raised.

**AOB from members of the public** – Sue Tarr asked Cllr Kraft if she planned to continue to **work in the MSP’s office** as well as be a Highland Councillor. Cllr Kraft confirmed she did intend to and had already declared her second job in the members register of interests at The Highland Council which is publicly available to view however, as she was on NPAC (planning committee), she would not get involved in any planning matters that come into the MSP’s office. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris noted how useful it had been to have Cllr Kraft and the MSP working together and both attend the MSP’s surgery in Garve on Friday 22 July 2022. Sadie thought joined up working should be encouraged. Cllr Kraft hopes to write a short piece for local newsletters explaining who is responsible for different issues, be it Cllr, MSP or MP. There was general agreement that would be helpful.

Cllr Kraft confirmed that she **hoped to meet up** with Ewan Bush (TG&DDC Community Energy Officer) soon regarding transport for Contin/Garve. Cllr Kraft had recently met up with Highland Council Transport Officials (different to public transport) to discuss various issues which she found helpful.

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – we have received seven consultations since our last ordinary meeting. Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) have launched a consultation on its Draft Communities Strategy for Scotland’s National Forests and Land. Forestry and Land Scotland is the Scottish Government agency responsible for managing the public forests and lands owned by Scottish Ministers on behalf of the people of Scotland. The Strategy sets out the principles and strategic priorities for how they work with communities. The Communities Strategy will sit alongside their Visitor Services Strategy and will focus on how communities can get more involved in the decisions, management and use of the national forests and Land. The Consultation is open until Saturday 23 August 2022, more details at <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/what-we-do/communities> This update has already appeared on our website. Community Council members had no comments.

The Highland Council were conducting a consultation into short-term lets. The deadline for comments was last Friday. This consultation had already appeared on our website and via our emailing list before the deadline closed. Community Council members had no comments.

NHS Highland Draft Engagement Framework - working together to develop better services for everyone. Over the last 10 months, NHS Highland have been working with a group of patients, carers, staff and third sector representatives to draw up a draft engagement framework. The draft framework sets the foundations for NHS Highland to work together with service users, partners, communities and staff, to ensure that their services more closely reflect the needs and aspirations of the people who live and work in the NHS Highland area. Community Councils were invited to submit any comments by Friday 29 July 2022. Some Community Council members felt there were too many unexplained abbreviations!

The Highland Council is currently working to make period products freely available to everyone who needs them. This is funded by the Scottish Government, and in line with the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 aiming at tackling period poverty, promoting period dignity and breaking the stigma surrounding periods in Scotland. The Highland Council has launched a community consultation to understand the views of people needing to access period products. They want to understand what sort of products people may be interested in being available locally and where these should be located. The consultation is an anonymous online survey, which closed last Wednesday but which was noted on our website.

The Highland Council are requesting our opinion on hybrid working within Community Councils. Community Council members felt online meetings work well, public are more likely to attend as they don't have to travel to the meetings (as we have seen here) and online meetings are how we now do most/all our meetings which is cheaper than hiring a venue such as a Village Hall which the small Highland Council grant we receive struggles to cover.  Online also saves everyone having to come out on a cold winter’s night and helps lower our carbon footprint. Online is also better than a local Councillor travelling some distance just to find out when they get there that the meeting has been cancelled! Such unnecessary and avoidable travel costs could have helped pay for another Gully Sucker! We learned from Cllr Kraft that Cllr expenses for 2019/20 had reduced by around £100k while meeting online during the pandemic.

The Highland Council has launched a consultation to ask people's views on how they would like to see area-based funding being prioritised and which types of community projects they would like developed in their local area.  This consultation is a chance for communities to tell The Highland Council what is important to them so that funds can be directed where they are needed most. The consultation will be open until 31 August 2022 at <https://engagehighland.co.uk/> This update has already appeared on our website. Community Council members had no comments.

UHI North Highland, UHI Outer Hebrides and UHI West Highland have launched a 10-week public consultation on a new strategic development, which would see all three colleges merge into one single organisation, creating an anchor institution of scale and impact within UHI, and the region, supporting 9000 students and 600 staff across 19 rural and island locations. You can make your views known by completing their survey - <https://www.rural-islands-merger.uhi.ac.uk/have-your-say/> The consultation closes on Friday 14 October 2022. This update has already appeared on our website. 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. 22/01116/DOM2 is for the new dwelling-house with separate workshop & associated works and sitting of temporary caravan at Broombank. It is thought this related to planning application 21/03360/FUL which we considered last August, which has since received planning permission from the Case Officer.

Two previous planning applications have been determined by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 22/02256/FUL, proposed erection of extension to house at North Hill Forest Cottage, north of Silverbridge which we considered at our last ordinary meeting has been granted planning permission by The Highland Council's Case Officer with no conditions.

22/02005/FUL was the proposed extension of tower to 25 metres height, installation of 3 antennas, 2 dishes and ancillary works above Glen Docharty which we considered at our last ordinary meeting has been granted planning permission by The Highland Council's Case Officer with no conditions.

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

There are currently three planning applications awaiting determination by The Highland Council for our area.

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)

There are no new licensing issues for us to consider this evening.

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

Tuesday 6 September 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

Tuesday 4 October 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

Tuesday 1 November 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

Tuesday 6 December 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

January 2023 – no meeting

Tuesday 7 February 2023, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 7 March 2023, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 4 April 2023, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 2 May 2023, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 6 June 2023, **AGM** followed by an ordinary meeting, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

As usual, our Chairman started to draw the meeting to a close by asking all present if anyone had any final questions or thoughts on anything they had heard the evening, a question he often askes throughout the meeting too. Nobody had any final questions or thoughts. Although our meetings are not public meetings, members of the public are still very welcome to attend Community Council meetings and take part in the discussions under the guidance of the Chairman (see section 12 of the Constitution). A copy of our Constitution is available in the library section of our own website and hard/electronic copies are available from the Secretary.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.  He also thanked Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris for again hosting the webcam session.  Sadie wished to thank our Chairman for his continued work on behalf of the community from his sick bed. The Chairman thanked Sadie and closed the meeting at 8.05pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

*The leaning tree in The Avenue …*



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

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This set of minutes were first published (in draft form) at 6.00pm on Monday 15 August 2022.