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

**held on Tuesday 1 March 2022 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**: Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC), Nick Sage (Infinergy) and one member of the public.

**Apologies**: Community Council member Joe Stewart who is away working and Cllr Dr Ian Cockburn. *Apologies were received next morning from Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) and on behalf of Yvonne Boa (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC).*

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 by post or email with any issues they wish raised.

Community Council members were sorry to learn that Norrie Matheson, a former resident of Fannich of many years passed peacefully away on Wednesday 9 February 2022, at the Highland Hospice, aged 87 years. Norrie was born in Coillie-Righ in 1934, schooled in Killilan with his three older brothers and younger sister. He went to Agriculture College in Balmacara, then on to the Army serving in Hong Kong. He worked on various estates before meeting Effie in Auchtertyre, then moving to take up the position of Head Keeper at Fannich in 1972. Norrie was quite a character, always good humoured and was, until recent times, still a regular at the Lochluichart Estate shoots where, we understand, he was the life and soul of the lunches! He was a keen shinty player and well respected within the game. He still attended matches when he could. Our thoughts are with his wife of 57 years Effie, former Community Council member Ruari Matheson who still lives and works on Fannich and the wider family.

Brenda Wray from Garve passed away suddenly last Friday after a short stay in Hospital. Brenda used to work in Contin Filling Station so was well known to passing motorists. Our thoughts are with her husband Jeff.

Best wishes to Cathy the Postie who left Royal Mail last Saturday for pastures new after 10 years on the post.

**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. 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 1 February 2022 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. 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. The Chairman reminded everyone that draft minutes do not need to be made public until they have been approved at the next ordinary meeting (see 8.3 of the scheme) however, this Community Council has, for many years, published its draft minutes in full as it keeps the community updated in a timely manner. LCT also work this way.

**Matters arising** – **Proposed Kirkan Windfarm** – we have seen through press reports that a public local inquiry is due to be held w/c 21 March 2022. Trevor Hunter from Coriolis Energy has confirmed to us that unfortunately the first public local inquiry due w/c 10 January 2022 (as reported at our November 2021 ordinary meeting) was cancelled as the Government Reporter caught Covid! Trevor and his team only found out the Friday afternoon before. No change to positions from anybody involved Trevor reports. SEPA and SNH have withdrawn their objections, so it’s solely The Highland Council arguing visual impacts from local viewpoints. The session will, as always, be available to view via [www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk) (ref WIN-270-14). Our thanks to Trevor for his update.

**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/) Nick Sage from Infinergy updated the meeting that NatureScot have requested further bird surveys be carried out which have been ongoing since the Autumn. This further environmental information will be submitted in the next month. Nick thought both the planning application for the proposed extension and the powerline could be considered in June 2022 after The Highland Council elections. Nick also apologised for missing our meeting last month. Community Council members had no questions and thanked Nick for attending tonight.

**Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – We note **untaxed (SORN) vehicles** in Highland Council carparks in our area have been removed. **White lines** in Garve Village and Gorstan Junction will be attended to in the spring. **Broken fence** at the playing field in Matheson Road has been repaired. Thanks to Community Council member Bob Moir for the update. **Collapsed drain** in Garve between Garve Public Hall and Garve Post Office has been reported. 387273371 was reported on Tuesday 21 December 2021. **Damaged road sign** east of Mossford has been reported. 393832332 was reported on Monday 17 January 2022. **Achnasheen EV Charger** – no further news from Cllr Cockburn or our MSP. The local MP has been informed, awaiting a reply.

**Achnasheen roadside cameras** – as reported at our December 2021 ordinary meeting, these cameras at the roundabout have not been able to be viewed by the public in some time as the website no longer exists. They were a great help to motorists, especially in the winter months when preparing for journeys. Our Chairman has been discussing the matter with Highland Council officials who agree with him that the cameras images could be provided via The Highland Council’s own website instead, perhaps as part of their winter information pages. The Highland Council confirmed that this process may take some time to come to fruition but they will endeavour to keep the Community Council informed of progress. Our thanks to Andrew Hunter, Colin Howell and Cllr Cockburn for their help in this matter. Trunk roads such as the A835’s roadside cameras at Aultguish are still available to view via [www.traffic.scotland.org](http://www.traffic.scotland.org)

**The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee** – The Highland Council’s Roads Department have raised no objections to us planting seven trees in The Avenue as discussed at our last ordinary meeting. Their Forestry Officer would raise no objections if we planted more depending what space there is in The Avenue but our Chairman has pointed out there is no budget for that … just like there isn’t a budget at The Highland Council! We have asked SSE if they would like to be involved in this project as they were ten years ago but they don’t have any local funds in the Garve area so they wouldn’t be in a position to provide support. However, they do send us the best of luck with the project – *“it sounds like a lovely way to mark this special occasion”.* The good news is that the Community Council has been awarded 100 FREE trees through the project “i dig trees” which aims to have 600,000 trees planted across the UK this season.

The trees are due to be delivered at the end of this month *(20 x Common Oak, 20 x Silver Birch, 20 x Green Beech, 20 x Hornbeam, 20 x Common Alder plus 100 x Spiral guards).* Community Council member Bob Moir is happy for the trees to be delivered to his house. If anybody would like to donate more trees, that would be most welcome. We are also grateful to all those who have already offered to help plant the trees. More offers of help were received tonight at this meeting. The Secretary suggested a planting plan would be useful. Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris suggested a contact she knew might be willing to help in this regard. Community Council member Bob Moir had been speaking to a retired Forester who also suggested the same person so Sadie will make enquiries. The point was made would these new trees be in keeping with The Avenue? It was felt the planting plan would iron out/highlight any issues. It has also been suggested that people could buy their own tree to plant in their own gardens to mark this historic event. We would welcome pictures if anybody does this. Just after our last ordinary meeting, our Chairman planted a tree in Achnasheen to mark Accession Day. Our thanks to The Midge Bite Café in Achnasheen for their assistance in this project. All trees are gifted to the landowners as Community Councils are not advised to own assets.

In related news, **The Garve Events Group** are planning to have an afternoon tea on Sunday 5 June 2022 to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. If anybody would like to be involved in helping with the event, they are very welcome to attend the next Events Group meeting which is on Monday 28 March 2022 at 7.00pm in Garve Public Hall. This update has already been posted on our website.

We note the **A890 will be closed** to all traffic at Balnacra from 7.00pm on Friday 4 March 2022 until 7.00am next morning. It will also be closed from 7.00pm on Saturday 5 March 2022 until 7am next morning and from 7.00pm on Sunday 6 March 2022 until 7.00am next morning all for works to take place on the Balnacra crossing. This update has already been posted on our website.

**A newspaper cutting** was recently posted on social media that brought back memories for some … (From March 1976) … *“At the recent meeting of the Ross & Cromarty District Housing Committee, a plan was submitted showing an area of land in Garve to be acquired for possibly eight houses plus a play area. Approval of the committee would allow the matter to be pursued further. The Committee expected opposition to the acquisition, as there had been in the former County Council’s day but The Marquesa de Torrehermesa, the local member, said it was the best site, there could be difficulty obtaining the land but the committee should proceed. She felt eight houses would meet the needs of Garve at this time. The committee decided to proceed the matter by acquiring the said land*”. These houses became part of Matheson Road.

**The Highland Council winter service** started on the 14 October and continues to 14 April. During this time, they monitor road and weather conditions across their roads network. The Highland council maintain a fleet of 105 gritters, 42 pavement gritters and 1 snowblower. Across the Highlands there are over 1,750 grit bins. Over a typical winter around 50,000 tonnes of salt will be spread on the road. The cost of providing this service reflects the fact that they have to treat the longest local road network of any council in Scotland. Although expenditure varies according to the severity of the winter, The Highland Council expect to spend in the region of £5million annually.

<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.

**Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via <https://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/> Marco Bardelli wrote to the Community Council last week as follows … *“I'm sorry that there has been a gap in communication between myself and the community in Garve. I was waiting for a meeting with colleagues in BEAR and Network Rail in regard to the proposed improvements to the interface between the trunk road and* ***level crossings in the Garve area****. These are part of a larger project to* ***install barriers*** *along the verge to prevent vehicles leaving the road and landing on the railway. The meeting took place last week and I can advise that there was broad agreement on our proposals. There are three level crossings, one at Killin Farm and two further east accessing fields. The middle crossing is no longer in use. At the other two crossings we will be building a new hardstanding at the side of the road to allow the farmer to stop safely away from flowing traffic while he follows the level crossing operating procedure while coming and going from his property. These improvements will largely de-risk the situation that pertains at present which is causing justifiable concern. The overall plan for* ***gateway signs*** *which I support and the possibility of* ***vehicle activated speed warning signs*** *can now be reviewed with road safety colleagues in light of the above. Although no programme date has been set for the level crossing work it is expected that it will go ahead in the summer or autumn this year.”* Our thanks to Marco for his update which we have passed onto Killin Farm. Flora Smith from Killin Farm attended this meeting. She felt the site meeting had gone well and now awaits the works on the crossings. Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC) updated the meeting that the Development Company are working away on the gateway sign design with the Biosphere and it is hoped the sign will also be in Gaelic. Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer, TG&DDC) had asked via email if we knew who was on the Road Safety Team, we did not.

**Scottish Water update** – our Treasurer declared an interest in this topic and took no part in the discussion. Installation of new water pipes for the Little Garve/Gorstan area are ongoing. It appears works are now concentrating in the Gorstan area and perhaps Little Garve are on the new pipes!

We were sorry to read the **local energy group** has dissolved - <https://garve.org/energy-group-update> Co-opted member Hamish Leslie Melville asked about the future of the Energy Grant in light of the news from LCT that it can’t continue in its current form (due to charity rules). Sue Tarr (Chair, TG&DDC) informed the meeting that it is hoped some of the work of the Energy group can continue within the Development Company and that both they and LCT hope to meet soon to try and find a way forward for the Energy Grant.

We note a **new community bus service** on the Black Isle - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14411/black_isle_community_to_celebrate_launch_of_door-to-door_bus_service> This update has already been shared with the Development Company and Contin Community Council.

It was noted recently that **Lochluichart Railway Station** is one of the least used in Scotland with just 24 passengers in 2020/2021. Garve had 426 passengers, Achanalt had 26 passengers and Achnasheen had 620 passengers. Coronavirus really has changed everything!

**Achnasheen Outreach Post Office** will be CLOSED on Tuesday 8 March 2022 and Tuesday 26 April 2022 due to holidays. **Garve Post Office** remains open every Wednesday & Thursday 3.30pm until 5.30pm.

**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 by the Police.

**Treasurer’s report** - The Treasurer updated members that the bank balance on Wednesday 9 February 2022 was £2,605.05. This was after The Secretary has expenses of £25.95 for cards and stamps and the Chairman had ink expenses of £34.00. A cheque for £86.00 public liability insurance has been sent. Community Council members fully agreed to appoint last year’s auditor as year-end is 31 March 2022. There were no questions for the Treasurer. *(Post meeting note – Secretary Fee to be discussed).*

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

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

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – none. 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** - We note one pre-planning notice regarding a proposed 4G telecommunications installation for H3G UK above Grudie Bridge. This SRN (Single Rural Network) project is to bring much needed coverage to remote areas that currently do not have adequate coverage. It is thought this proposed mast will have a good signal to the east towards Lochluichart and should provide some uplift to Garve. We will await the detailed plans with interest.

In slightly related news, Cornerstone and O2 Telefonica are undertaking upgrading works to the existing radio base station above Strathgarve. It is intended that the works will take place shortly and they will endeavour to keep any disruption to a minimum. Community Council members noted no improvement so far but perhaps works are still to take place.

One new planning application has been received by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. 22/00498/FUL is the proposed change of use of workshop and library into a house at Crannach, Strathgarve. Any comments to the Case Officer need to be in by this Friday. Community Council members raised no objections to this application.

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)

Before our Chairman moved to the last item, he had to note Community Council member Joe Stewart has been unable to attend Community Council meetings in some time and therefore, under 11.2 of the scheme had to ask Community Council members for agreement to the continued absence. Community Council members fully agreed so no further action need be taken at this time.

**Dates of future meetings** - the latest guidance received from The Highland Council on Thursday 3 February 2022 is that we can now meet in person if we wish to. Community Council members felt an in-person AGM would be nice depending on Covid at that time. Community Council member Bob Moir, who is also a Garve Public Hall Trustee will make a provisional booking for our AGM. He noted there have been more events happening in the Hall recently.

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

Tuesday 5 April 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

Tuesday 3 May 2022, 7.00pm, webcam

Tuesday 7 June 2022, **AGM** followed by an ordinary meeting, 7.00pm, Garve Public Hall tbc. Apologies noted from Community Council member Bob Moir.

July 2022 – no meeting

Tuesday 2 August 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 6 September 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

Tuesday 4 October 2022, 7.00pm, venue/webcam tbc

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

Tuesday 6 December 2022, 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 webcam session. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

