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

**held on Tuesday 9 April 2024 on webcam**

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

**Also present on webcam**: Fiona Richardson (Community Support & Engagement, The Highland Council from 7.00pm until 7.35pm), Peter Kane (Kane Partnership from 7.00pm until 8.10pm) and Seumas Skinner (Community Liaison Manager, Statkraft UK from 7.00pm until 8.10pm).

**Apologies**: Cllr Liz Kraft, Tina Hartley (Community Engagement and Development Officer) and Fiona Milligan & Matthew Wilson (Boralex).

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed everyone.  He also confirmed that this meeting would be recorded as per the agenda and will be archived and available for viewing for twelve months thereafter.  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 cannot attend our meetings can, as always, write to us by post or email with any issues they wish raised at garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com  Our website [www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict/](http://www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict/) continues to receive 150-200 visitors per month (out of a community of around 270 people).  The Community Council area covers from Garve to Aultguish and from Garve to Achnasheen and is the only organisation that represents the whole community.  We are elected by the community every four years or so and usually meet once a month.  Draft minutes and a list of current members of the Community Council can be viewed at our website.  We are also on social media - [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552992414355](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552992414355)

Our Chairman was delighted to attend the Craft Fair last Sunday in Garve Public Hall.  14-16 stalls selling a variety of items.  The fair was very well attended both by people from this community and further afield.  It is hoped the fair can become a monthly event.  It was our Chairman’s first visit to the Hall since it reopened and was allowed to have a wonder around.  He was pleased that the finished work was beyond his expectations.  Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris also attended the fair and was delighted to see so many in and the variety of items for sale.

**Declarations of Interest** – the Vice Chairman is a Garve Public Hall Trustee and a Friend of Garve War Memorial.  The Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris are all members of the traffic calming group.  Tina Hartley is the Community Engagement and Development Officer at TG&DDC.  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 ordinary meeting held on Tuesday 5 March 2024 via webcam were proposed without amendment by Bob Moir 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.  Minutes will be signed by our Chairman and Treasurer in due course via post.

**Appointment of Associate member** – following our last ordinary meeting and having received further clarification of local and area place plans, where it seems a local place plan does carry weight, elected Community Council members wish to appoint Tina Hartley as an associate member.  The appointment would be for six months from tonight or until this project is complete, whichever is sooner.  This will give Tina access to mapping software the Community Council has access to.  This in turn may help when looking at and describing specific parcels of land.  We would also be happy to publicise public consultation events on this matter.  An associate member does not count towards the quorum and has no voting rights (see 5.5 and 7.3 of the Scheme of Establishment).  Proposed Kenny Maclean, Seconded Sadie-Michaela Harris, unanimously agreed.

**Matters arising** – **Local and Area Place Plans** – Tina Hartley, Community Engagement and Development Officer (CEDO) has supplied us with the following report … “*October – December 2023: Tina spent time undertaking desktop research in support of developing a Local Place Plan for Garve & District.  Specifically she looked at The Highland Council’s information, Planning Aid Scotland and Nick Wright Planning, plus the one approved Local Place Plan available at that time – all provided lots of useful information.  She also attended a learning exchange event, run by the Scottish Community Development Centre, this was a useful event with relevant speakers, including a presentation from Nick Wright.  During this period, the CEDO and Sue Tarr (Chair TG&DDC), also met with Fiona Richardson (THC) and Natasha Hutchinson (Wester-Ross Biosphere) to discuss where Local Place Plans fit within a wider Area Place Plan which the Biosphere had been commissioned to produce.  Desktop research and wider discussion all confirmed that spatial mapping would need to be included in our locally developed plan. The CEDO was advised to gain access, via G&DCC, to mapping software.  This proved problematic due to licencing restrictions and opened a wider discussion within the G&DCC regarding the need for a Local Place Plan and whether it would truly have an impact moving forward.  January – February 2024: The CEDO’s work came to a slight halt during January and February 2024, whilst G&DCC gathered some further information from other Community Council’s and The Highland Council, plus attending a local visioning event run by Wester-Ross Biosphere.  This concluded with G&DCC agreeing to appoint the CEDO as an Associate Member on to the Community Council until completion of the Local Place Plan, effectively giving the Development Company access to the relevant mapping software while meeting all licencing requirements.  March 2024: With G&DCC support, CEDO now has full access to mapping software and their Chair continues to share all relevant information with her to support the development of a locally based plan.  During this period, she has continued to carry out desk top research, looking at how other communities are approaching the task.  The CEDO was also contacted by Seori Burrnett, Housing Development Officer for Coigach Community, who had previously undertaken a lot of research on the subject.  Following a zoom meeting, Seori was happy to share some very detailed information which proved useful.  The G&D Local Place Plan will inform the Area Place Plan for Ward 5 and the Development Company will use the shared priorities agreed across all Ward 5 communities (following recent Biosphere visioning sessions) as discussion points for the plan: - 1. Affordable Housing, 2. Economic Development, 3. Environmental Sustainability, 4. Community Well-being and Health, 5. Infrastructure Improvement, 6. Tourism Management and 7. Community Engagement.  In support of community engagement and sharing information, the CEDO is working with Doepud to develop a new, dedicated area on garve.org.  Tina is in the middle of updating project actions and developing a project plan.  To conclude this update, a Notification of Intent to produce our Local Place Plan has been filed with The Highland Council.”*  Our thanks to Tina for the report and her work to date on this project.  The Wester Ross Biosphere group are happy to support this project and link in to pubic consultations for their area place plan.  More details are available in the library section of our website.  Also see - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/15969/what_is_your_lived_experience_of_highland>  It was noted that had the Community Council been invited to earlier meetings, further headway could perhaps have been made by now but hindsight is a wonderful thing.  Fiona Richardson, Community Support & Engagement, The Highland Council explained that following agreement at full council, a new place-based approach was the way forward across all departments, working together [Place Based Planning](https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/79296/10_future_highlands_strategic_partnership_priority_4_-_place_based_planning_and_investment_in_communities).  Eleven Area Place Plans would eventually be created based on area committee areas.  We would fall into the Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh area (also known as ward five).  Wester Ross Biosphere are taking the lead on our area place plan with funding from the shared prosperity fund.  They have used desktop studies to find out what is already on the ground, what is needed. The aim of the plan and this way of working is to simplify processes, co-ordinate better uses of resources and understand where there are gaps to fill.  The Local Place Plan encourages community engagement, giving a greater voice to the communities.  This is all part of National Planning Framework Four [NPF4](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/).  The plan should be community led and driven, not by agencies and should set out the aspirations of the community.  The Highland Council are finding local action plans and development plans are all coming together under these new local place plans.  Templates are now available on the Highland Council website [LPP](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/178/development_plans/1043/local_place_plans)  to help communities find their voices.  The deadline for submitting local place plans is 27 September 2024 and these plans will be used as evidence towards the new Highland Wide Development Plan which is currently being drawn up.  Planning will use local place plans as a material consideration but other departments and organisations will use the plans to help set budgets, fill service gaps etc to it is not just a planning matter.  The Highland Council hope these new local plans will be community lead in finding solutions to achieve what the community wants, not just council but all agencies.  They should be ambitious despite current financial pressures-, short-, medium- and long-term goals.  In answer to several questions Fiona confirmed these documents will not sit on a shelf, they really matter as it is the local voice, community priorities based on needs, current issues and ambitions.  They should give greater power and influence across the board, a bottom-up approach.  The current Inner Moray Firth Local Plan will be replaced by 2027 by one Highland Wide Plan.  Pressure on staff?  Community development team of six, place planning is part of remit.  Area place plan has two full time fixed term employees there until March 2025.  Corporate approach across the board to inform discussions and decisions.

Fiona Richardson was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7.35pm

**Boralex** – [https://www.boralex.com](https://www.boralex.com/) – Fiona Milligan confirmed no news, but will be in touch when there is news to report.  Our thanks to Fiona.

**Kirkan Windfarm** – [http://www.kirkanwindfarm.co.uk](http://www.kirkanwindfarm.co.uk/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) – Trevor Hunter has been in touch to say they are still working away on options and grid connections so nothing to report at present.  Our thanks to Trevor for the update.

**Proposed Tarvie windfarm** – [https://tarviewindfarm.com](https://tarviewindfarm.com/) – no news.

**Proposed SSE Fairburn extension** – <https://www.sserenewables.com/onshore-wind/in-development/fairburn-extension> - no news.

**SSEN Spittal – Beauly 400kV project** - <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/spittal--loch-buidhe--beauly-400kv-connection>  Further public consultations took place in recent weeks.  SSEN have advised that those who signed in at the events were as follows … Contin: 32, Marybank: 69, Garve: 4 and Strathpeffer: 107, Total: 212.  Our Chairman attended the Marybank event which was well attended while he was there.  It was again stated that D3 (the corridor nearest to Loch Garve) is still NOT their preferred route but things can change.  The online recording of the Community Councils meeting with SSEN on Thursday 7 March 2024 is still to be shared due to IT issues.  Press reports suggest £60billion is required to upgrade the network across the UK for net zero by 2030.

**SSEN underground cable** from the Western Isles to Beauly – no further updates received.

**Proposed Carn Fearna windfarm** – <https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna/> Peter Kane and Seumas Skinner updated this meeting that work on preparing the planning application for the met mast is ongoing.  This is a Highland Council planning application so would be advertised through the usual channels in due course.  The Community Council will be kept updated.  Further public exhibitions are planned for May 2024 …

**Wednesday, 15 May – Contin Community Hall**

10.30                 Public exhibition starts

14.00                 Public exhibition ends

**Wednesday, 15 May – Garve Public Hall**

15.30                 Public exhibition starts

20.30                 Public exhibition ends

**Thursday, 16 May – Strathpeffer Community Hall**

15.00                 Public exhibition starts

18.30                 Public exhibition ends

Statkraft would like to thank the Community Council for the helpful feedback on exhibition times and venues.  These will be fully publicised at the end of the month, by a direct mailing, emails to local politicians, community councils and other stakeholders, emails to those who subscribed to their mailing list, newspaper adverts and hopefully posters.  Statkraft have also allowed for time in their bookings to hold a biodiversity workshop, tbc.  This will hopefully be overseen by Planning Aid Scotland, tbc.  At the public exhibitions, wireline drawings will be displayed as the design is at the “chill” stage, not “Frozen.”   Exact turbine numbers tbc.  Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris read out a WhatsApp message from a community page.  Sadie did not reveal who wrote the message …  “*I attended a public meeting in Contin re some local proposals.  I asked what I thought were pertinent local environmental things and the chap said it was okay as they were supported by MSP Kate (Forbes).”*



Sadie asked about this on a local SNP WhatsApp group page who replied the statement was correct. An article written in The West Highland Free Press which Sadie questioned the validity of was told it too was accurate. Statkraft wished it be noted they DO NOT sponsor political parties or individual MSP’s.  They do sponsor Highland Renewables who put on roadshows across the Highlands for renewable discussions.  Kate is a volunteer ambassador, not on the board.  Kate also volunteers her time with Highland Tourism.  It was noted people confuse Statkraft workshops with other developers.  It was confirmed that the comments were made at a SSEN exhibition in Contin.  Statkraft cannot comment on a SSEN workshop as they were not there in Contin.  It is not known if Kate Forbes supports this project or not but she will represent her constituents’ views and interests.  Statkraft compliance details – : [Business ethics and compliance | Statkraft](https://www.statkraft.com/sustainability/our-commitments/business-ethics-and-compliance/)  The key document is the [Code of Conduct](https://www.statkraft.com/globalassets/0/.com/4-sustainability/our-commitment/business-ethics-and-compliance/whistleblower-channel/statkrafts-code-of-coduct_en.pdf), particularly the first three bullets under part 2, section 4.  This perceived funding conflict will be reported, thanks for raising.  The Vice Chair felt compliance/legal is a big issue for companies these days so would be surprised if Statkraft/MSP have broken any rules but certainly needs to be investigated.  The Treasurer felt it was good people are made aware of what has reportedly been said.  Who was the SSEN employee who said this?  Enquiries will be made.  It was also noted that Edward Mountain MSP recently shared a platform with several companies including SSEN in Strathpeffer to engage with communities, Statkraft were not invited to that event.  Regarding this project, houses as potential candidates for noise monitoring, would they be willing to have microphones in their gardens for up to a month?  Those selected will receive letters.  How many houses?  Will check what can be made public but feedback received has helped shape which areas to monitor. Will every house receive a letter?  No, GDPR restricts what can be made public.  % of houses to receive letters?  tbc.

Peter Kane and Seumas Skinner were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8.10pm.

*(Post meeting note – our Chairman has asked SSEN, the individual who attended the public exhibition and Kate Forbes MSP for any comments on the above.* ***The individual*** *confirmed it was the Statkraft, not SSEN event and is surprised that what they regarded as a private WhatsApp group chat has been discussed at a publicly open meeting. SSEN have been updated accordingly as have Statkraft.* ***Kate Forbes MSP*** *wrote back to say she does not receive a penny, nor has she ever, from Statkraft/SSEN/Highland Renewables or any other developer.  She is not on side with any development.  Kate confirmed she is an ambassador for the Highland Tourism group, and has spoken at the Highland Renewables discussion forums because she cares about improving the situation for Highland communities - including small businesses, infrastructure and areas affected by over tourism.  These issues are all within her remit as a local MSP and so feels it makes sense to take part.  Kate feels at least four statements made at the meeting about her were untrue.* ***Statkraft*** *have updated us that regarding disclosing the addresses that they approach re sound equipment, they have been advised not to do this as they have seen some incidents where residents who host the equipment have been subject to intimidation or had the equipment stolen from their land, both of which can cause considerable upset. The noise assessment will ultimately depend on two factors: the level of wind turbine noise; and the level of existing background noise. As a rough guide for a wind farm of this scale they would expect dwellings up to 1km - 1.5km from the windfarm to be considered. Noise monitoring locations are generally selected based on the predicted noise levels around a windfarm and the spread of dwellings, rather than a percentage of a group of dwellings.  If the wind turbine noise level is predicted to be below a minimum threshold of 35 dB at all dwellings, then this can be used as a limit and background noise monitoring is not required. They have also raised the WhatsApp discussion with their own compliance team. Our thanks to all for their quick responses).*

**The Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk/) – **Future of Strathgarve Primary School** – The Highland Council, having carefully considered the views expressed by parents at the meeting of Thursday 15 February 2024, has decided not to pursue any proposal to mothball or close Strathgarve Primary School for session 2024-25; that is, for the session lasting from August 2024 to early July 2025.  As mentioned at the meeting, The Highland Council would potentially review this position in future years, should the roll of the school fall from its current figure of eight.  As also discussed, the current funding position is such that there are no immediate plans for investment in improving the school building.  At the meeting on 15 February, parents advised as a group that they would rather keep the school as it is than lose the school altogether.  This update has already appeared on our online channels.

On Thursday 28 March 2024, our Chairman and Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris visited Strathgarve Primary School to see how the children have been getting on designing a **Community Council logo**.  It was lovely to see the children's own individual drawings and how all of them had been incorporated into the logo.  They were very proud of their work and rightly so!  Next they are going to digitalise the logo and play with some fonts to add lettering around the outside of the logo.  The logo will eventually appear on our social media page and on all agendas/minutes of our meetings.  Well done to all involved! The picture was taken by teaching staff who have given us permission to share …



**Replanting Trees in The Avenue** – From October 2023 ordinary meeting … “g*iven the challenging ground conditions, cell grown trees are thought to be the most likely to bring the best results and will be easier to plant than bare-rooted stock.  Nursery stock will be sourced from local provenance where available.  Estimates for site area, based on an estimated area of 1.1 hectares and a planting density of 2000 stems per hectare, an allowance has been made for 300 trees.  Planting should be undertaken in winter/spring 2023/2024 (tbc).  50 x Scots Pine, 50 x Pedunculate Oak, 50 x Downy Birth, 50 x Silver Birch, 25 x Juniper, 25 x Alder, 25 x Aspen and 25 x Hazel.  It has also been acknowledged by The Highland Council that successful establishment of the young trees is entirely dependent on a robust maintenance programme therefore, an initial three-year maintenance contract will also be secured with the planting contractor.”*  We have learnt in recent days that The Highland Council did put this work out to tender but unfortunately there were no contractors able to take on the work this planting season so before the winter of 2024/25 they will be putting this contract out again for tender to get this work completed.  We have been asked when and where was the tender advertised?  We have been advised that due to the cost of the tender being below a certain threshold, the contract was put out to three contractors selected online through a search.  Concern has been raised at the “tendering” process and did the nine other sites in the Highlands due to have tree planting done also not go ahead?  Can fruit trees also be included in The Avenue as suggested by a local resident (The Highland Council will consider this suggestion) and can we see sight of the planting plan?  The Highland Council confirmed yesterday that five projects did go ahead but projects in Tain, Golspie Garve and Dingwall did not receive any quotes for tendering.  The Garve project was grouped with two other sites in Dingwall however, The Highland Council confirmed that if a local contractor was willing to take on the Garve project, just contact us here at the Community Council and we will pass on their contact details.  The one consideration The Highland Council would ask is that there is a Rhododendron Bush on site which needs to be removed.  The tree planting plan and a full history of this project is available in the library section of our website.  This update has already been shared on our online channels.  Community Council members expressed their concern at the “tendering” process and feel it should have been promoted more widely.

The **two large potholes** near the school on the road leading up to Blackwater Bridge have now been filled in, thanks to all.  The **Hotbox** is apparently in the east of the ward.

**Resurfacing works** on the A832 east and west of Achanalt are to be welcomed after we highlighted several issues over recent months.

**Future of Achnasheen Public Toilets** – awaiting news.  Last Thursday, we learnt that the toilets were closed again as are the Rogie Falls toilets.  Achnasheen are closed due to an overflowing septic tank.  Timescales for reopening the Achnasheen toilets are unknown at this stage.  Norma Ross, Chairperson at Contin Community Council was unaware of Rogie Falls closure but thanked our Chairman for letting her know.  *(Post meeting note – in slightly related news,****Achnasheen Post Office Outreach service****will not be available on Tuesday 30 April 2024, Tuesday 7 May 2024 or Tuesday 14 May 2024.  Kinlochewe Post Office and Garve Post Office remain open as usual and* ***Kinlochewe toilets are closed*** *until possibly the end of May 2024 for remedial* *works).*

**New bin collection arrangements**– The Highland Council are currently writing to all households with details of the new arrangements.  A new grey bin will be for non-recyclable waste.  Garden rubbish bins and food waste bins are not coming to our area.  If anybody has any questions - recycle@highland.gov.uk  This update has already appeared on our online channels.  It was noted some new grey bins were delivered in Strathgarve and Achnasheen today along with new bin calendars.

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 appreciates photos showing the actual problem.

**A835 Trunk Road issues - Killin Farm railway crossing improvements and barriers east of Garve** – we note works begun on Monday 12 February 2024 east of the crossing with works planned in two phases, this first phase due to last 12 weeks, ending around Friday 3 May 2024.

We also note the damage to the **crash barrier at the “Check Rail Corner”** which the MSP has raised (Case Ref: MT15572).  The reply she has received has confirmed that the barrier strike has caused extensive damage to the retaining wall which rests at the top of a steep embankment above the railway line, the wall has been assessed and is beyond repair and will need replacing, a complex project considering how close the road, rail and loch are.  Transport Scotland recognises the strategic importance of maintaining transport links on road and rail at this location and therefore investigation work is now required to properly consider options that allow a long-term solution to be constructed whilst keeping the trunk road and railway line open.  An exact timescale for the repair is not possible to gauge at this stage however the road is likely to remain restricted until the continuing investigations are undertaken and a possible solution agreed.  Our thanks to the MSP and Transport Scotland for the update which we have asked for continued updates.  This update has already been shared on our online channels.  Community Council members wondered if the water on the road may have been a contributing issue and recalled former Community Council member Jennifer Haslam’s suggestion of higher barriers.  The Treasurer noted the poor road surface at Blackwater cottages and although just outside our area, has raised accordingly.

**Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via [www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/](http://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/)

**A local traffic calming group meeting** was held on Thursday 7 March 2024 and on Thursday 21 March 2024.  Following discussion, it was agreed that the danger/speeding on the roads (both the A835 and A832) appears to remain the same and residents still have the same concerns.  It was agreed that the Community Council be asked to find out what the criteria for the allocation of speed limits on roads is (already done, Highland Council speed limit policy found online along with the Department of Transport guidelines – 20 frontages over at least 600 metres) and ask what traffic calming measures local communities are allowed to install and what permissions are needed.  It would appear permissions are needed from the appropriate road’s authority for both.  The Department of Transport document setting local speed limits 2006 is now available in the library section of our website along with the A835 speed survey from October 2022 and other useful links.  We have also written to the local MSP for guidance, Cllr Kraft and Iain Moncrieff.  In the meantime, the group has been asked to think about what signs they want, who would own/maintain them and fund such signs.  Are stickers on bins and another community survey options?  Early feedback would suggest little support for either.  We have also raised concerns on the A832 in Achanalt and Achnasheen with the Police (20240314-46060483) who will undertake extra patrols.  On Wednesday 3 April 2024, the local MSP’s office informed us that a response received from Transport Scotland regarding the A835 (Case Ref: MT15702) confirmed the criteria for 30mph (village) speed limits takes account of the number of properties ‘fronting’ the road where the speed limit is being assessed.  20 frontages over at least 600 metres is recognised as the threshold in national guidance to ensure a consistent approach is setting village speed limits.  In locations where this threshold is not met discretion can be used to introduce a lower, localised, speed limit instead of the national speed limit that would otherwise apply, this is currently the case at Garve, where the frontage threshold is not achieved but a localised 40mph speed limit is in force.  The speed measurements carried out in October 2022 at two locations in Garve show average speeds to be between 36 and 40mph, which indicates the speed limit is generally self-enforcing and many drivers are complying.  In line with best practice, traffic surveys are carried out during ‘neutral’ periods to ensure that the results are not affected by abnormally high or low traffic flows.  For context, a permanent traffic counter located on the A835 near the Gorstan Junction shows average speeds of 40.2mph during 16 to 22 October 2023 and 42.2mph during 16 to 22 July 2023.  In regards to the query regarding the possibility of residents installing their own measures to support speed reductions, it should be noted that Transport Scotland would not support such proposals.  This is to ensure that measures to encourage speed compliance are directed at locations where there is evidence of poor compliance.  A Gorstan resident has asked it be noted they feel there are enough signs on the A832 approach to the Gorstan Junction and drivers need to take responsibility for their own actions.  The Highland Council have supplied speed data for the A832.  Mossford 42mph, Achanalt 57mph and Achnasheen 37mph.  It is hoped the group can meet with Highland Council official soon to discuss A832 further but Average figures indicate speeding is not an issue.  It has also been noted several of the original members have left the group.  It was also noted that the suggestion of double white lines through Achanalt will not slow anyone down, NC500 brings issues to all communities and Motorhomes tend to slow traffic down.  Police should concentrate on the boy racers going round in convoy.  Anyone who wishes to raise an issue with the police are 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.  The police can also be contacted on [www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact/](http://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact/)

**Garve mains water** – our Chairman spoke with Gavin Steel on the telephone on Thursday 28 March 2024 to chase up an update and to invite him to attend this meeting.  Gavin hopes to supply a written report as he is unable to attend but hopes to attend next time.  We might even see investigation works on site before we see Gavin!  It is likely issues in Strathgarve are knock on issues from Garve which will be addressed when the upgrade work begins.  Gavin apologies for the lack of updates but certainly has not forgotten Garve & District.  Gavin has since been in touch to say Morrison Construction are now engaged to do the work and currently anticipate being ready to start on site in November 2024.   It does not appear that preparatory site investigation work (mostly localised trial holes) has started yet, but this is expected to begin from April/May 2024.  It appears the first work will be in the vicinity of the railway line, with further site investigation work spread over the following 2 or 3 months.  This initial work should only be for a short period at each location, but is likely to involve use of temporary traffic lights when they are working in or near the road.  The project includes one crossing of the railway line, with a possible second crossing depending on the findings of the site investigation work.  If there is found to be an existing duct below the railway that can be reused, this should be relatively straightforward.  Otherwise, there would be a lengthier process needed to gain the necessary approvals from Network Rail – and these might well not be received by next winter.  In that case, Scottish Water still intends to go ahead with the delivery of the rest of the project, but would need to return later to do the railway crossings.  Our thanks to Gavin for the update.  This update has already been posted on our online channels.  It was suggested Gavin be encouraged to attend our next ordinary meeting and bring updated maps of Garve with him.  It was also noted a pump issue recently brought disruption to residents but was attended to with tankers bringing water until the pump was fixed.  The Treasurer noted they have had no trouble with pipes bursting since the remedial work was carried out in Little Garve in 2022.

**GD CORe land** – a third and final public drop in event is planned for Wednesday 17 April 2024 in Garve Public Hall.  More details at <https://garve.org/phase2-communityengagement-garve-update11>  This update has already been shared on our online channels.

**Friends of the Garve War Memorial** will be marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day by holding an afternoon tea on Sunday 9 June 2024 from 12.30pm in Garve Public Hall.  To book places, just email them at garvewarmemorial@gmail.com (cost £8 per head).  Proceeds will go towards the 100th anniversary of the War Memorial due to be held in October.  Donations for the raffle would be appreciated.  This update has already appeared on our online channels.

Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris attended the **Mid-Ross Community Partnership** online meeting on Wednesday 20 March 2024.  Minutes are due to follow and will, as usual, be placed in the library section of our website but for now Sadie reports as follows … *“The meeting was chaired by Philip McRae NHS Highland and co-hosted by Laura Fisher Community Support and Contact for NHS Highland.  There were 20 or so people there and it was an interesting meeting hearing how all parts of the MRP work together.  The first of the presentations was from Richard Ross from Police Scotland, who is Acting Area Commander of North Highland.  He is also the Chair of the Resilience Partnership and his presentation was about the RP's Emergency Liaison Group and how all the agencies within the ELG work together when needed.  That was interesting - not least because something which several of us thought would fall under the RP such as when the Kessock Bridge is closed when a person presents as a threat to themselves does not in fact come under the RP.  The second presentation was from Ann Gilles who represents Performance and Improvement for HCPP - Highland Community Planning Partnership, again an interesting presentation which also touched on LPP - Local Place Plans.  Her department has worked with The Black Isle on their LPP.  There have also been conducting stakeholder surveys about what is needed and one of the recurring themes was the need for a Highland wide online services directory.  I raised the point that if there is to be such a directory it is essential that it be given funding to continue and to be constantly updated if it is to be of any value at all.  This was endorsed by others on the call.”*  Thanks to Sadie for reporting back.  It was noted GDPR can be an issue.  In separate news Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris hopes to attend the next Dingwall Medical Group meeting later this month.  She has also learnt Strathpeffer medical Practice has appointed a new practice manager who they hope, in time will set up similar meetings covering their area.

**Connecting communities** – Ewan Bush, project officer for this project has confirmed that any community bus would hope to bid for both the Secondary school run, as far as Tarvie and the Primary if it is indeed possible to do with one vehicle, but nothing confirmed yet.  The bus would then be available between morning and afternoon runs for the community and at weekends.  Our thanks to Ewan for the clarification.

**Updates from SEPA … Do not give waste criminals a chance!**Social media users will be familiar with adverts offering junk removal, waste clearances, man with a van and tip collection services.  They may look professional and legitimate, but SEPA’s investigations have confirmed this is not always the case.  Corrupt operators advertising their services online may dispose of the waste they collect through fly tipping and burning, blighting Scotland’s environment.  This activity can quickly escalate into more serious and significant waste crime impacting compliant businesses in the waste sector.  Everyone can play their part by not falling foul of digital scammers – when choosing a service provider – by always asking for their waste carrier number and checking that they are [registered with SEPA](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/wastecarriers/), confirming where they will take your waste and paying a fair price for the service.  Anyone can also contact SEPA to check a Waste Carrier Licence number they have been given if you cannot find it online.  If they are reluctant to give you information or you are in any doubt, do not give them your waste.  If you suspect they may be operating illegally, report it to SEPA [online.](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/EnvironmentalEvents)  Also from SEPA … **Scots are recycling more than ever** before as the nation’s recycling rate hits an all-time high in data released by Scotland’s environment watchdog, SEPA.  The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have published the [Scottish Waste From All Sources 2022 Official Statistics](https://bit.ly/3VtvRwt), which provide details on waste from Scottish households, businesses and public services.  Scotland generated 10.16 million tonnes of waste, with 62.3% recycled - the highest recycling rate recorded since the start of the current series in 2011.  These updates have already been placed on our online channels.

**Treasurer’s report** - the Treasurer reported our total bank balance is £1,972.96.  The breakdown is as follows … Treasurer's account was £72.91 minus £175.00 Secretary fee = £-102.09.  Reserve £1,613.45.  Wreath fund (in memory of Eliza) £461.60.  Ann Macrae has agreed to audit again but after many years, this will be her last time as she is now retired.  Ann first audited the 2010/2011 accounts and has done so every year since, working with one Chairman and three Treasurers!  We are grateful to Ann for her help and advice over the years and wish her well.  Proposal to appoint Ann Macrae as auditor, proposed Caroline Gamble, seconded Kenny Maclean, unanimously agreed.  Fundraiser?  Bingo was suggested but Community Council elected members will give the matter some thought.  There were no questions for the Treasurer.

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

**AOB from members of the public** - no issues raised.  Those who cannot attend our meetings can, as always, write to us by post or email with any issues they wish raised at garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com

**Screening reports, scoping reports and consultations** – we have received one consultation.  **The designation of Potential Vulnerable Areas (PVAs)** is a SEPA science and evidence-led process and feedback from public partners and local communities is key to making sure all relevant impacts are taken into consideration.  Your views and the views of your community on the proposed PVAs will inform essential future flood risk management work so we can improve flooding resilience together and best prepare for a changing climate.  You can help with this SEPA consultation by going to <https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/evidence-and-flooding/potentially-vulnerable-areas/?utm_source=mailing&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=cc>  This consultation has already been placed on our online channels.

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 are no new building warrants** currently being shown on The Highland Council website for our area.  **No new planning applications** have been received by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting but we have received **notice of one pre-planning application**.  The Wireless Infrastructure Group Limited (WIG) is an independent, pioneering wireless infrastructure operator and the UK market leader for

neutral host connectivity solutions.  They are looking at upgrading the existing mast above Druimdhu, about a mile east of Achnasheen.  This upgrade will primarily involve swapping existing equipment and replacing it with similar newer apparatus.  Community Council members have viewed the plans and have no objections but additional noise levels will be checked first.

A possible planning breach can be reported at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/180/planning_-_applications_warrants_and_certificates/170/planning_enforcement/2>

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 were no new licensing issues** for us to consider this evening.

**Dates of future meetings** – Monday 6 May 2024, 7.00pm, webcam – agreed.

Monday 3 June 2024, 7.00pm, AGM followed by an ordinary meeting, 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 this evening, a question he often asks 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 on request.  Those who cannot attend our meetings can, as always, write to us by post or email with any issues they wish raised at garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com

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 9.00pm.

Signed ……………………………..

Signed ……………………………..

Date ……………………………….

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

[www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552992414355](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552992414355)

garveanddistrictcc@yahoo.com

This set of minutes were first published (in draft form) at 3.00pm on Sunday 14 April 2024.