

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

**held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 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**: Cllr Liz Kraft (from 7.30pm until 9.05pm), Scott Vallance (Principal Project Manager, Statkraft UK from 6.10pm until 7.20pm), Seumas Skinner (Community Liaison Manager, Statkraft UK from 6.10pm until 7.20pm), Peter Kane (Kane Partnership from 6.10pm until 8.30pm), James Welch & Anna Webster (SLR Consulting from 6.10pm until 7.20pm), Fiona Milligan & Katrina Walker (Boralex from 6.10pm until 6.30pm), Matt Wilson (Boralex from 6.10pm until 7.20pm) and one member of the public (Flora Smith from 6.10pm until 9.10pm).

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.10pm following some technical difficulties and welcomed everyone. He confirmed that this meeting would be recorded as per the agenda and will be archived and available for viewing for twelve months thereafter - <https://bit.ly/GDCCmeeting4thMarch2025> Our website [www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict/](http://www.community-council.org.uk/garveanddistrict/) continues to receive around 200 visitors per month (out of a community of around 230 people as per the July 2024 Polling Station figures). 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 Community Christmas Lunch on Sunday 8 December 2024 along with the Vice Chairman and the Treasurer. 63 people from all corners of the area attended and reports suggest a good time was had by all. The Treasurer was delighted when she thought she had won a £200 gift voucher in the raffle … turned out to be £20. Our Chairman noted her grandson Finlay will have helped granny spend her winnings. Our Chairman was unable to attend the meeting regarding the future of Kinlochewe Primary School on Tuesday 28 January 2025 or the Friends of Lochluichart AGM on Wednesday 29 January 2025 or various drop in events held at the end of February 2025.

Our Chairman was delighted to welcome STV Weatherman Sean Batty back to our community once again. Sean often visits when we have snow and did his weather report from the famous red telephone box in Achnasheen. Sean hopes to visit again. We also note George the Postie had his drone out filming the train in Achnasheen in January 2025 in the snow. Scotrail shared the film on their own social media page.

Community Council elected members were sad to hear Doug Chappel was buried in Garve New Cemetery on Thursday 16 January 2025. His parents had been Alasdair & Winifred and were all former residents of Mossford. It was nice some of our older residents who remembered the family attended the burial.

For various reasons, our February ordinary meeting was cancelled. Our thanks to all for their understanding. We wish all those who have been in hospital from our community well and send congratulations to Alan Ross and Gemma MacDonald of Garve on the birth of their son Steven on Friday 24 January 2025. Our Chairman visited them in Hospital at the time to meet our newest and youngest resident and all was well. He also met Gemah Graham, former Manageress of Garve Hotel recently.

**Declarations of Interest** – the Vice Chairman is a Garve Public Hall Trustee, a Friend of Garve War Memorial, a LCT elected Director and a member of the GD CORe land panel. The Treasurer noted she is a land owner with regards to the SSEN underground cable from the Western Isles to Beauly and Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris is a member of the Wyvis Natural Playpark group. Cllr Kraft is a member of the North Planning Applications Committee at The Highland Council. Community Council elected 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 3 December 2024 via webcam were proposed without amendment by Bob Moir and seconded by Caroline Gamble, unanimously agreed. Minutes are available at Garve Post Office, 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.

**Matters arising** – **Boralex** **windfarm** – <https://www.boralex.com> – The Highland Council North Planning Applications Committee notes that the application was approved by them in January 2023. Details for the satisfaction of pre-start planning conditions are pending consideration by the planning department. Matt Wilson from Boralex confirmed that they are still wrestling with the project due to costs and have been over the last 12-18 months. The costs are challenging but it is hoped that perhaps planning permission can be extended from three to five years, the same as the overhead powerline. Katrina Walker and Fiona Milligan then informed the meeting of **a new project** which is at an early stage, a 36MW battery storage facility to the west of the Corriemoillie substation on estate land. This is separate to the Field proposal on the other side of the substation. This site is around 18Ha and would utilise existing forestry tracks (all be it slightly upgraded) and cable corridors. It is hoped public exhibitions will be held next month (3 April tbc), perhaps tied in with another event already planned to save people coming out twice. They are very aware of the fire safety concerns raised over the Field proposal. In answer to questions, managing grid capacity is the reason for these facilities, battery can store two hours of electricity but technology is getting better all the time. There has been no contact with Field directly as this site will be accessed from a different route. Boralex will be meeting with Highland Council planners next week to discuss various issues including fire safety.

Katrina and Fiona were thanked for attending and left the meeting at 6.30pm.

**Kirkan Windfarm** – <http://www.kirkanwindfarm.co.uk> - as reported previously, they are still in the phase of considering options for Kirkan and working through the various planning conditions. We thank Trevor for his regular updates. The Highland Council North Planning Applications Committee notes the Scottish Government issued consent on 25 July 2023 and are now awaiting submission of pre-development planning condition requirements.

**Proposed Tarvie windfarm** – [www.tarviewindfarm.com](http://www.tarviewindfarm.com) - Koehler Renewable Energy UK Limited (KRE) are developing proposals for a wind farm on land south of the A835, approximately 3.7km northwest of Contin that would have 11 x 7MW turbines, with a 200m tip height and 30MW battery energy storage system (BESS). Koehler representatives were invited to our February ordinary meeting that was later cancelled. We understand they hope to meet with us and neighbouring Community Councils in April 2025.

**Proposed SSE Fairburn windfarm 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 drop in events were held in February 2025 as advertised on our online channels at the time. As things stand, the proposed line will be to the east of Contin. 3D modelling can be viewed - <https://www.3dwtech.co.uk/dashboard/ssen/spittal-to-beauly/portal-update/> We also note Ground Investigation (GI) works have commenced in the southern section between Loch Buidhe and Beauly by SSEN. The GI works commenced on Monday 17 February 2025 and are expected to run until late 2025. The work will be completed along the full route. SSEN’s team are in contact with landowners, discussing access requirements to land, in advance of the GI works being undertaken.

**SSEN underground cable** from the Western Isles to Beauly – [https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/western-isles](https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/western-isles/) no news but we understand a public exhibition has been pencilled in for Wednesday 30 April 2025 tbc.

**Field Corriemoillie** – [www.fieldcorriemoillie.co.uk](http://www.fieldcorriemoillie.co.uk) – we asked for further information around fire safety but this request was then overtaken by the planning application for the development which we will discuss later. We have asked the Scottish Government when do they intend to have a Scotland specific EIA framework for BESS planning applications because the current EIA is that from England.  The environment here in the Highlands is far different to that in England especially for wildlife and risk assessment management. Also, why are the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service NOT a statutory consultee in planning matters? In response, the Scottish Government told us that they have no plans to draw up a Scotland specific EIA at this time and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are not a statutory consultee for BESS development applications in Scotland, although they are consulted for BESS applications under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. If SFRS receive information about a proposed BESS site, they refer those duty holders (site operators) responsible for the plant to the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) Grid Scale Planning Guidance for Fire and Rescue Services, which covers the UK. These guidelines detail, amongst other things, minimum standards with fire safety systems and design features, water requirements for firefighting and access requirements that must be taken into consideration when

planning a site.

**Proposed Carn Fearna windfarm** – [https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna](https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna/) - Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) have been commissioned by Statkraft to facilitate an event on their behalf, to gather views from the local community, including ideas for biodiversity enhancement and outdoor management plans. The event was held last week and was advertised through our online channels however, confusion seems to continue as to the whole purpose of the event. Scott Vallance from Statkraft explained that there had already been two public exhibitions about the windfarm itself and this was about the land, PAS were to gather constructive comments which could help access such as new pathways, benches etc … PAS data gathered would be included in the planning application which may be lodged at the end of this month. It was pointed out that the article on the Development Company administrated website also added confusion. The website was updated but Statkraft were also aware of this issue. The Vice Chairman attended the event and thought it was something it was not. Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris and her partner only went as far as the door when they realised it was not what they expected, the hillside should be left as it is. Were they counted as attendees? (No, 9 people came in which is down 6 on the last exhibition on the windfarm). If you have not managed to attend the event, please see below a link to an online survey which has been designed based on the in-person event - <https://forms.office.com/e/EfSzLV7edE> The online survey will close at 11.59pm on Sunday 9 March 2025. Scott and Seumas explained that once the S36 planning application has been lodged, a further public exhibition will take place, probably in Strathpeffer and Garve to help people understand the planning documents and process. Hard copies of the EIA which are often thousands of pages long will be available, possibly in Garve Post Office or Garve Public Hall. James Welch & Anna Webster (SLR Consulting) then explained aviation lighting on turbines. *(Slides shown at this meeting can be viewed on our website and at* [*https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna/project-documents/*](https://projects.statkraft.co.uk/Carn-Fearna/project-documents/)) There are many rules around this matter. Civil aviation lights (visual) and MOD aviation lighting (infrared) are used. ICAO international standard rules from July 2018 explain 2000 candelas are required on structures over 150metres tall. UK rules go further than international standard rules as lights need to be on 30minutes before sunset and off 30minutes after sunrise. If a site can be seen from 5KM away, lights can be reduced to 10% power so 200 candelas. Following discussion with the aviation authority, only four of these lights will be needed on the proposed 9 turbines on the reduced power on turbines 1, 4, 7 & 9. Garve sits greater than 3degree below the site so less light to see and everyone’s eyes are different, think about walking out of a bright house into complete darkness outside, it takes time for your eyes to adjust. Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris noted <https://www.shetnews.co.uk/2025/02/14/injured-by-vikings-subaudible-noise-pollution/> Seumas explained this was regarding a SSEN site and Statkraft were asked what they would do if it was one of their sites. **In related news** - [www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/carn-fearna-wind-farm-connection](http://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/carn-fearna-wind-farm-connection) We note **25/00219/SCRE**, a EIA Screening Opinion for construction and operation of a 132 kilovolt (kV) single circuit overhead line (OHL) of approximately 7 km to connect the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the existing Corriemoillie Substation. The Planning department has decided a Screening Application EIA will be required.

Matt, Scott, Seumas, James & Anna were all thanked for attending and left the meeting at 7.20pm.

**The EDF Corriemoillie Education & Training Fund** are looking for a new panel member from the Garve & District area.  If you are interested in the position, please contact marion@foundationscotland.org.uk for more details.

Cllr Kraft joined the meeting at 7.30pm.

**The Highland Council updates** – [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) – A **area committee** meeting took place on Monday 20 January 2025 where the area place plan was agreed and road spending for 2025/2026 was agreed. The 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan going to The Highland Council meeting on Thursday 6 March 2025, sets out recommendations to deliver a balanced budget, utilising a 7% increase in Council Tax, with 2% of this set aside for investment in schools and roads. The budget proposals, if agreed, would see over 100 jobs created across the Highlands, over £4.5 million revenue investments for 2025 – 2026 and over £17 million additional reserves investment earmarked for major developments on behalf of Highland residents. *(Post meeting note – the budget was agreed.)*

**Wyvis Natural Playpark sign** is still outstanding. Cllr Kraft continues to make enquiries along with a sign for **Silverbridge toilets** in Garve. It was noted that perhaps the playpark group should be providing their own signs to direct traffic away from Garve Village itself. The suggestion has already been passed on to them and we note permission for toilet signs at Gorstan have already been declined by Transport Scotland.

**Wooden fence at Garve Cemetery** continues to be left to rot. The Vice Chairman noted the **bins at the Cemetery** required emptying on Monday 23 December 2024. Cllr Kraft was made aware at the time and the matter was quickly dealt with. Our thanks to Cllr Kraft. *(Post meeting note – the bin is full again; Cllr Kraft has passed on to the relevant department.)*

Cllr Kraft and the MSP were going to investigate the 40mph being extended to **cover Gorstan Junction**, white lines at the junction and the knocked over sign which has since been replaced. The junction has been identified as an accident cluster site as part of Transport Scotland’s annual review of accidents on the network known as the Annual Road Safety Review. The recorded accidents at the junction include two with slight severity casualties involved and one of the accidents resulted in fatal injuries being sustained to a motorcyclist. No personal injury accidents have been recorded in the most recent full 5-year accident data 2019-2023. A collision investigation of the junction will be carried out in 2025/2026 financial year, along with additional speed surveys to inform any remedial measures required including in Garve itself. Transport Scotland have asked BEAR to arrange to meet with representatives of the community to hear their concerns directly ahead of their investigation. We hope to hold a special/public meeting when dates are known. This update has already been shared online and reported in the press although some press reported this as the junction in Contin. Our thanks to Cllr Kraft and the MSP for their help.

**Trees in Little Garve and Strathgarve** beside the road have been cut back to help get the gritter and bin lorry through. We have asked for a tidy up, awaiting works. It was also noted the rubbish uncovered when trees and bushes were cut back.

**A832 Gateways for Achnasheen and Lochluichart** – The Highland Council has confirmed that the tender that was issued for the works detailed in the drawings (which are available on our website) closed in early December 2024 and the successful contractor was Strath Civil Engineering at a cost of £28,239.97 for the works. The contract will now be formally awarded with the works requiring completion in the current financial year. Work started mid-February 2025 and is already near completed. This update has already been posted on our online channels. Several residents have already been in touch with us to thank us for the work and our input.

**Achnasheen Hall sale/new toilets?** No news but Cllr Kraft hopes the matter can be resolved soon, we have support from The Highland Council leader to keep funds in the area, possibly for new toilets. In related news, **Achnasheen Amenities Association (AAA), who used to run the Hall** has updated its members to say they have agreed changes to their constitution but as nobody volunteered to join the committee, AAA will be dissolvedat their next AGM and wound up in line with the requirements of the constitution. They will now distribute the funds as soon as is practical to Achnasheen and Achanalt residents (already in hand), arrange any Achnasheen Village Pond maintenance required immediately and then deposit the remainder of the pond maintenance monies with the Development Company who will ring-fence the amount for future use by the Achnasheen community. Our thanks to Achnasheen Amenities Association for their update. In other related news, **the elections team** have been in touch to confirm that voters in Achnasheen and Achanalt will go to Kinlochewe Village Hall on election days going forward. We also noted that 19/46 voters are already on postal votes. There are Postboxes in both Achnasheen and Achanalt.  Anyone can sign up for a postal vote for any election, just contact the elections team for more details - <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections_and_voting/1076/voting_information> Voters in Achnasheen and Achanalt have already received letters from the elections team informing them of this update directly. **Also,** Bob Moir as an elected LCT Director updated this meeting that the **Achnasheen Defibrillator** will be relocated to Ledgowan Hotel in due course, a contractor has been appointed to do the work once access to the Hall can be made available to him to disconnect the Defibrillator from the electricity supply. *(Post meeting note – access has now been acquired).*

**Request for grit bins** to be refilled in Achnasheen was requested on Thursday 9 January 2025 - FS-Case-677213422.

**Kinlochewe Primary School** whose catchment area includes Achnasheen might be formally closed. The Highland Council has issued a consultative paper. The consultation began on Monday 13 January 2025 and ended on Friday 28 February 2025. The proposal paper and appendices were available online at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations> This update appeared on our online channels at the time. Cllr Kraft chaired a public meeting on the matter in Kinlochewe on Tuesday 28 January 2025. Cllr Kraft updated us that depopulation, no housing etc .. must be considered but parents are also free to send their children to any school of their choice.

**Future of Strathconon Primary School** – several newspapers including the Press & Journal, <https://www.thetimes.com/article/1f1aad5e-4258-4b9e-a4d4-c59d43057401?shareToken=1f66e9fa6c8e6e133338c666d3a57afe> and <https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/fury-as-ross-shire-school-set-to-be-mothballed-after-1-8m-r-371729/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook> have used our old minutes without first approaching us for an update. We are supportive of Marybank, Scatwell & Strathconon Community Council on this matter as the school is part of the local cluster of primary schools but the school itself is not in our area. We note a grand re-opening of the school took place on Friday 24 January 2025 which we were kindly invited to but were unable to attend. Cllr Kraft explained that the council have no land in that area to build houses, so there is no way to generate numbers. Can costs of keeping a school open for one pupil be justified? Not a good learning environment but others may say 1-2-1 learning is good. It was agreed with both Kinlochewe and Strathconon that nostalgia perhaps by former pupils of either school will not keep them open now.

**The Dingwall Recycling Centre** notes that cardboard and polystyrene must be separated before being taken to the centre.

We note the update on **new mobile libraries** - <https://www.highlifehighland.com/blog/new-libraries-on-wheels-will-be-ready-to-roll-this-summer/> Cllr Kraft thinks Dundonnell will get one of the new vans, tbc.

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 – “check rail corner”** – around 8.15am on Wednesday 11 December 2024, our Treasurer noted a minor accident involving a van that was heading towards Contin that had slid on black ice caused by seepage of water running down the hill just south of where you pull over on to the opposite carriageway. The result was a nasty prang against the wall. BEAR and police were in attendance. BEAR took photos of the icy stretch as she passed. BEAR have since informed us that the vehicle was abandoned. Another report tells us a broken-down van in the middle of the roadworks was pushed in behind the traffic lights just to help keep traffic moving. On Saturday 14 December 2024 no lights as witnessed by our Chairman, BEAR on site, appeared to be another tampering incident, MSP and Police aware. Traffic lights continue to fail weekly as noted by those present at this meeting. The latest update from Transport Scotland tells us that BEAR are planning improvement works to the traffic management in January 2025 by installing concreted signposts for traffic management signage since the temporary traffic management will be in place in the first 6 months of 2025. (We note these concreted signs are now in place along with concreted signs warning motorists about cyclists on the road). BEAR have already put out additional advanced warning signs of traffic lights. The solution to permanently repair the damaged barrier is a technically complex scheme which is still due to be constructed in Summer 2025, and traffic management will be required for this until the new solution is in place. An Independent Geotechnical Verifier has been appointed by Transport Scotland to oversee the project. This update has already appeared on our online channels. Cllr Kraft confirmed that the MSP’s office is in constant contact with Transport Scotland on this issue and that people running the lights is thought to also be an issue. When matters reserved to Westminster come up such as railways, the new UK Government has responded better and quicker than the previous administration.

**Speed along Station Road, Garve** – Transport Scotland have confirmed that whilst the speed surveys undertaken in October 2022 are valid and will likely include a combination of tourist and local traffic, BEAR have been commissioned to undertake further surveys in the peak tourist season at the same locations to allow accurate comparison of the traffic conditions. The Vice Chairman took a walk along Station Road on Saturday 18 January 2025. The main issue is the lack if visibility due to the curvature of the road. Bob spoke to residents who raised the following concerns ...

* The pavement is in dire need of sweeping.
* The level crossing is also needing cleaned, muddy.
* Road marking are worn and need repainting.
* Road surface generally in poor condition.
* Lack of drains on Eastbound carriageway means with the camber all surface water builds up outside houses on opposite carriageway.

We have raised all issues with BEAR who noted the points raised and will ask roads team to assess the area but it was noted that rural villages do not get the same level of service as towns and cities. It has also been noted that regarding lorry’s, all Tachograph data is downloaded to a central data base as well as the company one where appropriate. Companies check for driving over hours, speeding etc. and will act as required. The traffic commissioners also check the database as does the police. It was thought the MSP can ask that Tachographs be checked, perhaps a Traffic Commissioner spot check can be set up in Garve, a good deterrent? Cllr Kraft will pass the request onto the MSP’s office.

**Hedges in Station Road** – raised with BEAR with some cutback out towards Killin Farm.

**Killin railway crossing –** remedial works to widen pull in area are provisionally scheduled for April 2025. Our thanks to Flora Smith at Killin Farm for the update.

**Flooding on the A835 east of Garve** – It has been confirmed that BEAR did attend this area to clear ditches and culverts following the torrential rain event. They have confirmed that no changes implemented to the drainage system at that time. They are not aware of an increase in flooding since works in the area have taken place, however when flooding does occur, water run-off from the hillside and from the powerline access is thought to be the main cause of the problem. BEAR will continue to monitor the situation. The Treasurer noted the flooding at Hazelbrae corner is also getting bad again, Cllr Kraft will raise via the MSP’s office as they seem to have the ear of Transport Scotland at the moment.

BEAR, on behalf of Transport Scotland, will be undertaking essential **carriageway resurfacing works on**

**the A835** in two sections, North of Aultguish, & North of Loch Glascarnoch viewpoint (Phase 1). Phase 2 is North of Loch Droma Viewpoint. Due to the nature of the works, it will be necessary to implement the use of two-way temporary traffic lights and convoy while works are being undertaken, to ensure the safety of our workforce and members of the public, which is of paramount importance. Resurfacing works will start for Phase 1 on Monday 3 March 2025 at 7.00am and are programmed to last 10 days, with working hours of 7.00am to 7.00pm. Works will be complete by 7.00pm on Friday 14 March 2025, subject to weather conditions. No works will be carried out on Saturday or Sunday. The resurfacing works will start for Phase 2 on Monday 17 March 2025 at 7.00am and are programmed to last 6 days, with working hours of 7.00am to 7.00pm. Works will be completed by 7.00pm on Monday 24 March 2025 subject to weather conditions. No works will be carried out on Saturday or Sunday. If for any reason works are delayed due to weather conditions, the end dates of phases 1 & 2 may change. The convoy will be removed out with working hours, however a 30mph speed limit and warning signs will remain in place, as traffic will be ravelling over a temporary road surface. Access through the works site for emergency services will be always maintained. This update has already been shared on our online channels.

**Faults on the Trunk Road (A835)** should be reported via [www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/](http://www.bearscot.com/report-a-defect/) or 0800 028 1414. Members of the public can live track gritters on the trunk road network using Transport Scotland’s online ‘[trunk road gritter tracker’](http://arcg.is/GritterMap). It displays the current location of gritters and where they have recently treated. We note Contin Community Council is in favour of **reducing the speed limit** to 50mph between Contin and Garve.

**Garve & District** **Road Safety Community Group (formally Traffic Calming Group)** – a meeting took place online and in the meeting room of Garve Public Hall on Monday 13 January 2025. Discussion was recorded and is available here [https://bit.ly/RoadSafety13Jan2025](https://bit.ly/RoadSafety13Jan2025?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR0lZ6r9CHmZ0Cs7aCTNMbVViXVjUzCeHHFk0o-CRS_kXgNSW0PjZ2stHsQ_aem_p2lKqlzRVx_dzYlY-dZpsQ) Updates following that meeting include Cllr Kraft will ask again about flashing speed signs for Achnasheen but notes “need” is a factor and current speed surveys in Achnasheen suggest there is no “need” as average speeds in Achnasheen are below the 40mph limit and the new gateway signs may help reduce that further. Westerbus have no issues stopping at the top of the road at Lochluichart, they do this in many other locations.  Perhaps worth noting that the new community bus would be able to go down to each house to collect passengers. The next road safety meeting is due to take place on Monday 28 April 2025 at 7.00pm in the meeting room of Garve Public Hall and online - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84203274575?pwd=yKRRRRlF7ex9vknQauVle1yhpuZ5zU.1> The Treasurer noted <https://www.nfumutual.co.uk/globalassets/campaigns/rural-road-safety/code-for-countryside-roads-booklet.pdf>

**Proposed Community Bus** – a drop in event was held on Sunday 19 January 2025. We understand about 30 people attended including some from Contin. Main points noted at the drop in event ...

* There will be a main zone which will be G&DCC area, Contin and Jamestown.
* Costs inside the main zone £4.00 return.
* Zone two to Dingwall £6.00 return. Zone three Inverness £10 return.
* Service will be door to door.
* Booking by phone or app.
* Driver at present only available Wednesday to Friday.
* Looking for another driver but so far no applicants.
* They have funding to April and will then reassess and look from more funders.

Since this event took place, The Highland Council have announced they will be taking over D&E Coaches so they will no longer need to put out tenders for school bus runs and the service is now good to go - <https://garve.org/cc-launch-mar25> Cllr Kraft confirmed the driver is very community minded but bus passes can not be accepted as this is not a fixed route service. The Vice Chairman asked about prices for those who have regular Doctor or Hospital appointments. Cllr Kraft conformed prices could vary but people need to use this service, use it or loose it! It was also noted the EV chargers are being installed at Garve Public Hall. *(Post meeting note - a second driver is not being sought at this time).*

**GD CORe land panel** – a site visit took place on Saturday 7 December 2024 and again for our Chairman on Thursday 19 December 2024. A panel meeting was held on Thursday 30 January 2025 along with further community consultation on the matter throughout January/February 2025. Results of the community consultation are due shortly with another panel meeting due to take place at the end of this month. *(Post meeting note – the results of the latest community consultation can be viewed at* [*https://garve.org/reuslts-retrofit-v-newbuild*](https://garve.org/reuslts-retrofit-v-newbuild)*)*

As reported at our last ordinary meeting, we have received reports from a Garve resident that copper pipes from the **gas tank behind Garve Hotel** have been removed, possibly stolen and the tank is still full of gas.  Environmental Health and Cllr Kraft have been informed but when our Chairman and Vice Chairman visited the site on Thursday 19 December 2024, no issues could be found. **In related news,** AO Hotels Group Ltd has been in touch to say like us, they are looking forward to getting the hotel up and running soon however, they are currently facing some challenges due to issues inherited from previous parties involved. They are hopeful that work will begin soon and that they can get the hotel ready in time for the upcoming season. This update has already been posted on our online channels.

**Proposed cycle path from Garve to Contin** – latest update  <https://garve.org/connectinggd-update-jan25> John Heathcote is Contin Community Council Secretary and Treasurer at Cycling UK Highland branch so if anyone locally is still interested in this proposal, please contact John who might be able to advise. John noted that it is a Scottish Government requirement for funding that active travel routes are suitable for everyone.  This accounts for the very high specification, and is a far higher specification than significant parts of the current National Cycle Network.  John also notes FLS reservations that a track to this high standard is probably not compatible with their operations.

**Garve water supply** – Gavin Steel at Scottish Water informed us today that there has been a change in the expected timing of their plans to renew the water network in Garve. Scottish Water is currently operating in a very challenging financial landscape and, very regrettably, this has forced Gavin’s colleagues to review commitments to ensure that their capital programme is affordable. In the years following the pandemic, costs rose significantly faster than prices and, although they have been making efforts to rebalance the situation, there remains an impact on their short-term financial position therefore the Garve project has been dropped from the plans. Community Council elected members were very disappointed at this news. Our thanks to Gavin for the update.

In Mid December 2024, we received a message from The Highland Council ... ***Visitor Levy Scheme Consultation Webinar*** *– Tuesday 14 January 2025, 7.00pm - 8:30pm. Community Council Representatives and members of the public are invited to a webinar on Tuesday 14 January 2025.* We shared this though our online channels on Monday 23 December 2024. Our Chairman and Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris attended along with around 100 other people. The webinar was hosted by Sheila McKandie – Highland Council Policy & Development Manager, Michelle Gowans – Highland council Revenue & Customer Services and Douglas Chisolm – Highland Council Economy & Regeneration. Points raised included would there be a local exemption for Highland residents staying in a Hotel perhaps for a Hospital appointment next day? (HMRC view levy as part of a business turnover figure). Money raised would be spent as per current tourism plan possibly including a ranger service. Motorhomes and cruise ships are not covered by this levy, The Highland Council and COSLA have raised this with the Scottish Government. More details at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/visitorlevyconsultation> Deadline for comments is Monday 31 March 2025. We would encourage everyone to have their say.

The **Mid Ross Community Partnership Action Tracker Meeting** took place on Wednesday 22 January 2025. We were unable to send a representative and await an update.

Garve & District Community Council currently has vacancies on the Community Council.  The Community Council elected 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 with your name and contact details. This update has already appeared on our online channels. LCT and the Development Company also have vacancies, contact them directly for more details. We note the Development Company’s operational plan will not be shared publicly as it is an internal document.

**Police update -** as reported at previous Community Council meetings, 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/) There appears to be changes at Police Scotland where ward-based reports may be sent to Community Councils and meetings with Community Council representatives may be held. We await developments with interest.

Peter was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8.30pm.

**Treasurer’s report** – The old bank account with the Bank of Scotland closed on Wednesday 18 December 2024, we are now with Virgin banking. Other Community Councils have followed our lead on this matter and have also changed bank accounts to also avoid paying fees. Our total bank balance (checked online) is £2,073.62.  The breakdown is as follows … Treasurer's account was £205.15 minus £35.00 data protection fee, £97.20 Public Liability Insurance and £32.98 ink = £39.97. Reserve remains at £1,613.45. Wreath fund (in memory of Eliza) remains at £420.20. Appointment of auditor and secretary fee to be confirmed before year end (31 March). There were no questions for the Treasurer.

**AOB from Community Council members** – Community Council member Sadie-Michaela Harris is talking to a Professor in **BESS fire safety** and others and will keep us informed of information gained. She also noted the **big pothole on the Strathgarve road** (known by some as Little Loch Gave) which was temporary filled in some time ago is holding up well so credit to Highland Council where it is due! The Vice Chairman noted a lot of **small potholes in Matheson Road**, Garve. Cllr Kraft noted the point and explained the money has been going on the busy “A” roads but hopefully side roads will get more attention going forward when time/money allows. Our Chairman noted the [www.turn2us.org.uk/](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/) is a useful page to explore what financial support you can get through **welfare benefits** and grants based on your circumstances. You can also find help and advice about welfare on [www.highland.gov.uk/welfare](http://www.highland.gov.uk/welfare) The Chairman also informed the meeting that there are no longer **station adopters** for Achnasheen and Garve Railway Stations. Anyone interested please see [www.scotrail.co.uk/sustainability/community/adopt-station](http://www.scotrail.co.uk/sustainability/community/adopt-station) It was noted that Health & Safety rules and lack of water at the stations were issues before.

**AOB from members of the public** – The Lord Lieutenant has asked that the following be raised … *“Don't Rubbish Ross-Shire Campaign. I have been alarmed at the increase of rubbish on our roadside verges recently, and it has got to the stage that I felt I had to do something about it. I live near the Nigg Energy Park, and it is particularly bad locally and on the A9 between Tore Roundabout and Tain. I contacted our three local Ward 7 Councillors early in January 2025 to see if we could organise a Roadside Rubbish Campaign, and I am so grateful to them, as they have been so incredibly helpful and supportive. So we have launched the Roadside Rubbish Campaign, known as 'Don't Rubbish Ross-Shire' on Monday 10 February 2025 at Nigg Roundabout, together with our 3 Ward 7 Councillors, Hector and a photographer from The Ross-Shire, together with support from the council. Global Energy Park kindly paid for the Roadside Banners. I hope you are supportive of this campaign, and would indeed like to extend it to your own council areas, I even wondered if on Skye, it could be known as 'Don't Spoil Skye'. I or any of the lieutenancy team would be delighted to assist you with your own localised launch. It is my hope is that this will be the beginning of a lieutenancy-wide campaign which will hopefully help re-educate those people within our community who feel it is acceptable to discard their rubbish on our roadsides. The Lieutenancy can be contacted via* [*lieutenancyr&c@highland.gov.uk*](http://lieutenancyr&c@highland.gov.uk/)*”* More details can also be found at <https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/don-t-rubbish-ross-shire-will-you-back-roadside-litter-d-374630/> This update has been posted on our online channels and has also been shared with neighbouring Community Councils. It was noted we had a rubbish group in our community before until volunteers run out, BEAR had asked individuals do not work beside the busy trunk road and the Vice Chairman noted someone keeps throwing a coke can outside their vehicle each day in Garve. When known who it is, their cans will be returned to them! Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris also noted <https://nwhighlandbeachcleans.org/>

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** – **The Highland Council has launched a public consultation on how Community Councils in Highland** are created and governed (The Community Council Scheme Review). The Council is keen to hear views from Community Councils and the wider public on these proposals and seeks further ideas and suggested changes to the Scheme.  The consultation will run from Thursday 16 January 2005 until Wednesday 9 April 2025. A summary of minor amendments and scheme documentation with all proposals can be found here: [Community Council Scheme Review 2025 | Highland Place Planning](https://engagehighland.co.uk/cc-scheme-review) The main changes (if agreed) would be making our area slightly bigger to include Strathvaich and Garbat forest, requirement to submit draft AND approved minutes to The Highland Council, adopt constitution at the first meeting after each election (we already do), and a right of appeal if a Community Council member was disqualified. This update has already appeared on our online channels.

**Proposed Tourism Levy** - more details at <https://www.highland.gov.uk/visitorlevyconsultation> Deadline for comments is Monday 31 March 2025. This update has already appeared on our online channels.

**Highland Local Development Plan: Evidence Consultation.** The Highland Council have issued three publications all available via [www.highland.gov.uk/hldp](http://www.highland.gov.uk/hldp) that will shape their future Highland Local Development Plan and Highland’s future. For those not familiar with the purpose of a local development plan, it is used to determine planning applications and steer future development and investment in an area. The deadline for comments is 12noon on Monday 31 March 2025.

**Grudie Basin** - Agents are seeking the Community Council’s opinion on a proposal for a new woodland creation project at Strathbran Estate. The total project amounts to approximately 84Ha in the area to the north of Grudie Forest and to the west of the Fannich Estate road.  The purpose of the project is to diversify the landscape and increase its ecological diversity. Most of the new woodland will be native trees, chosen to compliment the oakwood, mostly oak and Scots pine on the better land and birch on the poorer soils. There will be some commercial species present at the southern end of the site to assist in the landscape blending between the existing commercial forest and the native oakwood.

**A new woodland is** also planned to the south of the existing Achnasheen Plantation between Achnasheen and the quarry to the east of the village.

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>

Cllr Kraft left the meeting at 9.05pm and was thanked for attending but before she left, our Chairman asked about planning documents being submitted by an applicant after the deadline for comments had passed. Cllr Kraft explained that comments will be accepted up until the application is determined but agreed the deadline being extended on the planning website might be helpful. She would pass the suggestion onto the planning department. She could not comment n ECU handling of a similar situation there. Cllr Kraft also confirmed that Cllr Crawford’s motion that was agreed at full council is still being implemented. It was also explained that digging a hole does not need planning permission but companies like SSEN who do ground investigation works prior to submitting a planning application should make the community aware what they are doing or people will think they have already got permission or are taking the law into their own hands.

Flora Smith left the meeting at 9.10pm and was thanked for attending.

**Building warrants, planning issues and licensing issues** - **There are two new building warrants** currently being shown on The Highland Council website for our area. **24/01803/DOM2** is the erection of a house on land to the North of Forest Hill, Lochluichart (application has since been withdrawn) and **25/00247/DOM4** is the conversion of garage to music room and WC at Sruthan-Na-H'earba, Garbat.

**One previous planning application has** been determined by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. At our December 2024 ordinary meeting we considered **24/04364/FUL**, the creation of carpark (retrospective) and installation of EV chargers and gate on land 15M NE of Garve Village Hall. The planning application has been granted by the planning officer.

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

**Two new application have** been received by The Highland Council since our last ordinary meeting. We received notice of a new Prior Notification Order. 24/05203/PNO is the proposed peatland restoration scheme on the Fannich Estate (Phase five). The deadline for comments to the Case Officer was Thursday 2 January 2025 but we shared this update through our channels on Monday 23 December 2024. Community Council members were also informed via email at the time and raised no objections. The Case Officer has since decided that prior approval IS required.

**24/05187/FUL** is the proposed installation of a 25m lattice mast and ancillary works, 200m upgraded access track on land 1800M SE of Loch Droma. Community Council elected members were informed by email and raised no objections.

We also note the planning application for the proposed Corriemoillie Battery Energy Storage System which has been lodged with the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in Edinburgh. The application is referred to as "Corriemoillie Battery Energy Storage Scheme" and the 49 application documents have been published on the Scottish Government Energy Consents website <https://bit.ly/CorriemoillieBESS> Notice of the application has also appeared in the Ross-Shire Journal.  Comments needed to be submitted to the Energy Consents Unit before 27 January 2025. We shared these details through our online channels and with those local residents we had email addresses for. Community Council elected members considered the application and felt there should be a fire safety plan in place before the site becomes operational and suggested this be a CONDITION if consented.  We suggested the plan should be agreed with the applicant, landowner, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the local planning authority.  We suggested the plan includes run off should water or chemicals be needed to put a fire out. We also felt an EIA should be done as the technology is still relatively new so any possible impact on the local wildlife and land can be given due consideration. We note around 230 objections have been lodged with the ECU; the vast majority are from people who do not live in this area. A further six documents have been lodged since the deadline for comments. Late today, we received the following statement from Field to share at this meeting … *“The ECU consultation period for Field Corriemoillie BESS closed on 25 February 2025. Following this, some statutory consultee responses are still being received. Field are currently reviewing these, and the public comments, to address areas of concern. We are liaising with the ECU and The Highland Council in relation to these and will provide a formal response in due course. We will be happy to provide a summary of the response once it has been completed.”* Our thanks to Emma Devlin at Field for the update. Concern was again expressed at the alarming rate of battery fires not just BESS but ebikes charging in homes. Water can only cool components, not put such fires out. Community Council elected member Sadie-Michaela Harris is in contact with Paul Christensen, Prof. of Pure and Applied Electrochemistry at Newcastle University, and Director of Lithium-ion Safety Ltd. Paul is an expert consultant on all aspects of lithium-ion battery safety including fire detection and suppression. He is senior advisor to the National Fire Chiefs Council and the lead for continuing professional development on lithium-ion battery safety across the sector covering basic lithium-ion battery science and technology, thermal runaway and its consequences, additives and safety systems, detection and suppression of fire and explosion avoidance and mitigation. It was agreed that officials attending our meetings and saying “don’t know” is not good enough and we will push for more information based on current technology and its capabilities acknowledging technology improves all the time.

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 is one new licensing issue** for us to consider this evening. A notice for a short term lets license has been displayed on The Old Checkpoint and Old Post Office in Achnasheen. The notice is dated Sunday 23 February 2025 and any objections need to be sent in to The Highland Council within 28 days from that date. Community Council members raised no objections.

**Dates of future meetings** - *(Ordinary meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of every month unless stated otherwise)*. Tuesday 1 April 2025, 7.00pm, online – agreed. Future meetings may be held on Tuesday 6 May 2025 and Monday 9 June 2025, all tbc.

**Other dates to note** – Garve Craft Fair in Garve Public Hall on Sunday 6 April 2025 from 12noon until 4.00pm. The next road safety meeting is due to take place on Monday 28 April 2025 at 7.00pm in the meeting room of Garve Public Hall and online - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84203274575?pwd=yKRRRRlF7ex9vknQauVle1yhpuZ5zU.1> Garve Craft Fair in Garve Public Hall on Sunday 4 May 2025 from 12noon until 4.00pm.

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 and for members support while living away from the area and to his friends in Inverness, he hopes to come home soon.  The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

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)

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This set of minutes were first published (in draft form) at 10.00am on Saturday 8 March 2025.