

MINUTES OF MEETING 24th MARCH 2009

Members present: Mark Houston, Elizabeth Merther, Katherine Grant, Martyn Bateman, Kenny Fraser, Paul Higham, Sandy MacPherson, Alex Nicol, Alex Sutherland.

Also present: Councillor D. Hendry Mr N. Kirkland (Fire Brigade)

Apologies received: Lesley MacGregor, Councillor M. Davidson Police Constable A. Mathieson

Matters Arising from Previous Minute

Key Worker Housing No further information has been received from HSCHT and there does not seem to be any progress on this matter. Enquiries will be made as to the current situation. A.S. suggested that if there is no prospect of any action from HSCHT in the foreseeable future, it may be necessary for the Trust to look at the private housing market in general.

Notice Boards – M.H. reported that all notice boards now have keys attached by chain for ease of access.

Community Web Site – M.H. has submitted an application for funding to the Trust and the outcome is awaited.

Gorthleck War Memorial – M.B. has received the estimate for the work (£1,300). An application has been submitted to the War Memorials Trust.

Wade's Bridge at Whitebridge – M.B. reported that there is a further meeting planned for 14th April. It will be necessary to form a Trust to take responsibility for ownership of the bridge and he hopes that volunteers will come forward at the meeting.

Fencing for Foyers Cemetery – L.M. has been informed that a small group of volunteers is hoping to place deer height protection around the Cemetery to stop the long term problem of damage to flowers and plants. They are hoping to apply for a grant to cover the cost of materials.

Fraser Monument & Burial Ground at Foyers – E.M. made enquiries and it seems this is an important historical site. The Monument is Grade B listed. The burial plot contains 3 graves, one of which is that of Simon Fraser, last Laird of Foyers and father to the Jane Fraser named on the Monument. It was suggested that some of the Clan organisations might be willing to help with costs of restoration. Enquiries are continuing.

Tabling of Correspondence

Highland Council Correspondence - Highland Leader Programme 2007 - 2013 (circulated)

Other Correspondence & Circulars Received - Scottish Water - Notice of Glenlia water mains improvement

Letters Sent

Grant Application to Community Trust for CC funds

Letter to Neil MacKenzie, TEC Services regarding bridge at Lower Foyers

Letter to Chief Fire Officer regarding proposed EU Working Hours changes

Letter to Steve Smith, Forestry Office Fort Augustus regarding roads and other forestry matters

Treasurer's Report

K.G. reported that Mr John Campbell had deposited £124.03 from the Senior Citizens' Fund with the CC for safe keeping as in the past.

Photocopier receipts of £18.87 had also been deposited. The Ordinary A/C balance therefore stands at £268.39, of which £144.36 belongs to the CC. The Project A/C balance is £3663.34. E.M. reported that an application has been made to the Community Trust for additional funding.

Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications.

Letters have been received from Highland Council notifying the CC of grants of planning permission for the following applications, already discussed: Convert steading to house at site 25m. North of Lyne Cottage, Gorthleck; Erect house at land 80m. North East of Lyne Cottage, Gorthleck; Erect house at land 125m. North East of Lyne Cottage, Gorthleck; Sign boards at land 105m. East of An Clachan, Gorthleck

Fire Brigade Report

Mr Kirkland reported that the feeling within the Fire Brigade was that the proposed European Working Time Directive was more likely to impact on full time fire-fighters than on local retained forces. E.M. had written to the Chief Fire Officer to enquire about the situation. His reply indicates that negotiations are ongoing and it is hoped to arrange exemptions for local forces. Cllr. Davidson has provided some additional information that other services, in addition to the fire service, could potentially be affected. Exemptions will be essential for all these services. Mr Kirkland also reported that budgets for home visits had been cut and that they will no longer be able to provide new electrical equipment in the same way. They will still be able to undertake some home safety visits when requested.

Roads & Signage

(a) Response from TEC Services following meeting of 20.2.09: E.M. reported that no response had been received, and that earlier that day she had emailed Neil Gillies, the Director. This has resulted in a brief report from Les Houlker, Technical Manager, informing the CC it is estimated that £100,000 of the £120,000 of the Glendoe road improvement money has been spent but no detail was provided. On winter maintenance he indicated that a review will be carried out before next winter. K.F. expressed the view, held by all members, that the response the CC has received is totally unsatisfactory. A detailed breakdown of the Glendoe monies was promised within a week of our meeting and there has been no feedback on any of the other matters raised. It was felt that a further meeting with Neil Gillies may be necessary. Cllr. Hendry informed the CC that he was meeting with Les Houlker the following day, and would raise our concerns. He will report back on the response he receives.

(b) Other matters arising from previous minutes:

Some tarmac has been laid in some lay-bys and white-lining done but there is still more to do. Work has been done on the Newlands road but this is believed to have been done by the forestry contractors concerned rather than the Council. It is not known whether this work originated from the Council or is a result of the E.M.'s letter to the Forestry Commission. No further information has been received regarding the bridge at Lower Foyers. E.M. has written to Neil Gillies, including copies of letters from local residents. It is

proposed to start a petition regarding replacement of the bridge, and it has been suggested that the residents should seek some suitable publicity about the situation.

(c) Other items:

Mr Kirkland reported difficulty in getting snow cleared from the access road to Gorthleck Fire Station. He was informed that the road was unadopted & the contractor had no responsibility. Members were surprised that this is not a high priority for clearance. Enquiries will be made.

Various drainage issues were raised & will need to be reported or enquiries made: Drainage ditch opposite the Medical Centre blocked by dirt and debris during the recent snow – pushed in by large vehicles; Large pool of water gathers at the end of the footpath just before the old Church hall.

Water flooding across the highway (and turning to ice in winter conditions) where new driveway access roads are constructed. Enquiries will need to be made whether this is a planning or a roads matter. Concern was expressed about the dangers posed by large rocks being placed at road edges. The CC has been informed in the past that road verges form part of the road (where roads are adopted) for 1.5m. from the road edge. Cllr. Hendry said that he would look into this matter. A fallen tree on the road between Upper Foyers and Fairyburn has not been adequately cleared, and is still projecting over the road. This will be reported.

Community Project

Revised quotes have been received, and a member of HIE will be pushing this matter forward.

Renewable Energy & Community Benefit

The meeting with SSE is being rescheduled.

Any Other Competent Business

(a) Mr Hendry reported that our new Ward Manager takes up her post on 1st April and the plan is for her to get to the Foyers action plan ASAP.

(b) A Glenlia resident noted the poor lighting behind Glenlia. This is an unadopted road. There are moves under way to form a Glenlia Residents' Association, and it was suggested this is something an Association might look into. M.H. indicated that the CC would try to help if they could.

(c) Mr Kirkland has heard from Malcolm Sutherland regarding arrangements for this year's Loch Ness Marathon. It is intended to move the start line further up the road at Whitebridge. It was noted that we shall have to make sure that standards regarding arrangements for toilets, marshalling etc. are maintained at the new site.

(d) Mr Eric MacRae attended to inform the CC that he is applying for a trader's licence to work from home. (Cllr. Hendry left the meeting during these discussions.) The plan is to operate a largely internet based business in which he will source 2nd hand vehicles for customers. He indicated that there would be occasions when there might be 1 or 2 vehicles at his house, but he would not be storing vehicles there and there would be no commercial traffic. He wondered if the CC might provide a letter supporting the operation of a locally based business venture. M.H. suggested that Mr MacRae should provide the CC with a business plan and that CC members will then visit the site to assess the situation.

(e) A.N. reported that there is a derelict boat lying on the shore between the Fish Farm & the Foyers Pier. It has been there for some time and ownership of the land needs to be

established. It was suggested that we should write to the Hydro in the first instance to enquire about this.

(f) E.M. reported that she had met with Cllr. Davidson and some Glenlia residents regarding a possible extension to the car park at Glenlia and other work required including fencing and play park equipment. The setting up of a Glenlia Residents' Association was also discussed. Cllr. Davidson will draft a letter to be sent to Glenlia residents and will arrange a meeting to discuss this and some of the issues already raised.