

**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting  
held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Dave Griffiths, Paul Smith, Alan Fortune and Jill Hyslop  
**In Attendance** Councillor George McGuire, Councillor Tom Trotter, Mandy Harrington (VCEL), Sue White, Paul Hurd and Dougal  
**Apologies** Wendy Ferguson, Eleanor Hulme, Richard Austin, Nev Kilkenny, Councillor John McMillan, Councillor Shamin Akhtar and Brian Galloway

**1 Minutes of last meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of 13th January 2025 (approved by Dave and Alan).

**2 Items completed since last meeting**

**2.1 Second Defibrillator Event**

12 people attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> training event on 27<sup>th</sup> January. A total of 40 people received the training over the 2 sessions. Details of all the defibrillators in the Gifford are now on our website ([www.giffordvillage.org/community-council](http://www.giffordvillage.org/community-council))

**3. Matters arising**

**3.1 Renewable Energy Projects**

No update since last month. See the attached planning report for current status.

**3.2 Smart Meter Connectivity**

A local resident reported that his smart meter now works after Octopus fitted a cellular hub. John Scott intends to write to the Ombudsman now that 8 weeks have passed since he first raised the issue. CC continues to recommend that residents ask for a cellular hub to solve connectivity problems. Residents using RTS meters are being advised to contact their supplier as soon as possible as the RTS signal will be switched off on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

**3.3 Graveyard extension**

No update.

**3.5 Youth Club Activities**

George Chalmers is no longer able to set up the youth club due to additional work/study commitments. CC thanked George for his work to try to set this up.

**3.6 Beautiful Scotland**

The meeting decided that Gifford won't enter this year's competition due to concerns about the general appearance of the village. Adam will liaise with Roger.

**3.7 Cherry Trees outside the Tweeddale**

Jill has written to Mike Foy to ask for 3 replacement cherry trees, preferably a dwarf variety. Paul Hurd has kindly offered to water the trees during their first year. Jill will contact Mike again to see if the council can supply the trees before Easter. **ACTION JH**

**4. External Reports**

**4.1 Police**

There has been a reported theft of heating oil from a tank at a rural location in the Gifford area. Enquiries are ongoing. Between 1st – 31st January there were 35 calls to the area and the police recorded 3 crimes: 1 x theft and 2 x possession of drugs. The wooden 'speed bump' signs on the Broadwoodside Road have been destroyed by vandals. Chairs have been put in the water at the boating pond and the safety ring was thrown into the wildlife pond in the woods. Adam emphasised how important it is to report all such incidents to the police.

**4.2 Yester Estate**

No update.

**4.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

The woods newsletter has been delivered to everyone in the village. There is an Open Woods meeting on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Details of events and volunteer dates can be found at:

[www.giffordcommunitywoodland.com/events](http://www.giffordcommunitywoodland.com/events)

#### **4.4 East Lothian Council**

The council will put forward its budget for approval on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Councillor Maguire thanked emergency workers and others for their hard work dealing with Storm Eowyn. Regarding the Goblin Ha', Councillor Akhtar contacted Cornerstone Business Agency, who are managing the process to find a new tenant. They indicated that Jim McDougall, a Business Development Manager from Iona Partnerships, is responsible for the site. A message has been passed on to him about clearing up the site. The council's licensing team have not received a licence application from the village store. The council's Economic Development team are speaking to the store. CC remains concerned about the viability of the Goblin Ha' and the store. Councillor Maguire agreed to speak to Councillor McMillan to see if the council can do anything to help.

#### **5 Internal Reports**

##### **5.1 Roads and Footpaths.**

There are no road closures to report on. A couple of potholes have been reported to ELC on Main Street. On footpaths, the work to the gateway into the churchyard from Duns Road has not been completed. After last month's meeting, Councillor Trotter contacted Alan Stubbs to ask about re-surfacing the lane between Tweeddale Crescent and Station Road. Alan replied to say that "given the alleged tripping incidents, I will arrange for a further service inspection to be undertaken and any identified defects will be prioritised for repair according to their risk assessment rating." If no further update is received, Adam will advise the people who have fallen to contact the council directly.

##### **5.2 Lighting, Drains and Signs**

No lighting faults reported since the last meeting. Work on the new lamp post being installed on Main Street at the bus stop next to the Goblin Ha has not been completed. Nothing to report on drains or signs.

##### **5.3 Planning**

Please see attached report for planning applications within and outwith GCC Area.

##### **5.4 Finance**

Nothing to report.

##### **5.5 Resilience**

32 people attended the February lunch club. Around 28 people are receiving Soup & Smile each Wednesday. This service will run until Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March and will then take a break until the autumn. Wendy and Adam will be attending a Resilience Workshop on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

#### **6 Correspondence**

##### **6.1 Dangerous Masonry**

CC asked the councillors what residents should do if they spot any dangerous masonry/chimneys on private residences. This can be a particular problem with rented accommodation if nobody how to contact the landlord. The councillors advised residents to contact Keith Dingwall, Head of Planning.

##### **6.2. 80th Anniversary of the end of WW2 - Query re Events**

The council have asked East Lothian community councils if they will be arranging events to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2. Adam confirmed that no events are planned in Gifford.

#### **7 AOB**

##### **7.1 Edinburgh Road Club Gifford Race**

This will take place on 15th March. Adam would like to see the parking restrictions properly enforced on Main Street and he reiterated his concerns about marshalls not having legal powers to stop traffic. Adam and Paul will meet the race organiser to discuss safety concerns.

##### **7.2 Christmas fundraising for St Columba's**

St Columba's have confirmed that the incredible sum of £1,028.40 was raised through donations at the Christmas Lights Switch On, Carols Round the Tree and the village Christmas Post. CC thanked Nicola and the team at Lanterne Rouge, and everyone who was involved with the events.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March.**

## APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	Date Validated	GCC first discussed	Comments	Status
25/00098/P   Conversion of derelict farm buildings to form a short term holiday let   Skedsbush Farm Yester Gifford East Lothian	06/02/25	Feb 2025	Conversion of derelict farm buildings to create a two-bedroom holiday let.	Awaiting decision.
24/01356/P   Change of use of rough ground to domestic garden ground and installation of solar panels   Sunnyside Cottage Yester Estates Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF	12/12/24	Jan 2025	Reference 23/01485/P which was granted in May 2024. This new application seeks to increase the number of solar panels from 28 to 42,	Approved.
24/01321/P   Extension to house   8 Tweeddale Crescent Gifford Haddington EH41 4QZ	09/01/25	Jan 2025	Replacement of existing conservatory to rear of property, with new PVCu structure on same base and footprint.	Awaiting decision.
24/01273/P   Change of use of grass verge to form vehicular access and agricultural land for the siting of 4 glamping units for holiday let and associated works   Land South East Of Redshill Farm Gifford East Lothian	18/12/24	Jan 2025	Off-grid glamping development comprising four re-purposed horse lorries at land south of Redshill Farm. Application includes details of improved access from the public road and the proposed drainage provision.	Awaiting decision.

## APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA

None

## OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

### Newlands Hill Wind Energy Hub (Belltown Power)

The S36 application for the Newlands Hill project is under consideration by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). The full application is available on the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit website [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot), reference ECU00004603.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September the East Lothian Planning Committee met to discuss the report prepared by their Planning Department into the proposals. This report recommended that East Lothian Council should object to the granting of consent for reasons of adverse landscape and visual impact, adverse impact on the historic environment, adverse impact on the mountain hare population, impact on core paths and unacceptable access route for exceptional loads during construction. The Planning Committee voted to accept the report in full as East Lothian Council's consultation response to the ECU. Given the fundamental conclusions of the report, it seems unlikely that any modifications to the development scheme would be sufficient to cause ELC to withdraw its objection. In the event that the ECU wishes to grant consent against the recommendation of ELC, then the matter may be determined by a Public Inquiry.

The earliest Belltown expect a decision from ECU is mid 2025 and this would slip considerably if a Public Inquiry were to be called. As previously advised, GCC have been told by the ECU that public representations, either for or against the development, will be considered right up until the point at which a decision is made.

A consultation event was held in the Village Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> October on behalf of SP Energy Networks regarding the grid connection from Newlands Hill to the Fallago Rig substation. This would be a 132kV connection over approximately 6km, supported on 'double H' wood poles. The poster boards from this event can be viewed at <https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Newlands-Hill-Wind-Energy-Hub-132kV-Connection-Project-I-Consultation-Board.pdf>. Presumably, the grid connection would not be required were the Newlands Hill Wind Energy Hub not be consented.

### **Dunside Wind Farm (EDF)**

Proposals were submitted to Scottish Government in July 2023 and are being considered. The full application is available on the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit website, reference ECU00003436. On 7<sup>th</sup> August, EDF submitted supplementary environmental information based upon feedback from consultees. This information can be viewed on the ECU website and the EDF project site.

### **Crystal Rig Wind Farm (Fred Olsen Renewables)**

Crystal Rig Solar. Plans for this solar array within the existing Crystal Rig windfarm have now been submitted to the Energy Consents unit and can be viewed under application reference ECU00004759. All information is also available on the project website at [www.crystalrigwindfarm.com](http://www.crystalrigwindfarm.com)  
Crystal Rig I Repower. **Public Exhibitions are to be held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 4pm – 9pm at Longformacus Village Hall and Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 3pm – 7pm at Innerwick Village Hall.** The earliest phase of Crystal Rig has been operational for over 20 years and the operator is now exploring the opportunity to repower the site and use better, more modern technology. The existing Crystal Rig I wind farm comprises 25 turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 100m and the proposed repowering would involve replacing them with up to 10 much larger turbines each with a tip height of up to 250m. An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report has been submitted to ECU (application ECU00005089).  
Crystal Rig IV Construction. In 2021 the developer was granted consent for an 11 turbine extension to Crystal Rig. Construction of this extension will start soon.

### **Longcroft Wind Farm (Renewable Energy Systems)**

This proposed development of 24 turbines would be approximately 9km north of Lauder in the Scottish Borders, lying to the south west of the existing Fallago Rig Wind Farm and to the west of the proposed Dunside Wind Farm. The northern edge of the development is some 15km south of Gifford. Project website is [www.longcroft-windfarm.co.uk](http://www.longcroft-windfarm.co.uk). The full application is available on the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit website, reference ECU00004774.