

**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting
held on 8th September 2025 at Gifford Bowling Club**

Participating Adam White (Chair), Richard Austin, Eleanor Hulme, Alan Fortune, Dave Griffiths, Wendy Ferguson and Jill Hyslop
In Attendance Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Councillor Tom Trotter and 7 local residents
Apologies Paul Smith, Nev Kilkenny, Councillor John McMillan, Councillor George McGuire and Mandy Harrington (VCEL)

1 Minutes of last meeting

The meeting approved the minutes of 11th August 2025 (proposed by Alan and seconded by Dave).

2 Items completed since last meeting

2.1 Double Yellow Lines Painted

Double yellow lines have been painted outside the Goblin Ha to support the operation of the bus stop.

2.2 Smart Meter list sent to DCC

We have passed 19 cases to the DCC where Smart meters are not connecting. Richard will ask people to keep us informed about progress.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Feuars of Gifford – History, Purpose and Objectives

Wendy gave a short presentation about the 'Feuars of Gifford'. It is a charitable trust set up in 1966. The trust property comprises the Village Hall and some fields bordering the village, which together make up 55 acres. There are 2 individual trustees (Wendy and Finlay Marshall) and the 3rd trustee is a firm of solicitors. The term 'feuar' no longer has any legal significance and is only used in a colloquial sense. The trust leases the Village Hall to Gifford Community Association for £1 per year. The fields are leased to a local farmer for an annual rent of £5,000. Under the terms of the trust, the income raised is to be used for the benefit of the village. The trust has paid for maintenance work for the village hall and has also given money to the woods for drainage work and supported projects at the school. The total annual income and expenditure is published on OSCR. Accounts are independently audited and submitted to OSCR annually. *(From January 2026, OSCR will publish annual reports and accounts in full online once they are received. This marks a change from the current approach, where OSCR publishes accounts for certain charities, depending on their legal form and income, with personal details redacted.)* It was suggested that the trust's activities should be more public. Wendy explained that the constitution does not require the trustees to hold any public meetings, nor are they required to publish any information other than that submitted to OSCR. It was noted that the trustees are volunteers. It was suggested that the trustees could attend the Gifford Community Association AGM to give a short update. The trustees said they would consider this suggestion and could perhaps attend every 2nd year. The number of fields held by the trust has changed over the years as fields have been merged, but the trustees can provide the field names if anyone would like them. A question was asked about how trustees are appointed. Trustees have been approached in the past and are appointed by means of a trust deed. There is a published book detailing the history of the trust: Feuars of Gifford (1750-1980) (ISBN 0951124900). It is currently out of print, but a reference copy is available in the Haddington Library.

3.2 Thermal Imaging Surveys

Tim Crick has supplied an outline of the training needed to run the thermal imaging project. There will be a 1-hour online session, then 2 short face-to-face sessions. He has suggested some dates, which Jill has circulated among the volunteers. Jill to set provisional dates with Tim. **ACTION: JH**

3.3 Renewable Energy Projects

For details of all the renewable energy projects, please see the planning report attached at the end.

3.4 Graveyard extension

Wendy reported that testing is to be done on the fields before crops are sown. Ground testing is conducted with a drilling rig to check the depth of the groundwater, which will determine whether the area is suitable for a graveyard.

3.5 Airfield Memorial Plaque

Richard will start the planning application to see if the plaque can be put on the wall beside the other memorials. The first steps will be to speak to the owners of the Rink to check if they own the wall.

ACTION: RA

3.6 Community Council Elections

The council published the Notice of Election on 1st September. Anyone wishing to become a community councillor must submit a nomination form before 4pm on 18th September. Gifford CC can have up to 9 community councillors. If more than 9 people nominate themselves, there will be an election on Thursday 9th October.

4.1 Police

Between 7th August and 3rd September 2025 there were 10 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 3 crimes under the heading 'Reducing Violence and Antisocial Behaviour'. Following an email from a local resident, the issue of speeding in Park Road will be discussed at the next CAPP meeting.

4.2 Yester Estate

Josh was unable to attend the meeting. Eleanor will speak to Josh about getting the Yester defibrillators registered on the Circuit. Adam will speak to Josh to confirm whether the estate will be able to supply a Christmas tree. It was noted that the council cannot cut the grass in a corner of the Pound due to overhanging branches from the lime trees in the Avenue.

4.3 Gifford Community Woodland

The woods AGM was very well attended. Two new trustees, Andy Warner and Will Davies, were elected and there was a showing of the new film "This is Our Woodland" created by Richard Taylor. The next Open Woodland Meeting will be on 18th November in the Bowling Club. As well as the usual summary of quarterly activities and finances, they will be discussing the recent NVC survey results and have invited Ben Averis, the author of the report, to come along and answer questions. During the last month, there have been two volunteering days with the Lothian Conservation Volunteers (LCV), working on the last mature Rhododendron bushes and tackling regeneration across the cleared areas – an issue which was anticipated, and which will be ongoing. The woods are working with LCV to trial a methodology known as "lever & mulch" to avoid the use of chemical treatments where possible and to write this methodology up as guidance for other land managers. Having completed the twice-yearly tree safety assessment, Nev has commenced safety work as nesting bird season comes to an end. Some paths will be closed at times over the next couple of months, but everyone will be notified via social media in advance and there will be signage at the times of the works. There will be a family volunteering day on 22nd November to replant a site that was cleared of dying ash trees last year. There is also a chainsaw course for four volunteers the previous weekend. The woods have now GIS mapped the invasive species identified in the NVC survey, as part of the Inspiring Scotland Project which will help to quantify the work required to deal with these. P2 started back with Forest School for their first of four six-week blocks for the coming school year. The woods are still looking for funding to cover the costs of forest school sessions for the school's nurture group. A potential new funder has been in touch.

4.4 East Lothian Council

Councillor Akhtar spoke about recent constituency work. She also wanted to thank the community woodland for their work on Forest Schools and all the benefits it brings to the children involved.

5 Internal Reports

5.1 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

All 6 defibrillators registered on The Circuit are in working order (garage, bowling club, primary school, furniture school, 2 x golf clubs). Following last month's meeting, Eleanor spoke to the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) about the GoodSAM app. The clear advice from SAS was that all defibrillators should be registered on the Circuit. Eleanor will therefore continue to encourage Yester Estate to arrange for their defibs to be registered on the Circuit.

The British Heart Foundation will be publishing an article describing the life-saving usage of the garage defibrillator on a cyclist just outside the village. There will be a picture of Eleanor holding the defibrillator. Wendy was pleased to report that a defibrillator and cabinet have been bought for the telephone box at Longnewton. Wendy will contact the electrician to arrange the installation. Suzi Vestri has agreed to be the guardian and Eleanor will get in touch to offer assistance. Eleanor suggested that further defib/CPR training could be arranged and asked if the woods could help to promote it. A list of defibrillators is available on the website and a copy will be added to the noticeboard.

5.2 Roads and Footpaths

Some patching has been done on Station Road, Tweeddale Crescent and Tweeddale Avenue, as well as some other streets in the village. The electrical work at Park Road and Walden Terrace is now finished.

5.3 Lighting, Drains and Signs

As reported last month, new lamp posts are being put in on Walden Terrace and Park Road. Dave has been speaking to the council about the new light outside the Goblin as this does not appear to be connected yet. There are further issues with signs being obscured by foliage. Previously the council has advised that it is the landowner's responsibility to clear foliage from signs. Dave will email the council again and copy the councillors in.

5.4 Planning

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

5.5 Finance

Wendy reported that CC has £3,800 in the bank, with most of that reserved for Soup & Smile.

5.6 Resilience

Soup & Smile will re-start on Tuesday 30th September and will run through to Easter. The service is moving to a Tuesday to allow for a trial of a new resilience service on Wednesdays. The working title is 'coffee with a doggie' and it will be aimed at people who are no longer able to have their own pets. They will be able to come to the bowling club for a cup of tea/coffee and spend some time with a friendly dog. Adam reported that there were 26 people at this month's Lunch Club. Fish and chips is still being delivered on the last Friday of the month.

6 Correspondence

6.1 Speeding in Park Road

This was covered under the Police Report above.

7. AOB

7.1 Adam was pleased to report that a volunteer has been found to take over the updating of the Gifford Grapevine. It is likely to become an annual publication so will focus more on contact details for groups/associations, rather than event dates.

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th October

APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	Date Validated	GCC first discussed	Comments	Status
25/00944/P Extension to agricultural building Land North Of Existing Stables Yester Estate The Avenue Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF	02/09/25	Sep 2025	Addition of two lean-to sheds to existing agricultural building, for livestock and machinery storage.	Awaiting decision
25/00805/PP Internal alterations and changes to access ramp 26 Park Road Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QS	25/08/25	Sep 2025	Changes to access ramp.	Withdrawn
25/00810/CLU Certificate of lawfulness for an existing use - Domestic garden ground The Heddle The Square Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QJ	31/07/25	Aug 2025	Re-submission of application 25/00402/CLU, which was refused. The revised application includes sworn affidavits from the applicant and Jane Hare to the effect that the land behind the Heddle has been used as garden ground since 2015.	Awaiting decision.
25/00402/CLU Certificate of lawfulness for an existing use - Domestic garden ground The Heddle The Square Gifford Haddington EH41 4QJ	17/04/25	May 2025	Change of use of the whole of the grassed paddock field behind The Heddle (overlooking the Bowling Club) to domestic garden ground, based upon its use as such for the past 10 years. Reference also the approved application 21/00615/P of July 2021 for erection of a summerhouse and change of use for a small part of the field.	Refused
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. Determination date has been extended to allow drawings to be amended and submission of an Ecological Survey.

APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA

None

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

Newlands Hill Wind Energy Hub (Belltown Power)

The S36 application for the Newlands Hill project was submitted in November 2023 and 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, reference ECU00004603.

In September 2024, East Lothian Council objected 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. 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.

In July 2025 Belltown Power submitted to the ECU Additional Information to address the concerns of consultees, in particular those of East Lothian Council. The proposed development has been modified, reducing the number, height and position of the turbines within the site boundary, which remains unchanged. The access route for abnormal loads during the construction period remains unchanged. The revisions reduce the generating capacity of the development from 136MW (megawatts) to 120MW. The revised proposals will now be reconsidered by the ECU and by East Lothian Council.

All documents for the revised submission can be viewed on the Newlands Hill website <https://newlandshillwindenergyhub.com/> or the Energy Consents Unit site under application number ECU00004603 <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00004603&T=15>

If you wish to make representations either for or against the revised proposals, please do so on the ECU website. Belltown Power state that the 30 day consultation period for this Additional Information ran until 10th August, although Gifford Community Council has previously been advised by the ECU that any representations will be considered right up to the point of determination.

A consultation has been undertaken by 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> No application to the ECU has yet been made for this grid connection, which presumably 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 7th August 2024, EDF submitted supplementary environmental information based upon feedback from consultees. This information can be viewed on the ECU website and the EDF project site.

In June 2025 Borders Council Planning Committee raised no objections to the application and their recommendations will feed into the Energy Consents Unit's decision.

Crystal Rig Wind Farm (Fred Olsen Renewables)

Crystal Rig Solar. This application for a solar array within the existing Crystal Rig windfarm was consented on 30 July 2025. All information is available on the project website at www.crystalrigwindfarm.com.

Crystal Rig I Repower. 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.

Glenburnie Wind Farm (previously 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. The full application was submitted to the ECU in October 2023 and can be viewed on the ECU website, reference ECU00004774, under the project name Glenburnie Wind Farm. Additional Information was submitted in Jun 2025, reducing the size of the site and the number of turbines to 12.

Berwick Bank Offshore Wind Farm (SSE)

On 31 July 2025 the Scottish Government granted consent for the Berwick Bank offshore wind farm. Located in the outer Firth of Forth, approximately 38km from the East Lothian coast, if fully constructed Berwick Bank would be the world's largest offshore wind farm. It has the capacity to generate 4.1 GW (gigawatts) of electricity, sufficient to power over six million homes, and would increase Scotland's current renewable energy capacity by almost 25%.

Electricity from Berwick Bank will come ashore at two locations, Torness, near Dunbar and Blyth in Northumberland.