**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council meeting  
held** **on 12th February 2024 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Hugh Broad, Dave Griffiths, Rita Buchan and Jill Hyslop

**In Attendance** Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Paul Hurd, Douglas Johnstone and Sheila Miller

**Apologies** Richard Austin, Eleanor Hulme, Wendy Ferguson, Nev Kilkenny, Councillor John McMillan, Councillor Tom Trotter, Councillor George McGuire and Mandy Harrington (VCEL)

**1 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of 8th January (approved by Rita and Dave).

**2 Items completed since last meeting**

**2.1 Newlands Poster**

A poster has been advertised on noticeboards and in local businesses to raise awareness about the planning application for Newlands Wind Farm.

**2.2 Noticeboard contact details**

At the request of local residents, contact details have been added to the noticeboard to give advice about how to get notices displayed.

**2.3 Fundraising from Christmas events**

Adam was delighted to report that the amazing sum of £1,388.77 had been raised for St Columba’s Hospice as a result of the 3 village Christmas activities (Christmas Lights Switch On, Village Christmas Post and Carols round the Tree). Adam thanked everyone who attended or helped with the events, with particular thanks to Nicola and her team at the Lanterne Rouge.

**3 Matters Arising**

**3.1 Renewable Energy Projects**

Nothing to report (but see Correspondence below).

**3.2 Defibrillators**

Planning applications for the school and bowling club defibrillators have been approved. An electrician has started the installation at the bowling club. Jill to pass details to Dave about the outstanding work on the cabinet at the garage. Eleanor has changed new pads for the garage defibrillator. They last for 2 years at a cost of £78.23. Community Council will be arranging a training course for local residents. Details to be agreed at a future meeting.

**3.3 Nature Corridors and Grass cutting**

Eleanor reported before the meeting that the council is preparing ‘visual aids’ to share with the CC/Horti working group shortly. Bruce Allison is their lead. They do not know if the budget for this project will be repeated this year.

**3.4 Airfield Memorial Plaque**

No update.

**3.5 Graveyard extension**

Following a meeting with Wendy and Hugh, the council’s Environmental Health team has undertaken an initial desktop study of the field behind Yester church. Different ends of the field are being assessed as 2 potential sites. Based on SEPA’s ‘Stage 1 Screening Criteria’ (covering soils, geology (drift and solid) and groundwater), and taking into consideration that proposed burial rates are less than 100 per year, the council has advised that both proposed areas could be taken to a Stage 2 Assessment. Once the council’s budget has been set on 20th February, there will be a decision about whether the council can progress with the assessment using an external contractor.

**3.6 Gifford Cycle Road Race – Saturday 16th March**

Adam has spoken to Jon Fleetwood from the council’s Safety Advisory Group and he has also spoken to the police about the race. They have confirmed that there will be no road closures. Race marshals have no official powers to stop the traffic. There are likely to be parking restrictions alongside the Goblin to help ease congestion in the Square, and also to avoid drivers pulling out when the race is passing through the village. Adam to ask if any of the police officers on duty might be able to attend during the race. Dave will speak to Tom Reid to check that the public toilets will be open. **ACTION: DG/JM**

**4. Projects awaiting update from East Lothian Council**

**4.1 Wheelie bins on the Main Street pavement**

The wheelie bins have now all been moved to Lillies Lane. Councillor Ahktar has spoken to the resident of Lillies Lane who had objected to the new location. The resident has agreed to withdraw their objection on the basis that the council will keep the matter under review in case another suitable location can be found. One resident of Main Street has asked for a small bin to be sited at the bus stop and Councillor Akhtar agreed to follow this up. **ACTION: SA**

**4.2 Resurfacing lane between Station Road/Tweeddale Crescent**

No update.

**5. External Reports**

**5.1 Police**

Between 1st – 31st January 2024 there were 16 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 2 crimes (1 breach of ASBO and 1 where a person was ‘within curtilage with intent to steal’.

**5.2 Yester Estate**

A local resident wished to record thanks to the estate for promptly dealing with a potentially dangerous overhanging tree that she had reported.

**5.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

The next Open Woods community meeting will take place on Monday 19th February. Residents are encouraged to raise any matters relating to the woods at that meeting.

**5.4 East Lothian Council**

Councillor Akhtar reported on several matters:

* 4 out of 5 funding bids had been approved at the last Area Partnership meeting.
* There was a recent networking event bringing together lots of groups working in the area of health and well bring.
* East Lothian Climate Change Hub is offering small grants (£1,000 - £1,500) for local grass roots activity supporting environmental issues.
* There had been a cabinet visit to East Lothian
* East Lothian Council continues to face budget difficulties, but is trying to protect services where possible.

There were a number of questions/comments:

* Why doesn’t the council get more money from housing developers for essential services?
* When will solar panels will be brought within permitted development rights for Conservation Areas? The Scottish Government is currently consulting on this, but the timescale is not known.
* Is the council involved in setting taxi fares? The cost of a taxi between Gifford and Haddington had risen to £20.
* The road after the 30 mph coming out of Haddington to East Linton past Traprain Law is now all 40 mph. There are 40 mph signs at the junction onto the road from Seggarsdean Farm. It was noted that local communities often make requests to the council in relation to speed limits.

Councillor Akhtar provided her contact details to local residents present at the meeting. It was also noted that residents can contact the council’s Roads department directly with queries.

**6 Internal Reports**

**6.1 Roads and Footpaths**

Nothing to report.

**6.2 Lighting, Drains and Signs**

Nothing to report.

**6.3 Planning**

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

**6.4 Finance**

The bank balance is currently £1,318.

**6.5 Resilience**

33 people attended this month’s Lunch Club. Weekly deliveries of soup will continue until Easter. Monthly deliveries of fish & chips will continue throughout the year.

**7 Correspondence**

Copies of the following were circulated to CC members:

**Note about Battery Storage from AELCC.** Some AELCC members have raised concerns about the number of new applications in the East Lothian area and they have agreed to discuss this topic at a future meeting.

**East Lammermuir CC’s submission for Newlands.** This can be viewed at www.energyconsents.scot

**Gordon & Westruther CC’s submission for Longcroft Wind Farm.** This should be available to view at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot) shortly.

**Newlands** - Notice confirming that some items missing from a Technical Appendix have now been added to the planning submission for Newlands

**Crystal Rig Wind Farm.** A letter from Fred Olsen giving notice that they are at the very early stages of considering future plans for the oldest phase of Crystal Rig Wind Farm, which is nearing the end of its life.

The following items were also raised under correspondence:

**Premier Store signage.** A local resident has raised a complaint about the appearance of the new store front. The meeting agreed that, if a local resident feels that there has been a breach of planning regulations, the appropriate action is for them to contact East Lothian Council’s planning department.

The discussion then moved to problems with the cash machine which is located at the store. The Premier Store has no responsibility for the cash machine. Rita offered to contact the head office of the company that manages the cash machine. The meeting thanked Rita for her hard work in trying to resolve this problem. The cash machine is an important resource for Gifford and neighbouring villages.

**Doo poo problems on the Bleachfield.** The mini rugby coaches recently had to clear 16 bags of dog poo from the Bleachfield. Councillor Akhtar advised that if residents see someone failing to pick up dog poo, they should contact the council’s Dog Warden on 01875 824305 or [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/dogwatch](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/dogwatch). Complaints can be made anonymously.

**Dog poo bin on Station Road.** A local resident had drawn attention to the muddiness of the area around the poo bin on Station Road. It was suggested that this issue could be usefully raised at the next Open Woods meeting.

**Collection of sandbags and roadworks materials/signs.**  A complaint was made about the failure to remove sandbags and road work signs. Councillor McMillan has already passed this on to the relevant team.

**Next edition of the Gifford Grapevine.** Jane Steven is compiling the next edition to cover events from April – Sept. Any individual, group or organisation wishing to contribute information should contact Jane (via [chairgiffordcc@gmail.com](mailto:chairgiffordcc@gmail.com) if necessary).

**8 AOB**

**8.1 Parking at The Square**

Cars have been parking at the corner beside the Goblin, partially blocking access to the Square. This corner is due to have yellow lines installed during Q1 this year (the lines were approved by the council last year). Adam agreed to check the schedule with Ian Lennock. ACTION: AW

**8.2 Problems with cash point** Discussed under Correspondence (above).

**8.3 BT problems**

Several residents are having intermittent problems with BT. Residents can’t make or receive calls during these phases. Engineers have been out to various houses but the problem seems to be at the exchange. The problem is annoying for everyone, but it’s causing particular concern for some of our elderly residents who live on their own. Councillor Akhtar suggested that CC should collate information about the problem with a view to making a joint complaint with East Lothian Council. A local resident asked for advice about how to communicate during a power cut. The mobile phone signal often goes down during power cuts, alongside problems with phones running out of charge. Adam agreed to consider this as a resilience issue. **ACTION: JH/AW**

**8.4 Query about Newlands benefit fund**

Adam had received a query about the suggested community benefit fund for Newlands. It was noted that Belltown Power had suggested the arrangement of using 80% of any community benefit to reduce electricity bills. This arrangement is in place in several sites across Scotland. The final terms of any community benefit fund can only be agreed if planning permission for the development goes ahead. A local resident present at the meeting thanked community council for maintaining an impartial view in relation to Newlands.

**8.5 Duns Road Speed Bumps** Following a query about the removal of the Duns Road Speed Bumps, the meeting agreed that the relevant section from the October AGM would be reproduced here.

“*When the speed bumps were removed for re-surfacing work, community council was asked by local residents if the speed bumps could be left off due to concerns about their effectiveness and complaints about noise.  Community Council approached ELC about the matter and was given a very short time to make a decision.  Having regard to the new 20 mph speed limit, the complaints about noise and doubts about their effectiveness, Community Council asked for the speedbumps not to be replaced. Community Council appreciates the hard work that went into the original installation of the speed bumps and will continue to engage with residents about traffic concerns*.”

Date of next meeting: Monday 11th March.

**APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 24/00130/P | Alterations to house, installation of air source heat pump and erection of greenhouse | Feldon 31A Tweedale Grove Gifford East Lothian EH41 4RB | 07/02/24 | Feb 2024 | Minor alterations to house and garage, installation of solar panels (including on flat garage roof), air source heat pump and greenhouse. | Awaiting decision |
| 24/00053/P | Siting of hut for recreational use and formation of hardstanding area | Land North Of Newlands Farm Gifford East Lothian | 02/02/24 | Feb 2024 | Siting of a shepherd’s hut for owner’s use, on hard standing adjacent to an existing grain store. | Awaiting decision |
| 23/01490/EOL | Erection of overhead line of less than 132kv | Land East Of Yester Mains Gifford East Lothian | 18/12/23 | Jan 2024 | Changes to route of replacement electricity poles at Yester Mains | Approved |
| 23/01445/P | Installation of defibrillator cabinet (Retrospective) | Yester Primary School Walden Terrace Gifford Haddington East Lothian EH41 4QP | 11/12/23 | Dec 2023 | Defibrillator cabinet at Primary School (Retrospective) | Approved |
| 23/01444/P | Installation of defibrillator cabinet | Gifford Bowling Club Station Road Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QL | 11/12/23 | Dec 2023 | Defibrillator cabinet at Bowling Club | Approved |
| 23/01192/P | Change of use of domestic equestrian building to equestrian business use and associated works | Equestrian Centre South West Of Existing Stables Yester Estate The Avenue Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF | 18/10/23 | Nov 2023 | Change of use of the existing equestrian centre at Yester Estate to allow public use through the creation of a membership group. No physical changes to the existing facility. Access would be via the existing access from the Longyester road. | Approved. Hours of business to be restricted to 1000 to 1700, Monday to Sunday. Conditions to maintain visibility at access to road. |
| 22/01169/P | Alterations, extensions to agricultural buildings to form 7 houses, erection of a shared domestic ancillary building and associated works | Longnewton Farm Steading Yester Gifford East Lothian | 12/12/22 | Jan 2023 | Conversion of stable block to form 2 dwellings, steading block to form four dwellings and granary to form one dwelling. Barn to be converted for shared use. | Awaiting decision |

**APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 23/01388/P | Erection of furniture making studio (Class 4) and associated works | Bolton Muir Wood Gifford East Lothian | 21/11/23 | Jan 2024 | Revised proposal for a furniture making studio on land at Bolton Muir Woods. The application replaces 22/01217/P which was withdrawn in early 2023. The new submission is for a studio 40% smaller than previously applied for. | Refused. Application was supported by Humbie, Saltoun & Bolton CC, but refused as business was deemed not to have a need for a countryside location. Also concerns from landscape officer and roads department. |

**OTHER PLANNING MATTERS**

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

As indicted in last month’s Planning Report and on the posters Belltown Power have now submitted the S36 application to the Scottish Government’s Energy Consents Unit for the Newlands Hill project. The full application is available on the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit website [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot), reference ECU00004603. All of the submission documents can also be accessed on Belltown Power’s project website.

If you have any views, either for or against the development, you are urged to visit the Energy Consents Unit website, register and post comments there. Alternatively, contact one of your local MSPs.

**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.

**Solar panels at Crystal Rig Wind Farm (Fred Olsen Renewables)**

Plans can be viewed at [www.crystalrigwindfarm.com](http://www.crystalrigwindfarm.com)

**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.