**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council AGM
held** **on 13th March 2023 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Richard Austin, Jill Hyslop, Wendy Ferguson, Eleanor Hulme, Dave Griffiths, Hugh Broad

**In Attendance** Councillor George McGuire, Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Councillor Tom Trotter Neville Kilkenny

**Apologies** Rita Buchan, Councillor John McMillan

**1 Appointment of Office Bearers, new members and date of next AGM**

Councillor Ahktar opened the AGM by thanking the council members for their hard work. Office bearers were appointed as follows: Adam White (Chair), Richard Austin (Vice Chair), Wendy Ferguson (Treasurer) and Jill Hyslop (Secretary). It was unanimously agreed that Neville Kilkenny would join Community Council to fill the current vacancy. To correct the AGM scheduling, it was agreed that the next AGM will be on Monday 9th October 2023.

**2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of 13th February (approved by Wendy and Dave).

**3 Matters arising**

**3.1 Newlands Wind Energy Hub**

Nothing to report from the developers. The Association of East Lothian Community Councils has set up two subgroups: one is investigating the possibility of equity ownership; and the second subgroup is looking at priorities across East Lothian in case a portion of any future community fund is shared on a county-wide basis. Adam again emphasised that discussions about future benefits are only taking place so that community councils are appropriately prepared *if* planning permission is granted.

**3.2 Dunside Windfarm**

Nothing to report from the developer.

**3.3 Crystal Rig Solar Farm**

The proposed development comprises 25 to 30 solar panels to be installed within the existing Crystal Rig Wind Farm. The developers have submitted a Request for a Scoping Opinion from Scottish Ministers. Gifford CC is a consultee in the process as we are within 10km of the proposed site.

**3.4 Edinburgh Road Bridge Widening**

Work has started. Ian Lennock has confirmed that there will be appropriate signage on both sides of the bridge to warn of the narrowness of carriageway. Ian was not keen on the suggestion to have a speed-reducing chicane further up the Edinburgh Road. He wants to see if the new signage will be sufficient to slow traffic before looking at other options. There was a question about drainage, as a large puddle often forms near the bridge, and there was also a comment about making sure drivers are kept away from the edge of the kerb as they come round the corner.

**3.5 Additional Graveyard space**

As Councillor McMillan was absent, there was no progress to report. **ACTION: JM**

**3.6 Wheelie Bins on Main Street**

Planning Advisor, Paul Zochowski, has suggested using the lane beside the NISA to locate the new bin storage. This is a private road, but the owner has indicated that they would give consent. **ACTION: SA**

**3.7 Defibrillator**

3.7.1 School defibrillator.  Richard has now been advised by Keith Dingwall that a planning application might not be required. Richard now has the contact details for the Estates team and will follow this up. **ACTION: RA**

3.7.2 Garage defibrillator. Eleanor had a useful site visit to discuss cabinet options and has been advised that the cabinet model used for the school defibrillator will be suitable. Nev Kilkenny kindly offered to fit the new cabinet. **ACTION: EH/NK**

3.7.3 Bowling club defibrillator.  The bowling club have not yet decided whether to proceed. Richard will begin work on the planning application, pending a final decision. **ACTION: RA**

**3.8 School Shed**

Community Council will arrange funding once the school confirms the cost. *After the meeting the school estimated that the cost will be in the region of £500*.

**3.9 Noticeboard**

Richard reported that a planning application is not required, but there does need to be ‘advertisement consent’. Richard also confirmed that permission is not required to take down the old noticeboard. There was a query about the high cost of the noticeboard (£4,143 + VAT). Richard and Wendy informed the meeting that the basic cost of the noticeboard is around £2,000, but you then have to add on extras such as lockable doors and posts, which increases the cost. Wendy will apply for Area Partnership funding to cover some of the cost. **ACTION: RA/WF**

**3.10 Bus stop - review of position**

No update as Councillor McMillan was absent. It was noted that the Goblin Ha currently uses the Square for deliveries, which might be a relevant consideration.  **ACTION: JM**

**3.11 Disabled car parking for Gifford Community Woodland**

Nev reported that 2 disabled parking spaces will be created on Station Road (before the junction with Tweeddale Ave) and dropped kerbs will also be created.

**3.12 Dropped Kerbs**

No update on the wider AP-funded project to add dropped kerbs throughout the village.

**3.13 Lighting Review**

Councillor Ahktar has asked the Lighting Team to confirm the date for the site visit. **ACTION: SA**

**4. External Reports**

**4.1** **Police**

The Police Report stated that between 1st and 28th February 2023 there were 9 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 3 crimes: 1 x assault (domestic), 1 x abduction (domestic) and 1 x car theft. As PC Emma Stewart is moving to the Domestic Abuse unit, the new community police officer for Gifford is now PC Stuart Foster. A CAPP meeting took place just before the AGM, where it was agreed that parking issues would be a local priority.

**4.2** **East Lothian Council**

Councillor Trotter shared a link to information on ELC’s website about the budget and Council Tax increase. As this is public information, it can be shared on the CC Facebook page. Councillor Akhtar reported on plans to set up a new After School Club at Yester Primary. The service provider is currently assessing needs. Gifford CC agreed to donate £250 towards initial set up costs. Garvald and Morham CCs are also thought to be making donations. Following on from the issue raised last month about mould in houses, Councillor Ahktar reminded the meeting that support with energy costs is available from Community Wind Power, which can give grants of around £500.

**4.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

Nev Kilkenny reported that ash dieback felling had started and was progressing quickly. As the ground is very wet, the timber extraction might be delayed. An accessible foraging event is being developed. The first event is likely to be for an invited audience, who will advise on how the event should be set up. The woods newsletter is being printed and will be delivered shortly.

**4.4 Yester Estate**

No update from Yester Estate.

**5 Internal Reports**

**5.1 Roads and Footpaths.** Nothing to report.

**5.2 Lighting**

Nothing to report on Lighting (the review of lighting around the village square was discussed at 3.13 above).

**5.3 Drainage**

Nothing to report.

**5.4 Signs**

Nothing to report.

**5.5 Planning**

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

There was a discussion about the retrospective planning application for the Hopes car park. Richard has submitted comments on behalf of community council, welcoming the voluntary creation of the car park, but querying whether the restrictions to opening hours are necessary. It was stated during the meeting that environmental protection issues should have been considered before the carpark was created. The current planning application relates only to the car park and a separate application is expected to be made for signage. Community Council’s opinion is that the signage should be removed until its legality has been determined by a proper planning process.

**5.6 Finance**

Wendy reported that community council currently has approximately £9,000 in the bank. Donations of £250 are being made to support the provision of an After School Club at Yester and also to support a new Parent & Toddler Art Class running in the Village Hall. Wendy invited suggestions for any additional funding projects.

**5.7 Website/Communications**

Nothing to report.

**5.8 Resilience**

Wendy reported that ‘Soup & Smile’ was being delivered to between 20 and 24 people weekly and continued to be well received. The service will be paused at the end of March and will re-start in autumn. A leaflet will be delivered, asking people to get in touch if they need support in the meantime. The monthly delivery of fish & chips continues to be well received. 41 people had attended the last Lunch Club. The next 2 Lunch Clubs will have special themes of Easter and the Coronation. Wendy confirmed that she will pass on details of the resilience initiatives to GPs and social workers, so they can let any service users know what is available. **ACTION: WF**

**6. Correspondence**

Confirmation has been received that the Gifford Road Cycle Race, which often takes place in March, will not be running this year. A local resident had asked whether community council would be commenting on the retrospective planning application for the carpark at the Hopes and this was covered at 5.5 Planning (above)

**7. AOB**

7.1 Safe crossing point for school children. A local resident had asked the council to look at options for creating a safe crossing point on the main road. It was agreed that a lollipop person could assist with school children crossing and Councillor Trotter agreed to investigate this. **ACTION: TT**

7.2 Public Toilets. In response to media reports, Dave asked about the closure of public toilets. The councillors confirmed there have been no discussions about closing the toilets in Gifford.

7.3 Succession Planning. Wendy indicated that she will be looking to step down as Treasurer in 2025. It was agreed that community council should be looking at succession planning for office bearers and that written ‘job descriptions’ should be created for each role.

7.4 Community council has been asked to consider installing a bike maintenance station, along the lines of the one in Duns. It’s a bike pump with various tools attached. Adam agreed to circulate some images for discussion. **ACTION: AW**

Date of next meeting: Monday 17th March

**APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 23/00172/P | Installation of solar panels and painting of front door | Threagowen 18 Old Mill Lane Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QQ | 02/03/23 | Mar 2023 | Installation of ten solar panels on roof to rear of property. | Awaiting decision |
| 23/00090/P | Extension to house | 3 Castlemains Cottages Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PL | 10/02/23 | Feb 2023 | Extension to rear, new slate roof and cladding. | Awaiting decision |
| 23/00069/P | Replacement windows | Bank House High Street Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QU | 10/02/23 | Feb 2023 | Replacement wooden double glazed windows to existing design. | Awaiting decision |
| 23/00059/P | Change of use of agricultural land to form car park, erection of gates and fencing (Retrospective) | Hopes Estate Yester Gifford Haddington East Lothian EH41 4PL | 09/02/23 | Feb 2023 | Retrospective application for creation of car park. GCC comments relating to operational hours of car park submitted on 07/03/23 | Awaiting decision |
| 23/00043/P | Alterations, extension to house and formation of hardstanding area | Blinkbonny High Street Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QU | 01/02/23 | Feb 2023 | Single storey extension to rear and internal alterations. | Awaiting decision |
| 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 |
| 21/01599/P | Erection of 1 house and associated works | Land Adjacent To Castlepark Golf Club Yester Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PL | 31/01/22 | Feb 2022 | Six bedroomed house attached to the west of the clubhouse, for occupation by the owner/manager. The applicant has requested several extensions of time in order to prepare supporting information. | Awaiting decision |

**APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| None |  |  |  |  |

**OTHER PLANNING MATTERS**

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

No further information

**Dunside Wind Farm (EDF)**

No further information.

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

Initial consultation event was held in Garvald Village Hall on 28th February. Initial plans can be viewed at www.crystalrigwindfarm.com