

## **Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Wendy Ferguson, Dave Griffiths, Richard Austin, Nev Kilkenny, Alan Fortune and Jill Hyslop

**In Attendance** Councillor Tom Trotter and 8 local residents

**Apologies** Eleanor Hulme, Paul Smith, Councillor John McMillan, Councillor George McGuire, Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Kenneth Black (ELC) and Mandy Harrington (VCEL)

### **1 Minutes of last meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of 9th December 2024 (approved by Dave and Alan).

### **2 Items completed since last meeting**

#### **2.1 Christmas Events**

Adam thanked everyone who had helped with the Christmas events. Nicola from Lanterne Rouge will confirm how much was raised by St Columba's as soon as gets confirmation from them.

### **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**

Local resident, John Scott, is now pursuing this. Octopus Energy have agreed that the matter can be escalated to the Ombudsman. The office of local MP Douglas Alexander has been informed about the issue.

#### **3.3 Defibrillators**

##### **3.3.1 Circulation of the list of defibrillators**

Eleanor has completed a table detailing the location and access hours of all the defibrillators in the Gifford area. The list has been circulated to CC members. Jill will forward the list to Liz to ask if it can be added to the website and will put something on Facebook.

##### **3.3.2 Defibrillator Training Event**

*The date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> defibrillator training event was confirmed shortly after the meeting. It will be held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in the Bowling Club.*

#### **3.4 Graveyard extension**

Brian Galloway who works as a gravedigger was present at the meeting. He spoke about the difficulties they have with water on the site. Wendy explained that they were working with the council to look at whether the field behind the church would be suitable for an extension. Brian thought there would be too much water in that field. Brian offered to come to future CC meetings and Wendy will link his feedback with the council team looking at this. If the field behind the church is not suitable, Hugh Broad has offered an alternative field, subject to the necessary tests/assessments.

#### **3.5 Youth Club Activities**

George Chalmers, Alan and Councillor Akhtar are planning a fact-finding visit to Recharge, a youth organisation in Tranent. Councillor Akhtar has asked if CC can cover the costs of applying for PVG checks and safeguarding training. Volunteer Scotland offers free PVGs and training to organisations that enrol with them. CC is recommending that the youth club team look at what is needed to enrol.

### **4. External Reports**

#### **4.1 Police**

PC Edmond's report detailed that she had been in Gifford with the speed gun, giving advice and warnings to several drivers. The 'cut-out' police officer also spent some time in Gifford in December. The next CAPP meeting is on 14th January 2025. Between 1st – 31st December there were 36 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 2 crimes: 1 x Threatening & Abusive Behaviour and 1 x Theft by opening Lockfast Place.

#### **4.2 Yester Estate**

No update.

### **4.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

Nev reported that the woodland has organised some volunteer days to tackle rhododendron and to plant trees. Details of all the events and volunteer dates can be found at:

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

### **4.4 East Lothian Council**

Councillor Trotter reported that the council is working on the budget, which will involve some difficult decisions.

## **5 Internal Reports**

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

The C97 between Yester Mains and Longyester is shut during the day on weekdays for road repairs at Gamuelston Bridge. The work started on 6<sup>th</sup> January and should be completed by 17<sup>th</sup> January.

No major potholes reported in the parish even with the winter weather.

Yellow lines have not yet been added at the bus stop on Main Street in front of the Goblin Ha hotel.

A local resident parks their car on Park Road, close to the junction with the Wynd. He used to park on the pavement, but stopped doing that when new laws about pavement parking came into force. The pavement at that section isn't used by pedestrians, as they use the diagonal path across the grass. Dave has suggested to the council that an exemption allowing pavement parking should be made, as otherwise the road is too narrow for bigger vehicles. This was brought to the attention of the roads consultation team by email on 5<sup>th</sup> July. The parking team replied to say that a formal assessment would be carried out. Dave hasn't heard anything back, so he will contact them again.

Trench dug on Station Road and the start of Old Mill Lane. Contractor upgrading energy low voltage.

Footpath into the churchyard from Duns Road at the pedestrian gate becomes muddy when wet. The gate needs lifted so that the path can have infill material added. The problem has been reported to the ELC churchyard team in December. Bruce Allison said he would look at it the start of the new year.

The uneven slabs on the path between Walden Terrace and Walden Place are to be inspected by ELC and they will report back on what work is required. No progress on the path between Tweeddale Crescent and Station Road. Councillor Trotter agreed to follow this up.

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

Four street light faults on Tweeddale Crescent have been fixed after a resident in the Crescent spoke to a lighting officer.

The fault that caused a number of street lights on Walden Terrace to be out, as reported at the last meeting, was fixed within a week. A resident on Walden Terrace has reported that street light GK86 has a fault.

A new lamp post has been erected on Main Street outside the Goblin Ha. The lamp is to be added on the top to complete and electrical work to be done.

It was agreed that CC will publicise how residents can report lighting faults, so that they don't have to wait for a CC meeting. The same applies to roads issues. Jill will post something on Facebook and a link will also be added to the website.

On drainage, Dave reported that the gully sucker had still not been to the village. Councillor Trotter agreed to follow this up. *Shortly after the meeting, the gully sucker arrived and was seen working on Duns Road.* Dave was concerned that the gully pots to the drains in Duns Road, Main Street, The Square and Station Road would be full of silt brought down from the fields during heavy rain. There is silt on the same streets. The street sweepers were in the village before Xmas but not this year yet.

Nothing to report on Signs.

### **5.3 Planning**

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

Richard highlighted an application at Redshill for change of use to allow the siting of 4 glamping units for holiday let. The applicants were present at the meeting. Balfour Stewart, who runs The Bus Stop holiday accommodation at Bankrugg Farm was also present and he spoke about the benefits of agritourism, where working farms diversify to provide holiday accommodation. He is in favour the new development. The Redshill applicants explained that they offer B&B accommodation in the farmhouse, but wish to expand. The meeting agreed that Richard will submit a letter of support from community council.

#### **5.4 Finance**

Wendy reported that there is approximately £5,000 in bank. This includes £3,000, which was obtained to fund Soup & Smile. CC saved £300 by not buying a Christmas tree from the council this year. Thank you to Seb Callander for supplying the tree.

#### **5.5 Resilience**

Fish and chips were delivered on the last Friday of December and weekly deliveries of Soup & Smile continue on Wednesdays. The January Lunch Club had 30 people.

### **6 Correspondence**

#### **6.1 Edinburgh Road Club Gifford Race**

This will take place on 15<sup>th</sup> March. Adam will speak to the organisers.

### **7 AOB**

#### **7.1 Parking issues**

Alan has contacted Homes for Life about parking problems in Walden Terrace/Walden Place.

#### **7.2 Cherry Trees**

Paul Hurd asked if anything was being done to replace the cherry trees in front of the Tweeddale Arms Hotel. He said that if 3 new trees can be planted, he'll take responsibility for watering them during the first year. Jill to email Mike Foy. Noted that dwarf varieties would be better to prevent them becoming too big.

#### **7.3 Airfield Memorial Plaque**

Nev reported that he had spoken to the landowner at Townhead about the plaque. The landowner would like to see the plaque before agreeing to a final location. This will be picked up again in Spring.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February.**

## APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	Date Validated	GCC first discussed	Comments	Status
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,	Awaiting decision.
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.
24/01080/P   Installation of air source heat pumps   76, 77, 79, 80, 81 Walden Terrace Gifford Haddington EH41 4QP	15/10/24	Nov 2024	Installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps to five terraced houses.	Approved

## 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. 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) and public consultation events will be held in the near future.  
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.