

**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting  
held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Wendy Ferguson, Eleanor Hulme, Richard Austin, Nev Kilkenny, Paul Smith and Jill Hyslop  
**In Attendance** Councillor John McMillan, Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Councillor George McGuire, Councillor Tom Trotter, Richard Kerr (East Lothian Council) and 10 local residents  
**Apologies** Alan Fortune, Dave Griffiths and Mandy Harrington (VCEL)

**1 Minutes of last meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of 17th February 2025 (approved by Paul and Adam).

**2 Items completed since last meeting**

**2.1 Replacement trees planted in front of the Tweeddale Arms**

Adam was pleased to confirm that 3 rowan trees have been planted to replace the cherry trees that died. The trees have a columnar habit and should not grow too tall. CC thanked Paul Hurd for agreeing to water the plants during their first year.

**3. Matters arising**

**3.1 Council E-cargo bikes**

Richard Kerr spoke about the council's e-cargo bike loan scheme. An e-cargo bike is an electric bike which has a box at the front which can carry heavy loads of up to 100kg. The council has 6 bikes available for loan to community groups. They can make 1 bike available to groups in the Gifford area. The loan period is normally 4 – 6 months. The community group needs to sign a contract with the council to cover the loan. The council has an insurance policy in place, but the community group can arrange additional insurance if they wish. An excess of a couple of hundred pounds is payable in the event of the bike being damaged. Nev thought the Forest School leaders might be able to use the bike to transport equipment and he will liaise with Richard about this.

**3.2 Renewable Energy Projects**

No update since last month. See attached planning report for current status. Based on the timescales for decisions about other windfarms, Richard does not expect a decision on Newlands before 2026.

**3.3 Smart Meter Connectivity**

No update since last month.

**3.4 Graveyard extension**

No update since last month.

**3.5 Gifford Road Race**

Adam met with the race organiser ahead of the event on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March. It is the organiser's responsibility to enforce the parking restrictions. Adam remains concerned that the race marshalls don't have legal authority to direct the traffic. The organiser explained that in England marshalls can obtain a qualification allowing them to direct traffic. Councillor McMillan agreed to contact Martin Whitfield and Paul McLennan to see whether a similar scheme could be run in Scotland.

**3.7 Gifford Oil Club**

Community Council agreed to promote the existence of a bulk buying scheme for domestic oil. Jill to check the details and post something on Facebook. **ACTION: JH**

**3.8 Antisocial Behaviour**

Sadly there have been several instances of very serious antisocial behaviour. Two horses were attacked at Broadwoodside, cars have been set alight at the Gifford Garage and a nature camera was destroyed in the Community Woods. There was also evidence of someone attempting to light a fire with petrol in the woods. The matters have all been reported to the police. The residents at Broadwoodside spoke about how dangerous and upsetting the behaviour was. Councillor Trotter suggested that the antisocial behaviour should be made one of the priorities at the next CAPP meeting. Councillor McMillan said that antisocial behaviour often increases during school holidays and he would like to see additional resource made available at such times. As the incidents may have been caused by school-age people, Councillor Akhtar offered to speak to the school liaison police officer.

### **3.9 Goblin Ha' and Village Store**

The council's Economic Development team made an unscheduled visit to the store and found some evidence of improvements. However, there is concern locally that the shop has very little stock. There has been no application for a licence.

Regarding the Goblin Ha', Cornerstone are no longer managing the process to find a new tenant, but nothing further could be confirmed.

Community Council was sad to note that Lewis & Clarke will be closing on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

## **4. External Reports**

### **4.1 Police**

No police report was received.

### **4.2 Yester Estate**

Yester Estate has cut back leylandii trees which were overlooking the back gardens at the end of Park Road. The residents are very pleased with the work.

### **4.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

The woods maintenance schedule has moved into its Spring phase, so work on rhododendron clearance will be paused. Once tree inspection work is finished, they'll move to ditch clearing and wood fuel. They have arranged for someone to carry out a biodiversity survey. 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 councillors spoke about their casework and also mentioned the following:

- The council's Community Transfer of Assets Scheme, which can benefit community groups.
- The increase in social work referrals
- The need for additional foster carers
- The new council Chief Executive, Laurence Rockey, will start at the end of April

Councillor Akhtar thanked Adam and Wendy for attending the council's Resilience Workshop.

## **5 Internal Reports**

### **5.1 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**

Eleanor has checked the AEDs at the Garage and the Bowling Club this month. Around 40 people attended the 2 training events organised by CC. Although CC would like to see more people trained, there are no plans to organise further training at the moment. One local resident has expressed interest in doing 1<sup>st</sup> Responder training. Jill will publicise the availability of First Responder training on Facebook.

### **5.2 Roads and Footpaths.**

Potholes on Main Street have been repaired ahead of the cycle race. Station Road each side of the bridge needs repair work. This has been reported to the Roads department. Bablins Wynd has a road closure from 24th March - 4th April, but there is no TTRO yet. Nothing new to report on footpaths.

### **5.3 Lighting, Drains and Signs**

No lighting faults reported since the last meeting. Work on the new lamp post being installed at the bus stop next to the Goblin Ha has not been completed. No drainage problems were reported. There are excavations on the footpath in Station Road at houses from 1 to 4, but the cause isn't known.

### **5.4 Planning**

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

### **5.5 Finance**

After the last 2 weeks of Soup & Smile are paid for, there will be approximately £3,500 in the bank. Wendy thanked everyone who has contributed to fundraising activities, and in particular the Reindeer

Party, which have helped keep the finances in such good shape. The Bank of Scotland is looking to introduce £5 month charge for the bank account. Wendy would prefer to avoid bank charges, as it is not a good use of CC funds. However, it may be unavoidable.

### **5.6 Resilience**

Adam and Wendy attended the council's Resilience Workshop and came away with an action point to review and update the resilience contact lists. Soup & Smile will run until Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March and will then take a break until the autumn. This Wednesday the Soup & Smile people will receive a pot of Spring bulbs, which have been kindly prepared by Paul Hurd.

## **6 Correspondence**

### **6.1 Project Gigabit**

The Scottish Government has awarded its first Project Gigabit contract in Scotland to GoFibre. This is intended to provide gigabit capable connectivity to around 11,000 properties in the Scottish Borders and East Lothian. Further information will be shared as it becomes available.

### **6.2. AELCC Draft Complaints Procedure**

The AELCC have compiled a draft complaints procedure and have circulated it for comment. Gifford CC had no comments to make. Adam thought the policy would need to be approved by East Lothian Council before it could be adopted.

No AOBs

**Date of next meeting: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April.**

## APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	Date Validated	GCC first discussed	Comments	Status
25/00201/P   Alterations, extension to house, formation of hardstanding and erection of car port   The Willows Duns Road Gifford EH41 4QW	07/03/25	Mar 2025	Single storey extension to rear, new dormer window to rear for new master bedroom in attic space, free-standing car port to east of house.	Awaiting decision.
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.
24/01321/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.	Approved.
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 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](http://www.energyconsents.scot), reference ECU00004603.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 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.