

**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting
held on 11th August 2025 at Gifford Bowling Club**

- Participating** Adam White (Chair), Paul Smith, Nev Kilkenny, Alan Fortune, Dave Griffiths, Wendy Ferguson and Jill Hyslop
- In Attendance** Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Councillor George McGuire, Josh Farrell (Yester Estate), Gordon Emslie (GNE Consultancy), Prasanth Baskaran (Premier Store) and 17 local residents
- Apologies** Richard Austin, Eleanor Hulme, Councillor John McMillan, Councillor Tom Trotter and Mandy Harrington (VCEL)

1 Minutes of last meeting

The meeting approved the minutes of 9th June 2025 (proposed by Dave and seconded by Wendy).

2 Items completed since last meeting

Nothing to report.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Premier Store

Adam welcomed the Manager, Prasanth Baskaran, and Licensing Agent, Gordon Emslie, and invited them to outline their plans for the store. Gordon, who has a background in retail, has worked with the store to obtain their alcohol licence. This is Prasanth's first retail venture. He has been using a Premier 'standard template', which is focused on long-shelf life products and lots of snacks and drinks. CC has received feedback that people want to see more fresh produce. Gordon hopes this can be achieved via local supply chains and asked for specific recommendations. The meeting suggested: George Anderson in Macmerry, Linton Butchers, and Billy Logan (trading as East Lothian Produce). Laura's weekly fruit and veg van service will be re-starting on 19th August. The meeting wondered if Laura and the store might be able to work together. Nicola from the café highlighted that she previously used the co-op several times a day for fresh ingredients and grocery staples (like flour, sugar, salt). She is pleased to be sourcing her milk from the Premier, but would like to buy more from them if the appropriate products were available. Serena spoke about the benefits of being able to buy a 'complete meal' which needs fresh produce. Another resident said that she would love to use the store more, but she finds the volume of unhealthy snacks off-putting and she finds it difficult to find healthy snacks for her children. Rita visits the store often and highlighted the importance of keeping the entrance clean and removing any rotten vegetables. It was suggested that a simple hanging 'Open' sign on the door would emphasise when the store is open. Residents said the opening hours were excellent. Another resident wanted to see better quality products and was happy to have less choice, but better quality. It was noted that there have been positive improvements and that more time was needed to let Prasanth understand the shopping habits/preferences of the village. Gordon offered to come back in 3 months time. Prasanth wants people to ask him for new products and he will try them out. Paul suggested that CC might be able to help collate suggestions from the community.

3.2 Thermal Imaging Surveys

Tim Crick has confirmed that the East Lothian Climate Hub can cover the cost of the training (to train volunteers to use the thermal imaging camera). Jill has asked Andy to suggest some dates.

ACTION: JH

3.3 Renewable Energy Projects

For details of all the renewable energy projects, please see the planning report attached at the end. Two recent updates were highlighted:

Belltown Power have submitted Additional Information to the ECU to address the concerns of consultees. 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 be reconsidered by the ECU and by East Lothian Council. The 30-day consultation period for this Additional

Information ran until 10th August, although Gifford CC has previously been advised by the ECU that any representations will be considered right up to the point of determination.

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

3.4 Smart Meter Connectivity

With assistance from the office of Douglas Alexander MP, Richard has obtained confirmation from the DCC that they will investigate any cases that we pass to them where Smart meters are not connecting. Following posts on Facebook, and an email message to everyone who took part in our previous survey, 19 people have given us their details to pass on to the DCC. **ACTION: RA**

3.5 Graveyard extension

Wendy reported that SEPA is conducting tests on the site involving bore holes to monitor water.

At this point, Adam raised the issue of graveyard maintenance. A local resident, who visits his wife's grave regularly, has been in touch with the council to complain about a lack of maintenance. He has visited 3 other graveyards in East Lothian and found them to be much tidier than Gifford. Councillor Akhtar offered to do a site visit to look at this. **ACTION: SA/AW**

Dave said that the small gate in the graveyard had not been replaced, and he also asked about the path in the graveyard, which is becoming very narrow due to vegetation overgrowth. He had heard a rumour that the council was planning to allow the path to become grassed over, and he asked the council to confirm this. He has not received a reply. A similar issue is also affecting the path that runs alongside the field behind the church. Further on maintenance, it was noted that it can be hard for the grass in the Pound to be cut properly due to the overhanging lime trees. These trees are owned by the Yester Estate and Josh confirmed that they will be starting a new cycle of maintenance work in October. They were last done 2 years ago. Josh confirmed that the estate owns all the lime trees on the Avenue, but any trees within the Pound will be owned by the council.

3.6 Airfield Memorial Plaque

Wendy has moved the plaque to the churchyard. Several CC members met to view the plaque and agreed a plan to put it on the wall opposite the church, where there are other similar memorials. Richard to arrange a planning application. **ACTION: RA**

3.7 Community Council Elections

Preparations are underway for community council elections, which are held every 4 years. Nominations will open on Monday 1 September. People aged 16 years and over will have until 18 September to lodge nomination papers. Gifford CC can have up to 9 community councillors. If more than 9 people nominate themselves, there will be an election on Thursday 9 October. Jill will advertise the process on Facebook and ensure there are posters in the local businesses. **ACTION: JH**

4.1 Police

Between 9 June and 7 August 2025 there were 26 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 3 crimes: 2 under the heading 'Reducing Violence and Antisocial Behaviour' and one under the heading 'Reducing Acquisitive Crime'. A resident spoke about recent problems with a young person driving a motorbike in the Bleachfield and through the adjacent woods. This has been reported to the police and there have been no further incidents. Adam stressed the importance of reporting anything like this to the police.

There will be another 'Coffee with a Cop' session in Lanterne Rouge, with the date tbc. This will be advertised on the Lanterne Rouge's Facebook page and shared to the CC page and Gifford Families.

4.2 Yester Estate

Josh Farrell explained the proposed amendment to Yester Estate's Forestry Plan, which affects the area adjacent to the Bleachfield, known locally as the nursery. Several residents from the Avenue whose properties back onto the nursery asked questions about the plans. They would like to see some visuals to know what it will look like in future. There was a specific question about a very tall lime tree, which Josh will ask the consultant Mark Seed about. Josh confirmed that paths which have been

damaged during earlier work have now been repaired. Residents spoke about antisocial behaviour in the nursery and are keen that the forestry plan does not facilitate any increase in ASB.

4.3 Gifford Community Woodland

The woods AGM is booked for Sunday 24th August in the Village Hall. Residents will be able to view and comment on the recently completed National Vegetation Classification Survey. This survey will also be discussed at the next Open Woods Meeting on 18th November. The woods are offering chainsaw training for volunteers. For details of all events and volunteer days, please visit: <https://giffordcommunitywoodland.com/events/>

4.4 East Lothian Council

Councillor Akhtar spoke about recent constituency work, particularly housing queries relating to the modification of properties. A new Parent Council Chair has been appointed at Yester Primary.

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). The Circuit sent out labels to go on the containers and the machines to aid returning them if used and removed by ambulance staff. Eleanor has appended hers to the garage and bowling club defibs. She will contact the other AED holders to see if they've also done this. Jill highlighted to Josh that the Yester Estate AEDs are not yet on the Circuit. Josh said that they have recently been serviced. Nicola from the café highlighted another register called 'GoodSAM'. The Yester defibs are registered on that. Jill to pass details to Eleanor.

Wendy will shortly be submitting a funding application to Garvald & Morham CC for a new defib to be located in the red phone box at Longnewton. This is located on a popular walking/cycling route.

Eleanor has joined a Facebook page set up by the BHF for all Circuit Guardians. She gave an introductory message about the emergency use of our AED in 2024 which saved someone's life, and subsequently they asked for this to be written up for their magazine and for the Facebook page (members only). The summary of the interview will be accompanied by Eleanor holding the defib in the village.

5.2 Roads and Footpaths

No potholes to report. Road repairs have been carried out at Myreside. Dave highlighted that work was needed to maintain the path that runs behind the church. It is a core path, but is becoming very narrow due to the growth of vegetation at either side of it. Work to upgrade electric connections to a number of houses on Walden Terrace and Park Road has not yet been completed. Holes have been dug where connections need to be made. The work will probably take another week or more. Work on Station Road has been completed at present; it is not known if more will be done.

5.3 Lighting, Drains and Signs

New lamp posts are being put in on Walden Terrace and Park Road. There are only posts at present, with lamps still to be fitted. There does not seem to be anything wrong with the old lamp posts. They were all painted a year ago. It seems that they become rusty where they go into the pavement due to dogs toileting. Dave and Richard have cleared back some foliage which was covering road signs. Alan Stubbs confirmed after the last meeting that responsibility for cutting back hedges/vegetation on a public road falls on the landowner of the land where the hedge/vegetation is situated.

5.4 Planning

Please see attached report for planning applications within and outwith GCC Area. Adam highlighted that the application from the Heddle for a change of use of the whole of the grassed paddock field (overlooking the Bowling Club) to domestic garden ground has been re-submitted. The earlier application was refused by the council.

5.5 Finance

Wendy reported that CC has £3,760 in the bank, with around 50% of that reserved for Soup & Smile. Wendy is checking with the school whether they still need a donation from CC for a new shed.

5.6 Resilience

Soup & Smile will re-start in autumn. The start date is still to be agreed with the cafe. Fish & chips is still being delivered on the last Friday of each month. 33 people attended this month's Lunch Club.

6 Correspondence

6.1 Speeding in Park Road

A resident contacted CC about speeding on Park Road. Adam to raise this at tomorrow's CAPP meeting.

6.2 Haddington Parking Review

As previously reported, East Lothian Council is conducting a review of parking in Haddington and the possible introduction of parking charges. The council is assessing the feedback gathered through its consultation. Many Gifford residents visit Haddington regularly. Adam felt that, as opinions differ on the subject, it would not be appropriate for Gifford CC to campaign for a particular outcome. However, he does want to ensure that residents can feed their opinions directly into any official process. CC advertised the consultation on its Facebook page, and several Gifford residents attended the subsequent open meeting at Knox Academy. CC will continue to share information locally as it becomes available.

7. AOB

The meeting noted the recent deaths of village residents, Jane Steven and Elizabeth Whiteford. Wendy spoke about the enormous contribution both Jane and Elizabeth made to the village. They were involved with many clubs and initiatives. Thought is being given to an appropriate way to remember them.

Date of next meeting: Monday 8th September

APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	Date Validated	GCC first discussed	Comments	Status
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.
25/00485/P Replacement doors 38 Walden Terrace Gifford Haddington EH41 4QP	22/05/25	June 2025	Replacement of timber front and rear doors with composite in same colour.	Approved.
25/00484/P Replacement door 35 Walden Terrace Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QP	22/05/25	June 2025	Replacement of timber front door with composite in same colour.	Approved.
25/00476/P Replacement door and window side panel 10 Park Crescent Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QR	15/05/25	June 2025	Replacement of front door and side panel in same colours.	Approved.
25/00460/P Alterations to house Rossieden Tweeddale Crescent Gifford EH41 4QZ	09/05/25	June 2025	Replacement windows and doors with uPVC and composite. Painting of roof fascia and other external timber in grey to match adjacent property 'Lomond'. (Wall colour to be unchanged.)	Approved.
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.