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

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

**In Attendance** Cllr John McMillan, Cllr Tom Trotter, Cllr George McGuire and Paul Hurd

**Apologies** Cllr Shamin Akhtar, Mandy Harrington (VCEL) and Paul McLennan MSP

**1** The meeting approved the minutes of 10th June (approved by Nev and Dave).

**2 Matters Arising**

**2.1 Renewable Energy Projects**

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

Belltown have submitted supplemental environmental information to the ECU and this information, together with responses from statutory consultees (such as NatureScot), is included on the ECU website. The earliest Belltown expect a decision from ECU is mid 2025. The deadline for ELC to submit a response has been extended to 4th September 2024. 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.

**Dunside Wind Farm (EDF)**

EDF has 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 been submitted to the ECU 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)**

The full application is available on the ECU website, reference ECU00004774. No update since the last meeting.

Nev asked whether CC could look into local difficulties accessing the Wide Area Network, which is preventing smart meters from working and preventing access to the best energy rates. Richard agreed to look into this. **ACTION: RA**

**2.2 Defibrillators and Defibrillator Training**

Eleanor reported that the defibrillators at the garage and bowling club are in good working order. Eleanor would like a volunteer to help arrange defibrillator training. Priority will be given to CC members and Bowling Club users. Jane Steven is arranging a new edition of the Gifford Grapevine and it was suggested that it could include details of all the village defibrillators. The defibrillator at the school is only accessible when the school is open. This prevented a resident accessing it recently. Wendy agreed to look into the matter.

**2.3 Nature Networks**

The results from the consultation event in June showed a majority preference for planting a mix of wildflowers and bulbs in specific zones, with the remaining grass to be maintained. It was agreed that we should start with one planted zone and possibly add more in the future. Agreed that Eleanor will ask the council to prepare a visual mock-up showing one circular planted zone, covering an area roughly 25 square meters. CC will then publish this on Facebook and ask for any final comments before advising the council. The council would like instructions before October.

Dave asked why an area of the Pound, running beside the wall, was not being cut and he agreed to pass the details to Councillor McMillan.

**2.4 Airfield Memorial Plaque**

CC discussed the best location for the plaque. If it is sited in the village, there will need to be instructions about how to find the airfield, with an additional marker at the site itself. It was therefore suggested that it might be more straightforward to put the plaque at the site of the airfield. Wendy will speak to the landowner about this. **ACTION: WF**

**2.5 Graveyard extension**

No update.

**2.6 Beautiful Scotland 2025**

This has been added to the Agenda to help plan for next year’s entry. Actions likely to be needed around March 2025

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

Jill to forward photos to Councillor McMillan to show the poor state of the lane, especially at the steps.

**3. External Reports**

**3.1 Police**

Police Reports for July and August were circulated. Between 1st June and 30th June 2024 there were 27 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 4 crimes: 1 x Communications, 1 x Vandalism, 1 x Assault and 1 x Theft. Between 1st July and 31st July 2024 there were 54 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 2 crimes: 1 x Stalking and 1 x Attempted theft of a motor vehicle. The report also noted an incident where a residential oil tank had been tampered with, but no specific crime was established.

The Chair noted the very high number of police call outs to the area in July. Councillor McMillan agreed to look at this. **ACTION: JM**

**3.2 Yester Estate**

No-one from the estate was at the meeting, but it is understood that progress is now being made regarding the maintenance of the lime trees on the avenue and that surveys will be carried out soon.

**3.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

Nev reported that there has been antisocial behaviour around the pond, which the police have been informed about. There have been some well-attended volunteer days. The woods have received a grant of £9,000 from Awards for All and will also receive at least £500 from the Tesco blue tokens vote. The AGM will take place on Sunday 25th August in the woods.

**3.4 East Lothian Council**

The councillors updated the meeting on recent business. Due to a Head Teacher vacancy in the county, some temporary changes will take place. Yester Head Teacher, Debbie Mercer, will temporarily move to Campie. The current Head of Athelstaneford will move to Yester and the Head at Direlton will additionally cover Athelstaneford.

**4 Internal Reports**

**4.1 Roads and Footpaths**

The Edinburgh Road has been resurfaced. White lines will be painted by a contractor (schedule tbc). Some kerbs have been lowered in the village. Dave passed details of some overgrown hedges to Councillor McMillan to see if any action can be taken. The flood at Longnewton has been fixed following repairs to a broken drain.

**4.2 Lighting, Drains and Signs**

Nothing to report.

**4.3 Planning**

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

**4.4 Finance**

Wendy reported that there is £5,600 in the bank, which includes a £2,500 grant for Soup & Smile. CC was pleased to receive a Soup & Smile donation of £500 from Gifford Community Choir.

**4.5 Resilience**

Fish and chips were delivered on the last Friday of July and 35 people attended the lunch club. Wendy will look at the re-start date for Soup & Smile.

**5 Correspondence**

**5.1 Thermal Imaging Camera**

Garvald and Morham are working on a project to use a thermal imaging camera to help local residents improve their home insulation. Agreed that Jill will arrange a meeting to look at options for Gifford. **ACTION JH**

**5.2 Digital Switchover**

The AELCC has spoken to BT/EE/Plusnet to arrange an online webinar to look at the implications of the digital switchover. Jill agreed to join the webinar.

**6 AOB**

**6.1 CC Vacancies**

There are 2 vacancies for community councillors. Anyone interested can attend a CC meeting to find out what’s involved. It was agreed that Facebook reminders will be published sooner to give people more notice of the meeting dates.

**6.2 Christmas Dates**

The suggested date for the Christmas Lights Switch On is Friday 6th December at 6pm and the suggested date for the Carols Round the Tree is Monday 23rd December at 6.30pm. Wendy will arrange posters to advertise the events.

**6.3 Cherry Trees outside the Tweeddale**

The cherry trees outside the Tweeddale have been removed, as they had died. Mike Foy will be arranging replacements. Dave asked whether cherry trees were the best choice, as they can grow very large.

**6.4 Cycle Races**

The Scottish Team Time Trial Championships are being held at East Saltoun on the 21st September, and the Gifford Village Hall is booked for race control and feeding. CC will liaise with the race organiser. The Poppy Scotland Sportive will pass through the village on Sunday 22nd September.

**6.5 Branches overhanging Bleachfield**

Some trees that belong to Yester Estate need pruned, as they are restricting access for people walking alongside the river at the Bleachfield. Paul offered to cut the trees. Adam suggested that the matter should be discussed with Martin first.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 9th September.**

**APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 24/00517/P | Erection of agricultural building (Retrospective) | Land North Of Existing Stables Yester Estate The Avenue Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF | 10/06/24 | Aug 2024 | Retrospective application for erection of a feed store on existing hardstanding adjacent to the stable building. | Awaiting decision |
| 24/00541/P | Erection of fencing and gates | 2 Walden Terrace Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QP | 30/05/24 | June 2024 | In addition to replacement of fence and gates, the application includes removal of an oil storage tank, erection of a greenhouse, installation of ASHP and replacement of windows with visually similar double glazed units. | Approved |
| 24/00508/P | Installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps | 58-65 Walden Terrace Gifford Haddington EH41 4QP | 28/05/24 | June 2024 | Installation of ten solar panels to roof and air source heat pumps to rear at two semi-detached properties and six flats in Walden Terrace | Approved |
| 24/00499/P | Alterations and extension to house, erection of new gates, infilling of ditch and pond, formation of steps and hardstanding, alteration and reroofing of garage and associated works | 16 Old Mill Lane Gifford Haddington EH41 4QQ | 14/06/24 | Aug 2024 | Modernisation of the C listed Old Mill including upgrading and reconfiguring of windows and doors. Landscape alterations to garden, connection to mains drainage and removal of septic tank. | Awaiting decision |
| 24/00407/P | Change of use of rough ground to domestic garden ground, erection of garage and associated works | Woodbine Cottage The Avenue Gifford Haddington East Lothian EH41 4JF | 03/06/24 | June 2024 | Change of use, erection of double garage and paving of existing vehicle turning bay. Site is in woodland adjacent to a site recently approved for change of use and erection of solar panels under 23/01485/P. | Approved, subject to planting of fruit trees and hedge. |
| 24/00362/P | Change of use of agricultural land for the installation of solar panels and associated works for domestic use | Land North Of 3 Castlemains Cottages Yester Gifford Haddington EH41 4PL | 15/04/24 | Apr 2024 | Seven ground mounted solar panels and GRP cabinet on agricultural land. | Approved, subject to submission of scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 24/00175/P | Erection of log cabin for ancillary residential accommodation | Yester House The Avenue Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF | 01/03/24 | Mar 2024 | Two storey log cabin, comprising lounge, dining room, food prep room, two bedrooms and bathroom. Located adjacent to equestrian centre within Yester Estate. | Approved, subject to conditions on the building’s use, measures to protect trees in the area and enhance biodiversity. |

**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. 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. In recent weeks, Belltown have submitted supplemental environmental information to the ECU and this information, together with responses from statutory consultees (such as NatureScot), is included on the ECU website. The earliest Belltown expect a decision from ECU is mid 2025 and this may slip depending on the outcome of the East Lothian Planning Committee. The deadline for ELC to submit a response has currently been extended to 4th September 2024. As previously advised, GCC have been told by the CCU that public representations, either for or against the development, will be considered right up until the point at which a decision is made.

**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, 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.