

**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting  
held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair), Richard Austin, Eleanor Hulme, Dave Griffiths, Alan Fortune, Paul Smith and Jill Hyslop

**In Attendance** Councillor John McMillan, Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Councillor Tom Trotter, Mandy Harrington (VCEL) and 7 local residents

**Apologies** Wendy Ferguson, Nev Kilkenny and Councillor George McGuire

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

The meeting approved the minutes of 7th October (approved by Eleanor and Dave).

### **2. Welcome new CC members**

The Chair welcomed Gifford CC's 2 new members: Alan Fortune and Paul Smith.

### **3 Matters Arising**

#### **3.1 Renewable Energy Projects**

No update since last month. See the attached planning report for current status.

Richard attended the first meeting of the East Lothian Community Benefits SCIO. This organisation has been created by the Association of East Lothian Community Councils so that some of the community benefit funding from renewable projects can be shared throughout East Lothian. One of their longer-term goals is to support the delivery of heat networks to provide affordable energy.

#### **3.2 Smart Meter Connectivity**

The BBC's Panaroma is investigating problems with poor connectivity in Scotland and the North of England. Craig Hoy MSP has spoken to the Data Communications Company (DCC) and hopes that Gifford could be used as a trial area for the use of cellular hubs.

#### **3.3 Defibrillators**

##### **3.3.1 Status of AEDs in the village: garage, school and bowling club**

Eleanor outlined the defibrillator access in the village. The defibs at the garage and the bowling club are available all the time and no pin code is needed. The defibrillator at the school is now available all the time. A barrier prevents access to the car park during certain hours, but you can drive up to the barrier and then walk a very short distance to access the defib. A pin code is needed for access, but Eleanor is working with the school to remove this. In the meantime the PIN is displayed clearly on the defib container. **ACTION: EH**

##### **3.3.2 Basic resuscitation and defib use training.**

Sam from the Scottish Ambulance Service will run a training course on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November. There is a limit of 30 people, with 27 confirmed so far. Eleanor hopes to run a second event, but the date is still to be fixed.

##### **3.3.3 Poster advice for cafés**

Eleanor has been liaising with British Cycling and East Lothian's Cycling Forum to put together an advisory poster for cyclists. She was very pleased to report that the poster has the backing of one of British Cycling's medical team, Dr Neil Heron. The meeting approved the poster for display in the village cafes and online. Councillor McMillan suggested that the Courier might be interesting in doing a feature. Paul offered to help Eleanor with this. **ACTION: EH/PS**

##### **3.3.4 Meeting with Mr Stewart Brown, Acting HT at Yester PS**

Eleanor met with Mr Brown to discuss the school's defib (access issues covered at 3.3.1 above). Eleanor also reported that the school will be looking for community help to run small reading groups. The Head Teacher is planning to take this forward in the New Year.

#### **3.4 Airfield Memorial Plaque**

No update. The meeting agreed to work to a Spring schedule to have the plaque sited near the site or somewhere appropriate in the village.

#### **3.5 Graveyard extension**

No update. Councillor McMillan will ask Eamonn John to confirm the current position.

### **3.6 Festive Events**

The first festive event will be the Reindeer Party on Friday 15th November, with proceeds going to Soup & Smile. The Christmas tree will be dressed by CC volunteers on Saturday 30th November. The Lights Switch On will take place on Friday 6th December. Carols Round the Tree will be held on Monday 23rd December, accompanied by some members of Monktonhall Brass Band and Gifford Community Choir. The Christmas Post Box, for the delivery of local Christmas Cards, will be in Lanterne Rouge from Saturday 7th – 14th December, with all proceeds going to St Columba's.

## **4. External Reports**

### **4.1 Police**

Between 1st – 31<sup>st</sup> October there were 26 calls to the area, which resulted in the police recording 1 crime of Theft. PC Edmond had been on leave, but intended to follow up the ongoing antisocial behaviour case with the council team, as well as raising it at the next CAPP meeting. Local residents at the meeting again outlined the impact the behaviour is having on them. The Chair will be joining the CAPP meeting to ask about this problem.

### **4.2 Yester Estate**

Tree maintenance work will start on the lime trees on the Avenue on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November.

### **4.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

The woods have volunteer dates scheduled for November and December and the next Open Woods Meeting will be on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November in Gifford Bowling Club. Details of all the events and volunteer dates can be found on the woods website at: [www.giffordcommunitywoodland.com/events](http://www.giffordcommunitywoodland.com/events)

### **4.4 East Lothian Council**

The councillors updated the meeting on recent council business. The after school club at Yester is now up and running. Councillor Akhtar spoke about housing pressures in East Lothian. A resident asked why a property on Park Road had been empty for so long. People are thought to have viewed the property, but didn't want to take it. Councillor McMillan mentioned the proposed Visitor Levy and said this was around 3 years away. At last month's meeting, the councillors had been asked to investigate reports of asbestos in the garden and the roof of the Goblin. Councillor McMillan reported that a council officer had visited the site and could not see any asbestos. The meeting asked if anything could be done about the general rubbish which has been left in the garden, as it is could attract vermin. Councillor McMillan said this was the property owner's responsibility.

## **5 Internal Reports**

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

Potholes in Tweeddale Crescent have been patched. No other known potholes. There is some uneven slabbing on the section of path from 8 Walden Terrace leading to Walden Place. A resident at the meeting had recently fallen there. Dave will forward a photo of the slabs to Councillor Akhtar. Councillor McMillan urged people not to wait for CC meetings, but to report any Roads matters directly to the Council as and when they arise. The councillors will be happy to help if people cannot get a response from the council. Calum Redpath is due to get in touch with CC about the path between Tweeddale Crescent and Station Road. Leaves are starting to build up in key locations, such as the bridge over the Edinburgh Road.

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

The council is working on a proposal to add one additional streetlight to the Square beside the new bus stop. Glen Kane will be forwarding the details.

### **5.3 Planning**

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

### **5.4 Finance**

Nothing to report.

### **5.5 Resilience**

Fish and chips were delivered on the last Friday of October and weekly deliveries of Soup & Smile continue on Wednesdays. Adam was pleased to report that 3 new people attended Lunch Club.

### **6 Correspondence**

Nothing to report

### **7 AOB**

#### **7.1 Dog poo on the Bleachfield**

Problems with dog poo on the Bleachfield were highlighted on Gifford Families recently. If anyone sees a dog owner not picking up, they can contact the dog warden. It was also suggested that a poster campaign – either by the school and/or the mini goblins might help raise awareness. \*\*After the meeting, Councillor Akhtar raised the issue at the Yester Parent Council meeting. There is a school group that can look at this issue and see what they can do as a local campaign. The school might ask Community Council for help with resources.

#### **7.2 Cherry trees outside the Tweeddale**

The Covid memorial cherry trees which were planted outside the Tweeddale will be replaced. It was agreed that a small variety of cherry tree would be best. A careful plan for watering in the first year will be needed to avoid the trees failing again. CC agreed to look into suitable tree varieties and then contact the council.

#### **7.3 Youth activities**

A resident at the meeting asked if more could be done to provide activities for young people. He felt that young children and older adults were well supported in the village, but teens/young adults were overlooked. There used to be a weekly youth club in Haddington for ages 12 - 16 but this closed in March 2020. Councillor Akhtar and Mandy Harrington offered to look into this.

**Date of next meeting (AGM): Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December.**

## APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA

	<b>Date Validated</b>	<b>GCC first discussed</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Status</b>
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.	Awaiting decision
24/00676/P   Installation of solar panels (Retrospective)   26 And 27 Walden Place Gifford East Lothian EH41 4RA	17/09/24	Oct 2024	Retrospective application. Panels were installed at same time as neighbouring properties, before this application was made.	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.