**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council meeting  
held** **on 13th May 2024 at Gifford Bowling Club**

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

**In Attendance** Cllr John McMillan, Cllr Tom Trotter, Cllr George McGuire & 4 local residents

**Apologies** Hugh Broad, Richard Austin, Cllr Shamin Akhtar, Mandy Harrington & Paul McLennan MSP

**1** The meeting approved the minutes of 15th April (approved by Wendy and Eleanor).

**2 Items completed since last meeting**

Nev has repaired the benches and returned them to the Bleachfield. They will be repainted by the Community Pay Back Team.

**3 Matters Arising**

**3.1 Renewable Energy Projects**

Nothing to report (see attached planning report for current status).

**3.2 Defibrillators**

Eleanor has checked the garage defibrillator and everything is in order. The Bowling Club defibrillator needs to be registered on the Circuit. The cabinet at the bowling club is unlocked and no pin code is needed. Eleanor has emailed Sam from the Scottish Ambulance Service to ask about training. The bowling club defibrillator has a child key which wasn’t covered in the last training session. The meeting heard that there are also defibrillators at the Quarry, which employees have been trained to use. CC understands that the school has arranged its own training for staff.

**3.3 Nature Networks**

A public consultation event will take place in Gifford Village Hall on 6th June from 1.45pm – 3.30pm to look at the council’s planting proposals for The Pound. Eleanor will confirm further details with Ed Hendrikson and then CC will advertise the event **(ACTION: EH).**

**3.4 Airfield Memorial Plaque**

No update.

**3.5 Graveyard extension**

The proposed site has passed a Stage 1 desktop assessment. Council officials will now see what money is available for a Stage 2 assessment, which will involve soil analysis.

**3.6 Park Benches**

The benches have been repaired and returned to the Bleachfield. Jill to speak to Council Akhtar to confirm arrangements for the Community Payback Team to repaint them **(ACTION: JH)**

**3.7 SEPA Flood Prevention Survey**

Wendy agreed to look at the consultation document and add in details about the flooding problems at Longnewton.

**3.8 Beautiful Scotland 2025**

This has been added to the Agenda to help plan for next year’s entry. There are no current actions.

**4. Projects awaiting update from East Lothian Council**

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

As this issue has been on the Agenda for a while, it was suggested that CC should pass on some photos to show the current state of the lane. **(ACTION JH)**

**5. External Reports**

**5.1 Police**

Between 1st – 30th April, there were 27 calls to the area with 7 crimes recorded (1 x Assault, 1 x Threatening & Abusive Behaviour, 1 x Breach of ASBO and 4 x Wildlife Crimes). The Chair hoped that CC could be given more notice about community police activities. Details about a forthcoming visit to Gifford had only been discovered by chance on Facebook. A local resident asked for help with a serious situation involving repeated acts of antisocial behaviour which has been ongoing for 3 and a half years. The situation is severely affecting the resident’s quality of life, as well as their health and well-being. The Chair asked the councillors what could be done to resolve the issue and Councillor McMillan contacted several people during the meeting.

**5.2 Yester Estate**

Nothing to report.

**5.3 Gifford Community Woodland**

Volunteers have been helping with logs, path clearing and weeding. 10 yew trees have been planted in Speedy Wood thanks to a financial donation from a local resident. People can vote for the woods using the blue tokens in Haddington Tesco until the end of June.

**5.4 East Lothian Council**

Councillor McMillan updated the meeting on recent council business. East Coast Buses have acquired Eve which runs the 123 Gifford Circle. They are considering running tours out of Dunbar which might include Haddington, Gifford and Glenkinchie. New legislation in Scotland means that it is now illegal to park on pavements. ELC is looking at 34 locations in the county where exemptions may be required. The Premier store in the village does not yet have an alcohol licence, but a new application is thought to be in progress. Councillor Trotter reported that the flooded road at Longnewton should be re-opened in 2-3 weeks. Dave asked whether the short section of pavement at the end of Park Road (leading to the Wynd) could be removed to widen the road. Pedestrians generally use the diagonal path through the grassed area. Dave to send photos to Councillor McMillan. **(ACTION: DG).** The Chair asked why the green bins in the village were emptied on 2 different days and said this was causing confusion. The councillors said residents should have received confirmation of the collection date for their property. Bin lorry routes are carefully planned to minimise difficult turns and other factors. The Chair also asked about the Macmerry Recycling Centre that was closed last year. The councillors reported that, as well as staffing issues, there were also health and safety faults that needed to be fixed before the centre could reopen.

**6 Internal Reports**

**6.1 Roads and Footpaths**

The road at Longnewton will be re-opened in 2 – 3 weeks after a drain has been replaced.

**6.2 Lighting, Drains and Signs**

Drainage problems that occur in the village whenever there’s heavy rain still need to be discussed. This was held over until the next meeting.

**6.3 Planning**

Please see attached report for planning applications within and outwith GCC Area. Following confirmation that the road up to West Hopes is a public road, councillors were asked to confirm that people can park on the road. It was noted at the meeting that gates can sometimes be used across public roads, but these should not be locked. After the meeting the Roads Dept reported that: “*Parking on verges obstruct the Road preventing pedestrians from accessing verges. Verge parking can also cause a hazard to other motorists especially if the vehicle is parked on a bend, narrow road or junction. It can also cause damage to the amenity. The Council does not promote or support parking on grass verges. The road from the cattle grid to West Hope is public and any parking on this road must be done as to not cause an obstruction and allow free flowing traffic.”*

Dave reported that a 2nd building warrant is now in place for the site on the Wynd. Work is expected to re-start by the end of the month.

**6.4 Finance**

There has been no significant expenditure since the last meeting and there is just over £2,000 in the bank.

**6.5 Resilience**

Soup & Smile has paused for the summer. Monthly fish & chips and Lunch Club will continue throughout the year. There were 33 at the May Lunch Club. The Chair was pleased to report that the village choir is holding a fundraising event and they have decided to donate 50% of the proceeds to Soup & Smile.

**7 Correspondence**

**7.1 AELCC Update**

The next AELCC meeting will take place on 19th June in the Fraser Centre, Tranent. The AELCC has been discussing antisocial behaviour involving young people on buses. While the free bus scheme is widely considered to be very successful, a small number of people are involved with antisocial behaviour on buses and at key locations throughout the county. AELCC members are speaking to relevant officials about possible actions. The AELCC has also circulated a draft CC Complaints Procedure for consideration and comment.

**7.2 Community Art Classes**

A local resident would like to set up art classes and is looking for funding. CC may be able to make a contribution once the service is up and running. Jill to pass on information about funding options, including the Garvald wind farm fund **(ACTION: JH)**

**7.3 Lammermuir Larder**

There is a new drop off point at Lewis & Clarke. The Chair asked the councillors if they knew whether there would be outside seating at Lewis & Clarke this summer.

**7.4 Maintenance of the graveyard in Gifford**

Following a request from a local resident, the council has confirmed that the grass will be cut this week and other maintenance carried out. Dave reported that the small gateway from the Duns Road gets very muddy and he asked if anything could be done about this. Dave to send photos to Councillor McMillan. **(ACTION: DG)**

**8 AOB**

**8.1 Macmerry Recycling Centre**

Covered at 5.4 above.

**8.2 Clothing bin**

Dave reported that the bin was full and people had unfortunately left bags of clothes on the road. CC has put a note on the bin asking people not to do this, as any bags on the road will not be collected. There are 2 additional clothes recycling bins at the school.

**8.3 Help accessing council information**

A local resident said he found it difficult to find information on the council’s website. The councillors said they are happy to assist with any queries.

Date of next meeting: Monday 10th June

**APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 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. | Awaiting decision |
| 24/00235/P | Installation of solar panels | 70-75 Walden Terrace Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QP | 14/03/24 | Apr 2024 | Installation of ten solar panels to roof and air source heat pumps to rear at six semi-detached properties in Walden Terrace | Awaiting decision |
| 24/00233/P | Alterations and extension to house | Muirlea High Street Gifford East Lothian EH41 4QU | 08/03/24 | Apr 2024 | Replacement of existing sun room and rear door to rear of property. | Approved |
| 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. | Awaiting decision |
| 23/01485/P | Change of use of woodland area to domestic garden ground and installation of solar panels | Sunnyside Cottage Gifford East Lothian EH41 4JF | 16/02/24 | Mar 2024 | Change of use to formally incorporate existing woodland and open space into domestic garden. Felling of dead ash tree and overgrown plum trees to allow siting of ground mounted solar panels. Replanting of fruit trees within walled garden. | Awaiting decision |

**APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 23/01388/P | Erection of furniture making studio (Class 4) and associated works | Bolton Muir Wood Gifford East Lothian | 21/11/23 | Jan 2024 | According to reports in local media, the applicant is considering an appeal against the decision to refuse planning permission. | Refused |

**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.

**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.

**Solar panels at Crystal Rig Wind Farm (Fred Olsen Renewables)**

Plans can be viewed at [www.crystalrigwindfarm.com](http://www.crystalrigwindfarm.com)

**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.

**Car Parking at The Hopes Estate**

Community Council has been in contact with ELC’s Access Offer and Roads Dept regarding the recent change in the parking arrangements for visitors to the Hopes Estate. ELC have confirmed that, following renewal of their lease with Hopes, Scottish Water will no longer allow parking in the land under their control adjacent to the filter tanks building.  Local residents are reminded that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 only covers non-motorised public access. No landowner is obliged to provide parking and no one is allowed to take a motorised vehicle onto private land without the landowner’s permission. The Land Reform Act states that no landowner should take action to prevent or deter public access.    The Estate has provided a car park for public use. The car park is open on four days a week and requires pre-purchase of a £5 monthly permit from the Gifford Newsagents. Permit numbers are limited.  The proceeds are donated to Yester Church. The road from the cattle grid to West Hope is public road, but the land adjacent to it is private.   Any parking on public roads must be done as to not cause an obstruction and allow free flowing traffic.  As there are very limited options for parking on the road without causing an obstruction, visitors to the Hopes are advised to plan ahead and arrange a permit for the car park.