Laggan Community Council - Ordinary Meeting

Meeting 27 – **MONDAY 20th March 2023**

In Laggan Village Hall - **at 1830**

Minutes

**1) Attendees present**. Colin Morgan (CM), Amanda Gallagher (AG), Jill Warner (JW), Mignonne Khazaka (MK) from 1915. Apologies noted: Valerie Macpherson, Lauren Hendry, Minute Secy (Karen Thew) Also in attendance; Russell Jones (Highland Councilor), Carol Masheter (SSE for item 2 only) and 7 members of the community.

**2)** **SSE Renewables Community Investment (Benefit)** Meeting with SSE Community Investment Manager – Carol Masheter – to discuss Stronelairg Community Fund – The Future – a draft paper had been circulated to Community Councilors prior to the meeting providing a number of options for the community council and wider community to consider.

Highlights included – the present Laggan fund at end of March 2023 stands at £299,525 excluding any potential awards at the April 23 large grant round. In April 23, the 2023 (year 7) allocation will be approximately £70k – so a total of £369k available for disbursement to support sustainable projects for community benefit in line with the Community Action Plan.

CM (SSE) responded to many questions tabled by attendees.

SSE advised that the two most common models adopted for future distribution of funds are 1) a Local Third party who manages the funds on behalf of the Community, normally a Development Trust or Charity. They report annually to SSE.

Or 2) A Community Panel – supported by SSE - to make decisions on what should be funded – normally informed by a local action plan. Panels are made up of Community Members and will meet 2-4 times per year to assess grants and review the fund priorities. Other Key questions tabled were as follows:

* Is there an existing community organisation that has capacity and/or is an appropriate vehicle to manage the funds?
* if not, does the community wish to set up a new third-party organisation? Is there local capacity to administer and manage one?
* Or, should the funds be managed via a local panel?
* Or develop a hybrid of funding awards to eligible project/s and a panel.

It was agreed that these questions would be tabled at a meeting of all the Laggan Community Groups and the Community on Monday 17th April. Carol Masheter left the meeting at this point.

The Community Council meeting was formally convened. A quorum was declared and no new declarations of interest were noted.

**3) Approval of minutes of LCC meeting** 26 – 20th February 2023 – proposed AG, seconded JW – approved without amendment.

* Matters Arising 1) Primary School Mothballing – Noted that a Consultation is planned with prospective parents and separately for members of the CC on April 19th – Highland Council Education Authority making the required meeting arrangements 2) Public Bus Proposal – CC remained very disappointed that no discussion with the CC by members of the Transport team have been offered. RJ offered to intervene. 3) School Grounds Community Involvement – question of land ownership unresolved – land owner still to be understood – 4) Dark Skies proposal – lighting in Gergask avenue – RJ indicated that, as he is meeting with the lighting team in the area next week, he will request contact to be made – follow up to AG.

**4)** **Financial report – Treasurer**

* Bank account as reported at last meeting 19th February £7,742.07. Since the last meeting 1 payment has been made totalling £20.00. Current bank balance stands at **£7,722.07** – of which **£6,087.36** is ring-fenced as below:
  + £4,476.29 for SSE Micro Grants
  + £1,000 from SSE for the purchase of Defibrillators – this item was for a “trade-in” of a Defib. This trade-in is no longer available and a new device is to be acquired by LHH. An updated funding request to the SSE Large Grant panel was noted.(\*\*\* see POST meeting note)
  + £500 from Highland Council for the installation / signage for Defibrillators
  + £111.07 from CNPA for environmental / litter projects
  + General funds to use by the Community Council is £1,634.71
* To approve funds transfer for SSE Micro Grant application recommended by Local Panel – Summer Fete Request – Treasurer declared a conflict of interest. Others members of the CC authorized a transfer of funds (£135) following a recommendation to approve the request from the Micro Grants Committee.
* \*\*\*POST MEETING (22/3) – e-mail was circulated to all CC members to authorize the payment of £1775.94 being payment for the final defibrillator ordered on behalf of Laggans Helping Hands. All Approved. Treasurer to make arrangements.

**5)** **Statutory Items for Community Council to note and discuss.**

a) Planning – applications update – **SSEN Melgarve** – revised grid connection plans – Noted that CC will object to any revised plans to install Pylons connecting Melgarve to any future wind-farms on the “Stronelairg Plateau” - SSEN duly notified; Also to note that Visualisation plans presented for Pylons were not to an appropriate standard; **Gilkes Energy Hydro Scheme** - Lochan Earba – a 900MW scheme. Noted that no plans were available that showed any required connections to a sub-station or the existing grid. It was therefore an incomplete plan to determine. Meeting was advised of a number of likely significant objections to the proposal.

b) Licensing update. None advised.

c) Roads – A889/A86 – Improvement Proposals – Road Signage Comments. Meeting expressed disbelief at the very poor response from Transport Scotland to recent road safety concerns from feral goats on the road. Additional response awaited. Noted that speed safety study is likely to be undertaken on A86 at Laggan Bridge in April/May

d) Report from Public Sector Agencies – Police report – none supplied.

e) Highland Council – Public Toilet – noted that HC had granted Church a Comfort Scheme agreement for 3 years starting on April 2023. No change noted to the issue of the Septic Tank with on-going discussions between HC and LCH Ltd.

**6)** **Community Development/Action Plan** – Communication Plan discussion – agreed that Action Plan should be printed and a “house drop” be undertaken. April 17th meeting may also be considered for a “next steps” discussion.

**7)** Update from B&S Community Council forum – Highlights from this meeting included – CC members planning training to be available “on-line” in 2023; Concern expressed by a number of CCs at SEPA on flood risks for some affordable housing developments; noted that HC grants for all Village Halls in 2023 had been stopped; noted that budget restrictions in 2023 will reduce any HC ward discretionary funds by 50%;

**8)** Other Questions tabled – Comments raised about how to restrict access and speed on the Glentruim Road. Noted by RJ that similar issues exist on the Ruthven Barracks road and some additional safety signs are likely to be deployed there soon. RJ to explore suitability for Glentruim road. CM also to contact Roads team to review signage again.

**9) AOB –** Noted that a tidy up of the Richardson Memorial Garden is planned for March 31st with future plans to tidy up the Picnic Site area (started by minute secy and others w/b 20th March), The Laggan Bridge pathway area and potentially participate in the Spey River Clean from 28-30 April.

**10)** Proposed Date and time of next community meeting – **Monday 17th April 2023 at 1900** **-** in Laggan Community Hall – Community Groups/CC/SSE and wider community to be invited. Meeting to be facilitated by Karen Derrick (VABS) with SSE (Carol Masheter attending).

Proposed date of next formal CC meeting – **15th May 2023** at 1830 – Laggan Community Hall.

**Date of draft - 24th March 2023**

**Approved at meeting of LCC on 15th May 2023 without amendment**