

## Laggan Community Council - Ordinary Meeting

Meeting 2 - 2020 – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Laggan Village Hall @ 1900

Approved Minutes

**1) Attendees:** Chair Colin Morgan (CM), Vice Chair Mignonne Khazaka (MK), Treasurer Gordon Stirling (GS), Minute Secretary Liz MacFarlan (LM), Secretary Amanda Gallagher (AG), Lauren Hendry (LH). In attendance - Cllr Bill Lobban (BL) – Highland Council Convener.

**Apologies received:** Cllr Pippa Hadley, Cllr Muriel Cockburn.

Meeting declared quorate. 7 members of the community present and 2 from SSE Cloiche Wind Farm Team.

The resignation of Jo Cumming from LCC was recorded and CM expressed sincere thanks to Jo for her hard work and contribution during the establishing of LCC. Jo has agreed to contribute advice and expertise, as requested. Highland Council Ward office to be advised (CM).

**Declarations of interest:** GS - Item 4 b – licensing application - Laggan Coffee Bothy

**AOB items:** Based on recent developments a discussion on the future of the Public Toilet was agreed.

**SSE Cloiche Wind Farm** - SSE Renewables Ltd. CM welcomed Eilidh Todd (ET) and Craig Cunningham (CC). **BL declared an interest** and did not take part in these discussions.

29 people had attended the recent SSE Renewables drop-in at Laggan Community Hall – the best attended of their 3 community engagement sessions. CC/ET went over the basic information disseminated at the Drop-in and responded to questions. The current SSE Melgarve sub-station footprint should not need to change, but if **both** outstanding wind farm proposals are approved, it is likely that 2 additional transformers may be required. That will be the subject of an additional planning request from the SSE Transmission group – a separate company to SSE Renewables. There were multiple questions about the visual and sound impact of the turbines. LCC asked for replies to questions about the following:

- To understand the cumulative noise impact of 3 Wind farms in the area.
- To have a baseline noise study carried out in the village AND at selected sites in the wider community - where there is housing closer to the proposed sites. (Base line noise data was apparently carried out at Stronelairg & LCC asked for sight of these results and to understand if by desktop or on site?)
- SSE noted their intention to submit their planning application by the end of April 2020. They will also be reviewing the present planning objections raised in connection with Glenshero to provide any mitigation proposals for their design requirements – matters on effective peat management and wild land management being central to the outstanding objections.

It was noted that The Renewable Energy Foundation figures for Stronelairg show that £16.5m of restriction payments have been made to SSE for their WF to be shut down when power is not required. Two questions arose – do we really need another wind farm? And what percentage of time the power HAS been delivered and what its value is to the grid? The SSE team were thanked for their time and input and noted that any further questions to be channeled via the LCC.

On a related point - Re-landscaping is due to start at the SSE Melgarve site in June/July, irrespective of any planning outcomes. LCC has asked for a site visit and Melgarve have agreed this to be scheduled.

**2) Approval of minutes of meeting 1 – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020** Proposed MK, seconded AG. Approved unanimously.

- **Any matters arising not on formal agenda** – 2020 Christmas Lights – discussion postponed to next meeting; £500 Highland Council Ward grant – thanks for grant noted to ward management attending – project proposals to be discussed at later meetings.
- **Associate Membership to other Laggan Groups** – the 7 groups have all been emailed. 3 have replied and intend to discuss at their next committee meetings. The school parent council representative has agreed to participate.

**3) Financial report – Treasurer**

- Month-end (January 2020) Total balance £4991.61, of which £2590.11 is ring-fenced as SSE funding for micro-grants. Available balance £2401.50. A reconciliation of the micro grant funds has

been submitted to SSE. They will top up the “local fund” to £5000 when the present ring-fenced fund reaches £500. It was noted that Facebook communication of both small and large grants is required. The next submission dates close in the first week of March.

- Status of change of signatories – all paperwork with RBS. Further compensation payment received for the delays in processing. Still awaiting confirmation of change of signatories, after which GS will take over as LCC Treasurer.

A question was asked about SSE micro-grant funding for salt bins. BL said there is council provision for these for public roads, but not for private driveways.

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

##### **a) Planning update**

- Jahama Estates - new application for a new forest road and timber extraction and an O/S application for similar at Sherrabeag Cottage. LCC to consider a response via email consultation, before the next meeting. Questions to be asked about access routes and timings. It was pointed out that timber extraction may affect the amount of noise as there will be fewer trees to absorb possible wind-farm sound. Note: Jahama Estates are sending a representative to the next LCC meeting.
- CM declared an interest in the planning application by the Emergency Services for a communications mast to be sited on Forestry land, near Wolftrax. LFT is to seek more information about this and pass replies on to LCC.

**b) Licensing update** – GS left the room. Discussion about The Laggan Coffee Bothy application for a Premises License to sell alcohol for on and off sales, between 10.00 and store closing time. LCC supports the application and will respond accordingly.

**c) Roads update** – A889 update. Bear plans to close the A889 at Dalwhinnie for 2 weeks, day and night, while there are essential bridge repairs made to the railway bridge. Diversions will be signed via Kingussie. Businesses potentially impacted were e-mailed with a request to advise whether it would be better for the works to be carried out in April 2020 or October 2020. There was much discussion and generally, November 2020 was the preferred time. It was suggested that the repairs urgently needed on the A889 at The Pottery straight should be done at the same time. **A formal response to the consultation letter will be prepared.** CM will have specific conversations with Bear about any diversion signage as there are concerns about minor, single-track roads being used as short cuts. A question was asked about the opportunity to remove such minor roads from Satnav, during the closure period.

BEAR also advised that there needs to be a one-lane closure of Laggan Bridge w/b 23<sup>rd</sup> February or w/b 1<sup>st</sup> March for urgent “points” repairs. Timing to be advised.

**d) Report from Public Sector Agencies** – NHS, Fire. None.

Police: reported 4 recent Quad bike thefts, from locked premises on agricultural estates in the area.

**e) Highland Council – Education Boundary Planning Fees update & policy.** BL explained that Schools’ Catchment area is used to determine whether Planning Fees are levied. If a new-build is in a catchment area where the schools have expansion plans, a charge towards this is levied.

BL also reported that the HC budget process had been delayed due to the General Election.

The subject of the **Laggan Public Toilet** was raised. The CC noted that the community had consistently asked for the toilet to remain open. There is presently a discussion between the users of the shared septic tank as to its future maintenance. BL noted his personal view and would make this known to HC officials responsible. The comfort scheme remains available for a suitable community organization to use.

LCC is keen to ensure that the community’s interests are also represented.

##### **5) Community Development/Action Plan**

See below about the progress of the 6 priority projects and next steps.

**6) LCC Communications** – this item was deferred, but is to be at the top of the next agenda.

**7) Other Questions/contributions** from the members of public present.

The drain from the top of Gergask Avenue past the School has been causing problems. BL suggested contacting Highland Council. CM is meeting John McLean on Wednesday and will ask him about it.

**8) Any other agenda items** – May Bank Holiday events. LCC has no plans to put on anything for this.

**9) Proposed Date and time of next meeting** – next meeting scheduled for Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 1900. In attendance, Jahama Estates Ltd

CM thanked all those who attended. The meeting closed at 21.10

Date of draft minutes 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020

## February 2020 - Details of progress on each priority action item

Issue 1 - Paths to different parts of the Community – Lead group LFT – contact Cristian Pizarro at LFT office at Wolftrax – 01528544366

Update Feb 20 – Steering Group Formed - A feasibility study is taking place via funding from Sustrans. Consultant appointed to ensure community and landowner engagement. Community Consultation event 25<sup>th</sup> Feb in Village Hall plus survey.

Issue 2 – Improve communication between/with Community Groups – Lead Group Laggan Community Council – contact [chairlcc@laggan.com](mailto:chairlcc@laggan.com)

Update Feb 20 – invites from LCC to other voluntary groups in Laggan to participate as associate members of LCC. Laggan.com website being updated for all community groups to use. Calendar and Events page regularly updated [info@laggan.com](mailto:info@laggan.com) is e-mail contact details to post community events along with Facebook pages for the Community Council, Laggan Community, Laggan Village Hall.

Issue 3 – Keep Village Clean and Community Spaces well maintained – lead group Village Amenity Group – contact via Liz Macfarlan

Update Feb 20 – Group has initiated a tidy up around the Public Toilet in the village, undertaken re-planting of the planters acquired in Spring 2019 and created “take your litter home” signs for use by landowners in lay-bys. 6 signs have been taken by Ardverikie Estate, to use in lay-bys. Local landowners are being consulted about the siting and fixing of the rest.

Issue 4 – Upgrade Village Hall to serve future community needs – to have a better used hall.

Update Feb 20 – New community events list for 2020 published on-line on Facebook and laggan.com.

Issue 5 – Attracting and Keeping Visitors in Laggan – lead group LCC

Update Feb 20 - First meeting held in November 19 – general principle – how to attract and retain visitors to spend an extra night in the Laggan Area. Visitor Information points now established at the Laggan Coffee Bothy and Laggan Wolftrax Centre. Need identified to audit interpretation boards and signs throughout area especially historical and archaeological information in area. Support outcomes of the Badenoch Great Place Project. Continue to promote Upper Spey as part of Speyside Way. Mignonne Khazaka from LCC to establish and coordinate a “businesses group”.

Issue 6 – Housing – Lead group – Laggan Community Trading Ltd.

Update Feb 20 – local resident housing survey completed in December 19. A New non-resident survey issued and closes on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020. Objective to assess support for additional 4-5 low cost/affordable houses in the Laggan area. Survey information on LCT page of laggan.com website.

Approved at LCC meeting 3 on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020