

Glengarry Community Council (GCC)

Minutes of Meeting

held on 3rd July 2023 at 19.00 in Glengarry Community Hall

1. Present

Catriona Menzies (CM) chair, Lea MacNally (LMacN) treasurer, Neillie Stewart (NS), Ken Brown (KB), Cecilia Dyckhoff (CD), Philippa Maltby (PM), Kevin Sutherland (KS), Cllr Liz Saggars (LS); three members of the public were present.

No apologies for absence were received; CM and LMacN indicated a conflict of interests in relation to item 5 of the agenda.

KB made a preliminary request to record the meeting for his personal use. The statutory provisions relating to this were rehearsed; it was agreed by a majority that he should be allowed to do so and to keep the record until the next meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 5th June were approved. Proposed: KB; seconded: KS.

3. Matters arising

(a) Website: KB has investigated the website work of Stephanie Carroll; her own website is heybigdreamer.co.uk. She would be in a position to tidy the GCC website and maintain it. Her hourly charges to set up the website and then to maintain it for about one hour per month were agreed to be reasonable and affordable. It was unanimously agreed that KB should approach her and take the matter forward.

(b) Coire Glas: it was noted that a planning application had been received. The matter was more fully discussed later in the meeting.

(c) Post Office lease: it was agreed that Ms Fraser of McPhees should be instructed to review the present tenant's lease. In relation to the use of part of the property by Royal Mail, it was agreed that it would be prudent to obtain advice; it was noted that the cost of obtaining such advice might be high; it was further agreed that KB should investigate the cost. LMacN indicated that funds were available.

4. Financial reports

(a) Annual report: LMacN circulated copies of the report, which had been audited by John Henshall, an established glen resident now retired from a senior position with a leading international firm of chartered accountants. LMacN explained the details of the accounts and indicated that the financial position was healthy. A cheque for £500 in relation to the Children's Fund had been presented since the end date of the accounts. The Post Office account is not operating at present as new signatories must be registered with the bank. There was some discussion of the procedure for presenting the accounts, including the notification period. KB proposed that CD should write to Dot Ferguson (DF), the Senior Ward Manager, for her written confirmation that the presentation of the accounts in this manner

is acceptable; and it was agreed that acceptance of the accounts should be deferred until the August business meeting to receive this confirmation, either in writing or by DF's attendance at the meeting. DF would be sent a copy of the accounts before then.

(b) Monthly statement of accounts: LMacN had circulated the monthly statement before the meeting. He reported that the Council's two bids to the Glengarry Trust (GT), for skip hire and the payments to the Village Office (VO), had been successful. He confirmed that details of the VO's work and hours were given in the invoices that he submits, and that these details are given to GT when an application is made. The VO has mended the Post office door and will paint the Post Office building. CM said that the VO's excellent work is acknowledged in the Chair's annual report, and that the Council's gratitude is recorded there. It was noted that the VO, who is an independent contractor, not a Council employee, also does work for the Shinty Club and is paid by them. His work in the churchyard is paid for by the Council. If any resident has a suggestion about other works that the VO could undertake, they should contact LMacN.

5. Application from Glengarry Community Hall (GCH) management

CM and LMacN left the meeting as they are members of the GCH management. KS took the chair. It was recalled that GCH has applied to the Council for funding of £1,000 to meet the cost of replacing necessary kitchen equipment. KB proposed and KS seconded payment of the grant, which was unanimously approved. CM and LMacN returned. There was general discussion of the desirability of establishing a procedure for intimating to the community that applications for funding could be made, for intimating the criteria for making grants, for receiving such applications, and for undertaking due diligence in the distribution of any funds. The example of the GT procedure was noted. LMacN reminded the Council that the fund from which this grant had been made is a single payment, not a recurring one. It was not the funding that had been mentioned at the recent meeting with Malcolm Crosby. It was agreed that DF should be asked for guidance in relation to setting up due procedures.

6. Planning applications

KB had noted and circulated details of a single application: a very large file of documents relating to the SSE Coire Glas pumped storage project and in particular to the cable route and the switching station at Loch Lundie. It was noted that one resident living near the proposed site had expressed strong views at the recent SSE public meeting. It was regretted that the remaining short period of time for submissions would prevent the gathering of more public opinion. LS was asked if she was aware if Highland Council had developed a view on the project but she was not aware of anything of this sort.

7. Any other competent business

(a) LMacN reported that the strimmer used by the VO is one that was bought many years ago by Glengarry Community Association; it has been lent to the VO by the Council as successors to the Association. The strimmer has now broken. The

purchase of a replacement was discussed. It was noted that the VO is an independent contractor and not an employee. After discussion, it was agreed by a majority that the Council should not buy a replacement strimmer, because it is usually expected that a contractor would be responsible for his or her own equipment.

- (b) Bracken beside the Mandally road and the C1144 is obscuring visibility. LMacN will contact Kristen Tait of Highland Council about this.
- (c) CD introduced discussion of a series of emails that has recently been received by the Council from Sharon Machado, a resident representing Mars (Projects) Ltd (MPL). The emails raised the possibility of MPL contributing to the expenses and work of the Council, had expressed some serious criticisms of the Council's work, and had indicated that the writer and others known to her would be hoping to be elected to the Council in due course. It was noted that CM had replied to the first of these emails, without prior discussion. She had refused the offer and made reference to her understanding that the Council would not be allowed to accept funds from businesses. It was noted that this statement was not correct. Kenneth Knott, a member of the public also representing MPL, after requesting permission to interject, explained the type of support and funding that could be made available. LMacN reported that he has been receiving advice from an independent auditor. CD said that she had had occasion to speak to DF since the emails from Ms Machado had been received, and that DF had said that she was satisfied with the Council's financial procedures. KB requested that this response should be obtained in writing or in attendance at a meeting. He also proposed that the Council should apologise to Ms Machado. After discussion and a number of counter proposals about how the matter should be resolved, it was agreed, the hour being late, that a special meeting dedicated to the matter should be arranged before the next business meeting, and that both DF and Ms Machado should be invited to the special meeting. The date convenient to all members of the Council was 24th July.
- (d) LS asked if the Council had yet determined whether to offer Zoom connection to its meetings and referred to the convenience of such arrangements. It was explained that the technical and cost issues had not yet been surmounted.

8. Next meeting

The next general business meeting will be held at 19.00 on 7th August 2023 in Glengarry Community Hall.