

Glengarry Community Council (GCC)

Minutes of meeting held on 1st May 2023

1. Present and apologies

Catriona Menzies (CM), chair; Lea MacNally (LMacN), treasurer; Cecilia Dyckhoff (CD), secretary; Neillie Stewart (NS); Ken Brown (KB); Philippa Maltby (PM); Kevin Sutherland (KS)

One member of the public.

No apologies received. (It was noted that Highland Councillors observe the May Bank Holiday.)

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 6th March 2023 were accepted; proposed: KB; seconded: PM

3. Matters Arising

(a) Playground roundabout

KB advised that he has received the installation specifications from the manufacturers and will obtain estimates from contractors.

(b) Email account

With the help of Colin Grant (CG), LMacN has obtained access to the email account which has about 700 entries, most of which are out of date or irrelevant. Reviewing them will need to be done by people with Gmail accounts. CM, CD and KB would be able to do this; and KB volunteered to do so. It was agreed that CG should be asked to submit an invoice for his work.

(c) Zoom equipment

LMacN will investigate the type of equipment that might serve GCC's needs.

(d) Feral pig control

It was noted that there is still a problem in the village and along the glen. The grant from NatureScot is to be ring-fenced for the purchase. The grant does not include the cost of a contractor. It was confirmed, as previously reported, that the equipment would be available for loan to other appropriate bodies, but remaining under the control of GCC.

(e) Post Office building

As there has been no response from the firm of solicitors that KB approached, it was agreed that he should now contact McPhees of Fort William (successors to MacArthur Stewart). Proposed: CD; seconded: LMacN

(f) Glen road

It was noted that repairs to the glen road have been completed. CD was instructed to write to Kristen Tait (KT) of the Roads Department mentioning that there are

several places with potentially dangerous drop-offs at the edge and asking for an indication of the schedule of regular inspection that will take place in the future.

(g) Firework Fund

LMacN advised the meeting that Bank of Scotland has issued a reminder that the account will be suspended if there is no activity on it by 21st June. It holds £2,263.63. At present, it is not clear whether it will be required. Arrangements may need to be made for the original funders to be repaid; the amount will be easy to ascertain from the accounts. Repayment may need to be delayed until after the GCC elections in September. It was agreed that a nominal sum should be paid into the account to keep it running. This matter is to be further discussed at the next meeting.

(h) Coire Glas Liaison Group

General matters in relation to the project were discussed. It was noted that there is some complexity owing to the number of different branches of SSE involved. Some GCC members attended the public meeting in the Community Hall on 25th April about the proposed switching station sites. Several large volumes of information have been left in the Meeting Room at the Hall for residents to read. KB said that he had been approached there by a concerned Faichem resident. PM has also been contacted by people worried about the line of the pylons. KS regretted that village residents had not been notified about the proposed use of the former hatchery site as a works depot. It was agreed that members will gather community views on the proposals before the next meeting. KB will check if the land for the proposed switching station at Loch Lundie has been sold to SSE.

4. Financial report

(a) Details of the monthly report, which LMacN had circulated in advance, including the NatureScot advance and the Firework Fund, were noted.

(b) The accounts for the year to March 2022 were received. It was noted that though they had been checked by two people and signed off by Highland Council (HC), there was an addition to be made, and this has been done. The final figures are nevertheless correct. HC has paid the annual grant. In relation to that, it was noted that receipts for secretarial and other necessary administrative expenses should be produced. A proposal is to be made in writing before the next meeting about what use should be made of the surplus revenue from the Poultry hydro scheme. The next financial report will be presented in time for the AGM.

5. Planning applications

KB reported three applications in relation to the Coire Glas and associated works: two very large switching station sites with their pylon lines; and a helicopter landing place in the forestry at Laddie Wood. GCC has previously discussed issues in relation to the size of the switching stations. It was noted that the helicopter pad is on a raised bog, and that the works there, including what appear to be measures to protect the bog, have already been completed. KB will write to the Planning Department about these works. As a separate issue, it was also noted that the location of the switching station near Kingie has been moved to beside the Quoich power station, following ground work investigations.

6. Any other competent business

- (a) CD reported that a question had been raised by some glen residents about the placement of boulders within three metres of the edge of the glen road. Connected with this, LMacN said that when he happened to meet KT in the glen when she was surveying the road before the recent works, she had told him that it would no longer be possible for parts of the verge between the Tornacarry bridge and Inchlaggan to be cut by HC, as a new fence in that area had been placed close to the road. He had also mentioned to her the encroaching rhododendron ponticum at Loch Quoich. It was agreed that CD should write to KT for clarification of HC's interpretation and use of the provisions relating to the width of the road and verge.
- (b) Further in relation to the glen road, it was agreed after discussion that KT should be asked for a map of the accepted passing places along the glen road, with a view to investigating the feasibility of reinstating those that had been damaged or removed. It was noted that some years ago HC had undertaken to replace the ones damaged by verge-cutting machinery.
- (c) GCC held a meeting with Malcolm Crosby of Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) on 3rd April. A note of the meeting is appended. KB suggested that MC should be asked for clarification about the allocation of future revenue from FLS hydro schemes in the GCC area.

7. Next meetings

The AGM and the next business meeting will be held in sequence on 5th June 2023 from 19.00.

Note of meeting with Malcolm Crosby of Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)
held on 3rd April 2023

Present: Malcolm Crosby (MC), Catriona Menzies (CM), Lea MacNally (LMacN), Cecilia Dyckhoff (CD), Ken Brown (KB), Kevin Sutherland (KS)

The meeting was held in order for MC to describe the existing method of distributing community benefit funds from FLS hydro schemes and to explain proposals for changing the method.

The present method was set in place by Green Highland Renewables when the hydro schemes were installed. The community benefit funds involved amount to about £6,000 per annum; they are distributed by the Shinty Club to Glengarry Community Council (GCC) and Glengarry Bowls Club. With the installation of four new hydro schemes, the annual amount for disbursement will be in the region of £12,000 to £15,000. It has become apparent that a new assessment should be made of how funds at this level can be distributed direct to appropriate projects, rather than through an intermediary.

It was noted that the existing agreement is deficient in not including a method by which it can be revised.

MC said that the current preferred way to distribute funds is by reference to formally-constituted Community Development Plans (CDPs) which include lists of community benefit projects arrived at by community consensus after an open consultation process. He gave details of how this has worked in other places. He has met with Tom Cooper of GCW to discuss the issue, and is aware that GCW has started this process for Glengarry.

MC said that community benefit funds from the new hydro schemes have been ringfenced, awaiting the adoption of a Glengarry CDP, which it is understood will take some time to finalise, given that a robust programme of gathering the views of the community must be undertaken. Once the CDP has set out what the funds are to be spent on, an appropriate community organisation will then have to distribute the funds. The formal constitution of a CDP should allow for its regular periodic review and variation as circumstances change. The main principle of such a plan is that it should have a democratic basis. It is up to the community to decide the boundaries of the area to be benefitted by the funds to be distributed.

KB asked if the Glengarry Trust (GT) was likely to be identified as the distributing body; and MC noted that GT was set up to distribute Millennium Wind Fund benefits and its operating model allows its trustees to decide on the beneficiaries. This is a different model from one set up to distribute funds to projects set out in a CDP. MC said that there are various organisations constituted to undertake disbursements of this kind. Among such organisations are Foundation Scotland, Abundance, and Energy 4 All; and there are others. Alternatively, a person in the community with appropriate qualifications could be employed to do this. Local Energy Scotland could provide funding for this.

He said that GCC should be aware of the process of creating the CDP and could become involved in facilitating or overseeing this.