**Minutes of the Gifford Community Council Meeting held**

**on 14th February 2022 at Gifford Bowling Club**

**Participating** Adam White (Chair) Wendy Ferguson Jill Hyslop

Eleanor Hulme Rita Buchan Dave Griffiths

Richard Austin Hugh Broad

**In Attendance** Councillor Shamin Akhtar Councillor John McMillan Neville Kilkenny Martin Eggington Matt Olley Sam McMillan Paul Hewitt (online)

In addition, 12 members of the public attended the meeting.

**Apologies** PC Colin Boyd Councillor Craig Hoy Councillor Tom Trotter

**1. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The meeting approved the minutes of the meeting of the 10th January (approved by Dave Griffiths and Rita Buchan).

**2. Presentation by Belltown Power to introduce proposals for the Newlands Hill Wind Energy Hub**

Matt Olley, Project Manager with Belltown Power, outlined the proposed development for up to 23 turbines varying in tip height from 180m to 230m as well as an energy storage facility. Collectively this will be referred to as a Wind Energy Hub. The site, which is located in the Lammermuir Hills to the southeast of Gifford, is currently used as a managed grouse moor and is bisected by the B6355 which crosses the site from north to south. The site has been identified because it has a good wind speed and it is located near to available grid capacity. Belltown Power submitted a Scoping Request for Environmental Impact Assessment to the Scottish Government in November 2021. Gifford Community Council submitted comments on this report, suggesting an additional viewpoint just outside the village. East Lothian Council has suggested the same viewpoint and the developers have agreed to include this. There was also a suggestion for an additional viewpoint from the road between Gladsmuir and Samuelston. The next stage of the process is a public consultation. Gifford and Garvald will both have village hall exhibitions running from 1pm – 8pm. The expected dates are 15th March (Garvald) and 16th March (Gifford). These dates will be confirmed shortly. The developers hope to submit a planning application in July/August and would hope to have a decision in 2024. As the power output is greater than 50 Megawatts, the application will be submitted to the Scottish Government. East Lothian Council will be a statutory consultee. Were the planning application to be successful, the developers would expect a procurement process of 12 – 18 months and a construction phase of 12 – 18 months, giving an estimated date of 2026/27 for output. The estimated lifespan of the turbines is 35 years. Matt outlined the details of the community ownership scheme, which includes giving local community organisations 1% of the equity in the project for free as well as the opportunity to invest further at cost once the project is operational. In addition, the company would pay £5,000 per Megawatt generated per year for the lifetime of the project. The following questions/issues were raised:

* **Decommissioning.** Matt confirmed that the developers need to consider all aspects of decommissioning as part of the planning process.
* **Access Route.** The developers plan to access the site from the A1, avoiding Gifford, Garvald and Stenton. They have not yet published the intended route.
* **Connection to Grid**. A grid application is progressing and will probably involve over-ground cables. It was noted that Belltown may not be responsible for the grid connection.
* **Tree planting** It was suggested that the Eastern edge of the development site, which might be used for tree planting, should be assessed for peatland. It was also stated that ericaceous heathland should not be used for the planting of trees that form ectomycorrhizal partnerships, and that the development site should be assessed for fungi.
* **Storage capacity.** When questioned about the size of the storage facility, the developers said that it would be bigger than a substation, but should be quite compact.

Some people voiced general concerns about the development. Adam strongly advised those present to engage with any consultation process, so that their views are heard. Gifford Community Council will be submitting views as part of the consultation/planning process, but people should engage directly with the process themselves to ensure that their views are represented. Anyone can submit feedback to Belltown via a form on their website - <https://belltownpower.com/uk/newlandshill/>

**3. Matters Arising**

3.1Duns Road Traffic Survey. Rolled over to next meeting. **ACTION: RA**

3.2 Edinburgh Road widening survey. Nothing new to report. The work is thought to be scheduled for this year.

3.3 Longyester Quarry. The Quarry has agreed to carry out resurfacing work but the timetable is still to be agreed. Dave suggested that it would be sensible to do the work over the July trades fortnight when the Quarry will be shut. A Longnewton resident has asked for the passing places through Longnewton to be repaired especially in the event of Quarry lorries being diverted through Longnewton when resurfacing takes place. Councillor McMillan will forward to this request to Roads. **ACTION: JM**

3.4 Lane between Tweeddale Crescent/Station Road. No schedule yet. Similar resurfacing/repair work needs to be done on the steps that lead from Bablins Wynd to the School.

3.5 Additional Graveyard space. Councillor McMillan and Wendy are discussing funding opportunities with East Lothian Council in relation to the cost of the SEPA survey. **ACTION:JM/WF**

3.6 Wheelie bins on Main Street pavement. Councillor Akhtar reported that there was no progress due to Covid, but she will continue to follow this up. Waste Services will include the Recycling containers when discussing the matter with residents. **ACTION: SA**

3.7 Defibrillators. Wendy informed the meeting that the preferred model is unfortunately out of stock and is not due in until Q3. Sam (from the Scottish Ambulance Service) is looking at alternative models but it is important to note that she can only train on certain models. Eleanor confirmed that 10 people will be attending a training session on Tuesday 22nd Feb at 6pm in the Bowling Club. Sam still needs to check the defibrillator at the Garage. **ACTION: WF**

3.8 Beautiful Scotland signage. Adam submitted an application to the Area Partnership’s February meeting to cover the costs of this and is waiting on the result to be ratified. **ACTION: AW**

3.9 Trees (Tweeddale Arms/Witherspoon Plaque/Queen’s Green Canopy). Adam has spoken to Mike Foy about getting a suitable tree to be planted by the Witherspoon plaque. The resident who lives next to the plaque will be asked for their views. Mike is hoping to arrange a planting ceremony for the cherry trees at the Tweeddale. Adam confirmed that these trees will be registered on the QGC website once planted. In relation to QGC, Neville informed the meeting that the free trees being offered by the Woodland Trust were not appropriate for our local area, but that he was investigating alternative funding arrangements. **ACTION: AW**

3.10 School Railings. Councillor Akhtar reported that the work will be done in spring (either during the school holidays or at the weekend to avoid children coming into contact with wet paint). **ACTION: SA**

3.11 Noticeboards. The meeting considered whether a noticeboard was still necessary as many CCs use the internet. It was agreed that Gifford will retain a noticeboard, as not everyone has access to the internet. There was a discussion about whether it should be wood or aluminium. Although aluminium might require less maintenance, it was noted that wood might be required as we are in a conservation zone. Hugh suggested that we should try to use a local supplier and Martin agreed to pass on the details of a person who had recently made a noticeboard for Yester Estate. **ACTION: DG**

**4 External Reports**

**4.1 Police**

This report is based on incidents between 7/01/2022 and 12/02/2022. During the period since the last police report there have been very few incidents of note in the Gifford area. There may be more incidents but due to the nature of these or ongoing investigations full details cannot be given.

4.1.1 On 31/1/22 a male was stopped driving a motor vehicle on Main Street and found to have no MOT. Issued a fixed penalty ticket.

4.1.2 There continues to be reports of vehicles speeding through the village. This issue was raised at the last CAPP meeting. Local officers will continue to monitor this and take action when appropriate

4.1.3 On 25/1/22 a further report was received in relation to damage to Yester Castle, whereby person(s) unknown have forced open a padlock and entered the castle grounds, causing damage. Enquires are ongoing.

4.1.4 On 31/1/22, a housebreaking was reported at a property within Gifford. A number of items were stolen. Enquires are ongoing.

The meeting noted that this was likely to be PC Boyd’s last report for Gifford Community Council. It was agreed that a note of thanks should be sent to Chief Inspector Jocelyn O’Connor to recognise the valuable assistance that he has provided.

**4.2** **East Lothian Council**

4.2.1 The councillors both referred to pressures that might arise from the forthcoming Budget.

4.2.2 Councillor McMillan had asked Facilities Management when the public toilets in Gifford would be re-opened, but they were unable to give any indication (see further 7.4 below).

4.2.3 The council is reviewing the 20mph temporary speed limits and will consult on whether these should be made permanent. Adam queried the benefit of having very short 30 mph zones at the entrances to the village. It was noted that this might be a necessary requirement to allow drivers time to go safely from the National Speed Limit to 20mph. Councillor McMillan agreed to investigate whether the current 30mph zones could be reduced to 20mph. **ACTION: JM**

4.2.4 Councillor Akhtar reported that as the cost of living rises, Lammermuir Larder are helping an increasing number of families. She suggested that Community Council should get in touch with the Larder to establish a point of contact in Gifford. Haddington & District CC publishes a referral form on its website, which can be completed by a professional who is familiar with the individual or family, or it can be completed by the family themselves. **ACTION: AW**

**4.3 Community Woodland**

Neville Kilkenny, Project Manager of the Community Woodland, was present at the meeting and updated everyone on recent progress. They are pleased to have completed important drainage work, which was necessary to protect the paths, and has also allowed for the creation of a new wildlife pond. The trees that came down during Storm Arwen have now been cut up and are ready to be moved. A Spring Newsletter has been published.

**5 Internal Reports**

**5.1 Roads and Footpaths**

Some very minor patching of holes has been done in Tweeddale Crescent and some other streets in the village.

**5.2 Lighting**

The street light opposite the Goblin Ha hotel has now been working for the past 3 weeks, indicating that the fault must have been rectified. Otherwise, no other faults have been reported.

**5.3 Drainage**

Nothing to report.

**5.4 Signs**

A new 'Giveway' sign has been put in place at the junction from Gifford Golf Course onto Edinburgh Road, the B6355. A new warning ‘Bend’ sign has been erected to replace the one knocked down by a vehicle on the B6355 after Duncanlaw farm.

The public toilets on the Bleachfield have been shut for a number of weeks, but the public toilet sign on Main street has not been covered over. It was covered the last time the toilets were closed. **ACTION: JM**

**5.5** **Planning**

Please see attached report for planning applications within and outwith GCC Area.

Following an inquiry from a Gifford resident, GCC has been informed that planning permission is required to install an Electric Vehicle charging point in front of a house or garage due to Gifford being in a Conservation Zone. Planning permission is not required if the charging point is inside the garage. Richard has contacted the Planning department to confirm the details before we raise awareness of this issue on our Facebook page.

**5.6 Finance**

Wendy confirmed that Community Council had made a charitable donation of £250 to the Lammermuir Larder and a further donation of £250 to the Yester, Bolton & Saltoun Church to contribute towards the cost of lighting the church externally during the winter months. Wendy had received a funding request asking for £300 to provide tree protectors for 80 trees planted in the council field at Myreside. The original protectors supplied with the trees had deteriorated and were no longer doing their job. As the trees were on council land, Councillor McMillan felt that the council should cover this cost and agreed to investigate. Wendy confirmed that the Community Council’s balance was around £11,000. **ACTION: JM**

**5.7 Website**

It was agreed that the website should be updated to remove some out of date references, eg to past Christmas events.

**5.8 Covid Vaccination Update**

A report is attached as an appendix. Eleanor reported that the clinic was now very quiet. Councillor Akhtar thanked Eleanor for preparing the report and also confirmed that the vaccination bus was now back on the road.

**5.9 Yester Estate**

Martin was present at the meeting and was able to provide an update. The consultation process for the Scoping Report has now finished. A suggestion had been made to develop part of the land next to the public toilet as a bike pump track. Yester Estate had declined this suggestion, as the area is to be developed as an arboretum with benches. Martin reported that 6 of the Lime trees next to the Bleachfield are suffering from necrotia, which means they are dying from the inside out. They are going to stump grind them out and plant new limes.

**5.10 Resilience Update**

Wendy reported that fish and chips had been delivered on the last Friday of January. People had been very pleased with the delivery, as there had not been one in December. Adam reported that the lunch club will be re-starting on Monday 14th March and the Good Companions will re-start on Wednesday 23rd March. PC Boyd had suggested that GCC might benefit from a resilience ‘search and rescue’ exercise, similar to one held in Garvald a few years ago, and Adam agreed to look into this. **ACTION: AW**

**5.11 Local Business**

Rita has spoken to the Nisa about the temporary signage. They had received an initial quote, but were looking to see whether a cheaper quote could be obtained. It was noted that maintaining temporary signage could constitute a breach of planning. Councillor McMillan agreed to pass onto Rita the details of someone who has recently completed a similar job in Haddington. Rita also agreed to speak to the shop about the price of their milk, which was thought to be quite high. **ACTION: JM/RB**

**6. Correspondence**

6.1 Morag Mackintosh had contacted GCC to thank those involved with the improvements to the street lighting on the Duns Road.

6.2 A Gifford resident had made several suggestions for tree planting in Gifford. The details have been passed to Mike Foy.

6.3 Two Longnewton residents have separately raised safety concerns about an increase in large vehicles passing through Longnewton, and about road safety in general. Councillor McMillan has contacted one of the residents and intends to meet with them on site. **ACTION JM**

**7 AOB**

7.1 Proposal by AELCC to create 6-month rotating Chair system

The current Chair of the Association of East Lothian County Councils (AELCC) is standing down and has proposed that a new 6-monthly rotating Chair system be introduced. Most of the other CCs in East Lothian have approved this suggestion, with a couple still to report back. It was noted that Gifford CC has had little involvement with AELCC, but it agreed to the proposal.

7.2Bus stop outside Lewis & Clarke.

Dave outlined the current system whereby every 2nd bus has to reverse, as the direction of the circular route changes. Dave queried whether the position of the bus stop should be reviewed, as it can be confusing for customers depending on when and where the driver reverses. Councillor McMillan thought this issue should be referred to Andrew McClelland. **ACTION: JM**

7.3 Gifford Road Races, Saturday 19th March

Adam has received notice from Edinburgh Road Club that this race is scheduled to be held in Gifford on 19th March. He has asked Councillor McMillan to pass on any recommendations from the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meeting. Adam raised particular concerns about the closure of the public toilets and queried whether the race could be held if there was no access to public toilets. **ACTION: JM/AW**

7.4 Availability of home carers

Rita has been approached recently by several local residents who are experiencing great difficulty getting help with carers to support people with dementia. She had been told that carers are reluctant to come to rural areas, as they are not getting help with travel costs. Councillor Akhtar said that the council was trying to reduce its reliance on external care companies, where staff are often paid less and are not given travel costs. The council was instead trying to increase its inhouse staff, who would attend to those in need regardless of location. Councillor Akhtar agreed to speak to Rita about the people who were experiencing difficulties. **ACTION: RB/SA**

**Date of next meeting -** 7:30pm on Monday 14th March 2022.

**APPLICATIONS WITHIN GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 21/01599/P | Erection of 1 house and associated works | Land Adjacent To Castlepark Golf Club Yester Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PL | 31/01/22 | Feb 2022 | This is a separate application to that for the holiday lodges (21/01457/P, below) and involves a six bedroomed house attached to the west of the clubhouse, for occupation by the owner/manager. | Awaiting decision |
| 21/01600/P | Change of use of agricultural land to domestic use for the erection of 1 house for ancillary residential accommodation to Newlands Farmhouse and associated works | Newlands Farmhouse Yester Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PJ | 07/01/22 | Jan 2022 | New single storey, two bedroomed house adjacent to Newlands Farmhouse, for use by ageing family members. | Withdrawn by applicant |
| 21/01504/EOL | Erection of 11kv overhead line | East of Haddington To Gifford Area East Lothian | 14/12/21 | Jan 2022 | Replacement and in some cases rerouting of 11kV (wooden poles) power lines between Haddington, Gifford, and Morham. | Awaiting decision |
| 21/01457/P | Erection of 28 holiday lodges, 1 reception/plant room/store building and associated works | Castlepark Golf Club Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PL | 06/01/22 | Jan 2022 | Planning department request GCC comments. However, before these were sent, the application was rejected by the department on technical grounds and will have to be resubmitted. Plans are not currently available to view. | Awaiting re-submission |
| 21/01523/P | Replacement windows and doors. | Ardlea Haddington Road Gifford Haddington EH41 4JD | 06/12/21 | Dec 2021 | Replacement double glazed windows in white uPVC to south elevation and rear of house. | Approved |
| 21/01313/P | Change of use of woodland to domestic garden ground, extensions to house, erection of wall, gate, building for residential ancillary accommodation, generator building and installation of air source heat pumps | Quarryford House Yester Gifford East Lothian EH41 4PL | 10/11/21 | Dec 2021 | Two storey extension and annexe on west face of Quarryford House. | Awaiting decision |
| 21/01108/P | Change of use of woodland area for use as a nature kindergarten for nursery children, erection of log cabin, toilet, log store and associated works | Wester Wood Near Gifford East Lothian | 09/09/21 | Sept 2021 | Erection of 6.5m x 2.75m log cabin, compost toilet and log store in Wester Wood. Possible implications for right of access? | Awaiting decision |

**APPLICATIONS OUTWITH GCC AREA**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Date Validated** | **GCC first discussed** | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 22/00087/P | Erection of hut and composting toilet | Bolton Muir Gifford Haddington East Lothian EH41 4JH | 01/02/22 | Feb 2022 | Application includes a Site Management Plan, Woodland Management Plan and Species Protection Plan as were required as conditions of approving similar application 20/01247/P (22/10/21). | Awaiting decision |
| 21/01433/P | Erection of hut and shed (Part Retrospective) | Bolton Muir Wood Gifford Haddington EH41 4JH | 20/01/22 | Feb 2022 | Application makes no reference to a Site Management Plan, Woodland Management Plan and Species Protection Plan (See 22/00087/P above) | Awaiting decision |

**OTHER PLANNING MATTERS**

**Newlands Hill Wind Energy Hub**

* GCC have submitted comments to the Scottish Government on the Scoping Report for the Environmental Impact Assessment.
* Representatives from Belltown Power UK Wind Ltd (the developer) will present an introduction to the project at February’s GCC meeting.
* First public consultation exhibition is expected to be in early March 2022.

**Colstoun Estate Woodlands**

* GCC have been invited to comment on the scoping document for the Long Term Forest Plan for Colstoun Estate Woodlands.
* Comments to be submitted by 23rd February 2022

**Note 1:** 21/01504/EOL - Replacement of Power Lines Haddington to Gifford

Plans can be viewed on ELC Planning portal:

<https://pa.eastlothian.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=R3DR77GN0BM00>

Detailed sheets cover the following parts of the route:

1 to 3 Haddington to Monkrigg

4, 5 Cockles to Renton Hall

6 to 10 Morham to Papple

11 Cockles Brae

12 Brounshill

13 Myreside to Duncanlaw

14 Duns Road

15 Townhead

16 Sheriffside

17 Danskine

18 Newlands

19 Baxtersyke / Quarryford

20, 21 Yester Mains

**Note 2:** 21/01457/P - Holiday Lodges at Castlepark

Plans can be viewed on ELC Planning portal:

<https://pa.eastlothian.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=R2REGXGNHXC00>

**Report for Monday 14th February 2022 Gifford Community Council**

From national statistics, source below, as of Thursday 10th February 2022:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/phs.covid.19/viz/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview>

Boosters / Dose 3 only:

**Nationally:**

Booster/Dose 3 over 18s plus all adults: 74.8% (Jan 67.7%)

**Lothian:**

Over 18s: Boosters: 64.3% (38.2%)

**East Lothian: (**followed bydetailed breakdown)

Over 18s Booster/Dose 3=81.4% (Jan 74.1%)

**East Lothian by Age group:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AGE** | **Boosters February** | **Boosters Jan** |
| 12-15 | 1.1% | 0.4% |
| 16-17 | **15.3 %\*** | **29.8%** |
| 18-29 | **52.5%** | **36.8%** |
| 30-39 | **64.6%** | **50.9%** |
| 40-49 | **77.4%** | **68.2%** |
| 50-54 | **88.5%** | **82.2%** |
| 55-59 | **>90%** | **86%** |
| 60-64 | **97%** |
| 65-69 | 98.7% |
| 70-74 | 99.9% |
| 75-79 | 99.9% |
| 80+ | 97.0% |
|  |  |

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