

GARGUNNOCK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

Gargunnoch Community Council Meeting

Monday 1st March 2021

Microsoft Teams

Members Present: - Jeremy Wilkinson (Chair), Jon Sutherland (Secretary); Julie Cole; Charlie Fitches; Lovat MacGregor; Douglas Barr, Helen Rowell, Christine Philips and David King.

In attendance: Fraser Sinclair (Minute Taker)

Apologies: Police Scotland.

Abbreviations: GCC = Gargunnoch Community Council
SC = Stirling Council

1. Apologies & Introduction

Jeremy opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and noted Police Scotland apologies.

The Chair noted that GCC are required to hold meetings in public, and consequently have not held a meeting since the implementation of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions came into force. However, thanks to the temporary amendments that SC have made to the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils, we are now permitted to hold GCC meetings by video, teleconferencing or other remote means. Jon has selected MS Teams as our platform for GCC meetings; and thanks go to Jon for setting up this evening's meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Adoption of Previous Minutes

The minutes of March 2020 meeting were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Gargunnoch CC Noticeboard

No further action has taken place on procuring a noticeboard due to the difficulties presented by the Covid-19 restrictions.

As there have been limited number of village events requiring notices, together with the need to up-date quotations for the noticeboard, and to verify the source of additional funds, the Chair suggested shelving this project (Noting, that if the project is not implemented, the grant from SC's Community Pride Fund will need to be returned to SC.)

David asked is it possible to use the community council funds to purchase since, it's monies in the bank is at healthy balance. Jon advised that a noticeboard supply company had been circulating offers of noticeboards at reduced costs.

It was unanimously agreed, that in light of everything else going on, this project should be shelved for the time being.

Action: Jon to circulate copy of the communications from Noticeboard Company with offer of a noticeboard at reduced cost, for information.

Gate at Sawmill Cottage

Jeremy has spoken to a representative from Leckie Estate who said they would contact the owner about the restricted access through the gate on this Core Path. However, the Leckie Estate is in the process of being sold and Jeremy has suggested that we should wait until the new owner is in place and then discuss with them.

Car Chargers

Lovat spoke with the Sustainability Team within the Council on 16 February and they have confirmed that a company have been awarded the contract to install two electric chargers on Main Street (opposite the pub). The contractors are awaiting approval for a permit and connectivity connections and should progress shortly.

Road Safety at Junction of Station Road and A811.

Jeremy updated GCC on the three year debate that has been ongoing with Stirling Council concerning the safety issues at the junction of Station Road and the A811. Currently, we are waiting to hear back from Stirling Council on the outcome from E&H Committee which was held in February. Cllr Berrill got in contact two weeks ago to report that SC claim the issue had been resolved with white lining and traffic measures that have been installed. Jeremy contacted Cllr Berrill and advised that significant safety improvements had not been made for vehicles entering the A811 from Station Road, and that further collisions have happened in 2020. In the response from SC, it was recorded that the Roads Dept were talking to residents and with adjacent landowners - none of these actions have happened. Jeremy watched 11 Feb E&H Committee and SC stated that they were unaware of recent accidents. Situation is being revisited by Stirling Council.

Lovat has asked Police Scotland for incidents on A811 at the junction at Station Road in the last ten years to seek if that would give any data for leverage to pursue some form of road safety mitigations at the junction.

Action: Lovat to liaise with the Roads Dept to follow up information and next steps.

Clearing of Vegetation from Gargunnoch Burn at the School

Lovat updated that Stirling Council have confirmed they own the land on either side of the burn, but do not own the burn itself.

Action: Lovat to contact Stirling Council again to negotiate that the vegetation be cut down by their Land Services Team.

Road Safety

Members of the community have been raising issue regarding the potholes along the Eastern entrance road into the village (particularly around the entrance to Hillhead Farm). The Community Council discussed about populating a priority list of potholes. There has been some work done during the past year, but some areas for concern.

Action: Lovat to resubmit the list again that was composed prior to lockdown, highlighting high use roads and flag to Land Services to remedy.

5a. Police Report

Police Scotland circulated report to the Community Council, and this report was summarised at the meeting by the Chair. One issue of anti-social behaviour has been reported; one minor road traffic incident occurred on Main Street; and a resident reported being contacted by a telephone fraudster.

5b. Elected Member's Report

No update.

5c. Stirling Council Report

No update.

6. Reports

6a Chair's Report

Although GCC has not held a formal meeting for almost a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, GCC Councillors have continued to support the community, and the Chair gave the following summary of the key activities of the Chair and Community Council over this period.

1. Gargunnock Mutual Aid Group

In March, a group of residents formed the Gargunnock Mutual Aid Group to help the village during the Covid-19 pandemic; and in order to help gain additional support, the Group linked themselves to the wider SC area efforts. However, the Group was not eligible for funding from SC as the Group is not a constituted organisation registered with SC.

In order, to support the efforts of the Group in helping the elderly, vulnerable and key workers of Gargunnock, GCC adopted the Gargunnock Mutual Aid Group as a sub-group of the Community Council. This then provided some level of insurance cover for the Group's work relating to resilience efforts (e.g. delivery of leaflets, collecting shopping, etc.).

GCC also then became eligible to receive and distribute a grant of £500 from SC to help cover the expenses (travel expenses, masks, hand gel, etc.) of those volunteers who are supporting the community during the pandemic. GCC are required to keep details of how the grant is spent; and when the current crisis is over, any underspend must be returned to SC. To date, there has been no claim from members of the Gargunnoch Mutual Aid Group for any expenses. GCC would like to thank the Gargunnoch Mutual Aid Group for their efforts in supporting residents of the village.

2. Storm Damage in Rest Garden

A beech tree in the Rest Garden was blown over during a storm in early May, and a resident subsequently approached GCC asking that the tree should be replaced. The Chair contacted SC's Land Services who have agreed to replace the tree.

3. Potential Damage to Station Road

A local landowner approached the Chair in March with a concern that a retaining wall along the Gargunnoch Burn (West of Fleuchams) was starting to collapse into the Burn, and could result in failure of the roadway. The Chair obtained photographs and submitted the concern to SC, who agreed to arrange an inspection and make necessary repairs.

4. Gargunnoch Community Trust Strategic Plan

In June, the Community Trust sent the GCC Chair a copy of the Trust's draft Strategic Plan 2020/25 for review and comment by GCC. The Chair circulated the document to all Councillors for their comment, and then provided feedback to the Trust. The Chair thanked the Trust for their courtesy in allowing GCC to see and comment on their draft plan. The Chair provided a summary of the Councillors' positive comments, with one suggestion for an additional project in the "Development" section of the Plan. In conclusion, GCC unanimously agreed to support the Trust's Strategic Plan.

The suggested additional project was for creation of a "Gargunnoch Village Welcome Pack" for distribution to new residents of the village. The objective of this project is to create a booklet containing useful information to introduce new residents to the facilities available in the village, and to help them settle into their new home. GCC provided a detailed overview of the potential contents of the "Welcome" booklet, which could include: a brief introduction to Gargunnoch highlighting key features of the village; a map of the village; brief history; overview of the roles of GCC and the Trust; important dates; contact details for school, Stirling Council, public transport, etc.; listing of community groups; and facilities available at the Community Centre.

5. Use of the Football Field

In July, a resident asked GCC for permission to use the football Field (Provost Park) for children's football matches. The Chair responded that the Park is owned and managed by Stirling Council, so SC should be contacted for permission.

6. Post Office Hours

In June, the Post Office announced that the operating hours for the mobile post office in the village would be significantly reduced (resulting in no presence in the village on Tuesday or Wednesday). A resident approached

GCC with a concern about the reduced hours and the lack of consultation. David King contacted the Post Office who stated that the current two PO vans based at Kippen (which service the surrounding villages) would be reduced to one van based on an analysis of footfall/usage of the service. The new hours came into effect at the end of July.

7. Availability of Flower Beds in the Rest Garden

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, SC had decided not to plant flowers in the Rest Garden (located on Manse Brae, between the Church and The Square). In June, Helen Rowell approached SC Land Services requesting permission for residents to take over the planting. SC agreed to allow the planting of annuals, herbs or vegetables for the 2020 season only. Helen circulated this information to residents (via facebook, The Bugle, and the village noticeboard), but unfortunately there were no green-fingered residents who were interested in this project.

8. Charlie Fitches

On 15th July 2020, Charlie Fitches let the Chair know that he would be taking a sabbatical from the Community Council due to personal reasons.

On 15th February 2021, Charlie resumed his duties as a Community Councillor.

9. Community Council Representative on the Wind Farm Fund Panel

Charlie Fitches also resigned in July from the position of GCC Representative on the Gargunnoch Community Wind Farm Fund Panel. Douglas Barr volunteered to replace Charlie on the Panel. Jon Sutherland has also offered to take over from Julie Cole (who is currently the second GCC representative) when her term on the Panel comes to an end.

10. Dog Kennels at Wester Leckie (Glinns Road)

A planning application was submitted to SC for erection of dog boarding kennels at Wester Leckie on Glinns Road. GCC received a number of communications from residents concerned about the proposal (relating to potential noise problems, light pollution, increased traffic on Glinns Road, and disposal of waste), and consequently GCC raised questions with SC about the operation of a commercial kenneling operation on the site. On 10th June 2020, SC notified GCC that the applicant had decided not to pursue this application, and had confirmed in writing that the application is withdrawn.

11. Driveway Gates on Leckie Road

Residents have complained to GCC following the installation of metal gates and railings at a driveway on the South side of Leckie Road in the Conservation Area. The residents were concerned that the gates/fence are unsightly and out-of-keeping for a Conservation Area.

Enquiries by the GCC Planning Representative discovered that the installation of the gates/fence may have been in breach of planning control. SC's Planning team have stated: "... we do not consider the works to cause any significant issue or harm to public amenity, however we will be seeking the submission of a retrospective planning application or removal in order to rectify the breach."

12. Wolfcraig Distillery

In October, a Proposal of Application Notice was submitted to SC for a £15 million "whisky experience" to be located in Touch between the A811 and Touch

Road. The plans include a whisky distillery and an education-focused family visitor attraction, a private tasting room, and 180-cover bistro restaurant and bar. More details can be found at www.wolfcraig.com.

Although this project is outwith the GCC area, the developer has recorded that GCC are an interested party, and consequently have communicated their plans to GCC. If the project proceeds, it may, in fact, generate potential employment and recreation opportunities for Gargunnock residents.

The Chair facilitated a meeting in October between the developer and Gargunnock Paths Group members to discuss the potential route of the Stirling-to-Gargunnock path that may pass very close to proposed distillery.

13. Shelloch Wind Farm

As everyone is aware from recent articles in The Bugle, the Stirling Observer, and Facebook postings, there are plans for a new Wind Farm on the Fintry Hills. The proposal covers the installation of five wind turbines together with associated infrastructure to be located just West of the existing Earlsburn and Kingsburn Wind Farms.

The initial public consultation allowed public comment, however two Gargunnock residents were concerned that the 8-week consultation period didn't give them adequate time to consider the proposal. Consequently, GCC contacted the developer who agreed to extend the consultation by another two weeks (closing on 28th August).

An overview of the proposal, together with responses from the developer to questions posed by Gargunnock Community Council and Gargunnock Community Trust, was reported in the October 2020 issue of The Bugle, and further information on the project is available on the developer's website.

Stirling Council has recently received the formal Planning Application and Environmental Statement for the project. Notices on the GCC facebook page, village noticeboard, village website and The Bugle newsletter informed residents on how to submit comments on the Planning Application.

Whilst the community's view of the acceptability or otherwise of the development can be based on many factors, GCC recognise that the decision by the Planning Authority will rely exclusively on material planning considerations. In relation to these planning considerations, GCC took the relevant matters into account in assessing the proposal. GCC has also received a submission from Gargunnock Community Trust supporting the application. GCC has consequently summarised our assessment in a letter of comment to SC's Planning Dept., concluding that: "....."subject to all appropriate mitigating measures being put in place, Gargunnock Community Council supports the Shelloch Wind Farm planning application".

If this project proceeds, there may be a Community Benefit Fund that could support projects in the village. GCC unanimously agreed the following proposal from the Chair: *"In order to take advantage of the expertise of the Gargunnock Community Trust in negotiating with wind farm developers, and also their experience in the management of community benefit funds, the Community Council should ask Gargunnock Community Trust to lead the negotiations on the Shelloch Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund on behalf of the village."* The Community Trust has accepted this invitation.

14. Water Main Leaks and Flooding – Main Street

In January, residents and GCC reported a significant water leak on Main Street, just West of the junction with Stevenson Street (causing a wash-out on Charlie's Loan), to both SC and Scottish Water. Scottish Water subsequently identified a blockage in the surface water drainage system, which they have now cleared.

15. Water Main Leaks and Flooding – Charles Street

Flooding in Charles Street has been an ongoing problem and apparently can include sewage waste. At the request of GCC, following a re-occurrence in January, Scottish Water has assessed the situation again, and has stated that there is a lack of capacity in the drainage system for handling high-rainfall events. Although Scottish Water recognise that this problem exists, resolution is not likely to happen in the near future due to high workload, so any future occurrences need to be reported promptly to Scottish Water (with photographic evidence if possible) to help raise this problem up their priority list.

16. Stirling Council's Waste Transformation Programme

In June of last year, Stirling Council announced the approval of their Waste Transformation Programme, without any prior discussion with Community Councils.

Information on the Programme was included in the local press, and in letters to residents' homes. More details are available on Stirling Council's website, however, in summary the key points are phased introduction over the next two years of:

- Replacement of the grey and brown bins (that are coming towards the end of their life) with new bins of the same style as the existing green and blue bins. This standardisation of the bin styles will also facilitate improved operational efficiency.
- Stopping the current free garden waste collection, and the introduction in April 2021 of an opt-in charging system for fortnightly garden waste collection (£35 per year).
- A new four-weekly collection frequency for the grey (non-recyclable waste) and blue (plastics, cans, cartons) bins, instead of the current fortnightly service, This is expected to come into effect after July 2021
- The ending of glass box collections when the Scottish Government's "National Deposit Return Scheme" starts in July 2022. After this scheme kicks in, glass waste not covered by the scheme can be put in your blue bin.

Note that green bin (paper and cardboard) collections will stay the same and will be collected every 4 weeks, and there will be no change to the frequency of brown bin collections.

Implementation of the Transformation Programme has started in Gargunnoch with the replacement of the grey and brown bins during the first two weeks of January.

17. Councillor Graham Lambie

It was with great sadness that we heard recently of the death of Stirling Councillor Graham Lambie. Graham was a great supporter of GCC and actively advocated for a number of our proposals, including our push for traffic calming in the village. He was in regular attendance at our Community Council meetings, and his valuable input will be missed.

The Chair has sent a message to SC asking that they pass on our condolences to Graham's family.

18. Stirling Council's Spaces for People Fund.

This is a Scottish Government Fund aimed at improving public spaces through the delivery of infrastructure and traffic speed reductions to support safe active travel and assist in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Over a three-week period in October 2020, Stirling Council consulted the public for resident's views on how Stirling Council's share (£513,000) of the Fund could be spent.

Stirling Council has assessed all responses to the consultation and on 20th January finalized a list of projects for development and delivery. One of these projects is "Gargunock – Installation of traffic calming entry gateway treatments".

GCC has not yet been consulted on the project, but the Chair has approached SC with a request to be involved in the development of its plan. SC have replied, stating that it: "... will contact Gargunock Community Council and other key stakeholders once the draft designs have been developed, which will be by late March".

19. Restricted Access on Ladies Walk Path at Millthread Cottage on the Gargunock Estate.

A resident has approached GCC with her concern that access along the Ladies Walk path with her child in a buggy is not possible due to the presence of a kissing gate. The path is a Core Path and the "kissing gate" does not allow access for bicycles, wheel chairs, horses, children's buggies, etc. The resident has approached Gargunock Estate and SC about the problem, but with no success. The Chair has now also approached SC's Access Officer for help in ensuring access along this path, and has suggested that a 1.5m wide, 2-way, self-closing gate would resolve the problem.

20. GCC Article for The Bugle

The Chair created an article for the February 2021 issue of The Bugle providing an update on the work of the Community Council, and giving information about issues affecting Gargunock.

21. Christmas Lights

GCC would like to thank: Lovat MacGregor and the team of residents who installed the Christmas lights in The Square; the Rural for their Advent windows event; the church for the lights on their tree; and the residents who lit up their homes – all helping to brighten up what was a difficult period for us all.

22. Opportunity to Shape Future Health and Care Provision

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Partnership are asking communities in rural Southwest Stirling for their views on the delivery of community health and care models. GCC has circulated details (on the GCC facebook page, in The Bugle newsletter, and on the village noticeboard) of a series of virtual events and an on-line survey, if any resident wishes to take part.

The following actions came from the Chair's Report:-

Action: Jeremy will chase SC Land Services about replacement of the tree in the Rest Garden that was blown over in a storm.

Action: The Gargunnoch Wind Farm Fund Panel has two Community Council representatives on the panel (Charlie Fitches and Julie Cole). Julie has given notice that she will step down from the panel at the end of her term, but only if another Community Council representative can step into place. Discussion was had and it was agreed that Jon Sutherland will take on the position when term comes to an end.

Action: Julie confirmed that she will follow up with the SC Planning team about the status of the retrospective planning application for the metal gates and railings recently installed on a Leckie Road driveway.

6b Secretary's Report

No update.

6c Treasurer's Report

Douglas circulated to the community council his report.

6d Planning Report

Only update is that Graham's Dairy have submitted a Proposal of Application Notice for construction of a new dairy at Boquhan Home Farm, and have offered to discuss their proposals with the community council – the council agreed to acknowledge the email and invite them to the meeting to discuss their proposals.

Action: Julie to contact Graham's Dairy.

6e Roads and Transport Report

Lovat been in touch with a Traffic Management Officer, spoke to him about issues around speeding vehicles in the village. He has advised that they can monitor the speed of vehicles of cars in the month of March to gauge a better indication, and identify areas for potential traffic calming measures if required.

6f Defibrillator Report

Charlie updated that no calls have been for the use of the defibrillator. Charlie also wished to acknowledge the death of Stuart Ballantyne who was Chair of the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team and had actively supported the installation of defibrillators in the village.

7. Community Council Business

Helen raised the question about approaching SC again this year to allow residents to plant seeds in the flower beds in the Rest Garden. As there was no interest from villagers on this opportunity last year, GCC agreed not to contact SC again for this planting season.

Helen announced she will resign from the Community Council. She is not able to attend the AGM, but her resignation will be formally accepted at the AGM.

GCC meeting dates for 2021 have been selected by Jon and communicated to GCC councillors and to SC. Jeremy has updated the GCC notice on the village noticeboard to show the 2021 meeting dates.

8. AOB

None.

9. Residents Forum

None.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 26 April 2021 and AGM 2020 at 7.30pm held via Microsoft Teams.