

GIFFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes

of the meeting of Monday, 13th September 2010, held in the Todrick Room of the Village Hall at 7.30pm

1. Appointment of member to chair the meeting in the absence of John O'Connor

Agreed; Elizabeth Whiteford to chair the meeting.

2. Apologies: -- were noted from JOC, Jane Steven (JS), Shona Thomas (ST), Alistair McClung (AMcC), Margaret McDougall (MMcD); - also from ELC Cllr Ludovic Broun Lindsay; - and from the Police.

14. AOB; Broadband; Mr David Walls, and Mr Ian Smith had asked if they could outline proposals for a better broadband service in the area. They were welcomed and asked to speak. Since 2006 they have been pioneering a "Broadband Cooperative", with the help of EU money allocated for the improvement of broadband in rural areas. They have so far operated in E.Linton, Garvald and Morham, but would like to extend to Gifford and villages further W. They contend that, despite some efforts by BT, the service via the small local exchanges is unlikely ever to catch up with the service in bigger places like Haddington, or Edinburgh. Their ambition is to raise speeds from 6 or 8 megabytes to 20. They said that 18% of internet users in their area have joined them, of whom half are small businesses. 5 members say that the better service enables them to no longer commute to work. There is also the potential that better IT may help the isolated, elderly, disabled etc to take a more active part in life. Members may pay, say, £18 per month for the Coop's service. However, it is common that as speeds rise, so use increases. The speakers hoped that users in Gifford might transfer from their existing providers to the Coop. Further features: there would be money available for training (classes in village halls etc). A small team of qualified workers could be employed. Each subscriber would become a shareholder in the Coop, (which would be "not-for-profit"). A wireless system would operate from cable terminal into subscribers' houses. The speakers hoped to be able to say that they had consulted Gifford and had had a favourable response.

On the matter of the GCC Website, which has hardly progressed, it would be possible simply to copy minutes to the Coop website, where they would at once be accessible (see Item 7 below).

The chair expressed warm thanks to the speakers, who then left, with the understanding that the GCC (AMcC) would contact them to take things further.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 9th August, 2010; - AG said that he believed that ,in his presentation (Item 8, Planning, of 9th Aug) – Mr Jim Wilson had said he did not want affordable housing within his project. – With this amendment, the minutes were *passed*, on a proposal of AG seconded by MMas.
4. Matters arising: on Item 5, Police Report, EW (Chair) much deplored the fact the Police had said there was nothing to report, when in fact the vandalism of gravestones had already been reported at that stage. She pointed up the issue of restoration. It seemed doubtful if the ELC would take that on. This was *noted* with concern as needing further follow up.
5. Police Report; - No Police were present so there was no report.

6. Appointment of a Vice-Chair: -- no action was taken beyond the appointment of EW to chair the current meeting (Item 1).
7. Gifford-on-line Website: -- this has not progressed, but the presentation by David Walls and Ian Smith (Item 14 above) – had possible future relevance.
8. Correspondence: - No new correspondence was tabled.
9. Planning: (At this stage ELC Cllr Sheena Richardson joined the meeting)
 - (i) Applications for Planning Permission: AG had submitted his report which is attached, and he spoke to this. His recommendations,-- that no GCC intervention was called for,-- were *accepted*.
 - (ii) Forbes Lodge: AG reported that the expected new application for a house on the site had not so far been registered.
 - (iii) Castle Park project: AG reported that the putative 10 house would be more visible than had been suggested. They would also be quite close to Yester Estate and the old Castle.. The landscape there might be protected. HADAS would be objecting. However, no application has been registered as yet.
 - (iv) Main Issues – South East Scotland region planning paper from Scottish Government. – AG had earlier circulated a two page summary setting out a list of questions which the full document seemed to raise. Much discussion related to affordable housing, and members used Cllr Richardson’s presence to discuss the ELC’s position./It was noted that the “25% affordable” condition on housing developers seemed the main, if not the only, way in which a better supply of affordable housing could be pushed forward, -- and there was even doubt as to how far the 25% would apply to very small rural developments or those away from transport facilities.
 Some members focussed on allocation procedures, and the danger that houses might not be allocated to local or “deserving” applicants, but rather to “non-deservers” who are said to use devious devices to force the ELC to grant tenancies because the applicants are homeless.
 Some saw the root problem as being the huge district and national shortfall in supply; -- this in turn being due to the doctrinaire implementation of “right-to-buy” policies.
 To some the shortfall was down to shortage of government money. Others saw it as lack of political will, and even resistance from LA’s and individuals who feel more comfortable without the proximity of affordable housing.
 Cllr Richardson insisted that the will existed in the ELC. Various small projects are in progress (Whitecraig, N. Berwick).
 In an overall situation of huge shortage a notable discrepant feature is the presence of large numbers of houses that lie empty.
 In response to queries from JT, housing officials of ELC had shown that, despite some recent adjustment of regulations, actual allocations of affordable housing in the district are running in the hundreds, while applications are in the thousands. On a small scale this is reflected in Gifford.
 Some of the other questions from the Main Issues report affect Gifford less directly. In regard to some questions members were in general agreement with the position taken in the SES planning paper.
 Conclusion: JT to draft a response.*Agreed*.

10. Reports; EW reported on the ELC Licensing Paper which had been tabled at the June meeting. She did not favour radical changes or extra burdens on licensees. In discussion members showed some interest in a tightening of closing times for pubs, eg possible 10pm closing, it being increasingly clear that the “continental café culture” is not transferable to Britain.
11. Potholes and Road repairs: Generally there was some satisfaction At the way the ELC Transportation division have been improving local roads in recent weeks and months.
12. Christmas Tree 2010: EW expressed willingness to see that this is arranged this year on the lines of last year. [Regarding the 11November ceremony, EW has a wreath. It was *agreed* Shona Thomas be asked if she will place it on behalf of GCC]
13. Ongoing items: - WC’s and taps at the Sportsfield. There are still automatic taps needing to be fitted
 - Playground: members noted the plan for an application to Viridor, -- this is being pursued by AMcC
14. AOB: (See above after Item 2 for Broadband as a sub-item of AOB.)
 - Speeding heavy farm vehicles: It was noted that resident Cliff Ryan had reported dangerous speeding by very heavy vehicles coming down the Duns Rd. This led to some discussion of dangers at the intersection by the Coop store. *Agreed:* to appeal to ELC Transportation and ask them to come up with some options to improve the situation.
15. Date of next meeting: Monday, 11th October 2010.

Gifford Community Council Meeting 13.09.10
REPORT ON PLANNING MATTERS

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Weekly Listings of Registered Applications over the past weeks since the last meeting contained the following applications for work within the GCC area:

	Registered
12.08.10	nil
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19.08.10	2
10/00670/P	Painting of house, erection of wall, formation of hardstanding Woodlee, Tweeddale Avenue, Gifford EH41 4QN for Mr Simon Forrester <i>—simple & straightforward; excellent design statement; no action recommended</i>
10/00675/P	Installation of flue to outhouse, minor alterations to house Lilac Cottage, Then Wynd, Gifford EH41 4QT for Mrs Joanne Allen <i>—not controversial; no action recommended.</i>
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26.08.10	1
10/00691/P	Formation of large dormer window at rear and other alterations 30 Park Road, Gifford EH41 4QS for Mr J Hummel <i>—extension into roof to form two rooms; house backs onto Yester Lodge;</i> <i>no action recommended</i>
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02.09.10	nil
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09.09.10	1
10/00763/P	Erection of greenhouse in front garden 3 Burnside Cottages, Station Road, Gifford EH41 4QL for Mr Charles Hunter <i>—small greenhouse, colour green; no action recommended (recent application (10/00473/P) for timber garden shed at side of house)</i>

Andrew Gilmour
12 September 2010