

Glenmoriston Improvement Group (GIG)

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 17th March 2021 7p.m.

Meeting by Zoom

MINUTES

1. Attendance

Carol Pritchard, Jill Wyatt, Hilary Wilson, Catherine Thomson, Kat Murphy, Clare Levings, Joyce Gilbert, Doug Gilbert, Kelvin Hill, Lesley Hill, Lynne West

Apologies: Pat Dobner, Thomas Dobner

2. Chairperson's report

Carol presented a verbal report, outlining the activity of GIG during the last year and saying that it was pleasing that so much had been done, despite COVID lockdown. She referred to plans to upgrade the facilities on the recreation field but advised that we would need to check the legal conditions in the long-term lease granted by the Grant family to the Highland Council. Then she hoped to be able to hold meaningful consultation with the community on their wishes for this land.

3. Treasurer's report (attached)

The treasurer's financial report was shared on zoom. This showed grants received from Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company and £40 income from a canoeists' donation. A projected income and expenditure plan was also shared, with anticipated income and expenditure from the Glenmoriston Beastie Trail if this is granted funding by FAGCC Company.

4. Secretary's report (attached below Appendix1)

The secretary's report was shared on zoom. This referred to over 100 followers on the GIG facebook page and the support given by local residents to the submission to the RTIF for funds for toilet refurbishment at the Hall. FAGC Company funds had been obtained for a new website (Glenmoriston.net), which should be up and running by Easter, for a seat and ground improvements at the War Memorial (to be in place this summer- See Appendix 2) and for Christmas lights in Invermoriston. GIG is grateful to the many landowners, including Glenmoriston Estate, who have given permission for trail markers for the Beastie trail, for which an FAGCC application is pending.

There was discussion on the inclusion on the website of the Trail, and it was agreed that instead of publishing the whole trail, which might impact negatively on the purchase of Trail Packs, the website could feature one site at a time, refreshed monthly.

In answer to questions, Clare gave a brief resume of the latest position on the Hall toilets : funding was granted from windfarms to cover the essential works, but there is not yet a date for the work to be carried out or completed. Catherine referred to a report in the Courier concerning RTIF funding for Chemical waste disposal and electric charging points. It was agreed we should ask Margaret Davidson, Councillor, if she has any detail affecting our area.

5. Committee appointment

The committee for 2021-2022 will be Pat Dobner, Doug Gilbert, Joyce Gilbert, Lesley Hill, Carol Pritchard, Lynne West, Hilary Wilson and Jill Wyatt.

6. Election of Officers

The following were elected:

- a) Chair : Carol Pritchard
- b) Treasurer/ Vice Chair : Pat Dobner/Lesley Hill (role-sharing)
- c) Secretary: Lynne West

7. Future projects

a) Invermoriston Recreation ground (as referred to in Chair's report)
Consultation will define the changes the community would like to see.

b) Gaelic heritage

(i) Joyce referred to the recent research project into the Musical heritage of Glenmoriston, once known as the Glen of the Bards. This found 300 songs and lyrics from the Glen. She suggested that Scottish Nature/Heritage might have some funds still available for Gaelic-related projects and she would like to see a Gaelic music celebration in the villages, and for local schools. Joyce will be keen to lead on this, along with Gaelic conversation groups.

(ii) There had also been interest from the community in 4 zoom meetings arranged by Trees For Life and hosted by Roddy McEwan, on topics relating to the Gaelic Landscape, including local place names (98% of which have Gaelic origins).

c) Joyce also referred to interest in Dalchreichart in tracing its historical heritage, possibly with the lead of an archaeologist.

d) Doug suggested that a riverside walk/trail on both sides of the river would give a wonderful local opportunity for locals and walkers. Kat has been looking at opportunities to put more walks on the South side, and these two ideas might come together. There is part of the structure of an old bridge across the river, near Bhlairidh. Perhaps a river crossing could be erected again.

e) Lynne had noticed the deterioration of the Old Pier posts in the last two years and wondered whether Heritage funding could be obtained to preserve the pier. It was noted that Scottish Water construction there might prevent this.

f) Kat informed us that work on the Rewilding Centre was at the letting of contract stage and would be going ahead shortly.

g) Catherine asked if GIG would support changes to the speed limit on the stretch of road between the village and Fort Augustus- either extending the current 40 mph limit beyond the bends, and/or reducing the limit to 30mph. Since restrictions have been in place for some time due to water works, there would be consistency in retaining this limit.

This will be a matter for FAGC Council to pursue, but GIG agreed to contact them and to support a new application to Traffic Scotland.

h) Catherine also asked if GIG could see that Columba's Well is kept cleaned occasionally and noticed that the large Village amenities sign had come down. It was agreed we would seek Community Caretakers' help with both these matters. If not, Carol would try to arrange a community Tidy Task Force.

8. Date of next GIG Committee meeting : Thursday 29th April 2p.m. (venue to be confirmed, subject to COVID restrictions in place at that time)

APPENDIX 1 Annual General Meeting 2021 Glenmoriston Improvement Group
Secretary's report

Membership

The group does not require formal membership, regarding residence in Glenmoriston to offer membership to all. We do, however, have 106 followers on Facebook currently and our Residents' Group reaches 27 people by e-mail.

Meetings

Since our inauguration meeting, we have held two meetings- the March 2020 was held in Glen Rowan café, open to all: our second meeting in August had to be held by Zoom due to lock-down restrictions. Minutes of both are available on the Facebook page and by e-mail and posted on the community noticeboard. There is no doubt that Covid has seriously impeded our ability to meet up and consult with the community as a whole.

Correspondence

1. Glenmoriston Estate

As Secretary I have been in regular correspondence with Steven Gray, the factor to Glenmoriston Estate, concerning permissions to undertake some of our activities on Estate Land. This has been slow since the Estate Owner has not been permitted to visit the U.K. as he would during non-COVID times. However, we are pleased to report that Estate permission has been granted to undertake improvements to the war memorial area (see Treasurer's report) and to put up markers for the Glenmoriston Beastie Trail at sites on Estate land.

I also passed on concerns about access for walkers across Estate land and Steven offered to talk directly to anyone who could point to a specific concern, especially if safety concerns were being raised.

2. Scottish Nature

Joyce Gilbert approached GIG to see if we would act as intermediaries for a research project on Glenmoriston Musical and Poetic Heritage, funded by Scottish Nature. We agreed, and two researchers are currently active in this project

3. Trees for Life

We are pleased to have formed a good relationship with Trees for Life. We have publicised a series of 4 workshops on Gaelic in the Landscape arranged by Joyce and Kat at Trees for Life, which were delivered through Zoom and very well received. Trees for Life have also given permission for markers for the Glenmoriston Beastie Trail on their land.

4. We have had written permissions from Highland Council, Forestry and Land Scotland, S.S.E and J. Holt and P.&V. Wood for marker posts for the trail to be erected on their land.

Activities

1. Christmas Lights.

F.A.G.C. Company provided funds for a Christmas Lights display in Invermoriston. Access to a power source for the lights was a major issue. The Glenmoriston Millennium Hall committee kindly agreed to allow access to their supply so that a display could be arranged in the small garden adjacent to the hall and on the hall itself. Thanks to Hilary, who undertook all the original discussions with FAGCC and to local youngsters who told us what they would like to see- and of course to Karen and others at FAGCC who made it possible.

We will be trying to get access to Highland Council's electricity supply for next year so that we can put white lights along the car park/A82 trees.

2. Website

A bid to FAGCC was successful in obtaining funds to establish a website for all things relating to the Glen, from local services to local history and to give us a secure forum for discussions on Glen matters. This will go live shortly.

3. War Memorial (see Treasurer's report)

4. Glenmoriston Beastie Trail.

An application to FAGCC is currently awaiting consideration, to establish a Trail across Glenmoriston and in Invermoriston, to mark points of interest. Marker posts would offer symbols of animals to be found in the Glen, for 'brass-rubbings' by visitors. As well as marking our heritage, it is hoped this would encourage visitors to spend more time in the Glen instead of just passing through.

5. Public toilets

GIG was asked to support the Highland Council's bid to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund for money to refurbish the Hall toilets, septic tank and to place a chemical toilet emptying point in the car park. We were asked to supply photographs and counts to evidence the number of visitors, supporting comments from local people and businesses and details of bus connections, as well as making our own supportive submission.

Unfortunately we now know the Highland Council bid was not successful, with only a slight chance of getting funds on a waiting list of five reserve projects. However the Hall Committee has bid successfully to Beinneun Community Funds for sufficient money to carry out the essential repairs and is negotiating again with Highland Council to get the necessary support for public use of the toilets.

Appendix 2 Memorial Bench Update – March 2021

As you all know, with the virus restrictions in place everything has taken much longer than it previously would have but things have still been happening behind the scenes as much as possible.

I have been in contact with GD Steel, Belfast, throughout this time and kept communications open with Gareth at their head office regularly.

I am pleased to say that they have prioritised our bench as much as they could in these difficult times despite Northern Ireland having much tougher lockdown conditions than we have had here for much of the time.

As soon as the bench is here I will be able to arrange for the base to be made up. We haven't been able to do this beforehand as we need the bench to be here to get the correct kind of fixings and to assess the best method for installation.

We will get onto this as soon as it's here. Marion Gillies has, as has been mentioned previously, donated the slabs for the base so the only requirements will be to source chippings and edging stones to complete the landscaping.

Pat Dobner

G.I.G. Treasurer