

## GARVE AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES

of the meeting held at Achnasheen on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Present: Doug Winship, Lady Eliza Leslie Melville, Eimir Hughes Winship, Sheree Grant, Nel Macdonald Rolfe, Marianne Mackenzie, Alec Mackenzie, Councillor Ewen Mackinnon, and 8 members of the public.

Apologies: Pat Campbell, Ian Dickinson, Uisdean Menzies, Dena Ross.

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting was proposed by Sheree Grant and seconded by Marianne Mackenzie.

Chairman Doug Winship introduced Mary Gibson, Scottish Natural Heritage local officer for Wester Ross South, who is the contact for both Dingwall and Ullapool offices.

Mary explained that SNH has statutory duties set out in legislation under the Countryside Act, which must be followed – providing advice, research, gathering information on species, habitat, landscape, ecology. Resources come from the Scottish Executive to enhance natural heritage. The most contentious issues are those of designation of sites, eg the Fannichs. There is international recognition of the Fannichs, which contains areas of wet heath, upland heath, a mosaic of rare mosses and plants, thus the proposal to designate the area as a Special Area of Conservation. This means there will be surveys in conjunction/collaboration with owners/occupiers, to locate where the most important rare habitats are. Activities in these areas will have to be looked at to ensure there is no change to them.

A number of questions were raised regarding the probability of erosion if more people walk in these areas. Would SNH fund repairs? Mary replied that SNH would fund part of the costs. What extra restrictions would apply to these areas? SNH have to monitor this through a rolling programme. Muir burning could continue if carried out in accordance with the code, but additional sheep would have to be discussed.

The question was asked as to how an SAC would benefit our area. Mary replied it reflects the importance of the area. Promoting the sites would encourage more people to visit. It was pointed out that local Estates would not be amused if even more people go on the hill – accidents cost a lot. Mary said SNH recognised that stalking is a sensitive time. The whole principle of access is it must be responsible. Councillor Mackinnon pointed out that more information is required for landowners, and it should be for the local community to decide.

Doug thanked Mary for coming and explaining something about the proposed SAC.

### Any Other Business

The provision of rubbish skips in Achnasheen and Garve is to cease. Instead there will be a bin lorry on certain days. Information as to when, where and times will be forthcoming.

The Senior Citizens' Christmas Party last year was not well attended, so it is proposed to send out questionnaires to find out if some other form of event would be preferable, perhaps a lunch rather than an evening party.

Whatever the outcome, it will be necessary to raise some money for the event, so it is suggested we hold a Silent Auction again as the previous ones were very successful. It is two years since we held one, so hopefully everyone has accumulated lots of items they are willing to donate. As always, no clothing and no books. The date has yet to be agreed, but notices will be placed in all the usual locations. Any more information required, please contact Eimir or Doug on 414274.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003, 8pm at Garve.