

**Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston Community Council**  
**Draft Minutes of meeting held at the Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus**  
**on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Present:**

Deirdre MacKinnon - Chair (DM)

Jenny Findlay - Vice-Chair (JF)

Mike Anderson - Treasurer (MA)

Claire Pegrum - (CP)

Helen Clay - (HMC)

Clare Levings (CL)

James Prince (JP)

Daniel Clark (DC)

Cllr. David Fraser (DF)



**Apologies:**

Leanne Findlay (LF)

Cllr. Chris Ballance (CB)

**Previous Minutes:**

Addendum:

JF attended the SSE Community Liaison Group (CLG), and minutes have now been received.

Proposed by MA, seconded by CP.

**Speaker:** Laurie Piper (LP), Head of Customer Experience and Delivery at Scottish Canals Trust (SCT)

LP attended the meeting at the request of the Community Council. He explained that he has overall responsibility for the operation of the Caledonian and Crinan canals, plus moorings, volunteering and complaints.

LP acknowledged and apologised for the lack of direct interaction with the Community Council and residents over many years, and committed his staff to engage on a regular basis. This is already something that happens with the Environment, Development and Infrastructure

Committee of Argyll and Bute Council for the Crinan Canal and would be every three months at least.

He explained the staffing structure relevant to Fort Augustus and stated that councillors were welcome to speak with them directly anytime. However, in order to have oversight of the backlog of issues, Laurie requested that in the first instance, a collated list be sent to him so that he could assign them to the correct department/person and monitor progress.

*Craig Cummings, Manager of Canal Operations, based at the Seaport Marina, Inverness*

*Douglas Gordon, Local manager for Canal Operations*

*Gemma Flinders, Canal Operations team leader and liaison for community activities*

*Charlie Furnival, Caledonian Canal Centre manager*

Councillors expressed their disappointment that SCT did not take pride in Fort Augustus despite the scheduled monument status. The infrastructure is neglected and there are no activities for residents (and tourists) to take part in. LP acknowledged that this appeared to be the case and he undertook to work hard to change this, initially addressing matters relating to health and safety. Partnership with the community could then be developed by Sam Cassels (Placemaking) who reports to Fiona MacFadyen, Head of Estates.

*A selection of previously raised issues were then highlighted.*

Rubbish and dog bins; painting of infrastructure; loose paving on canalside and steps (last date of inspection to be checked by LP); Log of health and safety risks.

Ownership of the viaduct on Canalside North and the road beneath (not adopted by Highland Council) - potholes and pooling water causing issues for residents of Bruce's Building.

Leak at lock three is expected to be fixed by the end of May. It is now 28 May and has not been done.

The strip of land at Caledonian House is overgrowing again and does not appear to be part of the contractors' cutting schedule. LP committed to getting it tidied up.

Progress with ownership transfer of the Memorial Hall: LP assured councillors that SCT had completed their part in the matter as evidenced by Registers of Scotland.

Progress with ownership transfer of Glentarff: LP stated that he had already added his signature and it would be signed off by other legal parties in the next few weeks.

LP advised that Scott II was an unlicensed boat and he was making arrangements for imminent removal. He was reminded that it would be illegal to move whilst there were nesting birds. LP agreed to consult with the environmental advisors for SCT.

The motorhome site is an Aire site licensed for up to five spaces in accordance with the Camping and Caravanning Club. It was created in response to a problem that was occurring with overnight parking. This was refuted by a resident who lives close to the site and had

witnessed occasional overnight parking turn into nightly parking of between four and twelve motorhomes.

LP was thanked for his attendance and a full list of issues would be sent to him.

## **Matters Arising:**

### **Inchnacardoch Land**

Following the unanimous resolution to form an SCIO for Inchnacardoch Land, there has been an initial meeting of the SCIO sub-committee. Highland Third Sector Interface are advising and a mission statement has been created, although a name has yet to be chosen.

A report from the SCIO sub-committee is to become a permanent agenda item.

***Access to Inchnacardoch Land is currently prohibited. The Community Council cannot and will not give permission to the land adjoining the bay (the layby from the A82) due to the nature of the current condition of the site and the liability therein.***

### **Fort Augustus to Glen Urquhart School - HC service bus**

DF confirmed that the HC service bus for travel between FA and Glen Urquhart School is not being terminated. It operates (in the same way as the service bus from Tomich to Inverness) for the benefit of parents who have exercised their choice of school.

Councillors pointed out that no such service bus exists from Glen Urquhart to FA, nor from Foyers to FA for parents who wish their children to attend a smaller school.

Councillors again expressed their concerns about dwindling numbers, and an insufficiency of teachers. Any newly-qualified teachers have to leave because there is no hope of a job at the end of their probation.

DF stated he would speak to Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Exec of People, responsible for Education.

### **BEAR**

Daniel Preston from BEAR holds responsibility for the swing bridge but Councillors requested support from SCT to press for action concerning cleaning and maintenance (including repainting) of the protected structure.

DF is to meet with BEAR in approximately 2-3 weeks to chase the various outstanding road issues, including the swing bridge.

CL and Lynne West (LW), Chair of the Millennium Hall Association are to meet with Kate Forbes, MSP on 1 August to discuss the dangers of the Invermoriston junction.

## **Treasurer's Report:**

Current balance remains at £7905.90 with £1500 from Etape deposited the previous day and £1500 ring-fenced from Community Company towards solicitor costs.

## **Planning**

No new Planning Applications validated 28/04/25 - 25/05/25

## **Renewable Energy Projects:**

Tomchrasky has been approved.

Next SSE Community Liaison Group (CLG) takes place on 3 June.

Bhlaraidh to be invited to the June meeting.

Culachy to be invited to the August meeting

DM and MA met with the Chair and Operations manager of the Community Company to discuss cooperation concerning the Social Charter for Renewables and the Local Place Plan.

A working group for the re-negotiation of renewables community benefit is to be created under the umbrella of the Community Council, supported by the Ward Manager and Renewables Benefits Officer. The group will consist of FAGC Council, FAGC Company, Invermoriston Hall Association and the West Glenmoriston Hub.

Re-negotiation topics will include Direct Funding (local energy discount) for the whole Community Council area, and an increase in benefit from SSEN owing to the extension of the Auchterawe substation.

MA remarked that he would like HC to perform an arbitration role between Community Councils when negotiating with energy schemes to create a fairer system.

## **Community Amenity Issues:**

HC has not yet given a date for the start of the parking attendant in FA.

DF to speak with Citylink again regarding their refusal to recognise the Abertarff bus stop.

Parking and tree issues in the Riggs are to be looked at by the HC Housing department.

Following disappointing attendance at the monthly Directors' Surgeries held by the Community Company, there will be a trial at Soup and Sandwiches.

DF stated that HC would be voting to confirm 20mph orders. Flashing reminder signs were in place for motorists entering the village but not exiting.

The bark covering at the Abertarff play parks has been layered with salted grit. It is assumed that this is to kill off the weeds.

DF confirmed that it was up to the community to create a vision for the local play parks and calculate the investment required. There is professional support available from HC officers

and Sport Scotland, and because the £5000 from HC for play parks would not stretch very far, it could nevertheless act as seed money to get additional equipment. (This money would need to be committed by 31 March.) Councillors agreed to add this topic to the agenda for June.

### **AOCB**

Some residents of Abertarff Place are continuing to behave badly toward their neighbours. The Housing Officer was involved approximately 12 months ago but there has been no further action.

DM and MA have spoken with the Community Council about the provision of bins in the Fort Augustus car park and the increasing amount of waste. DF is to escalate the matter with Highland Council. A resident remarked that it would be good to have a whole village approach to reducing the amount of waste produced by tourists and improved recycling.

### **Correspondence:**

Monster Chip Shop, P & A Prendergast, Community Company, Highland Council Amenities, H Nicolson, Inverness Community Partnership, UK Forest Certification Group, Highland Third Sector Interface, Energy Consents Unit, Crathaic Wind Farm, Loch Kemp Storage.

### **Next meetings:**

**Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus on 25th June 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus on 27th August 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus on 24th September 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Glenmoriston Millennium Hall, Invermoriston on 29th October 2025 at 7.30 pm**

**Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus on 26th November 2025 at 7.30pm**