

Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston Community Council

Draft Minutes of meeting held at the Glenmoriston Millennium Hall, Invermoriston
on Wednesday 30th April 2025

Present:



Deirdre MacKinnon - Chair (DM)

Jenny Findlay - Vice-Chair (JF)

Mike Anderson - Treasurer (MA)

Claire Pegrum - (CP)

Helen Clay - (HMC)

Clare Levings (CL)

Leanne Findlay (LF)

James Prince (JP)

Apologies:

Daniel Clark (DC)

Cllr. Chris Ballance (CB)

Cllr. David Fraser (DF)

Previous Minutes:

Proposed by JF, seconded by CL

Matters Arising:

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Community Council land situation (Inchnacardoch Land) as publicly notified to the local communities via social media and noticeboards. Subsequent to these notices, the Community Council was advised that the Lovat Estate has ownership of the Kirton Memorial, and the land adjacent to the school does not belong to the Community Council either. Usual council matters would be addressed if time allowed.

Inch Bay

MA presented the meeting with the results of his analysis of the burdens within the deeds, and a large budget would be necessary over a number of years to enable major repairs including drainage, historical and environmental protections. This would also include dealing with the existing fuel contamination and boat wrecks, thus creating a welcome and managed space for the community, wildlife and the environment.

History and current status

Original burdens: 1922 sold by Lovat Estate to Forestry Commission (as part of the larger plot owned by their successor) with three burdens: Cannot sell alcohol on site; Damage is responsibility of the owner; Lovat Estate retains the right to reclaim ownership if the land is not maintained.

Subsequent burdens: 1984 sold by Forestry Commission to Community Council: Lovat Estate retains the right to fish; Access to and from the road cannot be altered; Boundaries to be maintained by neighbouring owners.

Liability: The Community Council office bearers of Chair and Secretary (and all successors in subsequent councils) are personally liable for the site. The limited insurance available to Councils cannot be extended to adequately cover this type of asset as the site has to be suitably managed and maintained to current SHE standards.

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.

Decision

Following a meeting of available councillors, Cllr Chris Ballance and the Ward manager on 31 March to discuss asset ownership and taking independent advice from Highland Council and Highland Third Sector Interface, it is proposed that an SCIO be formed to hold Inch Bay with councillors as Trustees to safeguard the asset for the benefit of the community.

Questions from residents were answered by councillors to clarify the setup process.

- Initially a Community Council sub-committee will be formed as the basis of the SCIO until such a time as the SCIO becomes a separate entity with the asset transferred.
- The Community Council can apply for funds and hold them in trust until the SCIO is in place
- The community will be consulted on proposals for the site
- There will be further discussions with boat users regarding access across the land.
- Tailored insurance specific to the site is currently being investigated.
- A name for the SCIO has not yet been chosen but every effort will be made to avoid introducing additional confusion amongst the community with regard to the existing organisations.

- The SCIO will take the form of a Heritage and Environmental organisation which will compliment the activities of the Community Company.
- It has never been the wish of councillors to have two companies (which may be perceived to be in competition with each other), but the Community Council always intends for the land to be available to the Community Company should their position ever change.

Following the discussion councillors unanimously resolved to form an SCIO for Inchnacardoch Land. The Community Company will be advised of this decision by email and a preliminary meeting is to take place on 5 May to discuss further co-operation between the SCIO and the Community Company.

Scottish Canals/BEAR

The swing bridge and its pavements no longer appear to be level with the roadway. It is better than during the winter works when the ramp/gap caused tyre punctures, but a motorised wheelchair user has complained of being tipped sideways whilst using the dropped kerbs.

Notification has been received that the leak at lock three is planned to be fixed by the end of May. The repair should take less than one day and will take place within the lock without disruption to road users.

The new wider access created for Cruise Loch Ness users to cross the A82 now means that pedestrians cross *en masse*, which seems to be creating a greater hazard than previously.

Councillors were pleased to hear that Laurie Piper, Head of Customer Experience and Delivery at Scottish Canals, has accepted the invitation to attend the meeting following the AGM in May. It is hoped that he will commit to engage with the Community Council and residents on a regular basis to protect and enhance the Scheduled Monument that sits within a Conservation Area. DM spoke with him for an hour relaying previously minuted issues and asked for any additional points to be emailed to her directly.

Councillors noted that the last major project relating to residents and tourists was the visitor centre which in their view was meant to be more of a heritage centre. There are no staff employed at the information desk, no artefacts and just information printed on the walls of the cafe, most of which must be read over the heads of people eating at tables.

Safety in Invermoriston

Lynne West (LW), Chair of the Millennium Hall Association is talking with Kate Forbes, MSP to encourage a site visit from Vincent Tate to view the specific nature of the junction. Whilst individual issues do not currently qualify for additional measures from BEAR, when treated as a whole the risk to pedestrians is high.

LW also raised the difficulty for funeral processions in reaching the cemetery from the car park without a path. In the past there were police directing traffic around the increased number of pedestrians. She asked if the Community Council would support her request for a pathway to be installed. This was unanimously agreed.

Treasurer s Report:

Current balance is 6512.10 with 1500 ring-fenced from Community Company towards solicitor costs.

Planning:

Planning Application Validated 28/01/25 24/02/25

Ref: 24/05322/FUL

Location: Culnacarn Glenmoriston Inverness IV63 7YJ

Proposal: Alterations and extension of house; erection of garage; siting and conversion of containers to gym and 2 short term holiday letting units

Applicant: Stuart Murray

The Community Council submitted an objection on the grounds of unsafe access/egress with the A887. Owing to an administrative error the planning application was approved without the statutory determination from Transport Scotland, who were only notified once the objection had been raised on 18 March. CP has addressed this with HC and also notified them that the track in question belongs to a third party, not the applicant.

Planning Application Validated 25/02/25 13/03/25

Ref: 25/00594/FUL

Location: Land 150M SW of Cherry Lodge, Fort Augustus

Proposal: Erection of 3No. holiday pods

Applicant: Simon Kennedy

Note: Cherry Lodge is one of the holiday cottages next to Loch Ness Cottage and Shorelands. New pods will be the same as those already on site. HMC lamented the loss of dark skies from lights within pods and lodges.

DM did not take part in this discussion. Although some councillors recollected that previous permission was granted with restrictions about expansion - CP had not been able to locate the prior application.

New Planning Applications Validated 13/03/25 28/04/25

Ref: 25/00963/PNO

Location: Land 2.5KM SW Of Glendoebeg, Upper Glendoe, Fort Augustus

Proposal: Peatland restoration scheme

Applicant: Glendoe Ltd

Notes: Determined that prior approval not required 17/04/25

Ref: 25/00993/FUL

Location: Land 350M North Of Newtown, Invergarry

Proposal: Formation of temporary workers residential accommodation, including welfare facilities, associated infrastructure and other ancillary development

Applicant: Balfour Beatty

Notes: Next stage of development for up to 360 workers. Full application following 25/00587/SCRE (which was in February s list).

Ref: 25/00775/FUL

Location: Quarry Lodge, Dalchreichart

Proposal: Erection of house

Applicant: Lloyd Fursdon

Notes: Planning permission for a house on this site has been granted in the past but has since expired.

Ref: 25/01507/PNO

Location: Land 100M SE Of Chatom, Dalchreichart

Proposal: Formation of forestry track

Applicant: Forestry and Land Scotland

Notes: Short extension to existing track

Ref: 25/01510/PNO

Location: Land 375M SE of Tailor's Croft, Invermoriston

Proposal: Formation of track

Applicant: Forestry and Land Scotland

Notes: New track to link two existing tracks

Ref: 25/01509/PNO

Location: Land 70M North of Riverview, Dalchreichart

Proposal: Formation of access track

Applicant: Forestry and Land Scotland

Notes: Upgrade and widening of existing track

Renewable Energy Projects:

CP and JF are both part of the SSE Community Liaison Group (CLG) but were unable to attend the latest meeting. Minutes have not yet been received.

Glen Earrach Energy - the planning application includes an upgrade of the access track at Allt Sigh. A resident expressed concern about water quality if the required works cause disturbance to the groundwater. They offered to participate when a CLG for the project gets created.

Bhlaraidh scheme is to be redesigned with fewer but taller (230m) turbines which would require steady red lights at the top of the support structure as a warning for aircraft. SSE are to be invited to attend the June meeting.

SSEN Auchterawe substation extension has received approval from HC.

MA proposed that it now seems to be a good opportunity to formalise the process for community benefit between the Community Council, the Community Company and the renewable energy schemes. HC is renegotiating at regional level but only the Community Council can negotiate at local level before planning; the Community Company is not allowed to engage with the energy schemes before planning is approved. (A Scottish Government consultation on updating the good practice guidance for developer payments closed on 11th April.)

Community Amenity Issues:

Sadly Sunflower Home Care will finish on 13 June owing to lack of staff.

Improved signage is required for the quarterly skips kindly provided by the Community Company, to deter fly-tipping of waste that cannot be disposed of. Tyres and mattresses for example are not allowed.

CL reported that a parking attendant issued tickets to residents attending an event inside the Millennium Hall despite the voluntary parking fee. When approached, the male would not identify themselves or state who he was employed by.

DM received a request from the Senior Citizens Association for support and organisation of a community gala as a fundraising event for all the different community groups. Members of the SCA are also members of many other groups and fundraising for most of them involves the same people being asked to attend and donate at several events. Having a whole village event involving tourists would hopefully generate greater participation by villagers and raise a worthwhile amount for each group. The idea being that each group should share in the workload by nominating a rep for the organising committee and their group would receive a share of the profits.

Councillors expressed support but considered that the Community Company were best placed to lead such an event. HMC was asked to relay this request.

HMC reported that there had been disappointing attendance at the monthly Directors Surgeries held by the Community Company, and encouraged residents to participate. It may be that the trial becomes quarterly instead. It was commented that Invermoriston residents usually take the opportunity to speak with a Director during Community Tuesdays, so perhaps attendance would change now that the project is on summer break.

A general discussion took place about the use of the community larders funded by the Community Company. HMC reported that they were well used, mostly appropriately, but with the occasions of misuse. Larders were now locked overnight. Hardship grants remain available but the change to making food available to everyone was to alleviate the stigma and processing time that making an application involves, and to remove the suffering of anyone deemed to be just above any set income levels. Everyone agreed that the funding was appreciated and the scheme could be deemed successful and worthwhile overall despite any misuse.

AOCB

From 4 April a no parking order is now in force between Caley Brae and Bunoich Brae. Existing yellow lines need repainting and extension.

The number of school children using the service bus to travel to Drumnadrochit exceeds the numbers reported by DF at previous meetings, and this number will increase from the next academic year. This is extremely worrying for the future of the school and the community.

Tourist minibuses and occasionally full-length coaches continue to drive to the end of Oich Pier. CP to write to all of the tour operators.

HMC restated the suggestion that the first parking bay on Canalside South needs to be for loading only. Deliveries to businesses need to take place throughout the day and congestion could be avoided if the bay was reserved.

CL restated that the viewcatcher on the Great Glen Way above Invermoriston needs to be repaired.

A resident's two dogs required veterinary treatment after consuming food waste thrown onto the bank of Canalside North. It was suspected to be from the larger boat cruisers but evidence would need to be provided before the Community Council could take any action.

Citylink are still refusing to recognise the Abertarff bus stop. The matter will be raised with them again.

Next meetings:

AGM - Memorial Hall, Fort Augustus on 28th May 2025 at 7.15pm

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