Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Council held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 2nd September 2025 in Kilmonivaig Church Hall

Present: John Fotheringham (Chairman, Ian Langley (Vice Chairman), Melvyn Giles (Secretary), Alison Munro (Treasurer) Sharon Donald, Christine Clephan, Val Steele, Ian Matheson, Linda Taylor and Highland Councillor John Grafton and 4 members of the public.

A**pologies:** Jenny Hastings

Conflict of Interest Declarations: None

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting on 5th August 2025 having been circulated and there being no amendments were approved:
Proposer: Christine Clephan Seconder: Ian Langley

Matters Arising:

a. **Community Police Officer –** Acting Inspector Katy Duncan has returned to post and has agreed to a meeting with the Chairman after 8th September. Sgt Paige MacDonald gave her apologies. A theft of an electric bike from the Woollen Mill Car Park was noted.
b. **Transport Scotland/BEAR Scotland** – An unsatisfactory response to our trunk road issues had been received from Fiona Hyslop the Cabinet Secretary for Transport via Kate Forbes which had been circulated. The continued failure by Transport Scotland to address the many trunk road issues besetting our community is entirely unacceptable. The Chairman has written to Kate Forbes MP with the suggestion that both Transport Scotland's CEO and herself attend a Community Council Meeting to explain why we are always neglected. Failing that a deputation would like to meet Alison Irvine in person. We await a reply. At the same time neighbouring Community Councils Laggan and Newtonmore received a reply from Transport Scotland claiming that the A86 and A889 were adequate to accommodate the increase in heavy goods traffic resulting from the recently approved major pump hydro scheme and related SSEN Sub Station. Transport Scotland are clearly in denial.
   The second phase of the resurfacing of the A86 Trunk Road Laggan Dam to Roy Bridge is due to be completed on Thursday 25th September 2025.
   The A82 between Inveruglas and Invernarnan will be closed from 2000 to 0600 between 21st September and 2nd October with diversions in place.
c. **Highland Council** - Once again as normal Lochaber is last to get the changes to Bin Collections. We note our Community Council Area does not yet have a garden waste collection despite being repeatedly and consistently misled by Highland council over

many years. Councillor Grafton will pursue on our behalf. Thanks to Councillor Saggers for sending us the Members Briefing on the Changes to the Bin Schedule which is available for circulation on request.

The winter gritting schedule has been agreed for 25/26 with no change affecting our communities.

A section of the U1015 the Glenroy Road will be closed from 1st September till 17th October to allow for essential replacement of bridge infrastructure on the road.

d. **The Convention of Highland Community Council** – The Chairman attended the second meeting of the Convention of Highland Community Councils at Kingsmills Hotel Inverness on 12th August. It was an opportunity for Community Councils to listen to our MPs and MSPs and hear how they will support the objectives of the Convention. A report has been circulated and a letter from the Chairman may appear in next week's Lochaber Times. Pumped Storage Hydro was once again ignored., and we are concerned about the politicisation of the campaign, and concentration on wind farm opposition. The next step may be looking at a canvassing MSPs at Holyrood. There is no doubt some rural communities are suffering massively from wind farm turbines and infrastructure and like our experience nobody pays any attention to the views of Community Councils.

   Halkirk Community Council are co-ordinating a Highland Community Council approach with Website and Facebook Page which was noted.

e. EARBA Community Alliance – We continue to communicate with our neighbouring Community Councillors online and in person. There appears to be a consensus on our collective attitude to the Convention of Highland Community Councils, and the Minutes of our Meeting with Gilkes Energy have been circulated. We have proposed seeking advice and support from Local Energy Scotland and it is anticipated another meeting possibly in Spean Bridge will take place in September.

f. Bunroy Road – We seem to have reached an impasse. If the Residents want to progress the matter somebody has to complete the Road Construction Consent Forms and submit them to Highland Council. They don't have to be perfect but by doing that they will be lodged in the system and Transport Planning and others will then give advice and support.

g. **Belford Hospital –** The project is now well through Stage 2 the Concept and Design phase with the next Stage 3 likely to be completed in January 2026. NHS Highland has shared updated timelines with the Lochaber Community Stakeholders Group in which the Vice Chairman is a member and the NHS Highland Website also contains information. A video showing the floor design may be available soon.

h. **Government Consultations** – The Consultation of the Environmental Standards Scotland Draft Strategy for 2026 – 2031 was duly completed, circulated, and forwarded to the Scottish Government on 21st August. It is our belief that the lack of resource is affecting the capability of ESS to carry out robust and timely investigations, and therefore to recommend necessary legislative amendments. There is a current consultation on Chronic Pain.

i. **Forest Plans** – The Forest Plans for Killechonate Woodlands, Jahama Highland Estates and Forest and Land Scotland have been circulated. Although broadly in favour of the diversification in timber species, and the natural regeneration of native trees there is concern about the extreme nature of the dear culling proposed. After receiving Council's opinion, the Chair responded to Jahama and will write to Killiechonate shortly.
j. **Communication Policy** – A policy having been drafted and circulated, and it was agreed that subject to an amendment it would be submitted for approval next month.

Correspondence:

1. **Engagement with the National Planning Improvement Framework –** following our selection and participation in March 2025 in the Peer Collaborative Review, a six month follow up workshop will be held online on Tuesday 16th September and the Chairman will attend on our behalf and report back.
2. **Land Purchase Request** – A couple from Australia requested information on land purchase in our community and what they would be permitted to erect on it. Referred to Highland Council Planning Authority.
3. **Linnhe Community Alliance** – The Alliance is in temporary abeyance until they can find someone to fulfil the role of Secretary for a calendar year. It seems a pity to lose an online useful forum for the lack of a Minute secretary. It was suggested that there are AI Apps that might be used to generate Minutes.
4. **SSEN** – Networking for Net Zero Stakeholder Newsletter Summer Edition is available for circulation if requested.
5. **Janis Strachan of An Gearasdan Integrated Transport Forum** – intimated the Agenda for the Meeting of 2nd September Ian Langley reported on the business conducted particularly Kate Forbes supporting directional signs every ½ mile on Trunk roads.
6. **Coire Glas Liaison Group** – The next Liaison Group Meeting is scheduled for 7pm on Tuesday 30th September in Glengarry Village Hall.
7. **Iain Boyd of the Social Enterprise Academy** – A place on the Active and Sustainable Travel in Rural Communities Residential Programme at Dundreggan Rewilding Centre, Glenmorison between 5th and 6th November has been awarded to the Chairman.
8. **Highland Camping and Caravans Association –** A report on Unlicensed Camping and its effect on Communities and Licensed Campsites. Noted**.**

Treasurer's Report

Income of £600 had been received from the Six Day Trials at the request of Kiliechonate Woodlands, and Expenditure of Micro Grants £500 to the Music School, £200 to the Children's Christmas Party and £400 to the Roy Bridge Garden's Scheme leaving a balance of £10,661.13.

Stronelairg Wind Farm Community Fund Micro Grant

An application from Sarah Jayne Stewart for £500 to support for the Roy Bridge Halloween Party was approved.

Planning:

The Chairman and Secretary met with Bob Robertson, Interim South Planning Manager to discuss current planning issues relating to our Community Council Area. We understand that our local input is appreciated.

Planning Application 25/02655/FUL – Change of Use of Land, siting of Cabin, Shed, Formation of Hard Standing. Erection of Fence (in retrospect) at land 190 m SW of Darroch Cottage, Spean Bridge. The Planning Sub Committee recommended objection based on NPF4 Policies but the recent DPEA Reporter's ruling that in such circumstances the planning unit is the whole area not individual plots may be critical. A Submission has been circulated approved unanimously and forwarded to Highland Council.

Planning Application 25/02832/FUL – Erection of House and Annex for Ancillary and Holiday Letting Purpose on land 30m West of Tigh Clovelly, Gairlochy, Spean Bridge.

Planning Application 25/02864/PNO – Erection of Agricultural Shed at 1 Murlaggan, Roy Bridge.

Planning Application 25/02866/FUL – Siting of Container for use as Workshop Space ancillary to Main Building at 5 Aonachan Gardens, Spean Bridge (Retrospective)

Planning Application 25/3059/FUL – Formation of Temporary Access and alteration of Existing Access at land 175m NW of Larchwood, Murlaggan, Roy Bridge.

Planning Application 25/3089/PNO – Prior approval under Class 29 for Alterations and Re-deck of existing Railway Bridge at land 71m NE of Alt na Caiplich, Murlaggan, Roy Bridge.

The five applications were approved, but we will ask Network Rail to erect warning signs on the A86 relating to 25/3059/FUL.

Any Other Business:
Next Meeting Tuesday 7th October.
The Vice Chairman highlighted the availability of the service provided by the LAD bus service which serves Roy and Spean on a Thursday and is currently underused.
It was noticed that the Spean Bridge Noticeboard has been damaged.

Meeting closed at 20:10.

Melvyn Giles
Secretary