Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Council held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 7th July 2026 in Kilmonivaig Church Hall.

Present: John Fotheringham (Chairman), Melvyn Giles (Secretary), Sharon Donald, Ian Langley, Ian Matheson, Linda Taylor, and Councillors John Grafton, Sammy Cameron and 7 members of the public.

Apologies: Alison Munro, Val Steele, Christine Clephan, Jenny Hastings, Linda Taylor and Councillor Liz Saggers.

Conflict of Interest Declarations: None

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting on 2nd June 2026 having been circulated and there being no amendments were approved:
Proposer: Ian Matheson Seconder: Ian Langley

Matters Arising:

a. **Transport Scotland/BEAR Scotland** – Last month's reply from Transport Scotland to the Chairman's comprehensive request has persuaded both Andrew Baxter MSP and SSE Renewables to contact the Roads Authority on our behalf.
The roadworks on the A86 between Laggan and Newtonmore commenced on 29th June at the Spey River Section with the McPherson Junction Section to follow on completion but the Laggan Church Section has been cancelled.
b. **Highland Council -** The Chairman drew the attention of those present to the difficulty he had experienced in getting replies to correspondence from some in Highland Council and Councillor Cameron offered to help.
c. **Coire Glas & EARBA Pumped Storage Schemes –** OFGEM has announced Coire Glas and EARBA are two of 16 Long Duration Electric Storage (LDES) projects named in its Minded-to-Decision list for receipt of cap and floor investment support
SSE Renewables we understand will now assess the outcome of the LDES project assessment and will fully engage OFGEM to work through a significant number of points of detail which will need to be resolved for the project to progress.
Although Gilkes Energy are proceeding with preparatory works for the EARBA Scheme we are unaware of any ongoing negotiations they are having with OFGEM.
d. Community Police Officer – Constables Meldrum and Cawthorn attended on behalf of A/Insp Tony Anderson whom the Chairman had been in correspondence with. We

still await a reply to the specific points raised in our last communication, and Constable Meldrum explained the process that Police Scotland deploy when investigating complaints. Speeding in both our villages remains a concern and although only the 20mph sector of the A86 adjacent to the school is regularly monitored vehicles were regularly exceeding that speed**.** The Chairman thanked both for their presence and support.

e. **Nature Scot** – The Site Visit and Hearing for the Nature Conservation Order Appeal took place on the 3rd and 8th June. In the absence of the requested Police Scotland presence the Site Visit was bit chaotic but in the Hearing Nature Scot's Geomorphologist and Lead Counsel were particularly impressive in explaining the need for a NCO. We must now await the Reporter's findings.
The Chairman and Secretary had a meeting with Nature Scot's Representatives on 18th June which proved most fruitful. We were shown the latest map of the Parallel Roads of Lochaber SSSI and understood Nature Scot's position in trying to balance where development might be possible against areas they are keen to preserve. Unconsented works were a particular problem and Nature Scot would welcome pre planning requests from prospective developers in the SSSI.

f. Environmental Standards Agency – The Chairman has written again to the lead investigator about ongoing issues and awaits a reply.

g. Belford Hospital. Ian Langley reported that the Planning process was proceeding and the final funding business case was being progressed. A large sign adjacent to the A830 had been erected and it was hoped construction would commence late 2027.

h. **Resilience Committee** – Nothing to report.

Correspondence:

1. **Callum Fraser –** An exchange of correspondence relating to development on the SSSI. If Nature Scot approves any Application and it conforms with the relevant Policies in NPF4 the Community Council will not object. If any application fails to meet that criterium we are duty bound to uphold the law.
2. **South Planning Manager –** Two emails requesting information and a meeting about a specific case and why Enforcement Action is not being pursued in 4 sites. After a lengthy debate it was agreed that Highland Council's inaction is not acceptable and that the Community Council will escalate by informing all South based Community Councils of our issues and proposing an amendment to Highland Council's Enforcement Charter to take punitive action against deliberate failure to apply for planning permission before commencing development.
3. **Fortnightly Community Support Briefings –** these are circulated for individual Councillors to highlight those that are relevant or worthy of progressing.
4. **Connecting Spean and Roy SCIO. –** The Minutes of their Trustees Meeting have been circulated.
5. **Highland Council –** Notice of Off Street Parking Changes Public Consultation 5th - 27thJuly**.**
6. **Cllr John Grafton –** Ongoing Visitor Levy Discussions. Noted**.**

7. **Highland Council** has just launched its new on-line engagement portal available at Citizen engagement platform | The Highland Council. This will supplement but not replace other methods of engagement and allows a much more interactive experience with the facility for creation of ideas, using mapping to drop 'pins', voting etc. One of the most helpful features is that registered users can select the geographic and/or sectoral areas they are interested in and will then receive notifications when there is new activity under these themes or when there are updates. There is no requirement to register on the site, but more functions are available to those who choose to do so
8. **Scottish Government –** Trust and Transparency in Scotland Community Bulletin Issue 6 is available for circulation on request.
9. **Imogen Dalley –** Results of survey of Lights for the Villages and support from the SCIO for her funding efforts.
10. **The Loch Abar Mòr partnership** will shortly be launching a consultation on the potential reintroduction of beavers to the River Lochy catchment. This follows the process outlined in the Scottish Beaver Strategy and, depending on the outcome of the consultation, could lead to an application to NatureScot for a licence to release beavers into the catchment. They want to engage with stakeholders to understand their views, and to consider the effects beavers could have and what could be done to manage and mitigate any negative impacts. The public consultation will begin in July and include a mail shot, drop-in events and online communications. The Drop In Events locally Roy Bridge Memorial Hall 2-7pm on 15th July & Spean Bridge Community Centre 22nd 2-7pm.
11. **Andrew Baxter MSP –** The Chairman had a meeting with our newly elected MSP on 8th June and he agreed to raise some of the issues that we were struggling to persuade Government Agencies to tackle.
12. **CARES Bulletin –** Is available for circulation on request.

Treasurer's Report:
In the Treasurer's absence the Chairman reported Income of £955.09 from Highland Council Grant and Expenditure 2 Micro Grant Payments to Spean Bridge Senior Citizens for 2025 and 2026 each £500, a Micro Grant award to Roy Bridge Senior Citizens for 2026 £500, Keegan and Pennykid Insurance £108.36, and ICO £52 leaving a balance of £7982.09.

Stronelairg Wind Farm Community Fund Micro Grants:
No applications this month.

Planning:

DPEA Appeal :PA-270-2326 Erection of House at Land 120m NW of Taigh Breagh, Achnabobane, Spean Bridge – Allowed subject to 4 Conditions.

Planning Application 25/02655/FUL and PPA-270-2324– Change of use of land, siting of cabin, shed, formation of hard standing, erection of fence (in retrospect) at land 190m SW of Darroch Cottage, Spean Bridge - Refused following appeal to DPEA**.**

Planning Application 25/02488/FUL and 26/00035/RBEF – Demolition of Existing Barn and Erection of House at Barn East of Taigh Breagh, Achnabobane, Spean Bridge – Following refusal by the South Planning Committee the Applicant is appealing to the Planning Review Committee. The Community Council have noted proceedings.

Planning Application 26/00920/FUL- Alteration to Hotel and Installation of Pods to form 55 Letting Bedrooms, façade upgrade, new wall, new pergolas, and formation of 44 parking spaces at Spean Bridge Hotel – Public Meeting was in favour of seeking a Community Right to Buy Order. Community Planning have joined Transport Scotland and the Community Council in objecting to the Application.

Planning Application 26/01293/ FUL- Erection of 2 Houses at Land 100m NE of Patrolman's Cottage, Fersit, Tulloch, Roy Bridge – Approved**.**

Planning Application 26/01294/FUL – Erection of 3 Houses Land 100m SE of Stalkers Cottage, Killiechonate, Spean Bridge – Approved

Planning Application 26/01295/FUL – Erection of House at Land 230m NE of Courdale, Spean Bridge - Approved

Planning Application 26/01900/FUL – Erection of 3 Shepherd's Huts, 1 Yurt, Decking Area and Shower Building (Retrospective) at Land 80m SE of Tulloch Farm, Roy Bridge. – Community Council found explanation implausible. Site is on SSSI. But no permission, Flood Risk. Contrary to multiple NPF$ Polices. OBJECTION submitted.

Planning Application 26/01905/FUL – Erection of Manager's House (Retrospective) on Land 70m NE of Tulloch Farm, Roy Bridge. - Community Council noted previous application withdrawn. On SSSI, appears to have been deliberately hidden from public scrutiny and original Manager's House still standing so no relief under NPF4 Policy 17. Fails other NPF Policies too. OBJECTION submitted.

Planning Application 26/02078/PNO – Erection of Agricultural Storage Building (Class 18) at land 250 m SE of Tirindrish Steading, Spean Bridge. – Approved.

Planning Application 26/02605/FUL – Erection of House, Shed, and Associated Drainage at Land 45m SE of Schoolwood, Roy Bridge – Approved.

Planning Application 26/02579/PIP – Erection of House and Garage at Land 60m SE of Springburn House, Spean Bridge. – Approved**.**

Any Other Business:
Next Meeting Tuesday 4th August 2026.

Meeting closed at 20.00.

Melvyn Giles
Secretary