

**APPROVED Minutes of the AKCC Meeting held in Avoch Pavilion at 7.30 pm on Monday
2nd September 2024.**

Present:

Members: Derek MacIver, Chair (DM), Fraser Brunton, Vice-Chair & Minutes (FB), Tim Phillips, Treasurer (TP), Rosie Brunton, Secretary (RB), Caroline Lindsay (CL), Nicolaas du Preez (NdP).

In Attendance: Alistair Adie (AA), Stephen Baker (SBak), Tony Machin (TM), David Brims (DB), Caroline Eccles (CE)

Apologies: Cllr Morven-May MacCallum (MMM), Stuart Bruce (SB), Debbie du Preez (DdP), Kathy Taylor (KT).

- | 1. Welcome and apologies | Action |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| DM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Morven-May MacCallum, Stuart Bruce (SB), Debbie du Preez (DdP) and Kathy Taylor (KT). | |
| 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th August 2024 | |
| The draft minutes of the AKCC meeting, held on 5 th August 2024, were proposed by AA and seconded by RB as an accurate record. | |
| 3. Matters outstanding from the Minutes of 5th August 2024 | |
| FB thanked those members who had provided updates on their individual actions in advance of the meeting and circulated version 9 of 'Register of Actions Arising' for information. He reported the following progress by exception: | |
| 3.1 Item 3c(ii)/290424: Brae Steps. Ongoing. SB was obtaining quotations. Work could be funded using the Village Officer Funds. | FB to contact SB for update |
| 3.2 Item 7.1/290424: DM was still working on local farmers' contact details, which was to be added to the Register of Local Businesses. | FB to contact DM |
| 3.3 Item 5/290424: Andy McLeman (AAA) had not replied about the request to locate additional storage adjacent to the Sharing Shed. | FB to follow up with AAA |
| 3.4 Item 8.1/290424: AKCC Website. CL, TP and FB had started planning the new AKCC Website. Anyone interested in getting involved as a contributor or from a technical perspective should contact AKCC. | TM and DB agreed to help |
| 3.5 Item 4/170624: Himalayan Balsam. AA said that the work carried out to remove Himalayan Balsam from Avoch Burn had been very successful, although more was required. The extent of the problem in Rosehaugh and towards Killen was unclear. AA agreed to contact Trudi Clarke to find out if there was any update and if a map was available. | AA provided an excellent update from Trudi Clarke |
| Trudi Clarke's report, which had been circulated by RB, showed that Himalayan Balsam had infested the entire length of Killen Burn from Killen Bridge down to Avoch. A tremendous amount of work, amounting to some 200 hours, had been carried out between July and August, by the WhatsApp Community Group of 'Avoch Balsam Bashers', organised by Lizzie Campbell (Rosehaugh Estate) and others. | |

Fallen trees were preventing access upstream from Killen Bridge. It was necessary to find the furthest upstream source of the Balsam and prevent it from reseeding the cleared areas. Trudi Clarke was seeking help from anyone with a chainsaw, who was willing to help clear the fallen trees at Killen Bridge over the winter and spring. Otherwise permission was required to cross the fields above the fallen trees to access the burn. Trudi Clarke can be contacted on 07498 889443.

Volunteer with a chainsaw sought to assist with fallen trees over winter and spring

It was agreed that clearing the Balsam should resume in 2025, starting in June; and that there should be widespread publicity on social media, noticeboards, etc; involving high school and scout groups, etc.

RB to add to AKCC Agenda for April 2025

3.6 Item 6c(iv)/170624: Community Gardens Fence. Further discussion required after SB has reported back on his discussions.

FB to contact SB for update

3.7 Item 6e(iv)/170624: Cllr. Sarah Atkin (SA) had been requesting legal clarification of responsibility for children after they leave their parents' care enroute to school. MMM had previously said she was attending AKCC in place of SA, she would discuss the matter with her.

FB to contact MMM for an update

3.8 Item 5(a)/050824: TP finalising electronic banking arrangements.

In hand

3.9 Item 5c(i)/05/0824: MMM to clarify consultation and arrangements for transferring funds raised for Black Isle swimming pool to the Dingwall Puffin Pool.

FB to contact MMM for an update

3.10 Item 5c(ii)/050824: MMM to investigate concerns raised with Kate Forbes MSP about the nuisance to residents and their families being caused by seagulls in the Avoch harbour area and elsewhere.

FB to contact MMM for an update

3.11 Item 5f/050824: TP and FB to meet Jo Graham, Sharing Shed Coordinator. SBak to contact Black Isle Cares about possible support.

See agenda Item 10 below

3.12 Item 7/050824: TP to meet Becky Richmond to discuss the BIPP.

Completed

3.13 Item 8/050824: MMM to help facilitate AKCC access to inspect Avoch Public Toilets, to assess the works required.

FB to contact MMM

3.14(a) Item 9/050824: SB was working on AKCC Asset Register and Maintenance records.

FB to contact SB for update

3.14(b) Item 9/050824: AA to investigate damage to Brae Steps, which had been reported after broadband cabling works.

AA to investigate

4. AKCC Action Plan Update

FB circulated the AKCC Action Plan, summarising the progress made with the various workstreams. It was noted that almost all the Actions had been completed and that many of AKCC's systems and procedures had been reviewed.

When it was realised that the version circulated was not the latest one, FB gave a verbal report confirming that the plan's current focus was on reopening the Public Toilets, developing a Business Register, creating the new AKCC Website and on concerns about road safety in Avoch. RB said that she would circulate the latest version of the Plan.

RB to circulate latest version of the Action Plan

5. Recurring Community Council Matters

- 5a Finance Update** – TP said that some outstanding costs had been paid and that the current balance of funds was £3124. As the expected annual grant funding had not yet been received, he said that he was taking the matter up with Highland Council. **TP to contact Highland Council**
- 5b Planning and Related Issues**
- 5b(i)** FB said that only one relevant planning application (**24/03514/FUL**) had been flagged by RB since the last meeting, involving erection of an extension and decking by Mr S Patience at Bayview, Braehead, Avoch, IV9 8QL.
- 5b(ii)** It was noted that RWE Renewables UK Onshore Wind Ltd had submitted a proposal (**24/03524/SCOP**) to erect and operate a wind farm comprising of up to 20 turbines and associated equipment at Ceislein Wind Farm, Novar, Evanton.
- 5b(iii)** CE asked about the AKCC's role in the Highland Council Planning process. FB and TP summarised the background and said that AKCC had recently agreed a policy and procedure for dealing with planning applications, which RB said she would forward to her. **RB to forward AKCC Policy and Procedure to CE**
- 5c Community Concerns Arising**
- 5c(i)** AKCC appreciated the considerable amount of work and effort put in by community volunteers to clear vegetation from the brae opposite Avoch Scotmid. CE said that she had been unaware of the event and was surprised at the extent of the work undertaken. She said that the hedge had been planted by AKCC some years previously when she had been a member.
- 5c(ii)** It was confirmed that AKCC had no responsibility for the grassed fenced area opposite the Lazy Corner or for any signs attached to the fence. DM said that he had discussed the area with Lizzie Campbell (Rosehaugh Estate).
- 5c(iii)** CL expressed concern about the overgrown nature of the narrow public footpath between the new houses at the south end of Avoch and the school. She said that stinging nettles were a particular problem for young children. DM said that he was concerned about the increasing number of weeds in Avoch and the lack of ground maintenance in the public areas. FB said that he would raise the matter with MMM. **FR to contact MMM for help**
- CE suggested that there should be a more co-ordinated approach to the organisation of community work parties and that she would like to become involved in community groups.
- 5c(iv)** The ownership and safety of the bridge linking the Pavilion area to Long Road was discussed. FB said that he would contact SB and Avoch Amenities for advice. **FB to contact SB and AAA**
- 5d Police Report** – RB said that Police Scotland Reports were received quarterly and that the latest report was for April – July 2024. She said Jenni Carmichael also hosted 'Coffee with a Copper' meetings at No.19 in Avoch. **RB to contact Police Scotland for next Report**

5e Correspondence

5e(i) Local Place Plan – RB referred to the Highland Council Local Place Plan Update (August 2024). It was noted that some community councils were developing Local Place Plans. Recognising that the council's capacity has been focused on establishing the new AKCC, it was agreed that future direction would link to relevant aspects of the Black Isle Place Plan.

5e(ii) Community Connect – RB referred to the email dated 13th August 2024, received from Scotmid Coop, inviting applications for local funding for projects in the East, North or West of Scotland. Although this may have been an option for funding the project to reopen Avoch Public Toilets, delays in gaining access to the toilets to assess the required works, had prevented an application from being submitted on this occasion.

5e(iii) North Highland Initiative – RB referred to the email dated 16th August 2024, inviting applications for funding available from the Community Infrastructure Support Programme (CISP) for initiatives that 'Create visitor amenities and signage'. RB wondered if this was also a source of funding for the project to reopen Avoch Public Toilets.

**TP to contact
North Highland
Initiative**

5e(iv) Information from BEAR Scotland Northwest Unit – RB referred to the email dated 29th August 2024 advising that essential safety improvement works were to be undertaken externally and inside all four pylons of the Kessock Bridge, starting in October 2024 and lasting six months. To protect workers, the bridge speed limit was to be reduced from 50mph to 30mph and there were to be intermittent overnight carriageway lane closures. One of the two footways/cycleways was to be closed.

5e(v) Black Isle Repair Café Event – RB referred to the email of 27th August 2024 reminding community councils about the Highland Climate Festival at Fortrose Academy on 7th September 2024.

5e(vi) Private Water Supplies Research – RB referred to the email dated 25th August 2024, received from Heather Anderson, a Stirling University PhD researcher seeking information about the quality of private water supplies. Anyone interested was invited to complete a short survey accessed at <https://forms.office.com/e/4LvZqeU64J> - Heather Anderson's email address is: h.k.anderson@stir.ac.uk

**RB to forward
this email to
AKCC
members**

5e(vii) Support for NHS SHARE – RB referred to the email dated 28th August 2024 from Sarah Ritchie, SHARE Deputy Program Manager, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, seeking healthy and people with health conditions to join the Scottish Health Research Register and Biobank.

Those on the register would receive information about health research projects, online surveys and opportunities to participate in research studies. Further information is available at www.registerforshare.org

6. Avoch Amenities Association (AAA) Update: – Regrettably, there was no one from AAA present, who had attended its recent meeting.

7. Black Isle Community Councils (BICC) and Black Isle Placement Plan (BIPP) Updates

TP provided a detailed update on the BICC and BIPP. He said that he had met Becky Richmond, Black Isle Place Plan, Project Manager and now had a better understanding of the plan, which sets out key Black Isle aspirations for the next 5-10 years. These included valid widely held goals and focused on local infrastructure (eg including reuse of the Church of Scotland building in Avoch), the 'think local act local' approach, affordable housing, getting about, etc. He said that further information was available online.

He described how some community councils were developing their own Local Place Plans, though he questioned if AKCC, as a new community council, had sufficient resources to write its own plan, particularly when future direction would link with relevant aspects of the overarching Black Isle Place Plan. This was agreed.

There was discussion about the Board proposed to promote implementation of the BIPP and about its accountability. It was noted that the Board's membership was likely to include experienced individuals with competence and ability to move things forward; the three Black Isle Ward Councillors and five members selected from the eight Black Isle Community Councils (though not representative of them). Despite uncertainties raised about the Board's accountability, TP said that the BIPP provided opportunity and local leverage, since Highland Council was obliged to refer to the plan about any actions affecting the Black Isle.

Although it had been suggested previously that Becky Richmond (BR) could be invited to attend an AKCC meeting, it had been agreed that TP would keep a watching brief on the Plan's progression and invite her to attend when most appropriate. DM said that it was important for AKCC to be part of the BIPP process and thanked TP for attending.

- 8. Church of Scotland Update** – RB said that she represented AKCC on the working group, chaired by Nicola Underwood, which was working on plans to secure the church for the benefit of the community. It had been proposed that a Community Asset Transfer Group was set up to consider the purchase of assets such as the church and public toilets. DM understood that the church sale was under offer.

RB to clarify position

9. Avoch Public Toilets Update

RB said it had not been possible to find a suitable date for the working group to meet. She also said it had not been possible to access the building to assess repairs required to the drainage system. Although MMM had offered to arrange access, this had not yet been possible. FB was following this up under Matters Arising (see Item 3.13 above).

RB to circulate new meeting dates

- 10. The Avoch Sharing Shed** – TP and FB had met with Jo Graham, Sharing Shed Coordinator (JG) (who was expecting a baby), to discuss the support required for the shed and the possible provision of adjacent storage for supplies. JG described the work undertaken by her team and that she planned to contact Black Isle Cares about possible support. JG said that she was also contacting the Men's Shed to ask if they would be able to construct suitable storage for supplies

that could be located adjacent to the shed (subject to approval by AAA). SBak said he had contacted Black Isle Cares (BIC) about the shed, following the previous AKCC meeting. BIC had confirmed they were willing to provide support and intended to contact JG. TP said it was important that AKCC acknowledged the work undertaken by JG and her team and that any support offered needed to work for them.

11. Assets owned and managed by AKCC

As SB was not present, this item was carried forward to the next meeting. FB said that he would contact SB for an update. It was noted that the flashing lights at the pedestrian crossing in Avoch were not working properly. It was understood that SB was investigating the problem. DM said that the Christmas lights required to be checked. SB had said that a qualified electrician was required. NdP said the lights were stored at the school and that he would investigate further.

**FB to contact
SB for updates**

**NdP to
investigate**

12. AOCB

12.1 Use of Pavilion: - It was agreed that AKCC would pay £150 to Avoch Amenities Association towards the upkeep of the Pavilion.

TP to pay AAA

12.2 Killen Vacancy on AKCC: - RB said that now Hamish MacLean had retired from AKCC, there was a vacancy for someone from Killen. Although she had found someone that was interested, it transpired that the person was leaving the area. It was suggested that a notice be placed on the Killen Notice, seeking a volunteer.

**RB to consider
placing notice**

12.3 Community Projects: - CE said that she wanted to engage with Community projects, which was welcomed.

12.4 Library of Things: - DB said that there was a plan to create a Library of Things on the Black Isle, supported by Transition Black Isle. He explained that a Library of Things is an organisation that promotes a sharing economy by lending items, such as tools, garden equipment, appliances and other useful items to community members, promoting a sharing economy. He said Libraries of Things were becoming popular elsewhere in the UK (including Edinburgh). Participation could involve members paying a nominal annual subscription. He hoped that AKCC could help to promote creation of a Library of Things on the Black Isle. It was understood that premises for the Library were required.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 7th October 2024 at 7.30 pm in Avoch Pavilion.