

**APPROVED Minutes of the AKCC Meeting held in Avoch Pavilion at 7.30 pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024.**

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:** Cllr Morven-May MacCallum (MMM), Alistair Adie (AA), Debbie du Preez (DdP), Stephen Baker (SBak), Tony Machin (TM).

**Apologies:** Stuart Bruce (SB), Drew Mann (DMn), Caroline Lindsay (CL), Kathy Taylor (KT).

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Action**

DM welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Cllr Morven-May MacCallum and Tony Machin, who were attending their first AKCC meeting. Apologies were received from Stuart Bruce (SB), Drew Mann (DMn), Caroline Lindsay (CL) and Kathy Taylor (KT). Although Andy McLeman from Avoch Amenities Association (AAA) was unable to attend, NdP said he would pass on any relevant information to AAA.

**2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were amended to clarify the wording of the reference made to Mike Armitage (MA) in Item 6c(iv) concerning the community gardens. It was noted that others involved with the gardens would need to be contacted. The wording of the minute relating to MA's advice was amended as follows.

*JC asked if the wooden fence between the gardens and the road next to the Avoch Chippy could be painted and a gate installed allowing access by visitors into the gardens. 'SB had discussed the matter with JC and planned to contact Mike Armitage for advice about how to proceed with the work, which could be funded by AKCC monies.'*

The draft minutes of the AKCC meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024, amended as above, were proposed by RB and seconded by DM as an accurate record.

**3. Matters outstanding from the Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

FB thanked members for providing updates on their individual actions in advance of the meeting and circulated the updated '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. **Still ongoing**

**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. **Still ongoing**

**3.3 Item 5/290424:** FB had written to Andy McLeman (AAA) requesting approval to locate additional storage adjacent to the Sharing Shed. **Reply awaited from 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.

**Volunteers invited to contact AKCC**

**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 work was required. The extent of the problem in Rosehaugh and towards Killen was unclear.

It was understood that a map was being prepared showing the affected areas. AA said that he would obtain an update from Trudi Clarke (TC, Scottish Invasive Species Initiative). It was noted that the plant should not be disturbed after late July because the ripe seed pods could burst open, exacerbating the problem.

**AA to obtain update from TC and report back**

**3.6 Item 6c(iv)/170624:** Works to Community Gardens Fence. SB considering options. Further discussion was required.

**Still ongoing**

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

**MMM to discuss with SA and report back**

DdP and others voiced their continuing concerns about road safety in Avoch and the need for an additional pedestrian crossing at the south end of the village. The situation had been exacerbated because there was no longer a Lollipop Person to help children cross the road safely.

Jenni Carmichael (JC) and others had previously highlighted the need for a further pedestrian crossing at the north end of Avoch, which had been brought to the attention of SA and Highland Council.

#### **4. AKCC Action Plan Update**

FB circulated version 10 of the AKCC Action Plan, dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024, which summarised the progress made with the various workstreams. He said almost all the Actions had now been completed and that many of AKCC's systems and procedures had been reviewed.

The main ongoing Actions were the reopening of Avoch Public Toilets, Development of a local Business Register and Development of the new AKCC Website. Increasing concern about road safety in Avoch would be reflected in the next revision of the Plan.

FB asked if the plan had served its purpose and was no longer required. NdP said that the plan provided a good overview of the work being undertaken without the need to refer to previous minutes. Others said the plan was worthwhile and should continue. FB said that he would keep it updated and provide regular reports at AKCC meetings.

**FB to keep the Action Plan updated and provide reports**

#### **5. Recurring Community Council Matters**

**5a Finance Update** – TP said that as there had been no recent bank transactions, the accounts remained the same as reported at the AKCC AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024. He said that some grant funding was expected from Highland Council.

He said that there were some outstanding costs, which would be paid when the electronic banking arrangements had been finalised.

**TP to finalise arrangements**

**5b Planning and Related Issues**

- 5b(i)** FB said that the application to build a house on Cemetery Brae, Avoch **21/02630/PIP** was still under consideration and that revised drawings had been lodged on 1 July 2024, together with one set of associated comments. AKCC had submitted comments in February 2024.
- 5b(ii)** FB said that only one relevant planning application (**24/03056/FUL**) had been flagged by RB since the last meeting. It was a further application relating to the property at Wester Templands Farmhouse, Fortrose IV10 8RA, involving creation of a garden room/storage shed.
- 5b(iii)** FB said that Scottish Forestry had lodged an application (**FPA-11578-Rosehaugh Estate**) to fell diseased trees throughout the estate during the coming years.
- 5b(iv)** RB gave an update on the Church Working Group, which she had attended on behalf of AKCC. The Group was investigating the option of Community Asset Transfer, an approach that could also be relevant to the project to reopen the Avoch Public Toilets. Potential uses of the church building included incorporating a learning or heritage centre, a community hub, a men's shed, a community space, etc.

**5c Community Concerns Arising**

- 5c(i)** It was noted that there was considerable concern on the Black Isle about the way that funds raised for the construction of the swimming pool had been transferred, apparently without due consultation, to the Puffin Pool in Dingwall. It was regretted that local people had raised significant funds, which had not directly benefited the community. MMM said that she would investigate the matter and clarify the process by which the funding had been transferred.
- 5c(ii)** Concerns had been raised with Kate Forbes MSP by several residents about rubbish from the bins in the Avoch harbour area and elsewhere that were encouraging the seagulls and causing a nuisance to residents and their families. MMM said that she would investigate the matter and report back.
- 5d Police Report** – The Police Report for the period April – July 2024 had been received confirming that 27 incidents had been investigated. Only 11 had related to any crime(s) or matters requiring a Police response. These had been mainly of a domestic nature and assisting partner agencies. None had taken place in Killen.

**MMM to clarify funding transfer**

**MMM to investigate and report back**

**5e Correspondence**

- 5e(i) 20mph Review** – The email received from Lisa MacKellaich, Highland Council Road Safety Manager, dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024, advised that Highland Council had implemented a Temporary Road Traffic Regulation Order for the period until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, reducing the speed limit to 20 mph in 125 settlements in the Highland Council area, including Avoch. In September 2024, Highland Council intends to begin

the statutory process of making the temporary order permanent and will consult formally with Community Councils at the proper time.

- 5e(ii) Highland Council Ecology Strategy** – The email received from Joe Perry, Project Manager, Highland Council Environment Team, dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024, invited Community Councils to participate in an online consultation event on the Highland Council's Ecology Strategy on 20<sup>th</sup> August. DM and AA said that they would like to attend. RB said that she would forward further information to them.
- 5e(iii) Contact Information for BEAR Scotland Northwest Unit** – The email received from Rachael Youngs, Correspondence Officer, BEAR Scotland, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024, advised that BEAR Scotland wanted to build good relationships with Community Councils and enclosed updated contact information. Information about BEAR's activities can be found on [www.bearscot.com](http://www.bearscot.com). Road defects can be reported by emailing [enquiries@BEARScotland.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@BEARScotland.co.uk).
- 5e(iv) September Highland Climate Festival Events** – The email received from Lyn, Project Officer, Highland Community Waste Partnership, Transition Black Isle advertised an event as part of the Highland Climate Festival, which will be held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2024 from 1pm – 4pm at Fortrose Academy. Further information available by contacting: [Lyn@transitionblackisle.org](mailto:Lyn@transitionblackisle.org).
- 5e(v) BT Digital Voice** – The email from Shona Aldridge, BT Digital Tec Lead, dated 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, raised awareness about the digital switch affecting everyone with a phone line, including Telecare users. Further information can be found on the BT website.
- 5e(vi) Community Wealth Building** – The email from Gail Ward, Community Benefits Manager, Highland Council, dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024, sought views on Highland Council's people-centred approach to economic development. RB said that she would circulate the survey link to members of AKCC.
- 5e(vii) Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2** – RB reported that Highland Council had formally adopted this Plan, which was published on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024. It can be viewed at: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/imf>
- 5f The Avoch Sharing Shed** – TP tabled a paper giving an overview of the Sharing Shed, set up in 2020 as part of Highland Council's COVID response. He described how the Shed was managed by the Co-ordinator, Jo Graham (JG), assisted by a dedicated group of volunteers. He explained how the Shed was funded, supplied, stocked and operated.
- He highlighted several important issues that required AKCC's support. These included (a) seeking a replacement or practical assistance for JG, who was expecting a baby; and (b) providing alternative secure storage for the Shed's supplies, which were currently stored in accommodation that was required for another purpose.
- The considerable work undertaken by JG and her team, was acknowledged. It was noted that the other Black Isle Sharing Sheds

**DM/AA to attend and report back**

were not managed by Community Councils and that Black Isles Cares supported the Fortrose Sharing Shed, which was adjacent to the Black Isle Leisure Centre. SBak said that he would contact Black Isles Cares, who also had premises in Avoch, to explore the support provided to the Fortrose Sharing Shed and to find out if there was support that could be provided in Avoch. It was agreed that AKCC would continue to support the Avoch Shed and help to address the current issues.

**SBak to  
contact Black  
Isle Cares**

There had already been discussions about locating additional storage adjacent to the Sharing Shed and the necessary agreement had been sought from AAA. It was agreed that TP and FB would meet JG and others to understand what was required and how best to proceed.

**TP and FB to  
meet JG and  
others**

**6. Avoch Amenities Association**

It was noted that the Avoch Fun Day would be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August and would be followed by a ticketed dance.

**7. Black Isle Community Councils and Black Isle Place Plan Updates**

TP tabled an excellent briefing note on the Black Isle Community Councils (BICC) and the Black Isle Place Plan (BIPP). He said that BICC met on an ad hoc basis, with each Community Council invited to provide two participating members. He said that BICC was not an executive body but was recognised by Ward Councillors and Highland Council as a significant voice on Black Isle matters.

TP said that the consensus emerging from BICC meetings was that BICC should support the creation of a separate body to lobby and act as a focal point to progress the outcomes set out in the BIPP. There had been considerable discussion about various related issues including the role, remit, membership and accountability of this separate body. The additional input and capacity needed to provide effective support for the proposed separate body required careful consideration.

It was envisaged that the BIPP would lead to creation of a Community Action Plan. DM highlighted the opportunities created by the BIPP, including potential funding that could benefit local communities and infrastructure.

TP said that it was important to understand the logic of the entire process and how it had evolved in recent months. He said that he would contact Becky Richmond (BR), the Project Manager for the Black Isle Local Place Plan, to obtain a clearer understanding of the process and the proposed way forward. It could be helpful for BR to attend an AKCC meeting, which TP would arrange as appropriate.

**TP to obtain  
further  
information  
from BR about  
the BIPP**

**8. Avoch Public Toilets Update**

It was noted that arrangements were being made to access the toilets so that a ground survey could be undertaken to assess the condition of the drainage from the building; and the extent of the necessary remedial works. MMM said that she would help to facilitate access.

**MMM to help  
facilitate  
access**

**9. Assets owned and managed by AKCC**

As SB was not present, this item was carried forward to the next meeting. DM highlighted the damage caused at the top of the Brae Steps, which appeared to have been due to the recent broadband cabling works. He said that he was taking the matter up with Highland Broadband.

**DM to discuss  
with Highland  
Broadband**

**10. AOCB**

Everyone was sorry to hear that Hamish MacLean had decided to resign from AKCC. DM and TP thanked him for helping to prevent AKCC from going into abeyance at the end of 2023 and acknowledged his commitment and contribution to the work of AKCC over many years. Everyone wished him all the best for the future.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 at 7.30 pm in Avoch Pavilion.