

APPROVED Minutes of the AKCC Meeting held at 2, Moray Wynd, Avoch at 7.30 pm on Monday 7th October 2024.

Present:

Members: Derek MacIver, Chair (DM), Fraser Brunton, Vice-Chair & Minutes (FB), Tim Phillips, Treasurer (TP), Rosie Brunton, Secretary (RB), Drew Mann (DMn)

In Attendance: Cllr Morven-May MacCallum (MMM), Alistair Adie (AA), David Brims (DB)

Apologies: Stuart Bruce (SB), Tony Machin (TM), Caroline Lindsay (CL), Kathy Taylor (KT), Jenni Carmichael (JC), Caroline Eccles (CE)

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| 1. | Welcome and apologies | Action |
| | DM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Stuart Bruce (SB), Caroline Lindsay (CL), Tony Machin (TM), Kathy Taylor (KT), Jenni Carmichael (JC) and Caroline Eccles (CE). | |
| 2. | Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd September 2024 | |
| | Paragraph 5c(iii), para 2, of the draft minutes of the AKCC meeting, held on 2 nd September 2024 were amended to reflect that Caroline Eccles did not want to be involved in 'leading' community groups but wanted to be 'involved with them'. The resulting amended minutes were proposed by TP and seconded by RB as an accurate record. | |
| 3. | Matters Arising from the Minutes of 2nd September 2024 | |
| | FB thanked members who provided updates on their individual actions in advance of the meeting as this reduced the time spent on matters arising. He circulated version 12 of 'Register of Matters Arising' for information and reported the following progress by exception: | |
| | 3.1 Item 3c(ii)/290424: Brae Steps. SB had been unable to obtain a suitable quotation for the works. DMn said he would obtain quotations. | DMn to obtain quotes |
| | 3.2 Item 7.1/290424: DM had provided a list of local farmers' contact details, which was to be added to the Register of Local Businesses. | |
| | 3.3 Item 5/290424: Andy McLeman (AAA) confirmed AAA's approval that additional storage could be located adjacent to the Sharing Shed, subject to approval of final design proposals. | Approval granted by AAA |
| | 3.4 Item 6c(iv)/170624: Community Gardens Fence. Following feedback received from SB, the decision that a gate was not required in the fence adjacent to the main road. It was noted that Stuart Smyth could be contacted about Community Garden matters. | |
| | 3.5 Item 6e(iv)/170624: MMM clarified that parents were responsible for their children whilst they were walking to school. She said Highland Council's Road Safety Unit was to undertake a full road safety assessment and prepare a report for the Education Service. This was to help to inform an eventual decision as to whether to recreate a road crossing patrol point in Avoch. RB referred to the email from Cllr Sarah Atkin dated 9 th September 2024 confirming this intention. | |

3.6 Item 5(a)/050824: TP was awaiting a response from the Bank about finalising AKCC's electronic banking arrangements.	TP progressing
3.7 Item 5c(i)/05/0824: MMM suggested that AKCC could discuss concerns, with the Black Isle Community Councils, about the process whereby funds raised for Black Isle swimming pool had been transferred to the Dingwall Puffin Pool.	DM/TP to discuss with BICC
3.8 Item 5c(ii)/050824: MMM advised that additional waste bins could be provided by Highland Council to address 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.	MMM to follow up with Highland Council
3.9 Item 8/050824: It was noted that access to the Avoch Public Toilets had been obtained.	
3.10(a) Item 9/050824: SB had advised that he had insufficient time at present to work on the AKCC Asset Register and Maintenance records.	
3.10(b) Item 9/050824: AA had taken a photograph showing that there was now no longer evidence of the reported damage at the top of the Brae Steps following broadband cabling works.	
3.11 Item 5c(i)/020924: DM expressed concern about the lack of regular maintenance and the increasing number of weeds present in public areas. MMM highlighted the current financial challenges with maintaining these areas. RB asked MMM if she could provide access to Highland Council's Grass Cutting Policy.	MMM to advise
The considerable work undertaken recently by local community groups was acknowledged; particularly in clearing Highland Balsam from Avoch Burn; and removing overgrown vegetation from the Lazy Corner brae. It was noted that Highland Council had uplifted a large quantity of waste from the latter; although some of the waste had still to be removed. DM said that included some branches that had been put in the fenced, grassed area opposite.	
The possibility that community groups might be willing to undertake other similar projects was also discussed. RB said that she would contact Keri Gibson, who had organised the clearing works on the Lazy Corner Brae. It was suggested that there may be scope for such works to be carried out jointly with Highland Council.	
AA said that he would be willing to clear any hogweed affecting the path between the school and the new housing at the south end of Avoch.	RB to contact Keri Gibson
3.12 Item 5c(iii)/020924: Safety of the bridge linking the Pavilion area to Long Road. SB had confirmed that Highland Council did not own the bridge. DMn said that he would investigate further.	DMn to investigate
3.13 Item 5e(iii)/020924: North Highland Initiative - Community Infrastructure Support Programme. FB had received a positive reply about funding to support the project to reopen Avoch Public Toilets. He said that similar projects had been funded in the past and that further information would be needed to support a formal application.	

3.14 Item 8/020924: Church Sale - RB said the sale was under offer.

3.15 Item 11/020924: Avoch Pedestrian Crossing – SB had confirmed that parts had been ordered to repair the lights at the crossing.

3.16 Item 11/020924: Christmas Lights Testing – FB to contact NdP for an update on situation with the lights. **FB to contact NdP**

4. AKCC Action Plan Update

FB circulated v11 of the AKCC Action Plan and summarised the progress made with the various workstreams.

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 £2777. As the expected annual grant funding had not yet been received, he had taken the matter up with Highland Council. MMM said that Kirsty Allan would be able to help. **TP to contact Kirsty Allan**

5b Planning and Related Issues

5b(i) FB said that only one relevant planning application (**24/03736/FUL**) had been flagged by RB since the last meeting, involving erection of a garage, carport with studio flat, by Mrs Kate James, Kava, Killen, Avoch IV9 8RQ.

5c Community Concerns Arising

5c(i) JC had raised concerns about litter in Avoch and asked how often it was cleared up. It was noted that there was no longer a Village Officer and that removing litter had become a collective responsibility. RB said that she would contact JC. **RB to contact JC**

5c(ii) Concerns were raised about the security of the Sharing Shed. The possibility of installing CCTV was discussed.

5c(iii) TP said Sandy Mitchell had raised concerns about the fallen trees on the old railway line between Avoch and Fortrose and was looking for volunteers to assist clearing them. Whilst the considerable work undertaken on the route was acknowledged, some sections could be very muddy and needed attention. Ownership of the walkway was unclear. RB asked if those involved in recent community projects might be willing to help. MMM said that Highland Council's Access Committee, which was due to meet in November 2024 may be willing to support improvements being made to the route. MMM to follow up. **MMM to contact Access Committee**

5d Police Report – RB said that Police Scotland Reports were received quarterly. The most recent report highlighted 44 incidents, 7 of which involved any crime. These included traffic offences, threatening or abusive behaviour, fraud and assault. The incident in Killen involved a road traffic incident. Provision of these reports in the present format was much appreciated.

5e Correspondence

5e(i) RB referred to the email dated 26 September 2024, received from Cllr Helen Crawford outlining a motion to establish online mapping of all applications received by Highland Council, including all renewables developments. The motion was to be discussed on 30th September.

- 5e(ii)** Correspondence dated 27th September 2024, received from Alasdair Allan MSP, was noted seeking information on Tackling Fuel Poverty in Scotland.
- 5e(iii)** RB referred to the Community Council Initial Engagement Survey received from Highland Council as part of its Community Council Review for 2024/25. It was agreed that DM/TP and RB would respond on behalf of AKCC. **DM/TP & RB to complete survey**
- 5e(iv)** RB referred to the HIE Survey – Our Place, Our Prosperity – the Voice of Communities, dated October 2024, whose purpose was to inform HIE’s approach to Community Wealth Building.
- 5e(v)** RB referred to the email received from Caroline Eccles (CE), dated 5th October 2024 suggesting and proposing the scope of an overall ‘Green Plan’ for Avoch and Killen, which could be a local version of relevant aspects of the Place Plan and the Council’s Ecology Strategy. It would include a summary of assets held by AKCC and AAA. AKCC welcomed CE’s interest and supported her request that she take forward the proposals outlined in her email of 5th October. **RB to reply to CE**
- 5e(vi)** RB referred to the email dated 1st October 2024, from Angus Watson Deputy, Lord Lieutenant Ross and Cromarty (including Skye and Lochalsh) advising that he was available to attend any local remembrance arrangements and lay a wreath on behalf of His Majesty King Charles III. RB to contact the Sea Scouts regarding the laying of a wreath from AKCC at the Remembrance Day Service. **RB to contact the Sea Scouts**
- 5e(vii)** RB referred to the email dated 4th October 2024, from Becky Richmond, confirming that Highland Council have now registered the Black Isle Local Place Plan.
- 5e(viii)** RB referred to the email dated 24th September 2023, from Tony Machin (TM), asking if Smart Meter Connectivity could be discussed by AKCC. It was agreed that this could be discussed under AOCB
- 6. Avoch Amenities Association (AAA) Update**
DMn said that the AAA’s AGM was due to be held on 17th October 2024. As DM was unavailable, TP said he would attend.
- 7. Black Isle Community Councils (BICC) & Black Isle Place Plan (BIPP) Update**
TP said that there had been 2 BICC meetings since the last AKCC meeting. The recent focus had been on filling key roles in the governing body, which included 5 community councillors and 3 ward councillors. TP said that BICC was a very useful and worthwhile forum. He confirmed that the BIPP had been registered by Highland Council.
- 8. Church of Scotland Update** – RB said that the church sale was under offer.

9. Avoch Public Toilets Update

RB said that the working group had met, chaired by Kathy Taylor (KT) and attended by RB, TP and others. Arrangements had been made to access the building. RB summarised the group's discussions, which included the options being considered, associated works and costs. The group had also considered why the previous facility had been unsustainable and wanted to ensure any new facility did not suffer the same fate.

RB said that whilst no decisions had been made, the group considered that there was a strong case for redeveloping rather than reinstating the present toilets. That was because the existing facilities were not fit for purpose and lacked the development and funding opportunities that a new build could provide. These included provision of a disability toilet, electronic paid access and a campervan waste disposal point.

TP and DM expressed their concerns about capital and revenue costs of a new build; associated asset transfer issues and the much longer time needed to provide a new facility. RB said that the group had recognised these concerns, which would be addressed in the option appraisal that would inform the preferred option. DMn recommended that the conclusions of the working group would need to be subject to a community consultation. RB reiterated that no decisions had been made and said that she would circulate the minutes of the working group to AKCC.

**RB to
circulate
minutes to
AKCC**

10. The Avoch Sharing Shed

TP said that Black Isle Cares were interested in taking over the management of the Avoch Sharing Shed. Although Jo Graham, the co-ordinator, was stepping down, it was understood that other volunteers may still be available to provide support. It was agreed that TP and FB would meet Black Isle Cares to discuss the way forward and keep JG and the volunteers informed about the options.

**TP/FB to
meet Black
Isle Cares**

The provision, construction and siting of additional storage for supplies was discussed. It was noted that AAA had approved locating additional storage adjacent to the Storage Shed, subject to approval of its design. The Man Shed would be able assemble flat packed storage but was unable to design and build bespoke storage.

11. Assets owned and managed by AKCC

As SB was not present, there were no updates other those referred to in Items 3.10(a), 3.15 and 3.16 above.

12. AOCB

12.1 Killen Vacancy on AKCC - RB said that no one had yet come forward, who could replace Hamish MacLean who had retired.

12.2 AKCC Meeting Format – TP and FB had discussed that a sizeable proportion of meeting time was spent following up Matters Arising rather than on new business. FB said that the Matters Arising Register was introduced to save time by enabling Matters Arising to be dealt with by exception; so increasing the time available for wider

discussion. This approach had enabled AKCC to close out some 55 Matters Arising since April 2024 and make considerable progress throughout the year. Whilst some action owners intimate progress made with their actions by email in advance of meetings, more time could be made available at meetings for wider discussion if that became standard practice. The alternative is a much less rigorous approach in which Matters Arising are simply left to action owners' discretion. The matter was carried forward for further discussion.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 4th November 2024 at 7.30 pm in Avoch Pavilion.