# **COMHAIRLE CHOIMHEARSNACHD SHLÈITE**

# **SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

# Minutes of the Meeting held in Tarskavaig Hall

# 7 pm on Tuesday 2 September 2025

## Members Present

Andy Wiliamson (Andy W) Janet MacDonald (Janet M)

Tim Shone (Tim S) Duncan MacInnes (Duncan M)

Kate Duffus (Kate D)

Public attendance: 11 members of the public with 2 apologies

## Welcome

**Andy W** welcomed the councillors and the public.

## Declarations of Interest

**Andy W** and **Duncan M** are Board members of Sleat Community Trust

## Minutes and matters arising from the meeting on 24 June 2025

**The AGM minutes will be placed on the SCC website**

* **Approval** of the Minutes was proposed by **Tim S** and seconded by **Janet M** and accepted by all.

## Storm Floris

### Local Heroes

**Kate D** suggested that note should be taken of all those, known and unknown, who had helped the community and individuals in the aftermath of Storm Floris. While names were mentioned it is not appropriate to list them here. Kate said that in this wonderful community, people go out of their way when things are not good.

### Scottish Water

Tarskavaig and other communities lost their water supply because the pumps to take it over the hill had no back-up power supply. **Kate D** will make enquiries.

### Estate tree clearance

Trees across the road were cleared by HC, the Estate and private individuals. **Andy W** noted that the HC had to make a firm request some days later to CDLT to properly cut back and make safe fallen trees.

### Other issues

The staff of the community shop were thanked for their speedy and positive reaction to the Storm damage which wiped out the power supply for 36 hours. SCC are investigating the installation of a generator which can have other benefits to the community as well as keeping the shop stock intact. It was also reported that the mobile phone signal in Tarskavaig.

## Community Resilience

**Andy W** noted that items above indicated the need to assess Sleat’s Community Resilience. This work was started some years ago but stalled when SCT lost the development officers. A resilience group is being formed from SCT members. This needs SCC support and a member of the public with suitable skills.

The community could be in a very weak position in a dire emergency. We cannot deal with enormous or impossible emergencies, but we need to step up to be aware of the risks.

Early examples would be a list of important and emergency telephone numbers, and knowledge of places that can provide cooking on gas.

## Update on CDLT

**Andy W** asked **Duncan M** to summarise recent activities of the Armadale SCT/SCC Working Group. This was brought together by SCT and SCC along with four members of the public who volunteered. During 6 meetings over 8 weeks, it investigated the possibilities inherent in all 7 lots of the Castle and Policies sale. It registered an interest with Strutt and Parker for which a non-disclosure document was signed by Donaidh MacDonald, Chair of SCT. The Working Group requested a viewing of the properties, which occurred on 30 July 2025. S and P took almost 5 weeks to respond with a viewing date. Just before the viewing date S and P announced a closing date for offers on 28 August, only 10 weeks after the properties had been put on the market.

The Working Group assessment of the investigations had to be postponed by a week because of Storm Floris. It wrote to SCT on 21 August with the recommendation that none of the Lots were a viable financial investment for the community. SCT has the full report.

### Floor discussion

Questions from the floor asked why there was so little information put out to the Sleat Community about the process and decision. It was pointed out that :-

* Sleat Community Council was not the lead on the investigations of the Working Group.
* Sleat Community Council has been totally excluded by CDLT in the last couple of years from any communication regarding developments at Armadale and the Sale.
* information was placed on FB in July naming the Working Group members and giving a contact for comments, which drew no response.
* The non-disclosure agreement meant no information received could be shared.
* The sudden announcement of an early closing date curtailed any meaningful discussion.

In an ideal world, once SCT had received the information from the Working Group, it would have opened the whole discussion up to the public. However by then the closing date for the sale had passed.

It was noted that CDLT in no way encouraged or supported SCT or SCC and the wider community in any bid to undertake a complete or partial community buyout.

It was suggested that the Armadale Working group provide a clear time-line about the activities and decisions relating to the report sent to Sleat Community Trust.

## Openreach

**Kate D** supplied information about the ongoing development of the provision of Full Fibre Optic for Sleat. She and **Duncan M** had held an hour-long Teams Meeting with four staff Members of Openreach from Edinburgh and Inverness, who supplied many details, timetables and maps.

It is complicated – Openreach is trying to pull together several different funding packages from UK and Scottish Government. Work is curtailed by the difficulty of finding worker accommodation and road permissions from HC in the summer, alongside the delay in equipment to be installed in Kyle. We were assured that some properties were about to be connected (they were!) and that everyone would get a connection, hopefully in the next 12 months (with the exception of the Point).

Floor comments pointed out how new telegraph poles had been installed but then trenches were dug instead, with worries about lack of local contact regarding croft entrances. (Subsequently it was reported that a conversation had taken place about entrances and the issue resolved)

There was concern about the road-surface finishing work in some places. Kevin Williams of Kilmore had provided detailed assessment which he sent to 0penreach but no mitigations had yet been undertaken.

## Local Place Plan

**Andy W** said the Plan was now open to updates and aspirations and it needs to lead to a Local Action Plan.

## Community Council Convention

**Tim S** gave a comprehensive report on the 2nd convention held in Kings Mills Hotel, Inverness, regarding collective community concerns about the vast influx of wind-farm and power-line developments that appear to lack any central coordination or community involvement. 50 Community Councils were present, representing 80,000 people including around 11 MPs and MSPs. Examples were given of planning agreements passed before land-owners and communities were told. There was a loud shout for a general pause to be placed on all such planning to allow for a consensus of opinion to be heard, set against the over-riding desire of Holyrood to pursue renewable energy sources at any cost. The next meeting will be in Holyrood. Please contact **Tim S** for full details or ask info@sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk for his notes

## Ferry Group

**Tim S** reported on the newly formed Sound of Sleat Ferry Group to meet soon.

## Roads

**Andy W** opened a conversation about the state of roads. The end of the road at Aird is in an appalling state. Parts of the Caligarry roads had been down with problems in the middle. Andy W had a good relationship with the local HC workers. Between Kilbeg and the school the lack of proper footpath, along with the badly functioning flashing 20 mph signs, remains of great concern, with silence from HC. The police have responded well. There is a call-out for hi-vis jackets for the children walking/riding to school.

## Bottle Banks

The recent issue of overflow has been resolved. This was the result of a lorry breakdown and the ongoing issue of commercial use of the banks – there is no provision of HC providing such business banks.

## Bins

The public bin issue at the pier has been resolved. Armadale Stores are pursuing their own large public bin.

## Matters arising and AOCB

* **Janet M** is pursuing details on the upgrade of **Public Notice Boards** around Sleat. **Duncan M** has done a brief survey of needs.
* **Additional Road comments** were made about drainage, particularly inAchnacloich, caused by the complete lack of cleaning of ditches and culverts – an easy job that would remove so many problems.
* It was suggested that the word ‘**community’** be used with care. It was pointed out that whenever SCC use it is in context, always referring to SCC, SCT or a particular named community group.
* **Duncan M** flagged up the **Just Walk** event happing on 18 September, when around 30 folk are walking from Broadford to Glasgow via as many communities as possible, flagging up issues relating to community and land-ownership. They will camp that night in the Tormore Fank.

## Community Councillors

Sleat Community Council is reduced from 8 down to 5 Members. We need new representation. If Sleat does not have a Council it does not have a collective voice. The Council is here not to have opinions, but to collate the wider community opinions.

Be part of it and put names forward.

## Next Meeting

**The next Meeting will be on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at 7.30 pm in Ardvasar Hall**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9 pm