



Cromarty and District Community Council

Approved minutes of meeting held on

Monday 28th April 2025, 730pm

Virtually via Microsoft Teams and in person at The Victoria Hall

Present

Community Councillors: Paige Shepherd (PS) – Chairwoman, Alan Plampton (AP) – Treasurer, Alan Rycroft (AR), Andy Thurgood (AT) – Vice Chair and Nigel Shapcott (NS).

Youth Member: Allan Munro (AM) & Orlagh MacIver (OM)

Highland Councillor(s): Sarah Atkin (SA)

Member(s) of the public: N/A

1. Chair's Welcome & Apologies

PS welcomed everyone to the meeting – all of whom were present at The Victoria Hall.
Cllr SA attended online via Microsoft Teams.

2. Declarations of Interest

No changes since March 2025 meeting.

3. Approval of previous minutes – 31st March 2025

The minutes were proposed by AR and seconded by AT

4. Youth Issues

4.1 - Association of British Ports:

After discussion with SA they agreed that they'd draft a letter to ABP with further questions regarding the Freeport. OM/AM agree they will send this after the consultation in Tain on Wednesday 30th (as more information may become available then).

4.2 - School bus:

Unaware of issues with lateness recently.

4.3 - Street cleaning:

AT in discussion with THC re. arranging the collection of any street waste we have and if we can make this more regular once we've established how it will work/who in the community will arrange the collections.

4.4 – Mooring buoys/tyres:

Complaints have been received from users of the beach re. these items and the hazards they are now representing. Nige to follow up with the boat club. **Action – NS.**

AM/OM both left at 1945!

5. Cromarty Community Development Trust

5.1 - East Church Hall

Still waiting feedback on their business plan and keys delayed until September at the earliest.

5.2 - Development Officer.

Still waiting for the funds to come through before advertising for this new position.

5.3 – Advertising (Social Media)

Had used a social media ‘influencer’ to advertise a night’s stay at the campsite in Cromarty and used it as an opportunity to showcase the town and most of its other highlights!

5.4 – The Thrift Shop

Has been painted by 2 x local residents. Big thanks expressed to them for their help!

5.5 – AGM

To be held on Thursday 5th June 2025. All members will receive an invitation and reports published.

5.6 – Shore Road

Sarah A will chase this up as members confirmed the condition of the road surface remains in poor condition. **Action – SA.**

No other comments.

6. Matters Arising from previous minutes – 31st March 2025

1. (4.1 – Little movement with THC on TMP and 20mph in urban areas until 2025.) **DISCHARGED.**
2. (4.2 – To speak to Wanda re. redesign of Cromarty Sign). Ongoing. **Action – PS.**
3. (4.4 – Potential to involve the Primary School with Links Shrubbery continuous maintenance). **DISCHARGED.**
4. (4.5 – To confirm when funding from Stagecoach has been received). **DISCHARGED.**
5. (4.7 – Public information notice to be prepared re. social housing). Ongoing. **Action – PS.**
6. (4.9 – To catch up with Kari re. email to J Nightingale about Pirates Graveyard). **Action – PS.**
7. (4.10 – Who’s responsible for Cromarty sign at bus shelter? - meeting with SA to be arranged). **Action – PS.**
8. (4.11 - To speak to Denis (resident) re. hedge options for the park). **DISCHARGED.**
9. (4.12 – Stakes to go in at The Hugh Miller Monument, and posters put up to stop contractors mowing/maintaining area). **DISCHARGED.**
10. (4.13 – Public meeting to be held re. parking byelaws around Cromarty (include alongside Place Plan meeting)). **Action – ALL.**
11. (4.14 – To see if Kari is willing to be involved in tourism portfolio). Ongoing. **Action – PS.**
12. (4.16 – To follow up with Ian Moncrieffe at THC re. state of Farness Rd). Ongoing. **DISCHARGED.**
13. (4.17 – To discuss recruitment for TVH committee). Volunteers are needed. **Action – CF.**

14. (4.18 – Sub-committee to be created re. Freeport etc (long-term project)). **Action - AT.**
15. (4.19 – Continue to be voice of the community re. Highland Broadband). **Action – AT.**
16. (4.20 – To contact waste management re. the oil spill kit that was dropped off to TVH). **DISCHARGED.**
17. (4.21 – To arrange a separate meeting re. noise monitoring). **DISCHARGED.**
18. (4.22 – To recruit litter picker volunteers for 2025 season). Also need to recruit a volunteer coordinator. **Action – AP.**
19. (4.23 – To gather ideas to celebrate 50 years of community councils (in 2027))! **Action – ALL.**
20. (4.24 – To follow up on items still outstanding with THC after meeting regarding town maintenance). **Action – AP/AT.**
21. (4.26 – Rota being prepared for dog-bin emptying for 2025 season). **DISCHARGED.**
22. (4.27 – SA to check if there is any preventative action we can take re. dogs in the park). **DISCHARGED.**
23. (4.28 – To speak to Stagecoach, SA and acting rector of Fortrose Academy re. the continuing bus lateness). Ongoing matter. **Action – PS.**
24. (4.29 – PS to seek contact details from resident re. owner of Nigg Pier). **Action – PS.**
25. (4.31 – To speak in more detail about the youth being involved in the work of AoBP offline). **DISCHARGED.**
26. (4.33 – Ask for job description from chair of Harbour Trust to aid us in finding a replacement). **DISCHARGED.**
27. (4.35 – To request local Cllr's receive the report re. Shore St TMP once it has been prepared by John Stewart) Requested but not received from JS). **Action – AT.**
28. (4.36 – To chase up the loose/missing drain cover at Clunes House with John Stewart once contact details have been received (via AT). **Action – NS.**
29. (4.49 - To arrange the community consultations from March onwards). **DISCHARGED.**
30. (4.52 - To arrange clearance of ECH grounds/maintenance etc sometime in March (mid to late). Has been passed to AT as maintenance required to wall. **Action – AT.**
31. (5.1 (Feb) – To query if Cromarty bus going to go back to being run via D&E now it's bought over by THC). **DISCHARGED.**
32. (5.2 (Feb) – To speak to Fraser Thompson about grit bin not being refilled). **Action – AM.**
33. (9.1g – Review speeding in Bayview and surrounding areas). **Action – PS.**
34. (9.1h – Circulate email re. One Cromarty presentation). **DISCHARGED.**
35. (10.1 – To get back to Ardross CC re. our thoughts/opinions on renewable project). **DISCHARGED.**
36. (10.2 – To arrange informal chat with Hayley at CCDT). **DISCHARGED.**

37. (10.3 – Email resident re. visitor levy consultation asking for feedback and see if they’re willing to share questions with us). **DISCHARGED.**
38. (5.1 - To speak separately to Orlagh and Allan re. how to further communication with ABP). **DISCHARGED.**
39. (5.2 - To arrange meeting with AM to see where improvements can be made to bus timetable). **DISCHARGED.**
40. (6.1 - Emergency resilience training to be arranged). To be arranged during summer. **Action – AP.**
41. (8.1 - Article for the Chatterbox to be done re. CHT). **Action – NS.**
42. (9.1a - Arrange grass cutting at Reeds Loop). Happening monthly. **DISCHARGED.**
43. (9.1b - More information to be sought re cruise ship levy before deciding to support or not). **Action – ALL.**
44. (9.1c - To respond to the invite from Cromarty Courthouse re. open night). **DISCHARGED.**
45. (9.1f - Send info to Sarah A re. potholes on Shore Road so she can follow this up). **Action – PS.**
46. (9.1g - Draft submission re. visitor levy to be submitted). **DISCHARGED.**
47. (9.1h - Send letter of thanks to Port of Nigg for subsidising the ferry). **Action – PS.**
48. (10.2 - To report back to Boat Club re. approval of links diversion). **DISCHARGED.**
49. (10.2 - Respond to other queries re. use of links now all agreed). **DISCHARGED.**
50. (10.3 - NS to write to THC re. abandoned property on Shore Street). **DISCHARGED.**

7. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer’s Report and accompanying notes, plus the **DRAFT** year-end financial statements (**Appendix A, B & C**) were prepared by AP and circulated prior to the meeting.

PS queried the ‘gala fund’ and if there was any cash available. AP confirmed that there was money raised in the past by the gala committee, but these funds are put into a pot for amenities and used in the community *NOT* just for future galas.

There were no further questions on the monthly report.

AP then went through the financial year end accounts and welcomed questions.

Significant funds held for Youth Café but all are allocated – some will be spent soon and some will be held for up to two years.

NS advised how impressed he was with the recent accessibility and sustainability improvements at Cromarty Courthouse and suggested similar be looked into for The Victoria Hall. AP to speak to contact at The Courthouse about work done. **Action – AP.**

NS also suggested a ‘financial masterclass’ for the youth members as he believes it’s an invaluable skill for them to have for the future. **Action – AP.**

The draft minutes were approved by all members and AP confirmed they will be sent for audit ahead of the upcoming AGM.

AT expressed his thanks to AP for all his work on bringing the figures together and producing accounts.

There were no further comments from members.

8. **Victoria Hall (VH) Report including Youth Café**

The Victoria Hall Report (**Appendix D**) that was prepared by AP, plus the Youth Café Powerpoint presentation prepared by Fraser Thompson (**available on Cromarty Live**) were circulated prior to the meeting.

There were no further comments by members.

9. **Replacement of Chairperson for Cromarty Harbour Trust**

No further action from last meeting, Chatterbox article still being prepared!

10. **Portfolio reports**

Portfolio Reports prepared by NS, AT, AP and AR (**Appendix E-H**) were circulated prior to the meeting.

Andy Thurgood

a) Cruise Levy

All members agreed we can't comment on this levy as there are too many unanswered questions. Not enough time to co-relate feedback from everyone to make it a community wide response.

b) One Cromarty

PS expressed thanks to AT for this workshop and all members agreed it seemed to be really well received in the community and should happen more regularly.

Nigel Shapcott

c) Reeds Loop

Conversation between THC and landowner has occurred re. repairs to Reeds Loop path but still very much in the planning stage.

d) East Pier

H.E.S have funded the repairs to East Pier (harbour). Work to start quite soon.

Alan Plampton

- e) Has been included in an email exchange re. The Gaelic Chapel & its potential restoration. All 3 Highland Councillors were included in the thread. Just for our information.

Alan Rycroft

f) Police Scotland

March report was sent to Paige instead of Alan R – PS to send this on. **Action – PS.**

Paige Shepherd

g) Shore Road/Bayview

Speed remains a concern – PS continuing to monitor. Aware the traffic levels were higher due to the diversion from the Fairy Glen closure.

There were no further comments on members' portfolios.

11. The Highland Council

This section was discussed after agenda item 6 as Cllr Sarah A had to leave early tonight.

Report prepared by SA (**Appendix I**) was circulated before the meeting.

AT advised SA to complete the Cromarty Courthouse Survey as they need a minimum of 100 responses. SA will tell everyone she knows about this too!

There was nothing discussed in addition to this.

SA left the meeting at 8pm

12. Correspondence Received

Nothing received this month

13. Any Other Business

13.1 – Park signage

There are signs in the park regarding dogs which aren't true and aren't enforceable. They were erected by previous community council members. Should we take them down? Requires further discussion as to what the signs say and who designs them. **Action – all.**

13.2 – Portfolio reports

We need to review the portfolio list and share out the jobs some more. To discuss at AGM.

Action – all.

There were no further comments or questions.

14. Date of next meeting

Monday 26 May 2025 – AGM at 7pm, followed by OGM at 730pm.

Meeting ended at 930pm.

APPENDIX A
AGENDA ITEM 7
TREASURER'S REPORT NOTES

- 1. 2024/2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** are attached. These are the Final Draft version that is subject to audit and consideration by Members. Hopefully they show a reasonably healthy situation although the future sustainability of all Community Council finances is an ongoing concern, without Highland Council/Scottish Government intervention to adequately fund Community Councils to carry out their bare minimum obligations. **FOR DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL RE. MONTHLY REPORT** attached
- 2. AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE/PAID IN ADVANCE** still reflects the £150 planning fee to be repaid by Stagecoach. Should be cleared soon. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
- 3. AMOUNTS PAYABLE** still reflects £200 that is to be used on a Primary School project. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
- 4. SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR YEAR** reflects the monthly BoS bank charges and the Annual Insurance Premium. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
- 5. COMMUNITY AMENTIES & EVENT FUNDS** reflects public donations. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
- 6. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND** reflects continuing maintenance of RLP. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Alan Plampton
27/04/25

APPENDIX B
AGENDA ITEM 7
TREASURER'S REPORT

		£	£	£
Net Assets			<u>Movement</u>	<u>at 30/03/25</u>
Bank & Cash in hand balances as at 27th April 2025		14,812.65	-338.83	15,151.48
Paypal Balance as at 27th April 2025		0.00	0.00	0.00
Amounts Receivable/Paid in Advance		150.00	0.00	150.00
Amounts Payable		-200.00	0.00	-200.00
Total Net Assets at 27th April 2025		£14,762.65	-338.83	£15,101.48
		£	£	£
Represented by:				
C&DCC Accumulated Fund Reserves at 1st April 2025		1,328.19	-268.50	1,596.69
Surplus/Deficit for the year to date		-179.49	-68.91	-110.58
		1,148.70	-337.41	1,486.11
Provision for Guidebook reprinting at 1st April 2025		211.75	0.00	211.75
C&DCC Amenity & Event Funds				
Community Amenities/Event Funds		6,434.46	25.74	6,408.72
Community Resilience Fund		1,976.38	-90.00	2,066.38
Cromarty Live Fund		0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Defibrillator Fund		1,738.89	62.84	1,676.05
Net C&DCC Reserves		11,510.18	-338.83	11,849.01
Designated Community Funds				
Gluren bij de Buren Fund		125.26	0.00	125.26
Toddler Playgroup Fund		1,811.29	0.00	1,811.29
Cromarty Rising Fund		1,315.92	0.00	1,315.92
		£14,762.65	-338.83	£15,101.48
Alan Plampton 27th April 2025				

CROMARTY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL					
Consolidated Statement of Financial Position (including Victoria Hall)					
as at 31st March 2025					
SUBJECT TO AUDIT					
31 March 2024					31 March 2025
£					£
	ASSETS				
	Current Assets				
	Other Current Assets				
171.60	Council Accounts Receivable			0.00	
1,255.75	Victoria Hall Accounts Receivable			1,410.51	
1,427.35	Total Other Current Assets				1,410.51
	Cash at Bank and in hand				
10,968.13	Council BoS Current Account			14,902.02	
979.10	Council Petty Cash			293.81	
7,639.53	Hall BoS Current Account			8,913.71	
0.00	Hall Petty Cash			106.51	
38,189.02	Youth Cafe BoS Current Account and Cash			45,097.16	
57,775.78	Total Cash at bank and in hand				69,313.21
59,203.13	Total Current Assets			£	70,723.72
	LIABILITIES				
	Current Liabilities				
200.00	Council Accounts Payable			350.00	
5,110.38	Victoria Hall Accounts Payable			5,864.56	
5,310.38	Total Current Liabilities			£	6,214.56
53,892.75	Total Current Assets less Current Liabilities			£	64,509.16
	Represented by -				
	Capital and Reserves				
2,093.28	C&DCC Accumulated Fund			1,596.69	
(496.59)	Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year			(268.50)	
1,596.69					1,328.19
	Other C&DCC Reserves				
1,609.69	C&DCC Amenities Funds			1,210.62	
5,073.84	C&DCC Event Funds			5,073.84	
336.10	C&DCC Resilience Funds			2,066.38	
	Designated C&DCC Reserves				
211.75	Publications Reprinting Fund			211.75	
1,014.98	Community Defibrillator Fund			1,702.58	
4.01	Cromarty Live Fund			0.00	
					10,265.17
9,847.06	Net C&DCC Reserves			£	11,593.36
	Designated Community Funds (held on behalf of Community Groups)				
202.06	Gluren bij de Buren Fund			125.26	
1,476.29	Cromarty Toddler Playgroup Fund			1,811.29	
393.42	Cromarty Rising Fund			1,315.92	
					3,252.47
	Other Funds				
38,189.02	Youth Cafe Projects Fund				45,097.16
3,431.27	Victoria Hall Fund			3,784.90	
353.63	Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year			781.27	
3,784.90					4,566.17
53,892.75	Total Capital and Reserves			£	64,509.16

CROMARTY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Consolidated Statement of Financial Performance (including Victoria Hall for year ended 31st March 2025

SUBJECT TO AUDIT					
Year to 31st March 2024					Year to 31st March 2025
£					£
INCOME					
656.49		Total Community Council Income		679.52	
12,773.25		Total Victoria Hall Income		14,861.39	
13,429.74		TOTAL CONSOLIDATED INCOME		£	15,540.91
EXPENDITURE					
1,136.63		Total Community Council Administration Costs		948.02	
16.45		Total Council Other Costs		0.00	
1,153.08				£	948.02
12,419.62		Total Victoria Hall Costs		14,080.12	
12,419.62				£	14,080.12
13,572.70		TOTAL CONSOLIDATED EXPENDITURE		£	15,028.14
(142.96)		CONSOLIDATED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		£	512.77
Analysed by -					
(496.59)		COMMUNITY COUNCIL			(268.50)
353.63		VICTORIA HALL			781.27
(142.96)				£	512.77

APPENDIX D
AGENDA ITEM 8
VICTORIA HALL REPORT

1. **Finances** As Members can see from the Draft Financial Statements, the Hall has had a good year and has also now established a £4,750 contingency fund for sustainability works, if not completed by THC. This is in addition to the existing operational reserves. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
2. **Repairs & Maintenance** Work on the back offices to decorate the new YC Snug Project have been instructed to the acceptable tenderer. The project is fully funded. Some minor work on under stage storage is being quoted for. Fire Alarm maintenance was successfully completed and the next boiler servicing is booked. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
3. **Sheddie.** The Trikes are now in their summer 'home'. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
4. **Youth Cafe** Latest report is attached. As mentioned above, the Snug Project is now fully funded. The YC committee will be meeting as soon as possible to discuss recruitment and support for the remaining resources. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

Alan Plampton - VHMC
27/04/25

APPENDIX E
AGENDA ITEM 10 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
ALAN RYCROFT

Police Liaison

I have received no specific information, concerning the C&DCC, from our local police contact for the month of April 2025.

Police Scotland have not yet circulated the Ward 9 Black Isle report, in respect of the month of March 2025.

APPENDIX F

AGENDA ITEM 10 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS

ALAN PLAMPTON

1. **BICC** will be holding its next meeting in May to consider the appointment of an Independent Chair and recruitment of Community Directors to the BIPP Governance Body. Formalisation of the BICC Terms of Reference will also be progressed. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
2. **Affordable Housing Sub Committee** has still not received any new news from Albyn Housing but will continue to suggest that another Housing Needs Analysis is not needed, especially if it is delaying their development proposals. The draft submission to the Highland Development has not yet been completed but will be circulated to Members prior to submission in May. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
3. **Defibrillators** A meeting with the supplier is now planned for May, possibly with THC representatives, to finalise siting in Townlands. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

Alan Plampton 27/04/25

APPENDIX G
AGENDA ITEM 10 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
ANDY THURGOOD

Meetings attended

No meetings attended this month.

Correspondence

I have had corresponded with Scott Duncan at THC on two matters:

- (1) Enquiry as to when the Links grass will be cut – this is scheduled for week commencing 28/4. It is noted that THC Amenities are in the process of scaling up for summer working.
- (2) The periodic collection of vegetative street litter arising from a coordinated approach to locals tidying the town. We have an agreement in principle, but this does require further Community Council discussion.

I liaised with the Development Trust regarding the re-instatement of goalposts on the links. This should have been undertaken over the weekend 26/4.

Noise and other nuisance from the Firth

A noise complaint from 11/4 (21:50) was circulated by Rory Gunn at Port of Nigg on 14/4. It related to the departure of a jack-up vessel at 23:10.

I put forward my suggestion of re-convening the meeting of the Firth Noise Group to review progress on noise management, and Rory has offered to host the meeting at Nigg.

THC Environmental Health are currently analysing data arising from noise monitoring undertaken at the end of February/beginning of March. Once their report is circulated, we will be in a position to meet with other parties at Nigg.

Projects

The 'One Cromarty' facilitated workshop was held at the Victoria Hall on Saturday 26/4, with Paige Shepherd and I representing CDCC. We were joined by 18 representatives, and between us, this covered 14 community groups.

In facilitated discussion, we covered the topics of: What Cromarty does well? How this can be shared more broadly in the community? What is the vision of the town 10 years into the future? And what respective groups could offer each other in the way of expertise, experience, resource and commitment? The collected feedback will be recorded, and shared back with the attending groups. The contribution provides a diverse range of community views on how the town can develop and deliver a Cromarty Community Action Plan (CCAP). It is intended to establish regular meetings to enable further discussion with community groups and develop the CCAP.

Cruise Levy

I circulated details of the questions in the Cruise Levy consultation to CDCC members on 3/4. For discussion at Community Council 28/4.

Andy Thurgood
28/04/25

APPENDIX H
AGENDA ITEM 10 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
NIGEL SHAPCOTT

Portfolio Report for Cromarty and District Community Council- April 2025- Nigel Shapcott

HC Core Path report- Reeds Loop Path, Lady's Walk, 100 Steps

Reeds Loop Path (shore part) All in all it is still in a functional state. A meeting (on and off site) 22nd April was held between Phillip Waite (HC Paths), John Nightingale and myself to look at the damage and discuss options. We also looked at the damage to the lower set of steps and the path feeding them. This discussion is continuing between JN and PW.

100 Steps No change.

Highland Strategic Local Access Group - Meeting 23rd April 2025. 147 Expressions of Interest (EOI) had been reviewed for CLLD funding. The top 42 will be offered the opportunity of applying for funding, 9 of which were £10k and will be invited to apply for other funds for "small" projects. Total sum currently available is about £500k which would be heavily oversubscribed if the second tranche were not to emerge. There was discussion of the urgent need for an internet portal to view and handle the enormous amounts of information. Sarah Atkins please discuss with Fiona Campbell and NS.

Cromarty Harbour Trust (CHT)

- 1) As a reminder Colin has provided us with notice that he will be resigning in March 2026 and informs us that C&DCC have an important role in filling that position according to the "rules". I have done a draft article for Chatterbox related to this, by way of an interview with Colin.
- 2) 3 or more pontoons were deployed on 4th April, the last two on 28th April weather permitting.
- 3) Resolving issues with THC re planning permission for the new shed.
- 4) Harbour will be full again this summer.
- 5) Harbour inflation running at 10%, fee increase again restricted to 5%.
- 6) East Pier deliberations with HES concluding imminently.
- 7) Cromarty Boat Club- crane in is scheduled for 28th April, weather permitting. This will mean the road to the ferry (starting early in April) will be blocked, for safety. Traffic will be diverted through the links.

Cromarty Care Project (CCP)

Parent and Toddler Playgroup – on-going commitment from CCP to fund both activities and equipment. Toys/equipment now funded, at last CCP meeting it was reported that activity sessions were going down really well, and Playgroup was thriving.

Monday Lunch Club – Now finished with Summer Café starting Tuesday 29th April. Children plan and make all refreshments and do a wee entertainment slot, at least one CCP trustee attends each session.

Classic Film Club – on-going and showing 2 films per month. Application just made to Port of Cromarty Firth for a further year's funding of this activity, awaiting confirmation.

Children plan and make all refreshments and do a wee entertainment slot, at least one CCP trustee attends each session. – CCP put daffodils out to all homes for COVID day of reflection. Really well received by folks and a couple of donations to CCP resulting.

CCP 10 Year anniversary - Planning started for celebration of CCP 10 year Anniversary. Hoping to have drop in session with display of photos/memories etc around end of August/beginning of September.

Trikes- will be made available (with pilot(s)) for the Cromarty Film Festival.

APPENDIX I
AGENDA ITEM 11 – HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CLLR SARAH ATKIN

My Month – April 2025 (for CDCC minutes)

April is a quiet month for committees, with the Easter holidays.

1. Highland Wide Local Development Plan consultation – including the ‘Call for Sites’ ends on Friday 2nd May at 12 noon.

RESPONSE: Discussion followed about the complexity of the online process for community councils, given their volunteers with time constraints. SA promised to flag this up with the relevant officer.

2. Accounts Commission Best Value Report on Highland Council was published last week. Broadly positive. Balanced and fair. An improvement on 2020 (when the last one was published.) Noted the commitment to transformational change. Also, the steps taken to reduce the budget deficit. Concerns: level of debt. Relying too much on reserves to balance the budget (which was not the case for 2025.) Noted that the pace of change needs to be accelerated. At 16-pages, it's a relatively easy and informative read. This item will be reported to a future meeting of the full council.
3. Members' Training: a day to refresh us on our role, including our code of conduct (including on regulatory committees such as planning and licensing.) One key presentation was on communication – members to officers.
4. Black Isle issues raised at Ward Business:
 - Fairy Glen road emergency work was completed ahead of schedule.
 - Roads (generally): all local members feel that Black Isle roads need to be singled out for a bespoke approach (if there is such a thing!) So many require attention. We will lobby for this.
 - Play Parks (concerns at the slow pace of purchase and installation of equipment since our election, despite agreement.)
 - Invitation-to-Pay car parks. This was just a discussion for some areas, but not Cromarty.
5. Cromarty:
 - I attended the Courthouse opening.
 - I was sent the CDT business plan for East Church Hall, via Matt and read with interest.
 - John Nightingale did make contact, but I was unable to meet at short notice. So, there's still no decision on putting a 'shed of things' in Townlands' park but that will be chased up.
 - Harbour – retrospective planning has been refused. Both Cllr Johnston and I were unable to refer this to the planning committee (NPAC) as we both had 'an interest'. The system sometimes allows us to individually – and independently of each other so we don't discuss/confer – refer delegated refusals back to NPAC.
 - Do the CC still wish to pursue the planting of a hedge for Victoria Park? Answer: not at present.

Questions: NS raised the lack of a portal to read and consider funding applications for the Strategic LAG. The system used is cumbersome and makes it difficult for all concerned – committee members and officers. SA agreed to raise this with the relevant officers.