



Cromarty and District Community Council

Approved minutes of meeting held on

Monday 31st March 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.

PS, AT, AM, Cllr SA, NS and AP were present from The Victoria Hall.

AR & OM attended online via Microsoft Teams.

2. Declarations of Interest

AT appointed a director of CCDT at meeting on 3rd March 2025.

3. Approval of previous minutes - 24th February 2025

The minutes were proposed by AT and seconded by AP

PS then moved to agenda item 5 – youth issues.

4. Matters Arising from previous minutes - 24th February 2025

Note – these are unchanged from last month due to miscommunication/absence of minute secretary!

1. (4.1 – Little movement with THC on TMP and 20mph in urban areas until 2025.) **On hold.**
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). **On hold.**
4. (4.5 – To confirm when funding from Stagecoach has been received). **Action – AP.**
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). Ongoing. **Action – KM**

9. (4.12 – Stakes to go in at The Hugh Miller Monument, and posters put up to stop contractors mowing/maintaining area). **Action – KM**
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. **Action – PS.**
13. (4.17 – To discuss recruitment for TVH committee). Volunteers are needed. **Action – CF.**
14. (4.18 – Potential 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). **Action – SA.**
17. (4.21 – To arrange a separate meeting re. noise monitoring). **Action – ALL**
18. (4.22 – To recruit litter picker volunteers for 2025 season). **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). **Action – AP.**
22. (4.27 – SA to check if there's any preventative action we can take re. dogs in the park). **Action – PS.**
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). **Action SA/AM**
26. (4.33 – Ask for job description from chair of Harbour Trust to aid us in finding a replacement). **Action – NS.**
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. **WIP. Action – AT.**
30. (4.52 - To arrange clearance of ECH grounds/maintenance etc sometime in March (mid to late). Ongoing. **Action – AP.**
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). **Action – SA.**

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). **Action – AT.**
35. (10.1 – To get back to Ardross CC re. our thoughts/opinions on renewable project). **Action – ALL.**
36. (10.2 – To arrange informal chat with Hayley at CCDT). **Action – PS.**
37. (10.3 – Email resident re. visitor levy consultation asking for feedback and see if they're willing to share questions with us). **Action – PS.**

5. Youth Issues

This section followed the approval of last month's minutes to allow the two youth members the opportunity to raise any issues/concerns they have before leaving the meeting.

- a) Focus Group – Claire @ Youth Highland, on behalf of Associated British Ports
World issues discussed rather than any local issues. Emails were provided and they think Claire is likely to contact Allan and Orlagh again but as it was amongst a larger group OM felt like it was hard for Claire to get her points across as to how it will be beneficial for us locally.

Also confirmed that no one from the Association of British Ports attended.

In addition to this, NS reminded members that Global Energy/Port of Nigg had advised they would welcome a visit from school pupils. AM and OM confirmed they'd be keen to visit the Port.

Sarah, Orlagh and Allan to meet separately to discuss how to further the communication with ABP and can then follow up with GEG. **Action – SA.**

- b) School bus

Bus has been on time pretty much every day this month. SA can arrange a discussion with AM to discuss the timetable to see where improvements can be made. **Action – SA.**

- c) Goalposts on Links

AT to follow up with CCDT

- d) Gritters

Gritters are now away. AP expressed a massive thanks to Allan for all his hard work over the winter months around the town.

- e) Secondary School Pupil of the Year 2025 at the Highland Heroes Awards!

Massive congratulations were sent to Orlagh for winning this award and to Allan for also being nominated! Ten and a half thousand people were nominated this year and to have two of these from our very own town is very special. We are very lucky to have such brilliant young people in Cromarty.

No further comments – both youth members left the meeting at 745pm.

6. Treasurer's Report

Find us on 

www.cromartylive.co.uk

Prepared by Claire Fraser – April 2025

The Treasurer's Report and accompanying notes (**Appendix A & B**) were prepared by AP and circulated prior to the meeting.

Bank of Scotland have started charging fees now, so another cost for us.

SSE had originally agreed to funding for 5 years but they've changed this to 2 years, with us re-applying for years 3, 4 and 5 when the time comes. Emergency resilience training can now be arranged. **Action – AP.**

Defibrillator training also to be held once unit at Townlands Park has been fitted.

There were no further comments from members.

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

The Victoria Hall Report (**Appendix C**) 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.

Youth Cafe

'Snug' project has been fully financed – should actually be receiving more than the £15k that they were originally seeking.

There were no further comments by members.

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

NS doing an article for The Chatterbox. **Action – NS.**

9. **Reports**

9.1 - Portfolio Reports:

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

Nigel Shapcott

- a) Requests if we can start mowing the Reeds Loop Path for April/May time – AP advised funding hasn't come through but to go ahead and arrange. **Action – NS.**

Andy Thurgood

b) Nigg/Port of Cromarty Firth

AT emailed members notes from this meeting earlier in March (as mentioned in his report). Port of Cromarty Firth are keen to seek our support on opposing the Cruise Levy as they think this will have a negative impact on trade. There is currently a consultation on this via The Scottish Government looking to seek views both positive and negative about how any such levy could work. Members need to seek more information and discuss it further before they can come to a decision. **Action – ALL.**

c) Cromarty Courthouse – Open Invitation

Andy to respond to the invite, one of our members will attend. **Action – AT.**

Alan Plampton

- d) BICC
Going ahead with 4 nominations for the governance body as Conon Bridge continue to be in Abeyance.
- e) Albyn Housing
Still no response

Paige Shepherd

- f) Shore Road
Potholes were repaired but badly done and the holes have appeared again. To send to Sarah A who will follow it up. **Action – PS.**
- g) Visitor Levy
PS has done a draft submission – lots of it was matter of personal opinion. To submit on behalf of C&DCC. **Action – PS.**
- h) Port of Nigg
Sent them a letter of thanks for subsidising the ferry to enable the season to start in April 2025, two months earlier than normal! **Action – PS.**

Alan Rycroft

Nothing in addition to what was already reported!

There were no further comments on members' portfolios.

9.2 - The Highland Council:

Report prepared by SA (**Appendix I**) was circulated before the meeting.
There was nothing discussed in addition to this.

9.3 - Correspondence Received:

Nothing received this month

10. Any Other Business

Minute secretary note – CCDT will have its own section in the Agenda from next month (due to Andy T now becoming a director).

10.1 - Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT)

East Church Hall

Business plan being submitted this week but still have to wait for the decision from court in August (as previously minuted).

Town Matters

Purchase of the Slaughterhouse is moving forward separately - CCDT don't have the capacity to take this on. Matt Hall (director of CCDT) sent round an email to all community groups to try to encourage/increase the communication between them on any other important town matters.

Development Officer

Funding has now come through from DTAS for a 12-month contract. Julie Macrae (original development officer) has now left so recruitment will be happening soon.

Open Gardens

Being organised by CCDT this year and has been scheduled for 21st and 22nd June 2025.

10.2 – Links Calendar

Various requests for use over the last few weeks.

NS requested access to links as a diversion for vehicles during 'crane in' operations at The Harbour (April 2025), now that ferry will be running. All members gave the go ahead. NS to report back to The Boat Club. **Action – NS.**

Other requests via email also approved. AP to respond. **Action – AP.**

10.3 – Abandoned house at Shore Street.

Residents are concerned about the safety of this abandoned property due to the recent rat infestation, suggestion that it be compulsory purchased by The Highland Council. Discussed opened and confirmed first step would be to write to THC. **Action – NS.**

There were no further comments or questions.

11. Date of next meeting

Monday 28 April 2025 at 730pm.

Meeting ended at 10pm.

APPENDIX A
AGENDA ITEM 6
TREASURER'S REPORT NOTES

- 1. AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE/PAID IN ADVANCE** still reflects the £150 planning fee to be repaid by Stage-coach. Should be cleared before year end. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**
- 2. AMOUNTS PAYABLE** still reflects £200 that is to be used on a Primary School project possibly towards new goalposts or maybe their 150th celebration event (ex OG donation). **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**
- 3. SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR YEAR** reflects the first monthly BoS bank charges. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**
- 4. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND** reflects SSE funding for 2 years. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**
- 5. CROMARTY TODDLER FUND** both reflects invoice paid. **FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**

APPENDIX B
AGENDA ITEM 6
TREASURER'S REPORT

Statement of Financial Position at 30th March 2025				
		£	£	£
Net Assets			Movement	at 23/02/25
Bank & Cash in hand balances as at 30th March 2025		15,151.48	1,629.75	13,521.73
Paypal Balance as at 30th March 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 30th March 2025		£15,101.48	1,629.75	£13,471.73
		£	£	£
Represented by:				
C&DCC Accumulated Fund Reserves at 1st April 2024		1,596.69	0.00	1,596.69
Surplus/ Deficit for the year to date		-110.58	-4.25	-106.33
		1,486.11	-4.25	1,490.36
Provision for Guidebook reprinting at 1st April 2024		211.75	0.00	211.75
C&DCC Amenity & Event Funds				
Community Amenities/Event Funds		6,408.72	0.00	6,408.72
Community Resilience Fund		2,066.38	1,700.00	366.38
Cromarty Live Fund		0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Defibrillator Fund		1,676.05	0.00	1,676.05
Net C&DCC Reserves		11,849.01	1,695.75	10,153.26
Designated Community Funds				
Gluren bij de Buren Fund		125.26	0.00	125.26
Toddler Playgroup Fund		1,811.29	-66.00	1,877.29
Cromarty Rising Fund		1,315.92	0.00	1,315.92
		£15,101.48	1,629.75	£13,471.73
Alan Plampton 30th March 2025				

APPENDIX C
AGENDA ITEM 7
VICTORIA HALL REPORT

1. Bookings - Figures for the year are looking good and will be confirmed in the Final Draft Financial Statements that will be presented to Members at our April Meeting. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
2. Repairs & Maintenance - Work on the back offices to provide the new YC Snug Project will start soon, especially as we have now received confirmation that the project is fully funded. Both kitchen urns broke down at the same time! (reality is nobody mentioned one wasn't working!). A new one, more energy efficient one, has been purchased and installed. Repairs to the vacuum cleaner have also been done. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**
3. Sheddie - Gritters have been cleaned and put away for the summer awaiting the arrival of the CCP Trikes. The ERC generator and power system service/check has been completed. **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 urgently to discuss recruitment and support for the remaining resources. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

APPENDIX D
AGENDA ITEM 8 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
ALAN RYCROFT

Police Liaison

On Thursday 27 March 2025, I attended the online inaugural *Police Scotland* Inspectors' meeting for community councils in the **North Highlands** region, chaired by **Chief Inspector Calum Smith** from Dingwall. Whilst no specific current crime issues concerning Cromarty were identified, the meeting clarified the senior officers' intention to formalise relations across the region. I received a published report for the month of February, covering the **Black Isle** district, which I am providing with this report for members. It will be seen that the formal report is in line with the information, received from our local contact, Constable Robin Brown, that I spoke of at our February meeting. Chief Inspector Smith will issue the March edition of the **Black Isle** report within the first week or so in April. *Police Scotland* plan to hold these Inspectors' meetings on a quarterly basis, the next one probably taking place during the week commencing 24 June 2025.

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

APPENDIX E
AGENDA ITEM 8 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
ALAN PLAMPTON

1. **BICC** After last meeting's lengthy briefing, the next BICC meeting is yet to take place, although it will be very soon. Members will be briefed with any news, before and at our April meeting.
ACTION – Information only, no action required

2. **Affordable Housing** Following the creation of the new Sub-Committee, although there has still been no response from Albyn, we are looking at clarifying the need to conduct further community needs analysis when there is no Rural Housing Burden attached. In addition, the Sub-Committee will be looking at drafting the C&DCC submission to the Highland Development Plan consultation, which has been extended in to May. The submission will look at revitalising interest in the previous IMFDP CM03 scheme. The draft submission will be considered by Members at our April meeting. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

3. **Defibrillators** A meeting with the supplier is planned for April, possibly with THC representatives, to finalise siting in Townlands. **ACTION – Information only, no action required**

Meetings attended

I attended the Port of Cromarty Firth Community Councils liaison meeting 13th March.
A full and detailed summary was provided to CDCC on 14th March and can be made available to community members upon request.
One item arising for our discussion, is a request for CDCC to comment on the consultation for the Cruise Levy.

On 24th March I attended an interactive session 'Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments' hosted by the Scottish Community Development Centre. The workshop was designed to discuss Community Benefit in such a way, to engage with the Government consultation, and get CCs thinking about how they could access benefit.

Correspondence

I have had email correspondence and some face-to-face discussions with Gillian Newman, regarding her initiative to co-ordinate community pest control to address the on-going rat situation. She has successfully managed to attract 32 households to the initiative, and initial rounds of baiting have been undertaken – including the baiting of the rock armour on Shore Street. This co-ordinated mass approach is hoped to address the current issue.

Noise and other nuisance from the Firth

There have been two recorded noise complaints during the period. I have had a protracted email dialogue with THC EHOs concerning their approach on the recognition of individual noise complaints, and the failure to communicate complaints to the agreed relevant parties in a timely manner (PoCF, PoN, CDCC). This approach raises concerns, both in the way that complaints are recognised, and then investigated. It may be worth re-convening the meeting of the Firth Noise Group to discuss these concerns more broadly.

THC Environmental Health are currently analysing data arising from noise monitoring undertaken at the end of February/beginning of March. Once their report is finalised, they will arrange for a Teams call to discuss the findings with CDCC.

Projects

Details of the 'One Cromarty' project were communicated to community groups last month. To date, 9 groups will be involved in the initial workshop - final numbers are TBC. It is hoped that the setting of the date and venue – Victoria hall, Saturday 26th April, and the updated announcement in the Cromarty News, will allow other groups to engage with us.

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

- 1) Reeds Loop Path (shore part) - Repairs to the drainage have been carried out and seem to be lasting. There is evidence of cows on the path and more collapsing of the original damaged part. All in all it is still in a functional state.
- 2) 100 Steps - No change.
- 3) Ross and Cromarty Local Access Forum - Meeting 14 March 2025. Basically looking at any "trouble spots" with access/the public/land managers or owners and making decisions for HC to act on. My first meeting, one part on site and almost three in the Dingwall Council Chambers. It was very interesting, if long. News was that the budget will enable approx 18 rangers to be employed across the Highlands the next financial year ('25-'26).

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 will be doing an article for Chatterbox related to this, by way of an interview with Colin.
- 2) 3 or more pontoons getting deployed on 4th 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. Despite raising over £100k of external matched funding for the project, there remains a considerable shortfall which HES is aware of and reflecting upon. There can be no guarantee that this will progress and if it does, it may be scaled appropriately.
- 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 need to be diverted through the links.

Cromarty Care Project (CCP)

- 1) Larder cupboard – quotes in and decision taken to have Loglap fencing larder shed made by Black Isle Men's Shed
- 2) 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.
- 3) Monday Lunch Club – Lunch club ongoing at Fishertown Inn, 20 attendees on our list in total but usually around 14/15 going each Monday. Final lunch Club Monday 31st March
- 4) Summer Café – This is in conjunction with Cromarty Primary School was really successful last year. Starts Tuesday 29th April until Tuesday 17th June from 1.15-2.45pm. Children plan and make all refreshments and do a wee entertainment slot, at least one CCP trustee attends each session.
- 5) 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
- 6) Cromarty Primary School 150th Anniversary Meeting with reps of Cromarty Primary Parent Council and CCP to come up with ideas for possible collaboration – on-going
- 7) Grant application to Global Energy made by CCP on behalf of Cromarty Primary to fund school trips has been successful with a sum of £3,200 handed over to the school.
- 8) Trikes will be back down in the village on weekend of 5/6th April and in use for Film Club, Summer Café and Open Gardens weekend. We have sufficient pilots for now.
- 9) Collaboration with Youth Café Application made on behalf of Youth Café to Hugh Fraser Foundation for grant of £7,963 towards the development of a snug area.

APPENDIX H
AGENDA ITEM 8 - PORTFOLIO REPORTS
PAIGE SHEPHERD

Planning

[Replacement of 12no. windows \(6no. of which in retrospect\)](#) 

The Glass Studio 5 Bank Street Cromarty IV11 8UY

Ref. No: 24/05265/LBC | Received: Thu 19 Dec 2024 | Validated: Fri 28 Feb 2025 | Status: Under Consideration

Roads

The entrance to Bayview Crescent from the shore road is getting worse as the days go on. Will provide photos and submit them to the reports department at Highland Council.

Visitor Levy

After a fairly lengthy conversation i have a draft reply for the consultation. There are lots of open-ended questions which individuals are invited to air their views on - matters such as local exemptions, the rate of the levy and how the HC will make decisions on how to proceed. Discussion required tonight. I also want to thank Fran Tilbrook for her notes on this.

Well Done

Although mentioned in Alan's Youth Cafe report i want to congratulate Orlagh MacIver on winning Secondary Pupil of the Year at the Highland Hero Awards 2025. A massive well done to Allan Munro on being nominated in this category also. Cromarty is very lucky to have two outstanding young people in the community.

Thank you

The C&DCC would like to say a massive thank you to the Port of Nigg who have subsidized the Cromarty to Nigg Ferry for an additional two months. The service is due to commence at the start of April. This is great news for the town and a welcome contribution by the port

APPENDIX I
AGENDA ITEM 8 – HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CLLR SARAH ATKIN

Highland Council – March 2025 Summary (for minutes)

March has been dominated by two meetings – the Budget and the Full Council of 27/3.

Budget – whilst there remains a continued need to deliver savings and efficiencies, this has been in parallel to THC investing in services, particularly those areas local members have been advocating for – the amenities budget and in ASN/education. The investment is, in the main delivered out of reserves. This year we managed to balance the budget **without** dipping into reserves.

Full Council - the most significant paper was the plan and timeline for Phase 1 of the Highland Investment Plan. This is good news for the Black Isle with Fortrose Academy earmarked for considerable investment in its physical infrastructure and improved sports facilities. There will also be more investment in roads, council depots and other infrastructure in the years ahead. This paper did not gain the headlines as much as the national pay rise for local councillors.

Councillors' pay rise - I explained the context on a recent Facebook post (knowing how bad the optics look). There would be no good time for this uplift to establish a formula for Cllrs pay. Personally, were I the Scottish Government I would possibly have deferred a new system until the next political cycle. On the other hand, the need to make the role more attractive and to retain good people matters. The Council has lost many good people this session, especially younger members with a lot to offer. Pay is a factor in that.

Local Issues

Fairy Glen road – I've engaged with Stagecoach, CDCC and other stakeholders in the run up to this emergency closure.

Street Lighting in Cromarty - Discussion with CDCC members. **Action** - chase Stuart Bruce to meet with CDCC for a night walk/visit.

Townlands - Mr Nightingale hasn't responded to me re: permission for a shed. I'd sent him dimensions, hoped for position and the names of officers to chase up.