

APPROVED Minutes of the AKCC Meeting held in Avoch Pavilion at 7.30 pm on Monday 3rd February 2025.

Present:

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

In Attendance: Cllr Morven-May MacCallum (MMM), David Brims (DB), Alistair Adie (AA), Jenni Carmichael (JC), Caroline Eccles (CE)

Apologies: Nicolaas du Preez (NdP), Debbie du Preez (DdP), Kathy Taylor (KT), Lizzie Campbell (LC)

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| 1. | Welcome and apologies
DM welcomed everyone. Apologies were as above. | Action |
| 2. | Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th December 2024
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 th December 2024 were proposed by RB and seconded by AA as an accurate record. | |
| 3. | Matters Arising from the Minutes of 16th December 2024
FB thanked everyone for providing updates on their individual matters arising in advance of the meeting. He referred to the Matters Arising Register. Matters related to agenda items were covered under that item. He reported the following progress by exception. | |
| | 3.1 Item 5c(iii)/020924: Safety of Pavilion Bridge – DM had been trying to establish if the Bridge was owned by Rosehaugh Estates. MMM said she would find out if it was owned by Highland Council. DM said that he would discuss the matter with Avoch Amenities. | MMM to investigate
DM to discuss |
| | 3.2 Item 5c(iii)/071024: Railway Footpath – The Highland Council Access Committee member that MMM tried to contact had been ill, so had sought an alternative. As the Council did not own the ground, they may be unable to provide support for any works. TP referred to the excellent work being undertaken on the north part of the footpath by Lucy Vaughan and others (Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council) and agreed to circulate details of their programme of works. | TP to circulate details of works |
| | 3.3 Item 11/020924: Christmas Lights Testing – RB said that she was progressing the various aspects of the risk assessment and planned to meet SB and NdP. | RB progressing |
| | 3.4 Item 5a/041124: AKCC Bank Charges – TP was investigating reducing AKCC's bank charges (potential saving £50 pa). Noted that NatWest and the Coop may offer free community accounts. | TP investigating |
| | 3.5 Item 3c(ii)/290424: Brae Steps – It had been agreed previously that this item would be discussed at the March meeting. It was agreed that removal of rubble left by Highland Broadband (HB) would be part of that discussion, as DM had not been able to make progress with HB. | RB to add item to March agenda |

3.6 Item 5c(i)/161224: Killen Phone Box and Noticeboard – RB had visited the Phone Box to investigate Sarah MacDonald-Taylor's concerns raised by about mould and water ingress in the Phone Box and had carried out some cleaning to improve things. She had cleaned the Noticeboard's glass so papers were more visible.

3.7 Item 5c(ii)/161224: Community Grit Bin – Although TP had been trying to source a Grit Bin for Ormonde Terrace, with Cllr Sara Atkin's help, it was not clear whether one had been provided. TP said that he would contact the resident who had raised concerns.

TP to follow up

3.8 To save time and space, the remaining Matters Arising from the meeting on 16th December 2024 had either been completed or are minuted below under the corresponding agenda item.

4. AKCC Action Plan Update

RB had circulated v14 of the AKCC Action Plan. FB said that he would update it regularly and continue to present verbal summaries at AKCC meetings.

5. Recurring Community Council Matters

5a Finance Update – TP circulated details of AKCC's financial position, which was mainly unchanged since the December meeting. He said he would send future reports to RB in advance so that she could circulate them with the meeting papers.

TP to send future reports to RB in advance.

RB asked if the previous monthly reports for 2024/25 could be added to the AKCC Accounts folder on the network drive. RB said that she would forward the necessary link to TP.

TP to add reports. RB to send link

TP said AKCC's Public Liability insurance renewal for 2025 was due.

TP to renew

RB referred to the grant funding available from the North Highland Initiative for community projects, such as the Avoch Public Toilets project. RB to forward details to TP so funding could be investigated and requested as appropriate.

RB to send TP details. TP to investigate

5b Planning and Related Issues

5b(i) To avoid any potential conflict of interest, MMM was unable to participate in planning discussions because she was a member of the Highland Council Planning Committee.

5b(ii) FB referred to previous concerns about the proposed house on Cemetery Brae. In February 2024, AKCC had participated in the statutory consultation and was disappointed not to have received any response. FB had asked Cllr Sarah Atkin if consultees could expect a reply, but this was unresolved. AKCC had subsequently received a letter dated 10th December 2024, from Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager, confirming planning approval. Although FB had written to Mr Jones asking if AKCC could expect a response to AKCC's input, he had not replied.

5b(iii) FB referred to the Environment Scoping Opinion consultation request (25/00226/SCOP) about the proposed expansion of the current Ardersier Port development by the energy industry, to include additional works and infrastructure related to the manufacture, assembly, delivery, export and deployment of offshore wind

components. The scoping consultation was supported by a comprehensive 115-page document summarising the proposed development and the 19 assessment areas to be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The closing date for responses was 18th February 2025.

During discussion, CE asked if RSPB were included and said she would forward the consultation document to them. RB said she would send details to CE, DB and to DMn, so he could post them on social media. FB to send a copy to Sarah MacDonald Taylor (SMT).

**RB to contact
CE, DB, DMn
DMn to post
FB to contact
SMT**

Given the comprehensive nature of the documentation supporting the consultation, which just had been received, FB and TP agreed to meet to discuss how AKCC should respond to Highland Council, given the short timescale.

**FB and TP to
respond to
consultation**

5c Community Concerns Arising

5c(i) Dog Waste Concerns – RB referred to Sarah MacDonald Taylor’s (SMT) email highlighting the increasing problem of dog waste in Avoch not being disposed of in the designated bins or taken home. RB said she would investigate options for new notices/signs for the dog waste dispenser boxes and would contact suppliers. MMM asked for a copy of SMT’s email.

**RB to contact
suppliers as
appropriate**

**RB to forward
email to MMM**

JC said that the dog waste bin at the bottom of Alexander Street was full and was not being emptied. JC said she would send a photo to MMM, who agreed to follow up with the Dog Warden. RB to send MMM’s contact details to JC.

**JC/MMM to
follow up
RB to contact
JC**

There was discussion about dog waste and general waste being left on the track between Avoch Industrial Estate and the Water Works. RB said that she would contact MMM to enquire about a dog waste bin being provided near the boatshed; and to request details of the arrangements for arranging special collections.

**RB to contact
MMM
MMM to
provide details**

5c(ii) Litter on Avoch Beach – SMT had raised concerns that the increasing amount of litter was becoming unmanageable as detailed in the email being forwarded to MMM. The council was concerned about the seeming lack of responsibility and pride that a few dog owners and some beach walkers appear to have for the village and our environment.

5c(iii) Condensation in Sharing Shed – SMT’s email also raised concerns about the presence of condensation in the Sharing Shed. It was suggested that a moisture absorber was required. RB said she would forward SMT’s email to TP, who would discuss with the Sharing Shed co-ordinator and purchase a moisture absorber.

**RB to contact
TP
TP to
purchase
absorber**

5c(iv) Flooding in AKCC Area – DMn raised concern about the recent flooding in Avoch and surrounding area. He said the Avoch Burn was heavily silted and blocked with fallen trees; and that the burn’s reduced capacity had resulted in the flooding of houses in Avoch. DM highlighted flooding opposite the new houses at the south end of Avoch affecting the school, caused by inadequate capacity of the drainage sumps, installed when the houses were built. TP referred to the recent landslide that had blocked the road between Avoch and Fortrose and to previous landslides above Henrietta Street. FB

- referred to various landslides which had blocked the Corrachie Road and were causing concern to residents in Moray Wynd. It was agreed that there was an urgent need to reduce the silting and fallen trees in Avoch Burn. FB said that he would circulate a provisional list of flooding sites for comment. RB said that she was already in contact with Highland Council's Resilience Team and would request a meeting to discuss AKCC's concerns.
- FB to circulate list
RB to contact Resilience Team**
- 5d Police Report** – RB said she would contact Police Scotland to request the report as there had not been one in recent months. AKCC had been very satisfied with the information contained in the reports. JC referred to successful 'Coffee with a Cop' meetings at No.19. DMn said that Police Scotland Youth Volunteers may be able to carry out a Letter Drop on home security that may be worthwhile. RB agreed to find out more information.
- RB to request report
RB to provide info on Letter Drops**
- 5e Correspondence – Secretary's Report (RB)**
- 5e(i)** Email dated 29th January 2025, from Highland Council Visitor Levy Consultation Team advertising a webinar on 6th February. RB said she would forward the link to all members.
- RB to forward link**
- 5e(ii)** Email dated 17th January 2025, from Highland Bike Academy seeking to build partnerships with community organisations to boost participation in cycling. Further information can be found at <https://www.highlandbikeacademy.com/outreach>
- 5e(iii)** Email dated 16th January 2025, from Highland Council launching a consultation until 9th April 2025 about how community councils are created/governed. Information and a short survey can be found at https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/5097/highland_council
- 5e(iv)** Email dated 13th January 2025, from Kenneth McElroy Trail Development Manager, Association of Northern Trails Scotland seeking support for the appointment of a development manager to oversee the development of an 'alternative' John o' Groats Trail, which will run from Munlochry to Cromarty and by ferry to Nigg. It was agreed that RB would write a letter of support on behalf of AKCC
- RB to write letter of support**
- 5e(v)** Email dated 21st January 2025, from the Highland Council Election Office to Community Councillors asking for support to encourage people to apply for vacancies in ten councils, including Resolis, which have fallen into abeyance.
- 5e(vi)** Email dated 21st January 2025, from Beata Nowakowski, student in Business and Management student at UHI seeking information on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on sustainability in the Highland population. RB said that she would forward the email and associated survey to DMn for posting on social media.
- RB to forward email to DMn**
- 5e(vii)** Email dated 24th January 2025, from Highland Council offering free Local Place Plan training and webinars for Community Councils. RB said she would forward details to Place Plan Leads, DM and TP.
- RB to send details to DM and TP**
- 5e(viii)** Email dated 16th January 2025, from Caroline Eccles submitting version 1 of the Avoch "Green Plan", which was discussed under Item 10 below.

- 6. Avoch Amenities Association (AAA) Update**
 No report received. RB said she would contact Andy McLeman (Chair) to find out AAA meeting dates and to request a quarterly report. JC said she would find out the name of the new secretary. DM said that support was required to run the Pavilion. It was suggested that opening time details and the need for support were posted on social media. **RB to contact AAA**
- 7. Black Isle Community Councils (BICC) & Black Isle Place Plan (BIPP) Update**
 TP said there had been nothing new to report since November 2024.
- 8. AKCC Website Working Group Update**
 TP said that the Working Group (CL, DM, TP and FB) was due to meet in the next few weeks. Responses from businesses interested in free advertising on the website had been slow so far. RB had been making enquiries about obtaining suitable photographs. FB and TP planned to meet to review progress. **RB sourcing photos**
FB and TP to meet.
- 9. Avoch Public Toilets Working Group Update**
 RB said the next step was to proceed with the agreed Public Engagement Survey, which would use a fixed set of questions. RB and DMn to meet to develop and launch the survey. **RB and DMn to meet**
- 10. Avoch Nature Conservation Plan**
 Caroline Eccles (CE) presented the first draft of the above, on behalf of a Community Group, which included detailed contributions from Alison Philips, Mike Armitage, Mike Thompson, Andy McLeman, Roddy MacPherson, Mary Smyth and Stuart Smyth.
 The intention of the excellent 19-page plan, warmly welcomed by AKCC, was to create shared local awareness and understanding of local biodiversity, encourage community enjoyment of it and to encourage/support appropriate management and use of the environment in Avoch and Killen.
 The plan focused on areas where the community can make a difference, building on existing projects, highlighting challenges and opportunities; and identifying the associated management principles. It contained an extensive inventory of amenity areas, footpaths, woodlands and trees, freshwater, mixed habitats and coasts, together with comments on existing/potential use, current management, issues and aspirations/actions.
 Discussion centred around implications of the plan, inclusion of a map and photos, the need for representation from Killen, the link to the Black Isle Place Plan, choice of suitable title for the plan, preparation of a Chatterbox promotion article, further development of the inventory, etc. **AA to provide some photos**
 It was agreed that the plan provided an excellent framework for community projects, which it was hoped could be owned by the community; and supported by AKCC, AAA, individuals and other stakeholders. RB and CE agreed to meet to discuss next steps. **RB and CE to meet**

- 11. Avoch Sharing Shed Update**
TP had contacted a joiner regarding the construction of additional storage that would be located next to the Sharing Shed. The design would need to be approved by AAA as previously agreed. Scotmid had been very supportive and provided £500 to support the Shed.
- 12. Assets owned and managed by AKCC**
SB said that he planned to inspect the assets in the near future and prepare a maintenance schedule. RB said she would send SB information about the Lazy Corner sculpture obtained from CE. **RB to send details**
- 13. AOCB**
RB to resend details of AKCC office bearers to the Highland Council contact provided by MMM. **RB/MMM**
- RB said that she would create a crib sheet for volunteers undertaking work for AKCC. **RB to create a crib sheet**
- 14. Date of Next Meeting**
Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7.30 pm in Avoch Pavilion.