

**APPROVED Minutes of AKCC Meeting held in Avoch Pavilion on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Present:**

**Members:** Fraser Brunton, Vice-Chair & Minutes (FB), Rosie Brunton, Secretary (RB), Alistair Adie (AA), Nicolaas du Preez (NdP), Drew Mann (DMn).

**In Attendance:** Cllr Morven-May MacCallum (MMM), David Brims (DB), Debbie du Preez (DdP)

**Apologies:** Derek MacIver (DM), Tim Phillips (TP), Stuart Bruce (SB), Caroline Eccles (CE), Jenni Carmichael (JC),

- |           |   | <b>Action</b>                                    |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Welcome and apologies</b><br>FB welcomed everyone. Apologies were as above.  |  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025</b><br>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025 were proposed by DMn and seconded by DB as an accurate record.   |  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Agenda Item 11 - Community Improvement Works and Volunteers</b><br>This item was discussed out of sequence as DMn had to leave early.  |  |
|           | <b>3.1 Community Improvement Works</b> - FB thanked AA for the progress he had made improving the Brae Steps. AA said that he and CE had prepared a draft programme of Community Improvement Works, which would take place over the summer months. The first event was the Spring Clean-up Day on 26 <sup>th</sup> April. Places requiring attention, weeding, etc included the Brae Steps, the School Steps, the Burn Path and locations in the High Street. CE was producing a poster for display on the AKCC Noticeboards, and at the bus stops, No.19 Café, Post Office; and on social media. | <b>RB to advertise the Spring Clean-up Event</b> |
|           | <b>3.2 Himalayan Balsam</b> – AA said that Himalayan Balsam (HB) was now reappearing in Avoch. Lizzie Campbell (LC) had reported some in Killen and Killen Burn. AA said he had contacted Trudi Clarke (TC) to discuss a plan for the coming months, which would be advertised as part of the programme of Community Improvement Works.   | <b>AA to discuss and propose HB Plan</b>         |
|           | <b>3.3 Health &amp; Safety of Volunteers</b> – RB said she had prepared and circulated a Health & Safety crib sheet to AKCC, which provided advice for volunteers undertaking community improvement works. Although AKCC had public liability insurance, those leading community improvement events on behalf of AKCC, needed to be familiar with the sheet and be able to refer volunteers to it if there were any health & safety questions.  |  |
|           | <b>3.4 Waste Bins for Community Improvement Works</b> – The need for additional brown waste bins for disposal of garden waste from community improvement works was discussed. Two bins were required, one for the Community Gardens and the other for use in the school area. MMM agreed to investigate the provision of the two bins.  | <b>MMM to request two brown bins</b>             |
|           | <b>3.5 Removal of Vehicles</b> – It was reported that the two vehicles left at the end of Ormonde Terrace had been removed.   |  |
|           | <b>3.6 Flood Prevention Plan for Avoch and Killen</b> – FB highlighted the significant concerns being raised by various members of the community  |  |

about the recent flooding around Avoch and Killen, badly affecting the school grounds; and properties near Avoch Burn and in Mannsfield Place. Other concerns related to the landslips that had blocked the A832 between Avoch and Fortrose; and the Den above Ormonde Terrace, increasing the risk to a nearby property in Moray Wynd. Water flowing down onto the railway path was also an issue. The flow of water through Killen Bridge was being impeded by branches and debris trapped by the bridge's parapets.

FB and DMn had visited some of the potential flood sites, including those along the Avoch Burn and around Mannsfield Place, Toll Road, the School and the Den. A social media appeal had resulted in significant community engagement. Photographs, video clips and information had been provided, showing the impact/extent of the flooding. FB had reported the landslip roadside debris in the Den and the Killen Bridge issue to Highland Council.

AKCC welcomed MMM's news that Highland Council had started work to identify and clear the fallen trees and debris from Avoch Burn.

FB said he was collating the information being received from the community and would produce a report for discussion by AKCC, Highland Council, SEPA, landowners and other stake holders. The intention was to develop an effective Flood Prevention Project Plan for Avoch and Killen that would be formally approved and supported by all parties.

The flooding of the school grounds was highlighted as a longstanding concern that parents and others said adversely affected children's education. Protracted discussions between the previous AKCC and Highland Council had not solved the problem, which now needed revisited following the recent flooding of the school grounds and Mannsfield Place.

#### 4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

FB thanked those who had provided updates on their matters arising in advance. He referred to the Matters Arising Register and reported the following progress by exception. Matters Arising covered by agenda items were covered separately.

**4.1 Item 5c(iii)/020924: Safety of Pavilion Bridge** – Attempts to establish bridge ownership were ongoing. DM was contacting AMcL (AAA) and MMM was investigating with Highland Council. DMn said that he would also make some enquiries. DB had contacted the Men's Shed and arranged with Steve Bramwell (SBr) and NdP for a bridge inspection to be carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> April. SB may be able to attend.

Ownership question ongoing.

Survey planned by DB & NdP

**4.2 Item 5c(iii)/071024: Railway Footpath** – MMM was still exploring if the Highland Council Access Committee could provide any support for any works on the footpath. TP was circulating Lucy Vaughan's report of the works being supported by Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Council.

TP to circulating LV's report

**4.3 Item 11/020924: Christmas Lights Testing** – RB said that she had met with SB and NdP and that she was working on the risk assessment.

RB progressing

**4.4 Item 5a/041124: AKCC Bank Charges** – TP had been considering changing banks to avoid the new bank charges of £50 pa, being levied on AKCC's account. He had spoken to Alan Plampton (AP), Acting Coordinator of BICC, who had written to the Bank of Scotland and was awaiting a reply. MMM said that some of the community councils had switched to the Co-op, which did not levy bank charges. DdP said that the Primary School's Parents' Council had switched to the Royal Bank of

TP/AP (BICC) discussing charges with Bank of Scotland

Scotland, which also did not levy charges. Although there had been some support for TP's view that the charges should be accepted, it was agreed to await the bank's reply before making a final decision.

**4.5 Item 5c(i)/070325** – MMM had spoken with the Highland Council Dog Warden, who had agreed to provide additional signage to increase the social awareness of the small minority of irresponsible dog walkers, who failed to dispose of dog waste responsibly. The provision of an additional dog waste bin on the shore track to the water works was discussed. It was agreed that the most practical solution was to provide an additional dog waste bin at the south end of Ormonde Terrace. MMM was asked if she could contact the Dog Warden about the provision of an additional bin.

MMM to investigate provision of additional dog waste bin

## **5. AKCC Action Plan Update**

FB said he was continuing to update the Action Plan to reflect progress being made on AKCC's main projects and would present updates at AKCC meetings. The latest version would be circulated with the meeting papers.

## **6. Recurring Community Council Matters**

**6a Finance Update** – TP's finance statement for the eleven months to 28<sup>th</sup> February was circulated with the papers for the meeting.

### **6b Planning and Related Issues**

DMn said that it was a field to the east of the A832, at the south end of Avoch that had previously been zoned for housing; rather an area 'near the Corrachie', as had been suggested at the previous meeting.

### **6c Community Concerns Arising**

**6c(i) Local Walks Leaflet Boxes** - Roddie Macpherson had advised that the leaflet box at the High Street/Shore Street junction was damaged and leaking. RB had asked TP if he could purchase a replacement.

TP to purchase replacement

**6c(ii) Street Parking in Avoch** – JC passed on concerns received from a local firefighter about unsafe parking in Avoch. Car parking on the pedestrian crossing zigzags, outside the Chinese Takeaway, was a safety concern. Parking in Rose Street and outside the Brethren Hall in the Dock, left barely enough space at times for a car to pass and would not accommodate a fire engine. Others said they had also observed poor parking. It was agreed that parking in these areas would be monitored by everyone and reported if necessary. FB and DMn to discuss posting an appropriate message on local social media.

All to monitor Parking in Avoch High St, Rose St and Dock  
FB to discuss parking with DMn

**6c(iii) Overnight Parking by Campervans** – FB had been informed that a campervan had parked overnight in Henrietta Street. It was understood this had been a problem during lockdown and that someone had been designated at that time to request that campervans did not park overnight in what was considered a conservation area. MMM said that she would discuss the matter with the newly appointed Ranger for the AKCC area.

MMM to discuss with the Ranger

**6c(iv) Collapsing Roadside Wall on A832** – The Avoch Harbourmaster, Gwyn Tanner (GT) had informed DM that the seaward side of the roadside wall on the A832, just north of the harbour entrance, had partially collapsed and was at risk of falling onto the road. FB had reported the issue using Highland Council's online system. MMM said she would investigate the matter for GT if he emailed her. FB said he would update DM.

FB to update DM

MMM to assist GT

**6d Police Report** – RB welcomed the format and information contained in the report received for February 2025, which had been circulated with the

papers. She highlighted that AKCC representatives could attend quarterly police meetings and that AKCC could request a meeting with a police officer to raise specific concerns.

## **6e Correspondence – Secretary’s Report (RB)**

- 6e(i)** Email dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from Scott Wilson, from the Orkney based Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE), whose focus was to apply state of the art aviation technology to deliver economic growth to the region. Community Councils were being invited to complete an online survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3XPBGF6>). RB said she would forward the email to AA and DB, who expressed an interest. **RB to forward email to AA & DB**
- 6e(ii)** Email dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from Caroline Eccles (CE) referring positively about the Forest Plan being developed by Broadland Properties. CE and AA had highlighted a range of areas requiring further consideration, including the possible inclusion of the woodland strip behind Ormonde Terrace/Henrietta Street; plans for the Den, where elm tree loss and landslips have been a problem; and consideration of upstream attenuation measures to mitigate downstream flooding of the Avoch Burn. RB said she would contact Broadland Properties for comment. **RB to contact Lizzie Campbell**
- 6e(iii)** Email dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025, from Peter Finnie, Public Affairs (SEPA), providing information about the SEPA consultation on the proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS) for reporting on how businesses were meeting their responsibilities. RB agreed to forward the email with further information to AA, DB, DMn and FB. **RB to forward details**
- 6e(iv)** Email dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from David Cowie (DC), Development Plans Team, Highland Council, advising that the deadline for submissions on the Highland Local Development Plan had been extended until 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025. A copy of DC’s email can be obtained from the secretary (RB).
- 6e(v)** Email dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from Jane Young, Community Support Officer, Highland Council reminding community councils about year-end procedures and submission of records. **RB to oversee compliance**
- 6e(vi)** Email dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from Michael Hanratty, Community Fundraising Office, Scottish Charity Air Ambulance, raising awareness about the air ambulance service.
- 6e(vii)** Email dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025, from NHS Highland’s Technology Enabled Care Team, advertising drop-in sessions at Inverness Central Library on the last Thursday of each month from 1000-1200 to demonstrate how individuals can lead healthier lives using technology.
- 6e(viii)** Email dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, from NHS Highland’s Technology Enabled Care Team, advertising interactive drop-in events across the Highlands.
- 6e(ix)** Email dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, from Scottish Forestry consulting on Broadland Properties’ request (FPA-12359) to fell approximately 0.25 acre of Sitka spruce near the old Keeper’s Cottage on Rosehaugh Estate. The area was to be replanted with deciduous trees.
- 7. Avoch Amenities Association (AAA) Update**  
The next meeting of the AAA was to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025. It was hoped that AKCC members could attend to provide support. FB said he would ask DM and others if they could attend. It was hoped that AKCC and AAA could work more closely together. It was reported that funding had been granted for an astroturf surface in Fortrose. **FB to contact DM and others**

8. **Black Isle Community Councils & Black Isle Place Plan Update**  
Nothing further to report.
9. **AKCC Website Update**  
FB said that CL had been working on text being provided and edited by FB, TP, CE and AA. TP was in contact with DdP for information about the Primary School. Although some photographs had been received, more were required particularly of the harbour and local landmarks.
10. **Avoch Public Toilets Working Group Update**  
RB had circulated notes of the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The aim was to replace the current public toilets with a modern, accessible and financially sustainable modular facility. A grant funded feasibility study will confirm demand and site suitability. A community survey (112 responses) indicated strong backing for paid-entry access and supported consideration of including solar panels, campervan waste disposal, and EV charging.  
Next steps included applying for a Community Asset Transfer, securing planning permissions; and progressing with design/installation. A new Community Development Trust had been proposed to support the initiative. Efforts were underway to involve more local volunteers with relevant skills. The project plan stages include preparation, engagement, development, and implementation, all dependent on appropriate funding and approvals.
11. **Avoch and Killen Nature Conservation Plan**  
Although CE was not present, she had provided a written update on the Nature Plan activities, which RB said she would circulate. RB said there had been considerable public engagement with the plan, which had been widely circulated.
12. **Avoch Sharing Shed Update**  
TP had reported that plans to construct the proposed walk-in storage shed (floor area approximately 6 feet x 8 feet) were ongoing. FB had provided details to AAA for consideration as agreed previously.
13. **AKCC Assets**  
Due to his other commitments, SB had been unable to make progress with the Asset Register, records and maintenance schedule. SB had provided details of a supplier for Christmas lights.
14. **AOCB**  
It was agreed that CE could invite James Bunyan to give a short presentation on bats from 1900-1930 immediately before at the next AKCC meeting, which would start at 1930. RB to advise CE. **RB to advise CE**  
  
Those present thanked the Vice Chair and Secretary for their work on behalf of AKCC to increase its contribution and engagement with the community. FB acknowledged the support and enthusiasm of all involved.
15. **Date of Next Meeting**  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.30 pm in Avoch Pavilion.