

Approved Minutes of the Meeting Held at 7pm on Monday 1st September 2025 in Avoch Pavilion

<u>Present:</u>		
Members: Fraser Brunton, Chair (FB), Tim Phillips, Treasurer (TP), Rosie Brunton, Secretary (RB), Alistair Adie (AA), Nicolass du Preez (NdP), Stuart Bruce (SB)		
In Attendance: David Brims (DB), Debbie du Preez (DdP), Caroline Eccles (CE), Andy McCleman (AM)		
<u>Apologies:</u> Drew Mann, Vice Chair (DMn), Derek McIver (DM), Jenni Carmichael (JC)		
1.	Welcome and apologies	Action
	FB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as above.	
2.	Membership update	
	<p>FB tabled a paper (circulated with the minutes) summarising the membership issues, media coverage and forthcoming community council elections. He said the recent membership review confirmed that AKCC had 3 more co-opted members than permitted for its elected membership of 3. Office bearers who were co-opted were to remain in post temporarily; 3 others were to move to associate status until election. Highland Council had been provided with requested audit information on 2 occasions but had not questioned AKCC membership. Steps were being taken to restore compliance and encourage participation in the forthcoming election.</p> <p>A Highland Council press release had led to the <i>Ross-shire Journal</i> incorrectly describing AKCC as “inactive.” In response, AKCC raised concerns about inaccurate journalism and highlighted AKCC's increasing list of active projects. The <i>Ross-shire Journal's</i> senior news editor apologised for the misunderstanding and offered a follow-up article after the election.</p> <p>FB said that 5 election nominations (including 3 current office bearers) had been submitted. If uncontested, the new council was to be confirmed on 29 September 2025. If contested, a postal ballot was required, with the new council being confirmed at a later inaugural meeting. He said that the compliance issue was technical and correctable. AKCC had remained active throughout, continuing to deliver for the community despite administrative challenges and misleading press coverage.</p> <p>In a reply to TP, FB confirmed that the present interim arrangements avoided the need for abeyance and enabled AKCC to continue functioning until the election, within the Scheme of Establishment. FB thanked AA, NdP and CL who had reverted to associate membership so that AKCC could continue until the election.</p>	
3.	Minutes of meeting held on 2nd June	
	The minutes were proposed as an accurate record by DB and seconded by AA	
4.	Matters Arising register	
	AA agreed to be the point of contact for the additional brown bin permit. RB to advise MMM and clarify that there will be no charge for additional bins.	RB to update MMM

	<p>4.2 AA advised the group that there had been more fly tipping of garden waste close to the burn. He also noted that the planned Railway path clearance will generate a large amount of green waste, including larger branches of trees etc. This will require a special pick up. DdP suggested that AKCC contact Keri Marie Gibson, who had organised large green waste collections after the clearing of the school brae bank. AA stated that the special collection for the beach clean has been organised.</p> <p>4.3 It was also noted that there was a lot of storm damaged trees which had been cut and left in the ditches. AA to contact Lizzie Campbell (Rosehaugh estate) for the removal of these.</p> <p>4.4 Concern was also noted about the volume of debris in the burn. A public notice will be posted on face book to discourage items being disposed of in this manner.</p> <p>4.5 TP to follow up on a query from a local resident about the new building at the harbour. RB to reply to resident once response received.</p> <p>4.6 AM stated that there has been no progress with Avoch Amenities Association (AAA). It was agreed that there needs to be an informal meeting to establish what AKCC can do to support AAA.</p> <p>4.7 As previously agreed AAA are to fund the improvement works required for the pavilion bridge. NdP to contact the Men's Shed to instruct the works.</p>	<p>DdP to provide contact details</p> <p>AA to contact LC</p> <p>DMn to post</p> <p>TP to contact Harbour Master</p> <p>DMn to set up meeting</p> <p>NdP to instruct works</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Routine Community Council matters</p> <p>5.1 Finance report: TP spoke to the report issued with the papers for the meeting. He acknowledged receipt of our annual grant of £527.61 for the period 2025/26. It was noted that we had a small deficit last year and there will be the same this financial year. TP stated that we would need to fundraise if we planned to finance anything significant.</p> <p>AA asked for clarification on what our outgoings were. TP advised our main outgoings are Insurance, CFine for the sharing shed and admin costs such as printer ink and paper.</p> <p>TP proposed that we continue to remit £150 per annum to AAA for the use of the pavilion, this was seconded by FB.</p> <p>FB raised the point that we need to change the signatories to reflect the new office bearers. FB to replace DM.</p>	<p>TP to remit</p> <p>TP to update</p>
	<p>5.2 Planning Applications: There were no relevant planning applications since our last meeting.</p>	
	<p>5.3 Community concerns arising: A member of the public has commented on the untidy state of the area to the side of the pavilion. It appears that there are several football nets that have been dumped there, and it is looking quite unsightly. NdP agreed to contact Avoch rovers to establish whether these are still actually in use or can be removed and disposed of?</p> <p>There has also been contact about the Avoch telephone box. DB investigated this and repaired a faulty hinge. He noted that the door was slightly warped & will revisit to see if further works are required.</p>	<p>NdP to contact Rovers</p> <p>DB to revisit</p>
	<p>5.4 Police liaison report: The latest report is to the end of May 2025. There were no items of concern within the report.</p>	

	<p>5.5 Correspondence</p> <p>5.5.1: Email dated 16 July from Defib World advising that our defibrillator electrode pads and battery must remain in date. This raised the question as to who is responsible for the routine maintenance of our De-Fib at Scotmid? DdP agreed to contact the first responder to clarify.</p> <p>5.5.2: Email dated 24th July from Highland Caravan and campsite association raising concerns around the number of campervans parked overnight and that damage caused. The can be contacted if we have any local concerns.</p> <p>5.5.3: Email dated 12th August from Vector24 Veterans charity. They are looking for volunteers to support their charity. RB to forward email</p> <p>5.5.4: Email dated 13th August advising of free emergency life support training available via Scottish Fire & Rescue in Beauly and Dingwall. RB to forward email for those who wish to book onto this.</p> <p>5.5.5: Email dated 14th August from Cfine asking to promote a cost of living survey to inform their manifesto. RB agreed to forward this email to DdP for distribution via the school. The survey can be accessed via this link: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/M1YAbMsPwB It will also be posted on FaceBook</p> <p>5.5.6: Email dated 26th August regarding fly tipping. This was discussed under item 4.2</p> <p>5.5.7: Email from CCSupport requesting nominees for a quarterly Inspector community council meeting. RB was unclear exactly what this meeting was and will seek clarification.</p> <p>5.5.8: AA had been asked to look at a video about flooding, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS), and improving the environment. He will forward the link for access.</p>	<p>DdP to contact first responder</p> <p>RB to forward email</p> <p>RB to forward email</p> <p>RB to forward email. DdP to promote. DMn to post</p> <p>RB to clarify</p> <p>AA to forward link.</p>
6.	<p>Avoch Amenities Association update: AM stated that there were no significant updates and that AAA is just limping along. The recent fun day went well, and confirmation of funds raised will be notified in due course.</p>	
7.	<p>Black Isle Community Councils & Place Plan update: TP advised that BICC had been very quiet. He feels that this is still a very valuable group, where acting together to address issues would be more effective.</p> <p>TP keen to share some of the excellent work to date with other CCs, these specifically would be the Nature Plan and the Flood Report.</p>	
8.	<p>AKCC Website update: TP acknowledged the work carried out to date and thanked Caroline Lindsay (CL) for all the technical support being undertaken. The last of the changes are now almost complete. CL will remain as an associate member of AKCC, however is now standing down from the project due to other commitments.</p> <p>TP & FB will pick up the project with Plexus who are helping develop the user-friendly platform. The hope is that we can be live by this Christmas.</p>	
9.	<p>Public Toilets working group update:</p> <p>Background: In May 2025, Kathy Taylor (Chair) and Caroline Riome stepped down, leaving only Rosie Brunton, Tim Phillips, and Drew Mann. The remaining</p>	

	<p>members are committed to other community projects and do not have the capacity to lead this project forward.</p> <p>The toilets are currently closed. The lease previously held by AKCC has lapsed. Highland Council now has responsibility for the building.</p> <p>Community Mandate: Successful community survey (112 responses) shows:</p> <p>Strong support for a new modular toilet facility with accessible and Changing Places provision with 81% support for a pay-per-use model. 88% support solar panels to reduce running costs. 71% support a campervan waste disposal unit. 52% support an EV charging point.</p> <p>The survey concluded that there is a clear mandate to redevelop, not refurbish.</p> <p>Current Issues: Leadership vacuum and lack of project management/technical expertise. The remaining members are already heavily committed to other community projects and do not have the capacity to lead this project forward. Running costs remain a major concern — the facility must be financially sustainable. Governance: a community body was proposed to lead a Community Asset Transfer (CAT).</p> <p>Way Forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rebuilding capacity: need to appoint a new Chair and recruit skilled members. 2. Secure funding: apply for feasibility study support and register Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) interest. 3. Governance: confirm lead body for CAT (AAA, AKCC, or new trust). 4. Feasibility & Business Case: commission study covering design, costs, and income streams. 5. Engagement: share survey results publicly and maintain community support. 6. Specialist expertise: follow up with individuals identified in earlier meetings (e.g., planning, design, feasibility, funding specialists) to secure professional guidance. 7. Community appeal: launch a local social media campaign to raise awareness, recruit new volunteers, and build early fundraising momentum. <p>Conclusion: A modern, accessible modular facility is achievable but requires strong leadership, feasibility funding, specialist input, and a sustainable business model.</p> <p>Actions from meeting: Full document to be circulated to AKCC meetings list. TP to ask DM to chair the working group and lead the project. RB to contact Andrew Bruce who had expressed an interest. RB to create a poster for local businesses. Appeal for volunteers with specific skills to be posted on Facebook.</p>	<p>RB to send out summary Paper</p> <p>TP to contact DM</p> <p>RB to create poster</p> <p>RB to appeal for volunteers</p>
10.	<p>Sharing Shed update: TP advised that the bulk storage shed is now in place. Thanks were extended to AAA for their support in making this happen. We received £1300 funding from Northern Highland Initiative. TP to formally extend our thanks. AKCC will install a sign onto the storage shed to acknowledge funding support. Scotmid has also been approached for their community funds awards in order to finish the roofing.</p> <p>Unfortunately, there has been recent vandalism to the shed and its contents. It transpired that both incidents were attributed to youngsters from the village. DMn dealt with the incidents very judiciously and some local parents came</p>	<p>TP to thank NHI</p> <p>TP to source sign</p>

	<p>forward saying that their children had been involved and had since been reprimanded.</p> <p>AKCC agreed that the shed should remain unlocked to continue the essential service to our community. It was agreed that we should place emergency contact numbers on the shed for any future incidents.</p> <p>AKCC acknowledged the work undertaken by Jo and a small team of volunteers and will continue to provide support when needed.</p>	<p>TP to add Telephone no's</p>
11.	<p>Flood Prevention report: FB tabled a brief update (enclosed with the Minutes) summarising the AKCC draft Flood Management Strategy prepared by FB, DMn and TP (approx. 45 pages inc photos). He said the document reviewed recent flooding incidents and identified high-risk areas including Avoch Primary School, Avoch Burn Corridor, Mannsfield Place, the A832, Sea Scout accommodation, the Den and wider catchment issues and maintenance.</p> <p>Recommended priorities included urgent improvements to the Avoch Primary School and Mannsfield Place drainage systems, regular maintenance of drains and watercourses, works at Avoch football pitch and a catchment-wide partnership approach.</p> <p>Next steps included circulation of the draft to AKCC members post-election, for comment and formal adoption, followed by engagement with key stakeholders including Highland Council, SEPA, Scottish Water, local estates, farmers and the wider community to agree an Action Plan.</p> <p>There was discussion about water run-off from agricultural uplands, the old weir in the Avoch Burn, Himalayan Balsam and upstream mitigation of water flow. It was noted that Highland Council had been removing fallen trees and branches for Avoch Burn.</p>	
12.	<p>Nature Plan & Community Improvement</p> <p>CE referred to the update that had gone out with the papers. She is keen to raise awareness and encourage community engagement.</p> <p>The Himalayan Balsam management has been a huge commitment and would needs more volunteer engagement for next year.</p> <p>Replacement of cherry trees is currently being discussed with the Highland Council. The plan is to replace any fallen/old trees with the Native white cherry trees.</p> <p>Local residents are to be encouraged to hold Nature Garden events next year.</p>	
13.	<p>AKCC Assets: maintenance and records</p> <p>Monitoring of our assets is ongoing; SB will undertake another round of inspections in the near future.</p>	
14.	<p>AOCB: Nothing raised.</p>	
15.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place at 7pm on Monday 29th September in Avoch Pavilion</p>	