

# Shieldaig Community Council



DRAFT

## Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 September 2024 in the Shieldaig Hall

**Present** Community councillors - Jim Alexander, Ian Livingstone, Richard Munday, Daniel Sharp, Julia Boger and one member of the public.

**Apologies** Laura Mackenzie, Hugh Gosling, Highland Councillor Christopher Birt

**Minutes** of the AGM held on 6 June 2024 - approved and signed

**Matters arising** – Some temporary repairs had been carried out to the road around Arrina and Kenmore but it was still in a pretty dreadful state; major resurfacing was required and urgently. The posts for upgrading the Kinloch Woodlands back fence would be flown out on 24 September; delays to traffic on the road above Kinloch would be kept to a minimum. The drop in session to discuss the priorities identified in the Shieldaig community survey was held on 13 July. There was a good discussion with support for action on the key priorities identified by the Community Council – social housing, road maintenance and road safety improvements in the village.

**Financial Issues** – Jim reported that the current balance in the Community Council account was £4993. The annual grant from the Highland Council was expected shortly.

### Follow up action on community priorities –

1. Social housing. Richard reported on the recent helpful visit by Kirsty Campbell from the Albyn Housing Society and Boyd Alexander from the Highland Council, following his letter of 15 July. Kirsty said that a contractor had been appointed for the rebuild of the 2 houses which had burnt down at Baile Schuas. She hoped to be able to give us a start date soon and confirmed that the new houses would be built to current insulation standards, with photo voltaic solar panels and air source heating. The group looked at potential sites for a modest development of new Albyn houses, including our preferred location which would extend Albyn's phase 1 and 2 developments. We had asked Louise Pearson to identify this in the Area Place Plan. The landowner concerned had said that he was willing to sell land for the scheme. The next step would be to agree the scale and nature of the affordable housing demand for Shieldaig. Boyd said he would check whether Highland Council already had enough information to do this from the housing list or whether a full housing needs assessment would be required. Following this, Albyn would look into site related issues of buildability and cost and consider if funding would be available to go ahead. The Highland Council stats. highlighted the importance of the high numbers in the Shieldaig school for community resilience.

2. Road maintenance – deferred to the October meeting when it was hoped Chris Birt would be able to attend.
3. Road safety plan for the village. The meeting endorsed the plan which had been circulated earlier (annexed) and Julia said that current school numbers had now increased to 31 (including the nursery). Chris Birt is considering whether a suitably experienced officer in the Highland Council might be identified who could help the Community Council take the work forward.

**Kinloch Woodlands partnership with Edinburgh University.** Richard reported on the agreement which had recently been signed between Kinloch Woodlands, Edinburgh University and Scotland the Big Picture. The driver for this was EU's decision to move to zero carbon by 2040, offsetting those carbon outputs which they would not be able to reduce by partnering with estates which had plans to extend their native woodlands or restore their peatlands. Kinloch Woodlands particular attractions were its emphasis on natural regeneration, effective deer management, the opportunities for woodland related research, the scope for developing links with the primary school and the fact that Kinloch Woodlands was community owned.

**SSEN community benefit fund** – Daniel will send details to Julia to check whether any aspects of the programme might be of benefit to the school. The key was strengthening community resilience.

#### **Any other business -**

##### **1. The Woodland Trust.**

Malcolm Turner's 2 notes covering an update about their current work and plans and more specific details of their access improvements in Glen Shieldaig had already been circulated to community councillors. A more recent update about the access was passed round at the meeting.

The meeting reiterated its support for the phase 2 planting scheme in Glen Shieldaig and was pleased to note the plans to start fencing in late September and planting in early 2025. It was also pleased to see the effective work which was being done to control local deer numbers. The shelving of plans for affordable housing at Couldoran was noted although the Community Council thought that the priority should be to locate such developments within village envelopes where people could walk to local facilities and visit neighbours and not prejudice those without cars. The new tree nursery at Couldoran was an exciting project.

There was a constructive discussion about the proposed access improvements in Glen Shieldaig. Richard and Ian declared their interests as trustees of Kinloch Woodlands because of its close working relationship with the Woodland Trust. After a full discussion, the meeting agreed unanimously that

- a) It was most regrettable that the WT had started work on the access before the Community Council had had an opportunity to offer its views and before a planning application had been submitted. It noted Malcolm's apology.
- b) Because of its support for the phase 2 planting scheme, the Community Council would not want to put any impediment in the way of getting the work done in an environmentally acceptable way.
- c) But because of the long term visual impact of permanent improvements to the track and the undesirability to opening up the wild land around Loch Lundie to much wider public access, the Community Council would like to see the ground reinstated at the completion of the planting without any

residual longer term impact.

## **2. SCOTO “Press Pause” workshop.**

Louis Pearson, area officer for Wester Ross Biosphere has confirmed that SCOTO (Scottish Community Tourism) will be facilitating a half day “press pause” workshop at Shieldaig Hall. The workshop is to discuss tourism and “bring business and community interests together to consider what’s working, what’s not working and what could be done better/differently in your community.” Shieldaig Community Council have been asked whether a date in October or November would be preferable, and it was decided given the timeframe, that November would be best. – Daniel to respond.

## **3. Fish Farming.**

A discussion with Mowi and Bakka Frost about the operation of their fish farms in Loch Torridon and their future plans will be arranged for a future meeting as soon as a mutually convenient date can be agreed.

Date Of next meeting – **Thursday 10th October** at the agreed compromise time of **7.00 pm**.