



Shieldaig Community Council

Email: ShieldaigCC@gmail.com Website: <https://www.shieldaig.info/communitycouncil>

D R A F T

Minutes of meeting Thursday 13th March 2025

Present: Highland Councillors: Chris Birt. **Community Councillors:** Jim Alexander, Julia Böger, Ian Livingstone, Richard Munday, Daniel Sharp. **South West Ross Community Car Scheme:** Co-ordinator Peter Fenton.

Apologies: Hugh Gosling, Laura Mackenzie

Community councillors approved the minutes of the previous meeting of 6th February.

1. Matters arising

1.1. Fish Farming

Dougie MacLeod (Bakkafrost) has confirmed a site visit and this will happen once a date is agreed.

1.2. Hybrid Meetings

Feasibility of using a laptop and virtual meeting has been confirmed and this will be tried out at the next community council meeting.

2. Finance

The bank balance remains at £5,414. **Action:** Julia to complete paperwork to become a signatory on the account.

3. Community Car Scheme

Peter Fenton gave a very good and informative presentation on the South West Ross Community Car Scheme. He outlined the history of the scheme, activities, and details of how the scheme is funded. Information on the scheme and how you can volunteer to become either a driver or telephonist can be found via this link to the Car Scheme website: www.swrc-carscheme.co.uk

Under a recent pilot scheme, the Highland Council has provided an 8-seater vehicle which has enabled the Car Scheme to provide transport for larger local groups to go to community events and for primary school children to travel for swimming lessons. This supplements the Car Schemes mainstream activities where volunteers use their own vehicles to take people to hospital, GP appointments, picking up and delivering prescriptions and providing a feeder service to local public transport services.

The Community Council and SWRCCS are grateful to both Highland Council and NHS Highland for providing core funding for the scheme, in support of the contribution of the local volunteers.

4. Local Housing

Cllr. Birt confirmed that the site for four houses at Baile Shuas was in the Highland Council's housing plan.

The abandoned caravan is still near the entrance to Baile Shuas and Albyn will follow up on this.

5. Village Road Safety Plan and Road Maintenance

5.1. Reduction of 40 mph speed limit on the "top road" (A896)

The Community Council wishes to thank the West Highland Free Press for publishing details of the Community Council's efforts to reduce the current speed limit on the "top road" and to introduce other road safety measures in the village. Unless action is taken quickly the Community Council is concerned about the risks faced by the large numbers of families with young children in the village given the rising traffic pressures generated by the NC500.

5.2. Road Maintenance

The meeting discussed again the poor state of the Coast Road; this matter having been raised again to the Community Council by a local resident. Cllr. Birt has requested that the Coast Road be included as part of the planned road maintenance work, and he hoped that this will happen once the final budget has been agreed.

6. Visitor Levy

The meeting discussed the proposed Visitor Levy and agreed with the views expressed by other Community Councils locally that while it did not oppose the levy in principle, it believed that the proposals in their present form were badly thought through and likely to be detrimental to smaller local businesses; in particular that the principle of the Levy being based on a percentage of any accommodation charge should be replaced by the principle of a standard charge per night (either per person per night or per room per night) being charged. Cllr Birt hoped that Highland Council would call for the Scottish Government to amend the legislation to address the issues raised and not press ahead in the meantime.

7. Woodland Management

7.1. Woodland Trust - Gleann Shildeag

Woodland Creation

The fencing and two deer grids have now been completed, and planting has started in Glen Shildeag. A successful first community tree planting event had been held on 1st March, and the pupils, teachers and helpers from Shildeag Primary School had planted over 400 trees on 3rd March.

The main bulk of the planting will now begin and is aimed to be completed by the end of April.

Tree Safety

A local contractor would be undertaking tree safety work on Monday 17th March along the A896, just to the south of the cattle grid after leaving Shildeag.

If you would like any further information on the above, please contact:

MalcolmTurner@woodlandtrust.org.uk or CazAusten@woodlandtrust.org.uk

7.2. Kinloch Woodlands

Now that Glen Shildeag and the area at the southern end of Loch Dughail had been closed off to deer, 3,000 alder, willow and birch would be planted alongside the river margins on Kinloch Woodlands ground. Thanks to the efforts of local volunteers this was likely to be completed by the end of March.

8. Planning

No new planning applications have been submitted within the Shildeag Community Council area.

9. Any Other Business

9.1. Mobile Library

The Community Council is pleased to learn that two vehicles have been acquired to enable the Mobile Library to continue and it awaits details of the proposed service.

9.2. Vandalism at the Coast Road Viewpoint

The meeting discussed the wanton damage and felling of mature trees at the spot on the Coast Road that provides a viewpoint of the village. The Community Council was shocked that anyone would do such a thing.

9.3. Roadside Rubbish Campaign

The Community Council supports the Roadside Rubbish Campaign, known as 'Don't Rubbish Ross-Shire' recently launched by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty. The scheme aims to publicise the issue of litter thrown from vehicles and change behaviours.

9.4. Community resilience/emergency planning

The meeting discussed and agreed, that this was a worthwhile issue to take forward given the increasing risk of nature based emergencies such as wildfires and severe storms. Time would be found to consider the best approach to this at a future meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at 7pm **Thursday 10th April 2025**