



Shieldaig Community Council

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DRAFT

Minutes of meeting Thursday 10th April 2025

Present: Highland Councillors: Chris Birt. **Community Councillors:** Jim Alexander, Ian Livingstone, Richard Munday, Daniel Sharp.

Apologies: Julia Böger, Hugh Gosling, Laura Mackenzie

Community councillors approved the minutes of the previous meeting of 13th March.

1. Matters arising

1.1. Abandoned caravan near the entrance to Baile Shuas

The Highland Council have been informed of the problem and have told the Community Council that they will take action to arrange for the caravan's removal in the near future.

1.2. Fish Farm Visit

It was agreed that a visit to the smolt rearing facility was preferable to visiting the Aird fish farm.

Action: Daniel to contact Bakkafröst to see if this is possible and agree preferred dates.

1.3. Hybrid Meetings

The set up used in the meeting worked well, but would be improved by the addition of a webcam with a wider field of view and a conference microphone. **Action: Daniel** to research options and prices.

1.4. Visitor Levy

The meeting discussed the proposed visitor levy. The view of the Community Council is that, given the current economic uncertainties and additional costs to be imposed on local businesses in the new financial year, such as increases to minimum wage and employer national insurance contributions, that the implementation of the levy should be paused.

1.6. 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. **Action: Daniel** to contact the Lord Lieutenancy to find out what the Community Council can do to provide support.

2. Finance

The bank balance is £5,335, having paid its accommodation dues to the Community Association since the last meeting. The yearly accounts need to be advertised prior to the AGM. **Action: Jim** to publish on the village noticeboards at the Hall and Shop. **Daniel** to publish on the Community Council website.

3. Ranger Service

The Community Council welcomes the appointment of Katie Grant, as ranger for Wester Ross South. The meeting agreed that the risk of wildfires was of particular concern. The use of portable barbeques and lighting of campfires by visitors were raised as increasing this risk. **Action: Daniel** to contact Katie to arrange a call for introductions and find out how the Community Council can support her work.

4. Local Housing

The reinstatement of the fire damaged houses at Baile Shuas is nearing completion.

5. Village Road Safety Plan and Road Maintenance

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

In February the Community Council was advised that the proposed speed limit reduction had been added to the list for consideration by the Ross and Cromarty Area Roads Team. The Community Council asked Cllr. Birt, if he could obtain an update from the Roads Team.

5.2. Road Maintenance

The final road maintenance budget for the coming financial year is awaiting approval by the Highland Council. Once approved it is hoped that repair work for the section of the Coast Road within the Shieldaig Community Council area will be added to the list of planned works.

6. Woodland Management

6.1. Kinloch Woodlands - Richard reported that a dedicated team of local volunteers had completed the planting of a total of 3,400 birch, willow and alder along the river banks above Loch Dughail.

7. Planning

The meeting reviewed the planning application for alterations and extension to Innis Mhor, Ardheslaig. No concerns were raised. The planning application can be viewed here: <https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=SQSMIKIHKZI00&activeTab=summary>

8. Any Other Business

8.1. Dentistry

The meeting discussed the acute lack of provision of dental services within the local area, both NHS and private. The Community Council noted that the fallback service was emergency treatment at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, and this very worthwhile service had been successfully used by several local residents. This highlighted again the importance of the Community Car Scheme to enable people to access such vital services.

8.2. Community resilience/emergency planning

The meeting discussed the growing risk of emergencies caused by nature-based events such as wildfires or severe storms, which could lead, for example, to power loss or road closures. It was agreed that it would be good to gather information on the resources that were available within the local community to give support if an emergency occurred and to consider other measures which could strengthen community resilience. **Action: Richard** to propose a sub-committee to take this forward.

8.3. Dog Fouling and Dogs not Under Control

A local resident has raised the issues of dog mess and dogs roaming free in the village. In the latter case, local dogs that are left to wander free by their owners have then on occasion behaved aggressively towards other dogs and visitors. The Community Council asks that local residents keep their dogs under control at all times and, bag and bin dog waste.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the AGM at 7pm **Thursday 5th June 2025**