|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Kenmore and District Community Council Meeting**  **Breadalbane Reading Rooms**  **10 July 2025**  **Minutes** |
|  |  |

1. **Present**

KCC Members - Peter Ely, Colin Morton, Carol May, Lou Oppenheim Alex Low, Jon Iddon

David O’Donoghue (Taymouth Castle Estate)

Members of the local community – Bill Oppenheim, Heather Arnott, Ann Hunter and Robert Cochran, Kenny McVicar

1. **Apologies**

Shirley Shearer and Bill Howie

1. **Declarations of interest**

None

1. **Previous Minutes**

Previous minutes circulated to K&DCC and wider email circulation. No comments received. Minutes approved. All meeting minutes are available for view on KCC&D website and Facebook page.

1. **Matter Arising**

It was agreed to discuss planning matters arising as part of the main agenda.

* Taymouth Castle.

Concerns had been raised by a resident at the previous meeting over a perceived lack of progress with Kenmore Hotel and Taymouth Trading.

David said he was very disappointed that, when the estate had contributed quite substantially to so many community requests and projects, criticism should be pointed at these unfortunate delays when a clear commitment has been made to renovate and complete both buildings. He also found it concerning that some persistent ‘keyboard warriors’ who contribute nothing to the community, thought it ok to criticise those who do. The estate had invested significant amounts to the community, including heavily subsidising the village shop and regular cleaning and maintaining the public toilets, and many other projects.  
He said Taymouth Castle will continue to invest in the area. It wants to make a serious contribution to the new Community Action Plan and will shortly bring forward an updated Masterplan for future development and improvements to their assets within the village.

1. **Taymouth Castle Estate Liaison Group**

Colin Morton provided the following update:  
The south river path is now closed while construction works take place. This is a temporary measure, and the original core path will be reopened in mid-October.  
  
The tall fencing along the South path near the A827 has been replaced by low level, less obtrusive wire fence.  
  
Refilling of the borrow pit at Inchadney has been approved by PKC. Work has commenced and it is expected to take around 2 years to complete the restoration.  
  
The picket fences in the village are currently being repaired and repainted. Private owners have been approached to have the work done on their fences free of charge - one owner has done their own.  
  
Ballintaggart has applied for permission for the siting of a food van near the beach. They still hope to be operational for the remaining summer months.  
  
The renovation of the phone box has been completed, and it has been replaced in its original spot. information boards, approved by the CC and the Kenmore Business Group, are prepared for near the box and the beach area but planning permission is required for the one near the phone box.  
  
The Capercaillie Trail was launched on Wednesday. This is wonderful initiative by pupils at Kenmore Primary School to create a challenge trail to find ten capercaillie signs in and around the area. Leaflets will be placed in the new phone box information centre, and a new section has been created on the Kenmore and District Community Council website.  Glad to say both the telephone box and Capercaillie trail have been fully supported by Taymouth Castle.  
  
The beach has been cleared of debris, and a new accessibility ramp has been built at the car park end of the beach. This follows several requests to make things easier for wheelchair and pushchair users. New commemorative benches are replacing the old ones and Mairi has contacted as many of the families as can be found to get their permission.  
  
The estate has also produced for us Keep Kenmore Tidy posters for display around the village.  
  
Preparations are underway to hold a second castle open day in Oct. The first had been very well attended and it is hoped that more local people will be able to attend this year. Lou Oppenheim asked if people who attended last time would be allowed to attend again. David O’Donoghue indicated that people who have attended before will be encouraged to allow others to attend this time, but TCE will not be enforcing any policy to stop the same people attending again. 30 to 40 people contacted TCE when they were unable to attend the first open day. These will be given ‘early bird’ access when the event is publicised.  
  
The Taymouth Castle summer newsletter has been printed and is being distributed. The Post Office had lost the first print run so distribution has been delayed.  
  
The living archive project, which will record people’s stories of the village and castle, is moving on with filming and editing due to start soon. This is part of a project led by Taymouth Castle to document the history of the area up till recent times. Once complete it will be handed over to the community.  
  
We had asked Taymouth Castle if it could source some stugged columns for us. These are the Scots pine columns that support the veranda at the reading Rooms and are hard to get. Suitable logs were identified, lopped and kiln dried for us. The estate is storing them until we are ready to have them installed. That is a tremendous help.  
  
Lastly, we were sad to learn that David O’Donoghue is leaving us shortly. We wish to thank him for all the assistance and goodwill he has given to the Council, and the CC wish him well in his next venture.

1. **Community Action Plan**

K&DCC working group for this project comprised Peter Ely, John Duff, Jon Iddon and Alex Low. The community action plan is a combined initiative with Loch Tay and Glen Lyon and K&DCC. CAP has been produced by Community Enterprise (commissioned by PKC.

Peter Ely received the final draft on 8 July, and this has been circulated to K&DCC members initially for review. No concerns have been raised over the final version, which is based on 363+ responses (238 from residents) to the local CAP survey.

Peter will make the published CAP document available on the KCC&D Website and Facebook page to allow the wider community access to the document. The key points were distributed at the meeting.

The key strategies are:

* Kenmore and District in Bloom
* Road safety improvements
* Right of responsible access to public areas of Taymouth Castle Estate
* Litter picking group in Kenmore
* Feasibility study into alternative uses of Kenmore Kirk

Next steps: Community Enterprise will arrange a public meeting to present the CAP findings and ask for feedback on the top priorities.

1. **Kenmore Kirk**

Colin Morton provided the following update on progress to date on community purchase of Kenmore Church.

Since the last CC meeting the following have happened:

* The CoS confirmed the purchase price of the church and notified us that the six-month time limit had commenced.
* We have had assistance from McKenzie Strickland Architects and Taymouth Castle to pull together some of the cost estimates involved and options for adapting the church.
* We have spoken with relevant funding bodies to investigate grant funding options.
* We visited Comrie White Church to hear of their experience running a former church as a community centre.
* Spoken with energy efficiency experts on options for replacing the heating and lighting services.
* Met with the CoS, Head of Planning and Policy to discuss the sale.
* Provided a feasibility report to the CC.

**Desirability: Do We Need or Want the Kirk?**

**Contribution to the Community Action Plan**

The Loch Tay Area Community Action Plan emphasizes the need for a friendly, well-connected community that fosters engagement across all ages. Utilizing the church as a community space could significantly enhance social cohesion and support local businesses by attracting visitors.

**Alternative Ownership Scenarios**

If the community opts not to purchase the Kirk, it risks falling into disrepair or being sold to private owners whose intentions may not align with community interests. Thus, community ownership emerges as the most favorable option to retain the church as a valuable local asset.

**Current and Projected Demand for Community Space**

Recent community events have shown a growing demand for local activities, indicating that the community would benefit from additional space. The church could serve various functions, including social gatherings, educational programs, and cultural events, thereby attracting both residents and tourists.

**Potential Uses for the Church**

Potential exists for the church to accommodate a variety of functions such as a community space, children's care facilities, sports activities, and cultural events. This flexibility could provide numerous opportunities for engagement and income generation, especially during peak tourist seasons. The resulting income, in turn, would assist in the funding of the ongoing operational and maintenance costs of the building.

**Need community consultation to confirm all that.**

**Feasibility: Can We Make It Happen?**

**General Restrictions on Use**

The Church of Scotland has indicated that there will likely be no restrictions on the use of the building following its sale, although any change of use will require planning permission. This opens possibilities for diverse community activities.

**Building Condition and Required Repairs**

A recent inspection indicates that while the church is generally well-maintained, it requires significant repairs, particularly to its roof and mechanical systems. Estimated costs for these repairs range around £400k over the next decade, highlighting the need for careful financial planning.

**Purchase and Running Costs**

The church is being offered at a market valuation of £80k, with additional costs for repairs and adaptations.

| Estimated capital costs (k) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Items | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Purchase (inc legal costs) | 85 |  |
| Building repairs | 327 | Non-services items identified as required in years 1-3 in bldg report. |
| Internal adaptation | 250 | Estimate based on immediate needs - installing new toilets and levelling floors. |
| Services | 37 | Assuming £44k heating systems replacement, costs are included under Energy efficiency below. |
| Energy efficiency measures | 75 | See section 14. |
| Catering and function equipment | 15 | Tables, chairs, cutlery and crockery, kitchen equipment, linen. |
| AV Equipment | 12 | Sound system, stage and lighting. Projector and screen. |
| **Total** | **£726** |  |

**Funding Sources**

Potential funding sources include grants from Historic Environment Scotland, the Scottish Government’s SME Loan Scheme, and local fundraising initiatives. However, reliance on grants alone is not sustainable, necessitating diverse income streams from events and community activities.

**Community Involvement and Management Structure**

Sustained community involvement is crucial for the successful management of the church. A proposed management structure could involve a dedicated committee to oversee operations, supported by volunteers and potentially part-time staff as the project develops.

We would envisage the need for the employment of a Project Manager on a temporary basis to manage delivery of the acquisition and business plan.

**Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations**

* 1. The Kirk provides scope to be adapted as a viable and practical community centre with multiple uses.
  2. We consider that the project could provide significant benefits to local communities, visitors and businesses.

**Challenges**

* 1. The timescale imposed by the CoS is very restrictive. Obtaining funding in this period will be challenging.
  2. The building fabric of the Church is in fair condition overall but there are some pressing items that will need attention soon.
  3. Most mechanical and electrical services are in a ‘fair-to-poor” condition and are rapidly reaching the end of their serviceable lifespan.
  4. There will be restrictions on adapting the building to a new use, but these are not insurmountable.
  5. Significant funds will be required to purchase the church, make urgent repairs, adapt the building to its new purpose, and maintain it. Ten-year costs, excluding running costs, are likely to be in the region of £850,000.
  6. Resourcing the purchase and adaptation projects will be challenging. Expert assistance may be required, and consideration should be given to appointing a project manager.
  7. The willing and sustained support of local volunteers will be essential. not just to the acquisition process but also to the long-term sustainability of the project. The scale of the support required should not be underestimated and a clear community commitment to providing support will be required before moving forward.
  8. Over-ambition to do too much too quickly may be a temptation, but a staged approach would allow demand and requirements to be fully assessed before committing to longer term internal changes. Smaller scale staged funding may also be more achievable. (Up for discussion).
  9. If sufficient funds and community support can be found the project appears feasible.

**Next Steps**

The CC needs to decide if we move to public consultation. The move to public consultation was unanimously approved by K&DCC members. Colin will share plans for public consultation as soon possible as time is of the essence. The following steps are planned:

* Public meeting in Church to discuss Feasibility Study.
* Conduct on-line survey
* Convene an extraordinary K&DCC meeting to decide on plan going forward

The following discussion points were raised during the meeting:

Kenny McVicar asked if more pressure could be put on the Kirk sessions to at least extend the 6-month timescale. Colin confirmed that it is the CoS trustees who are stipulating the 6-month timescale (rather than the Kirk sessions) and they will not be moved from their position due to the number of churches that they are currently having to sell. Colin indicated that the Kirk sessions have been very supportive of the community plan to buy the Kirk and helped to negotiate the 6-month timescale.

Kenny also asked whether it was intended that Kenmore Kirk could still host weddings, funerals, and services? Peter confirmed that there was no intention at all to restrict any of those events from taking place in the Kirk going forward.

Lou Oppenheim asked when the 6-month period started. Colin confirmed the period started 2 weeks ago. Lou also asked what happens at the end of the 6-month period. Colin confirmed the Kirk would go on the open market at the end of the 6-month period OR if the local community withdrew its ‘expression of interest’ the Kirk would go on the open market immediately. It is understood that there would be a small degree of flexibility if the purchase was underway and funds were available, but the sale was not fully completed when the 6-month elapses.

Lou also raised the possibility of employing a full-time project manager/team to undertake this project. It is an extremely large project for the local community to take on and the requirement for volunteer time would be extensive. There is a real danger of ‘Volunteer fatigue’. Colin indicated that this would be a sensible approach and should certainly be considered to take the project forward after the initial purchase (funds permitting).

Bill Oppenheim queried the scope of the public consultation. Should it be focused initially on the local community before opening to the wider community? Colin described the intention to canvas opinion from locals, K&DCC area, adjacent CC’s, second homeowners, people who visit regularly, but respondents will be asked for their post code to allow the views of local people to be prioritized. Having support for the project from visitors will help secure funding.

John Duff suggested that the purchase be progressed through an officially constituted body such as the Breadalbane Development Trust. This would bring benefits from a legal perspective. Peter Ely is involved in the BDT. Colin said that was one of several governance options set out in the report.

1. **Finance**

Jon Iddon gave the following update on Finance:

Finance Report.

Balance as of 7/5/25: £13,668.85

Balance to date: £10,361.57

MAY.

Payments:

12/5/25. Ardtalnaig notice board £200 (MG)

18/5/25. First aid training £600 (MG)

22/5/25. Capercaillie trail £700 (MG)

22/5/25. Stamps £25 (Resilience)

29/5/25. K&DCC Meetings £185

29/5/25. Xmas Fund £750. Supports music nights

29/5/25. Room hire. First aid courses £80 (MG)

29/5/25. Community Council expenses £83.49

JUNE

Received:

18/6/25. SSE Renewables £3035.00 for micro grants

Starting balance for the year £4465.00

Brings the micro grant up to £7500.00

Payments:

30/6/25. Garden box for RR 143.99

30/6/25. Breadalbane Storage. Container £3540.00 (Resilience Grant)

Reserve account.

Balance as of 31/3/25: £3015.29

Balance to date;: £3023.86

Increase of £8.57 is bank interest.

Resilience Grant.

Total award: £8718.86

Spent to date: £7068.59

Balance: £1652.27 (To be spent by 31/10/25)

Lou Oppenheim asked for confirmation that the container had been purchased. Jon confirmed that this was the case and would be used to store community assets as well as resilience equipment.

**Microgrants**

* Microgrants reserve has been topped up to £7500 which needs to be used by the end of this year.
* Carol and Alex will work on a microgrant application to renovate the telephone box in Acharn that is currently being used as a library/book share. Paint left over from restoring Kenmore’s phone box has been made available. If any remains it can be passed on to Ardtalnaig should they wish to restore that phone box also.

1. **Planning**

**Planning items from previous minutes**

* 1. House boats at the Marina – Dirk advised that Taymouth Marina has applied for a Certificate of Lawfulness to PKC. This certificate is used in cases where planning permission is not required. **Nothing further heard from PKC on this.**
  2. **24/01293/FLL** Erection of 5 holiday accommodation units, installation of 5 air source heat pumps and associated works at land 30 Metres Northeast of The Byre Bistro – pending decision. Updated drawings have been submitted. **Approval has been granted.**
  3. Taymouth Marina – sewage works have been approved by PKC with conditions. PKC awaiting documentation to confirm conditions have been complied with. Dirk confirmed upgrading the sewerage system is a high priority issue for Taymouth Marina. Dirk agreed to confirm the status of the conditions. It was confirmed that tankers are still be used to manage the sewerage system in the meantime, however tankers are only necessary if the system is used beyond capacity. This is not a regular event, but Taymouth Marina understands the inconvenience caused when this is needed. Lou also reported that there is often a smell of sewerage when you drive past. The new sewerage system should hopefully address all these concerns. **It has been confirmed that condition 7 regarding the routing of the waste pipe has been met.**
  4. PLANNING APPLICATION 24/01857/FLL -ERECTION OF A DWELLING HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS - LAND 40 METRES EAST OF ANEMONE, BALNASKEAG – enforcement notice has not been complied with or appealed. Owner is currently in ‘negotiations’ with PKC. Peter has been in discussion with Mary Barr at PKC about this as KCC is concerned that the enforcement is being ‘negotiated’. Update awaited. **Assertion in planning application that development will not impact ancient forest has been rejected by PKC. John Duff indicated that retrospective planning applications have been submitted. Enforcement notice will not be implemented until the outcome of the retrospective planning applications is known. This is standard PKC planning process. Decision is still pending.**
  5. 24/01948/FLL Siting of office/storage building, changing room, sauna and jacuzzi at land 30m NE of Portbane, Kenmore – K&DCC objection lodged on basis of road safety. Dirk confirmed that some material has been delivered ahead of schedule and prior to approval being granted. PKC enforcement officer (Mary Barr) is aware and was on site 7 May. **Formal approval received 19 May.**
  6. As per previous minutes Stuart and Heather raised concerns about several developments/projects that are currently taking place at the Marina with no apparent permission having been granted. **Peter Ely has received update that these are still with the Enforcement Officer at PKC planning. Heather and Stuart have received no response. John Duff explained that PKC planning process requires that they update specific parties on progress of planning applications, but they are not obliged to respond to people raising objections. This is not satisfactory but is the current process.**

**New Planning Applications**

Peter Ely has circulated details of the latest planning applications to the 100+ recipients on the KCC mailing list. No issues or concerns have been raised so far.

Concerns raised over application by Milton of Ardtalnaig Farm for change of use to STL property. Objection to be raised by K&DCC as it further increases the proportion of STL holiday properties v residential.

1. **Road Safety subgroup**

Jon Iddon provided the following update.

Excellent work has been done by PKC roads department, w/c 23/6/25, to formalise passing places on the U177 east of Inchadney to Comrie Bridge. In all, 5 passing places have either been created or improved. Drainage works to the east of Karelia House has been carried out to prevent flooding after heavy rain and extensive carriageway repairs have taken place in front of Rustic Lodge.

We have written to PKC, thanking them for undertaking this work, noting it was as recently as January 2025 that we had our joint site visit to look at the undertaking of this work and are pleased this has been undertaken before major repairs to the A827 at Bolfracks takes place later in the year.

We have once again, raised our concerns with PKC in respect of issues on the C451, South Loch Road and asked them to look upon these with some degree of urgency, particularly in view of possible further work being undertaken at Taymouth Marina and a recent serious RTA west of Acharn.

The RSG has received representation from residents at Dalerb concerned by vehicles driving with excessive speed through their community, an issue we have also raised with PKC and will follow up when we next meet with them.

1. **Resilience Subgroup**

At the last Community Council meeting on 8/5/25, I was asked to draw up a list of outstanding items, or those that needed to be confirmed.

This has been done and was circulated to members of the CRG.

The document details a history of the project from its inception, including minutes of CRG meetings and those held with representatives of PKC Civil Contingencies and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

It also details the decision-making process and discussions that lead to the submission and subsequent awarding of a grant, allowing us to purchase equipment for the resilience centre.

Among those items purchased, were 6 battery power packs for use at the resilience centre and for loan to members of the community in the event of a crisis.

The other significant requirement identified, was the purchase of a storage container and we are grateful to the K&DSA, who kindly offered us a site on the games field.

The purchase of a container will not only provide storage for resilience equipment but be a resource for other community activities.

This container has been ordered from Breadalbane Storage, based at Camserney and will be delivered next week.

Other significant activity includes the preparation of the Kenmore Emergency Plan and an Emergency Resilience leaflet, to be delivered, along with a short questionnaire to all households in the K&DCC area.

A sizeable proportion of households have been visited, and our thanks go to those who have undertaken this work.

We anticipate completing this very shortly, after which, feedback from the questionnaires will be reviewed, followed by a meeting of the CRG, to move the project forward coupled with a hoped-for reestablishing of our previous close working relationship with PKC Civil Contingencies.

Lou Oppenheim confirmed for the meeting that both Lou and Heather Arnott have resigned from the CRG since the last KCC meeting. Jon acknowledged this and thanked them both for their significant input to the group.

1. **Kenmore Business Group**

Shirley was unable to attend today’s meeting. The item will be moved to next meeting.

1. **Capercaillie Trail**

Capercaillie Trail was launched 9th July and will involve following clues to find 10 Capercaillie’s hidden in various locations in Kenmore and Acharn.

1. **Kenmore Telephone Box**

The refurbishment is now completed. The phone box will act as an info point and library. Left over paint will be used in refurbishment of Acharn phone box.

1. **SURF**

Colin confirmed that Kenmore and district has been encouraged to apply again this year. Our application last year was very strong, and second place was gained in the awards. Colin agreed to lead the application again this year under the ‘Most Improved Place’ category. There are benefits to taking place in the awards including access to free advice which has been particularly useful in discussion about the community buying the church. It also helps in the application for grant funding.

1. **Kenmore and District in Bloom**

Jon Iddon provided the following update:

The inaugural meeting of Kenmore & District in Bloom took place on Monday 7th July at the Reading Room; the name having been changed from Kenmore in Bloom to include also Balnaskeag, Acharn, Ardtalnaig and Dalerb.

In all thirteen people attended, including 10 members of our local community, with support from Taymouth Castle and PKC Community Greenspace. Several other offers of help have been received.

The In Bloom group is constituted, separate from the Community Council and the Reading Room management committee and will have its own bank account. The constitution has been signed and returned to PKC, as has an application for Public Liability Insurance.

An allowance upon which we can draw, initially set at £200 for a community of our size, but has subsequently been raised to £400. Fundraising will be an important part of our activities, and we have heard today the Thrift Shop in Aberfeldy has added the In Bloom group to their list for 2026.

We are looking at several projects, such as bulb planting, tubs, hanging baskets and re wilding, all with the aim of enhancing our communities, the natural environment and encouraging pollinators. Our first project has been to plant window boxes and hanging baskets at the Reading Room.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm and positivity expressed at this first meeting, as we move the project forward and will meet again early September.

1. **AOCB**

No additional topics were raised for discussion.

1. **Date of next meeting**

The next K&DCC meeting will be held 11th September 2025.