

Kiltearn Community Council



Minutes –

Held in Ante Room, Diamond Jubilee Hall

Held on Tuesday 13th May 2025

PRESENT

Elected Members

John McHardy (JM)
Shelagh Dennett (SD),
Annelie Graham (AG) & Minute Taker
Mike Finlayson (MF)
Mandy MacLeman (MM)
Gabrielle Buist (GB)
Sarah McNair (SM)
Susan Crookes (SC)

Councillors

Cllr Sinclair Coghill

Public

Preston White
John Ross
Gary Payne
Adrian Clark
Larisa Jansen

Item Discussion

1 **Apologies/Welcome**

Apologies noted from Cllr John Edmondson.

2 **Finance**

Balances are £50,792 (95 day savings account), £43,694 & £83,987
Overall Profit/Loss as at 30th April 2025, £2557

It is hoped that the audited end of year accounts can be requested and completed for next month's AGM. Agreed to use the same accountant to do this.

SD

3 **Previous Minutes/Matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April 2025, were agreed as proposed by MM and seconded by SD.

- 3.1 • **Community Regeneration Funding** – the Highland Council funding of capital projects. MM advised that the ECT application for funding of the village toilet

block (including a village orchard and stretch tent for the village green) project did not get through to the second round. Total cost would be £90k, KCC will be contributing £40k. Cllr Edmondson advised (via email to KCC) that he had asked, on behalf of the KCC, that the Evanton toilets project be considered if any of the successful projects pull out of the process.

The reason given was that the planning application was not yet approved and the building warrant was not yet in place. Application can be made again for the second round of funding. Cllr Sinclair Coghill advised that the Highland Council were awaiting more funding for this so they had to prioritise those applications who had everything already in place. JM advised that the building warrant is expensive so would not be put in place until the funding was secured – so is a vicious circle.

MM

MF queried again the money that had been allocated previously by Highland Council for the toilet block. MM advised that those funds were no longer there. MF expressed disappointment and that it was not acceptable that it had been reallocated. Cllr Coghill said that he would take that up with the Highland Council.

- 3.2
- **Flower baskets** – JM advised that the baskets are not yet filled, awaiting petunias. Will hopefully be ready second week in June.

- 3.3
- **Easter Ross Community Partnership** – to continue to look at various services & issues across the local community councils and prioritise/co-operate together. Meeting scheduled for 14th May 2-4pm. GB & MM may be able to attend.

GB,MM

- 3.4
- **Road at school** – MF commented on the previous suggestion that a one way system be put in place and raised concerns that doing so would infringe on the crossroads at either end of the Drummond Farm road creating safety issues.

- 3.5
- **Fyrish Crescent playpark** - MM confirmed that funding had been earmarked for this over 5 years ago but nothing has ever been done. MM advised that former Councillor Molly Nolan had told her that she thought equipment had been bought and paid for but was in storage as there had been no available contractors to install it. MM spoke to Helen Ross who said she would speak to John Mackay, Amenities Services Manager, to see if it could be tracked down. MM and Cllr Coghill will follow this up.

MM

4 Correspondence

None apart from that already spoken about.

5 Police Report

March Report for Ward 6 circulated.

5.1 AG will attend the quarterly online Community Council Inspector Meeting with a number of other representatives from other community councils. Next one is on 18th June. AG will ask if the report can be more specific to areas & towns to make it more relevant. **AG**

5.2 SM & SC raised that there has been vandalism and youngsters messing around in the school grounds including smashed bottles.

6 Councillors updates

- 6.1
 - Cllr Coghill advised that he had attended a BEAR meeting and was awaiting outcomes on their review of all the A9 Junctions. Larisa mentioned that the lighting & road markings are not visible enough for those turning right off the A9 into Evanton at the Drummond Road junction.
- 6.2
 - Cllr Coghill advised that the by-election will be held on 19th June. It was commented on that there has been no publicity about this and no-one in the community has had any kind of formal notification yet – not even KCC.
- 6.3
 - Cllr Coghill has no further information around the Highland Investment Plan, for capital investment by Highland Council.

No update received from the other councillors.

7 ENERGY

- 7.1
 - **Ceislein & Creachan Wind Farm RWE proposal (behind Fyrish & Strathrusdale)** RWE have slightly amended their proposals.
Sheila Campbell-Lloyd gained peoples views outside of Ardross Hall and Jubilee Hall during the consultations. In Ardross, out of 50 people, 47 were opposed, 0 thought it a good idea and 3 declined to comment. In Evanton, out of 34 people, 30 were opposed, 3 were in favour and 1 declined to comment. It was felt that this was not a big enough sample of the community and further views within Kiltarn needed to be sought. It was suggested that that there be more events held to inform the public, but organised by the KCC with impartial and informative information.
The Save Fyrish petition currently has approx. 3000 signatures.
It was felt the Highland Council interactive map is not adequate and Sheila has commissioned a more comprehensive one from elsewhere showing all the energy proposals.
Ardross CC are looking to secure consultants in all the relevant fields to inform the proposals and gain more knowledge that is useful to the community to decide what impact, positive or negative, the energy proposed projects will have. They are allocating up to £60K for this. It was agreed that KCC would contribute £5K towards this. **JM**
Public events with the collated information would hopefully take place end June.
MM suggested that there should also be a simple online questionnaire.

GB agreed that a poll on Facebook could be organised. AG to add GB as a KCC Facebook admin. **GB,AG**

MF said there should be a postal drop to all the households emphasising the importance of coming to the information sessions around this. It would be around £400 to do this via Royal Mail.

JM advised that due to Royal Mail being non-user friendly this would not be a quick process.

SC & MM said that the Scouts could post the letters, and those households further outside the village could be hand dropped by willing volunteers. **SC**

Larisa said that she had been doing some research herself and quoted these figures:

Over the last three years there had been 236 Major Energy applications in Scotland which had been given the green light. Highland has the highest number with 51. Highland currently has 1305 live renewable applications, including windfarms, battery storage, transmission projects and infrastructure. One example is a proposal within 45km of Balloch for 959 turbines all over the height of 150mtrs, which would therefore all be lit up at night. In the Netherlands most of the turbines are offshore, along dykes or in water and due to objections the lights on the turbines have a digital radar detection sensor so that they only come on when an aeroplane approaches.

JM commented that these numbers will be surprising to people.

8 Adrian Clark asked if there had been any further information regarding what was the proposed community benefit from the proposals. JM advised that nothing had been specifically mentioned so far.

8.1

PROJECTS

8.2 • **Public toilet** – as mentioned previously the planning application is now online.

8.3 • **Winter relief fund** – MM advised that the leaflet will be posted out to households within the next couple of weeks. **JM**

9 • **Village Community Caretaker** – nothing further has progressed with ILM due to staff having annual leave and them working on a big project but it should be finalised soon.

9.1

GROUPS

- **Evanton Community Trust / Jubilee Hall** – MM asked if KCC will pay the outstanding water supply invoice, £500. The ECT took over the hall part way through a financial year so could only get charitable exemption for water rates from the beginning of the new financial year. Agreed. **MM,SD**

The solar panels, battery storage and heating in the hall are now installed. The funding from HIE for LED lighting and windows is still being processed.

9.2 Community help may be needed for redecorating. JM congratulated MM for all the hard work in securing the funding to do this.

9.3

- **Stay & Play** – This started yesterday and was a great success with 20 families attending.

- **Evanton Wood Community Company** – Adrian Clark advised that the woods continues to have regular visits from Academy school groups as well as Kiltearn Primary. The Friday Futures group for those suffering from dementia has up to 10 people attending. NHS Branching Out groups use the Mags Wood shelter for people with mental health difficulties. The summer concert programme starts on Saturday 7th June. There is a Friday woodland management group.

They are working on thinning out some of the beech trees on the ridge to allow light for Scots Pine growth. Some (13 so far) beech trees along the back of the houses are diseased and are being managed.

The group are applying for a full planning licence for the cabin as its temporary licence is due to run out.

9.4 MF wondered about having fire hydrants in the woods. SD thought at Mags Wood might be good.

9.5

- **Evanton Community Enterprise** – Adrian Clark advised that this group had managed the half pipe (no longer there) and BMX bike area. This group has now been disbanded and the funds distributed to other community organisations.

9.6

- **Evanton Community Cinema** – GB advised that the last film showing was cancelled due to only 2 tickets sold. More showings are planned but community support is vital for it to continue. This is now a constituted group.

10

- **Evanton.online** – Gary advised that there is now a new page on the website specifically for the police reports. He asked about needing verification for the Highland Council links that he had on the web page and all agreed that it would be fine.

10.1 **AOCB**

10.2

- **School grounds** – MF pointed out that the school perimeter needed to be strimmed and SC said that it was struggle to get the Highland Council to cut the grass as well as do any strimming.

- **Kiltearn Church** – MF advised that he was disappointed and saddened to report that it is now confirmed that the Church of Scotland are selling Kiltearn Church. It is hoped that there is a group who could take it on.

JM commented that the general opinion was that it is a public building that needs to be saved and protected as such. It is thought that the local community are not fully aware of this sale happening and the public custodians need to publicise it more.

MM

10.3

MM said that DTAS (Development Trust Association Scotland) are looking at bringing church buildings into community use and she would look further into that.

- Larisa asked about helping people directly with energy bills from the proposed windfarm projects. JM said that the KCC winter fuel payments will provide some relief in the immediate term.

11

Next meeting - AGM: Tuesday 10th June 2025 in the main hall.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.