Kiltearn Community Council

Minutes –
Held in Ante Room, Diamond Jubilee Hall

Held on Tuesday 6th October 2026

PRESENT

Elected Members	John McHardy (JM) Shelagh Dennett (SD) Annelie Graham (AG) & Minute Taker Mike Finlayson (MF) Mandy MacLeman (MM) Gabrielle Buist (GB) Susan Crookes (SC)
Councillors	Cllr John Edmondson
Public	Gary Payne Claire Gordon (Kiltearn Primary Parent Council) Kyle Golden (Kiltearn Primary Parent Council) David Cathie Lorna Shirran Janice Robertson

Item	Discussion	
1	**Apologies/Welcome** Apologies noted from Sarah McNair (SM), Cllr Sinclair Coghill	
2 2.1	**Finance** • Business Reserve Account: £118,000 • 95 Day Current Account: this has now been closed • Business Current Account: £1,000	
2.2	SD advised that ILM are months behind in invoicing KCC for Chris (Village Officer) wages. There is still income due from windfarms grants.	
2.3	Janet from Evanton Social & Events Group asked about an outstanding £2000 grant payment agreed in June 2026. SD will look into this.	**SD**
2.4	Budget and projections for expenses ongoing.	**SD/JM**

3 Previous Minutes/Matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 8th September 2026, were agreed as proposed by SC and seconded by SD.

3.1 • **Benches –** one has been moved to playpark, one still to be moved there and agreed that one stays at Blackrock field. **JM**

3.2 • **The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service –** seeking views on the draft Local Fire & Rescue Plan for Highland 2026. MF working on completion of survey. Deadline 15th October. **MF**

MF advised that he has gone through the provided 'booklet' which covers the whole of the Highlands. Looking at Evanton, he raised specific concerns about the fire hydrants – unknown when they were last tested, could be very many years ago. The woods are in close proximity to houses so a potential fire risk. The access road into the woods for the fire engines should be looked at to ensure it is fit for purpose.

MM said this survey could fit in with the resilience planning.

In connection with general fire & rescue provisions, MF suggested a life belt down at the shore.

JM asked if the booklet will be adapted and made appropriate in light of the increased fire risk that has occurred this year, and likely for future years.

3.3 • **Transport Forum** – walking street audit to highlight any issues such as dropped kerbs, rough paving, bus stops etc still to be arranged. JM & SC agreed to be involved in this, along with Cllr John Edmondson. **JM/SC**

3.4 • **Nadira trip** – no-one is available to attend.

4 Correspondence

4.1 • **Cromarty Cinema –** asking if they can publicise their programme of films on Evanton noticeboards and social media pages. Agreed. **AG**

4.2 • **Highland Sustainable Development Summit –** 18th & 19th Nov, Kingsmills Hotel. GB & MM will look at attending. **GB/MM**

4.3 • **NHS Communities Futures Fund –** advising of grants available, including community transport. To be forwarded to everyone, including Kiltearn Parent Council. **AG**

4.4 • **Novar Estate, Larch Woodland Creation –** details about consultation. To forward to all on committee. **AG**

4.5 • **Easter Ross Community Partnership –** networking event, Nov 4th.

4.6 • **Openreach Fibre Build update –** information from Openreach about their upgrade of the network with full fibre. Asking if KCC can put on social media their poster advising of their plans.

Cllr John Edmondson advised Openreach are working on swapping over 90% of the numbers on the exchange from copper to superfast broadband. This involves putting up poles. Ducting in the towns are already full. After the switch off those still with copper, like those in outlying districts, may be cut off and there are no meaningful strategies in place to replace it for them.

4.7 • **Message from a member of the community –** advising that Openreach had dug a large hole in the verge outside his driveway, left a large pile of boulders and rubble in his driveway and made a mess of the verge and the front of his house. To be raised with the Highland Council and Traffic Commissioner as all works undertaken should reinstate previous look of area. **JM**

4.8 • **Message from a member of the community –** asking if some repairs can be done to the Kiltearn footbridge on the shore. JM to contact Phil Waite, Environment & Transport Planning, ref Core Path access, or Matt Dent, Access Officer, and also Joanne at the Port Authority. **JM**

4.9 • **Message from a member of the community –** asking if pressure can be put on Highland Council and SSEN as the street lights on Drummond Road were not working. JM contacted SSEN. Lights are now back on.

5 Police Report

September 2026 Report for Ward 6 has been circulated.

5.1 No-one attended the last Inspectors Quarterly Meeting. Next Inspectors quarterly meeting will be 16th December 2026 at 6.30pm, online. Whoever attends to ask about what and what is not included in the Report.

5.2 Concern raised over older teenagers and young adults knocking on doors & windows in Teandallon, causing alarm and distress to the community. The public are advised to call the police if this happens. Query if this is just high jinks or part of something more serious like County Lines.

6 Councillors updates

Cllr John Edmondson:

6.1 • Transport Forum – in reference to community transport, the Alness Academy buses are not always used and work is being done to try and get them released for community use.

6.2 • **Licencing for hall –** new regulations are coming in which may be restrictive for community halls who want to have a public bar for events eg. No children allowed to be present at all.

6.3 • **Katewell loop –** there was a query if a speed limit could be placed on the Katewell loop however this is not a main through way so the criteria for having a different speed limit would be difficult to reach. The back road to Dingwall is different as it is classed as a cycle route as well.

6.4 • **Rail stop** – MF asked if the request for a rail halt in Evanton could be raised again and said he could pull out all the paperwork that was previously done. Cllr John Edmondson advised that Network Rail would need a solid business case to consider this. Maybe if there was a lot of work via the Free Port. This request is on the Action Tracker.

7 MAJOR ENERGY APPLICATIONS

7.1 • **Ceislein Wind Farm –** no further activity on this. JM advised that objections needed to be in by tomorrow (7th Oct) but would not be before the committee until Nov 2026.

7.2 • **Novar 1 repowering –** no application in as yet.

7.3 • **Abhainn Dubh Wind Farm,** north of Evanton/Fanny Field – JM has looked at the proposed access route for the heavy construction traffic which is planned to turn off immediately after the A9 Evanton junction and will cut across the field on Drummond Hill road, and across other smaller junctions. JM and John will look at this and put together comments. **JM**

7.4 • **SSEN pylon work –** the meeting welcomed David Cathie who has raised concerns around SSEN's and its subcontractors' current use of the Swordale Road to access pylon sites for the proposed Spittal-Loch Buidhe-Beauly 400kV overhead line. Over the past 18 months, the road has seen substantial movements of heavy plant and pickup trucks, often 7 days per week and throughout daylight hours. This has inconvenienced residents along the road, but also public safety. SSEN has negotiated a second access route via the road informally known as the "wind farm road", on the outskirts of Evanton. This route, owned by Novar Estate, can be accessed directly from the A9 at Skiach Junction and avoids the village entirely. This is a much safer route for all residents but especially those that live along the Swordale Road given that it runs for 3 miles from the very centre of the village, is single track, has very limited pavement and is largely unlit. Swordale Road is used throughout the day by children walking and cycling to school, dog walkers, other pedestrians and of course existing residents' vehicles. SSEN will only use the wind farm road for heavy plant. If that is the case, other project-related traffic would continue to use the Swordale Road and will only increase as the overhead line work progresses.
It was agreed that KCC would repeat these concerns to Roads & Transport. **JM**
Cllr John Edmondson said it was important to make clear that this is not a suitable route. MF pointed out that the timber lorries that use the Swordale Road have to survey the route and any damage caused and pay for any wear and tear.

8 GRANT APPLICATIONS

8.1 Kiltearn Primary Parent Council
For transport to swimming lessons
Applied for £5700
This was discussed in some detail. Claire advised that the buses want to charge £300/trip to Alness swimming pool. All the bus companies have been approached and this was the only one / best price. The Head Teacher has suggested that parents could be asked to make a contribution.
Cllr John Edmondson is still waiting for a response from Highland Council to use their own buses. He will follow this up with head of Transport.

JM asked why the Highland Council does not fund these costs. Alness is within the catchment area. What is happening in other schools that have to travel to lessons? He added that KCC would gladly fund a Swimming Bus club if it was set up (many years ago there used to be one).
Queries over the availability of the Alness Academy, Dingwall Academy and Alness Heritage mini buses.
All agreed to pay for first 6 weeks of lessons - £1800

9 PROJECTS

9.1 • **Toilet –** this has now been delivered. MM advised that all the connections now need to be done. Hopefully should be up and running in next few weeks. A mural is planned for the outside.
JM reminded that KCC had agreed to collaborate with ECT in the management of the toilet for the next ten years. All agreed.

9.2 • **Gala week –** date set for 5th to 12th June 2027.

9.3 • **Community minibus** – SC looking at this, ongoing.

9.4 • **Armistice Day** - Sunday 8th November. MF advised arrangements in hand. The light up poppy is now up. **MF**
Both ministers to be asked to attend.
Wreaths ordered by SD.
A wreath will be laid on behalf of the KCC.
Scouts, Cubs and Beavers will be involved.
SM had previously advised she had a PA system that could be used.
SM had previously advised she knew of a piper who could attend. Confirmation sought of which Councillor will be attending.
Song sheets need confirmed & printed
Chris to clean the steps and surrounding area.

9.5 • **CHRISTMAS** – Fri 28th Nov for lights switch on event. SM will update at next meeting. **SM** MF will speak to Cornerstone. School have been asked to take part in a 'design a Christmas light' competition. **MF** MM advised there may be a Christmas Market in the hall on Sun 29th Nov. **MM**
MF advised Fri 18th Dec there will be a carol service in the hall, hopefully a joint service with both churches. Song sheets will be needed. **MF**
MM advised that ECT might plan a Christmas movie morning. **MM**

10 NEW PROJECTS

10.1 • **Training café –** not discussed this time.

10.2 • **Co-opt a younger person onto the committee –** not discussed this time.

10.3 • **Memorial steps renovation –** not discussed this time.

11 AOCB

11.1 • Gary Payne pointed out that the outside light at the side door of the hall had not been working, and also now needs to be brighter.

11.2 • **Evanton online –** Gary Payne advised that he has to send all editions of the newsletter to the National Library of Scotland. The next newsletter (no.19) will hopefully be out mid October. JM said that he has almost completed the KCC update for the newsletter, MM said she can also provide an update from ECT. Gary asked if he could have an update and photo of Chris, the Village Officer. Gary intends on updating the whole website. He would still appreciate if someone was willing to help with management of Evanton.online. It was suggested that the new ECT Events Officer could co-operate with Gary on the posters page. **MM**

11.3 • MF asked if there could be better signage at the Drummond Road junctions, with clearer road markings. JM suggested that the Highland Council roads portal could be used for this. **MF**

12 **Next meeting:** Tuesday 10th November 2026

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.