

Kiltearn Community Council



Minutes –

Held in Ante Room, Diamond Jubilee Hall

Held on Tuesday 10th December 2024

PRESENT

Elected Members

John McHardy (JM)
Shelagh Dennett (SD),
Annelie Graham (AG) & Minute Taker
Susan Crookes (SC)
Mandy Macleman (MM)
Gabrielle Buist (GB)

Councillors

Cllr Sinclair Coghill
Cllr John Edmundson

Police

PC Jaia Pirrie

Public

Preston White
John Ross
Gary Payne
From Ardross CC – David & Sheila

Item Discussion

1 **Apologies/Welcome**

Apologies noted from Mike Finlayson (MF), Sarah McNair (SM)

2 **Finance**

Balances are £50,050 (in new savings account), £50,795 & £83,540.

As there are a number of projects and longer term cash flow expenses being budgeted, a cash flow projection is needed. SD, JM & MM to work on this.

**SD, JM
MM**

3 **Previous Minutes/Matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th November 2024, were agreed as proposed by MM and seconded by SD.

4 **Sports Hall**

In reference to issue regarding usage restrictions. Following a post on Facebook, nine people expressed an interest in being part of an Evanton Sports Club. AG will pass details onto MM to contact them.

AG, MM

5 **Winter relief fund** – following further research by MM & GB, they proposed that a sum of £250 be given to those households in ‘fuel poverty’ or ‘fuel debt’, paid direct to their energy supplier. The overall budget would be approx. £20K plus 5K towards purchasing the smaller items that can be provided. They will have another meeting with AliEnergy to discuss how to frame the eligibility criteria, and AliEnergy would act on behalf of KCC in obtaining details of applicants. The Scottish Government plan to re-introduce the Winter Fuel Payments next year so this scheme would run until October 2025 and will then be reviewed. All agreed to this proposal in principal. MM will put together a report with the eligibility criteria and distribute to members for further approval/go ahead.

MM,GB

6 **Multiple major energy planning applications & consultations –**

6.1 • JM attended a joint Community Council meeting with a view to CC’s joining forces on issues that affect all the respective areas.

6.2 • **Tourist Tax** – there is a Highland Council consultation with a deadline of 31st March 2025 regarding opinions on implementing a Tourist Tax on all visitors to the area who stay in hotels and lodgings.

6.3 • **Power line:** There will be a consultation closing on 10th January 2025 regarding the proposed power line route serving the proposed Abhainn Dubh Wind Farm, which mostly follows the existing route before veering toward Fannyfield. The KCC to look at the proposals and give comment so that the views can be lodged.

JM

6.4 • **Lochbuie/Spittal Line:** there will be further consultation in the New Year. The preferred route is the Northern route towards Ardross/Strath. KCC to consider viewpoint once details come out.

JM

6.5 • **Swordale Battery Storage facility** – planning was passed despite objections and debate. It should be noted that Cllr Maxine Smith voted for the application.

6.6 • Sheila from Ardross Community Council advised that Ardross currently has over 9 large scale energy planning proposals in their area, including hydrogen projects. They want all the proposals to be looked at as a total and not as stand-alone projects. The Highland Council as a whole has been inundated with applications. The Ardross CC propose that the CC’s collectively join together to look at these applications. She suggested that they pool funding to get a professional expert in this field in to look at them and view them from a knowledgeable base to give a considered, balanced and expert opinion and one that would properly represent community views. They could then present a proper report for the planners to consider. At the moment the community impact is being overlooked and missed.

Sheila added that although the Freeport is a great asset, it does mean that there is easy access to the area for large machinery and parts.

MM agreed that the members just do not feel knowledgeable enough about the technicalities of proposals to be able to give a fully informed opinion. A public meeting should be held to specifically discuss the proposals and to air views. Google forms could be used to survey opinions.

Everyone agreed that Sheila's ideas were worth looking at and for the CC's to work together.

JM pointed out that further advice would need to be taken regarding how this could be financed as there were certain restrictions in using the KCC windfarm money for this.

JM

7 **Police Report**

PC Jaia Pirrie had submitted the latest Police update to the KCC. Of note on the report is that some residents have received scam letters for financing and an alert will be put out on Facebook about this.

AG

8 **Councillors updates**

- Cllr Sinclair Coghill advised that he had been in contact with Iain Moncrieff, Highland Council Roads Operations Manager, regarding a separate cycle track on the backroad between Evanton and Dingwall. This was passed to Allan Bryce, Project Officer/Active Travel, who did not offer much in the way of solutions and advised there are no plans to put one in place.
- Cllr Sinclair Coghill also asked Iain Moncrieff about the Jubilee Hall junction and Iain said their engineers were neutral about it and seemed to think there would be no issue about getting it changed. PC Pirrie said that she would look at past reports concerning any road traffic incidents recorded at the Jubilee junction, but of course minor ones and 'near misses' would not be recorded.
- Cllr John Edmundson advised that he would also try and get more communication with the Highland Council on the various roads issues.
- Despite reports being made about it to the Highland Council, the Katwell sign is still down so JM advised that he would organise getting it put back up.
- The Swordale deadend sign is missing – a notice will be put on Facebook to ask for it back.

AG

No update received from the other councillors.

9 **Public toilet** JM advised that the Highland Council would lease the site to ECT for a nominal fee. JM will send them building plans.

JM

10 **Village Community Caretaker** JM has created a job description which KCC members are reviewing. The budget is 15K/ year and discussion is ongoing with ECT to act as the employer. One of the duties suggested was as a school lollypop person but this would need to be applied for separately as a Highland Council

employee. MM advised that ECT concerns would be around public liability, employee liability and actions taken should repairs not be done safely/properly. The ECT will need to seek legal advice on this because if they are an employer acting on behalf of the KCC then that might be considered agency working.

It was suggested that if this goes ahead the person would initially be employed on a 2 year fixed contract in case of funding changes etc and the position can then be reviewed again.

Everyone agreed that JM and SD should continue to discuss this with ECT to explore all options and push it forward.

**JM, SD,
MM**

11 Correspondence

- Moira Mckenna, the Deputy Lieutenant to Joanie Whiteford, Lord-Lieutenant for Ross and Cromarty, will be attending the January 2025 KCC meeting to further explain the role and function of the Lieutenancy and how it may be of help to the Community Council and our community.
- Liam Clancy, Highland Council Community Support Officer, will be attending January 2025's meeting to introduce himself.

12 Other Business

- There is a consultation on the 20mph areas, with views to be given by end 31st January 2025.

13 Groups

13.1 Evanton Woods Group

- A Winter Torchlight Walk is taking place on Saturday 14th December 5.30-7pm.
- The group are having their AGM soon and are actively looking for more members.

13.2 Evanton Social & Events -

- Friday 13th December, Carol concert in the parish church and then afterwards at Cornerstone as a fundraiser for the Hospice.

13.3 Evanton Community Trust –

- 19th December, primary age children's Christmas party.
- 30th December, family Ceilidh.
- 12th January 2025 the Evanton Community Cinema are planning a showing.
- Funding from the Children's Lottery to restart the Stay & Play in January 2025, has been granted, in partnership with Emily and Gregor.
- Some funding has been secured from SSEN towards energy efficiency measures in the hall for new heating, lighting, windows and internal doors and part funding of solar panels. The rest of the funding will be sought from elsewhere.

- The ECT AGM will take place on 26th January 2025 in the Jubilee Hall. There will be a vacancy for 1 or 2 board members.

14 AOCB

- A member of the public as asked if some kind of shelter could be made for those waiting outside the post office van. It was suggested that the van could maybe park elsewhere like the Church carpark.
- **Xmas lights** – Preston wanted to extend thanks for the way the Christmas lights look, to all those who organised them.
- **Evanton.online** – Gary Payne advised that the closing date for the next newsletter will be mid January 2025.
- **Place Plan** – only one person turned up for the feedback presentation on 22nd November. MM advised that Maureen Cusick's work on the Place Plan has involved more work than anticipated and taken longer than expected. The original submission was going to be much earlier. This means that she has not been able to complete some of the ECT tasks that she was commissioned to do. MM asked that KCC agree for ECT to invoice the KCC for a further 2 months of Maureen's time, 5K. All agreed.
- **Nursery** – SC agreed to keep councillors up-to-date with nursery building plans & progress.
- **John Ross** – as John Ross is leaving Evanton and has been an active member of the community and been an extremely helpful attendee of the Community Council meetings for the last 34 years, he was presented with a gift of thanks for all his hard work.

15 **Next meeting:** Tuesday 14th January 2025

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance.