



COMHAIRLE COIMHEARSNACHD CILL MHÀLAIDH  
**KILMALLIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Draft Minutes of meeting held at 7.15pm on Monday 27 January 2025 at Kilmallie Community Centre**

<b>Present</b>		<b>Apologies</b>	
Gwyn Moses (Chair)	GM		
Russell Leaper (secretary)	RL		
Carol Anne Campbell (Treasurer)	CAC		
Lyn Kilpatrick	LK		
11 members of the community			
<b>Highland Council</b>			
Cllr Liz Saggars (online)	LS		
John Grafton (on-line)	JG		

**1. Apologies – None**

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None declared

**3. Minute of meeting**

The minute of the meeting held on 25 November 2024 was agreed for accuracy.

**4. Treasurer’s Report**

CAC updated that the balance on 27 January 2025 was £3784 of which £1879 is restricted for the newsletter and £290 for administration costs. £1614 is unrestricted. During the month a newsletter donation of £125 had been paid in, and £562 paid out - £530 for printing of newsletter and £32 for hall hire.

There are resources to cover a further 3 x newsletters.

**5. Update on Bus Service**

Legitimate concerning grievances were expressed from the floor about the continuing impact of the reduction in bus services. These grievances had been exacerbated by The Highland Council’s recent publicised purchase of D&E Buses in Inverness to provide improved transport to the retail park in Inverness. Meanwhile, getting to work, doctors’ appointments, hospital appointments etc have been severely disrupted in Kilmallie.

For example, the bus timetable doesn’t tie in with the sawmill opening times. MacKleaners staff are having to leave work 45 minutes before the end of their shift, impacting on costs. Anecdotally, some people have had to leave their jobs because the

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bus service does not match shift patterns. One member of the public shared their experience of waiting at the bus stop at the Health Centre for 1 hour 12 minutes in freezing temperatures with an older gentleman in his nineties and an older woman in her mid-eighties. A press release has been prepared to publicise the unacceptably poor bus service and the impact on vulnerable, frail and older people.

There was a call from the floor for a public petition and a campaign approach to reinstate the extra bus per hour. Shiel Buses reported that it would require procurement of an additional bus to restore the service and manage the congestion delays. Cllr JG asked the public interested in a public petition to contact him in order to coordinate and support impact.

Cllr JG also reported that local councillors are submitting a formal complaint to The Highland Council about the transport problems in response to the council's purchase of extra buses in Inverness. The next council meeting for lodging the complaint is 27 March 2025. In the meantime, Cllr JG is seeking a discussion with the Council's leader Raymond Bremner and requested details of the health centre example as a case study.

It was **AGREED** that Kilmallie Community Council also submit a complaint to the Council stressing the necessity of a 4<sup>th</sup> bus in order to address the problem. It was also noted that other community councils would be approached in terms of a collective response.

## **6. Visitor Levy**

There was a strong call from community members for The Highland Council to pause the current consultation on the Visitor Levy and reconsider the proposals. While there is no disagreement with a visitor charge, the proposed Visitor Levy is felt to be not fit for purpose and is in fact more correctly an Accommodation Tax that will be applied equally to local residents (not just visitors) for the purpose of improving services for tourists (not residents).

Notably the underpinning legislation excludes camper vans and mobile homes from the Visitor Levy, which arguably have the greatest impact on the congestion difficulties faced by local people in Lochaber during the season. There is a sense that the general public is not aware of the implications and costs on being taxed for accommodation required when attending hospital appointments in Inverness, for example.

It was also noted that there is no administrative system in place to collect the proposed 5% tax from accommodation providers and that Third Party Platforms will not be implementing system adjustments to enable collection by The Highland Council. In some cases, the 5% addition will put businesses above the VAT threshold impacting viability.

There was reference to a more measured approach taken to this legislation by other local authorities in Scotland, with some agreeing not to implement the Visitor Levy.

There was also concern expressed about the limitations of the mostly on-line consultation undertaken by the Council.

In response it was **AGREED** that Kilmallie Community Council would write to the Council to reflect these views and allow for more consideration of the purpose, scope and impacts of the Visitor Levy than is likely to be achieved through the current consultation.

It was also noted that the Visitor Levy is an agenda item at the next Linnhe Community Alliance meeting.

## **7. Linnhe Community Alliance**

GM reported the following updates from the recent meeting:

- 1) **Defibrillators:** There is work in progress to produce a definitive list of where these are sited throughout Lochaber.
- 2) **Spean Bridge/Roy Bridge/Achnacarry:** These community councils are seeking legal advice in connection with the council's relaxation of planning conditions for wind farm developments in their vicinity and the hydro scheme at Corrie Glas. This includes a relaxation of working hours and a requirement to strengthen bridges.

## **8. Community Council Scheme Review**

RL noted that the Council has published changes to the scheme, none substantially affecting Kilmallie.

## **9. Climate change**

Kilmallie Community Fridge and Garden is progressing well and has recently been successful with funding applications to strengthen provision.

## **10. AOCB**

### **1. Health and Social Care Redesign Stakeholder Group**

LK reported from the last meeting of the stakeholder group on 6/12/24:

- a) **New Hospital:** Progress on the new hospital has resumed following the budget announcement. There will be a 12-week mobilisation period with an intention to resume work on the business case from April 2025. There is an intention to repeat the public/stakeholder Design Workshop that was originally held in December 2023 before the project was paused.
- b) **Care Homes:**
  - Mosspark:** The acquisition of Mosspark by The Highland Council has been announced. NHSH will deliver services once the transaction has concluded. There is not yet a date for this.
  - Care Village at Blar Mhor:** UHI are reviewing proposals for a Stem Centre at the Blar Mhor site. If this doesn't proceed there is a possibility of a 'care village' at this site.
  - Mackintosh, Mallaig:** NHSH have now successfully recruited and have been able to reopen this care home for 4 residents from November. NHSH continues with recruitment to help reach capacity at the home.

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**Dalmhor, Strontian:** NHH has been advertising for staff and interviews are arranged. If successful, this care home could re-open February/March providing a rota can be covered.

**c) Delayed Discharge:** There were 7 people delayed in hospital at the time of the meeting due to legal guardianship in progress.

## **2. Recycling Facilities at Kilmallie Hall**

In response to a query CAC clarified that donations can be paid to Kilmallie Hall via QR codes, and that the hall can respond to further questions.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

24 February 2025 at 7.15pm.