



### **Chair's Report 2022/2023**

In presenting my report I am fortunate in having a good team around me so I thank my colleagues, especially Secretary Russell Leaper and Carol Anne Campbell, Treasurer and KCN Editor, who have the main workload.

Last AGM was the first meeting in the Centre since Covid and we have had hybrid meetings throughout this year.

Our main topics of interest this year have been:

- Road safety. Since the trunk road speed review has been several years in coming so things like village gateway signs have had to wait too. We hear that Transport Scotland has asked BEAR to look again at the possibility of a pedestrian crossing at the Swing Bridge. If the speed limit is lowered, that could be feasible;
- Nuisance. While noise complaints at Annat have lessened, concern over carbon dust emissions is ongoing;
- Responding to Highland Council Planning on proposals that will affect us. The new bus route at the GP surgeries; delaying Phase 2 housing on the Blàr until the new hospital's needs are clear (parking and accommodation particularly); getting the Council to accept and condition a future bus route, round the hospital and through Phase 2; successfully encouraging Highland Council to create better access for pedestrians and cyclists to Phase 2; expressing concern at a housing proposal at Badabrie that would remove dozens of trees.
- We have also raised concerns over the proposed widening of the Blàr Mòr Footway/cycleway and the effect on orchids, for little benefit.
- Sometimes chaotic parking in the vicinity of Corpach Hotel and Co-op.
- The state of the Icehouse which Highland Council has a responsibility to protect and linked with that, access to the shore.

We have struggled to get responses from SEPA and from Highland Council Planners. Police engagement has also been less than in previous years. As part of the Linnhe Community Alliance, we met with Kate Lackie, the Highland Council's Acting Chief Executive, 10 weeks ago and still await a response to the items we raised. These centred on the Blàr Mòr Community Liaison Group, where we remain aggrieved that community councils seem to have to make the running on things that planning officials are paid to do.

Most of the issues that I have been referring to are the responsibility of others and we press these public bodies as necessary. Community councils were created by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to "express to the local authorities.....and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents". Sometimes, we get the impression that public bodies get irritated by us but we are just doing our job and after 50 years you would expect that to be recognised.

For the first time in several years, I'm pleased that the Community laid a wreath at the Kilmallie War Memorial and we're grateful to Dougie Dykes for doing so, when I had Covid.

Kilmallie Community News, which is justifiably a source of pride for us, produces 1,000 copies delivered free of charge to every home and business in Kilmallie. The editorial team of Carol Anne and Ann as well as the many contributors and distributors deserve our thanks. With annual sponsorship pledges we are confident of its future; thank you.



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**KILMALLIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The Community Fridge has been doing well, almost two years on and is now expanding into a Community Garden and Food Hub. Carol Anne and her team of volunteers deserve our appreciation. Most importantly, thanks are due to those businesses and individuals who donate items regularly, without whom there would be no stock at all! This facility is for us all, even if we can afford to buy food; it's about minimising waste and we can all play our part in that. We don't want items to go to the community fridge only to be dumped.

We were delighted when Carol Anne Campbell, KCN Editor and CC Treasurer, won the 'Volunteer of the Year' Award at the VOSCARS. She has been the driving force behind several initiatives starting with the Community Cupboard during Covid and the Community Fridge, bringing together the Community Centre, Community Company and Community Council – KCC Cubed we have been calling it.

Our community councillors have been active in other meetings too: the Active Travel Group, the Blàr Mòr Community Liaison Group and the new Belford Hospital project, or more properly Lochaber Health and Social Care Redesign, since there are broader issues than a new hospital building. We are also part of the Linnhe Community Alliance which has done well to open up Fort William 2040 and get places on its Transport Working Group and create the new Community Stakeholders' Group.

Our thanks are due to many people:

- we have three new Highland Councillors in Liz Saggars, Andrew Baldrey and John Grafton. While Councillor Liz is in contact and attends regularly, we have never seen the men;
- Joy Biggin, who did the annual inspection of our accounts;
- to the Lochaber Times, through Fiona Scott and Mark Entwistle (now replaced by Jamie Wills) who regularly report our activities and can be relied upon for bigger issues;
- to all those who have contributed to the newsletter and the local businesses that have provided ongoing financial support; and, last but not least,
- to the public who attend our meetings. Our business must be done in the eyes of the Community.

It can be very rewarding to serve on a community council. Kilmallie remains the biggest development area in Lochaber with the new Belford, the UHI West Highland College STEM Centre and the houses on the Blàr Mòr. We should be pleased that we have a Community Council – we are here to represent you all; some places don't have and you have shown that you support us when it's critical.

All community councils come to the end of their terms in October and the word needs to go out to make sure that Kilmallie CC continues. The Linnhe Community Alliance aims to have a couple of articles in the Lochaber Times and Lochaber Life over the next few months to try to generate interest but the best way of finding people remains by word of mouth.

I hope that I have covered our activities and concerns adequately.

Thank you all.

**John C Hutchison**

**Chair**

**26 June 2023**

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