

**Meeting of the Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Council**

**Minute of Meeting, 7:30pm, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Community Councillors present:**

Éamon Doorley, Cameron Kemp, Inglis Lyon, Jayne MacMillan, Judith Rumbold, Lindsey Stout.

**In attendance:**

Councillor Emma Knox.

The meeting was held in person at Kirkhill Community Centre.

<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from George Hogg (Aird Community Trust) and from Highland Councillors David Fraser and Chris Ballance, who had other meetings to attend.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minute of Last Meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b></p> <p>The minutes of September’s meeting were agreed; Inglis Lyon proposed and Judith Rumbold seconded their acceptance, pending corrections.</p>	
<p><b>3. Matters Arising</b></p> <p><b>Minutes of Meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024:</b></p> <p><b>Parking outside Kirkhill Primary School/Road Safety/Speed of Traffic</b></p> <p>Jayne Macmillan had spoken to Georgina Dunbar, the Head Teacher and the matter of children’s safety with cars parking outside the school and cars coming down at school drop off and pickup rather than parking at the Community Centre is ongoing. Jayne Macmillan said that she had been asked at the last Parent Council meeting to raise this issue of the children’s safety crossing to and from school. She said that it’s an accident waiting to happen. The children think that the traffic calming measures which slow cars down to 10mph are somewhere where they can cross safely to or from the park but this depends on the driver’s discretion. The drivers have priority and it is not a pedestrian crossing. Inglis Lyon said that the traffic calming measures do seem to be working in slowing traffic down (Lindsey Stout said, but not tractors due to the size of their wheels).</p> <p>There was general discussion around the feasibility of installing a Pelican crossing at the school and Lindsey Stout said that some drivers do not stop at the Pelican Crossing in the village to allow people to cross as it is. Jayne Macmillan said that the school staff have already put cones in the no parking zone outside the school and up beside the park to discourage stopping. Inglis Lyon suggested using the green space opposite the school for a parking area. Jayne Macmillan said that the Parent Council had already investigated this and the residents of Groam Crescent were against it. She also said that this land was not built on because it had a natural spring and was always wet, unless it was Summer. Councillor Knox added that Highland Council policy is to keep the green spaces if possible. Jayne also</p>	

<p>said that the school had already been through Safer Routes to School. Inglis Lyon said that someone from the Roads Department should come out. Councillor Knox replied that it would be the Safer Routes to School staff, not the Roads Department. Councillor Knox to investigate and action.</p>	<p>Cllr Knox</p>
<p>Councillor Knox said that she will ask about installing a buffer zone at the school. Councillor Knox said that there was an opportunity here for Highland Council to develop a Highland-wide schools road policy which is uniform across the region. She also suggested that there was an opportunity here to make an application to the Ward Discretionary Fund to replace the banners outside the school (the banners are old and worn and are too familiar to drivers) which would newly raise awareness. Jayne MacMillan to action.</p>	<p>Cllr Knox  Jayne MacM</p>
<p>Traffic continues to speed into the village from the direction of the Smiddy. A number of residents have mentioned this in the consultation on the Local Place Plan and also verbally to Community Councillors over a period of time.</p>	
<p><b>Crannog Newsletter</b> <b>Local Place Plan Consultation:</b> <b>Local Shop, Road Speed &amp; Safety issues, Playpark equipment, Lentrans Station/Charleston Academy bus stop safety issues</b></p>	
<p>Jayne Macmillan said that there were two obvious themes in the responses to date: the demand for a local shop and concern about road speed and road safety (most comments received).</p>	
<p>Lindsey Stout said that the children's views on improving park equipment were also a strong theme. Jayne Macmillan said that the primary school children had been clear on what they wanted to see as an improvement in their local environment from the school survey. The main issue seemed to be a lack of challenging equipment for older children. Lindsey Stout said that there had been a few similar post-its on Gala Day written by children and parents. Lindsey Stout commented that she started off the original Park Group and had been involved in Phase I and II with a group of like-minded parents of primary school aged children some years ago to replace the existing park equipment, which was old and in one case had caused an accident. Jayne Macmillan and Lindsey Stout discussed the issue that the Highland Council does not provide new equipment, only maintenance for existing equipment, the safety flooring and the fences. If any item of equipment is deemed unsafe, it is removed. Funding from Highland Council for new equipment and redevelopment is very limited. Inglis Lyon said that instead of developers building a new playpark for each development which seem to be little used, funding should be put towards Kirkhill's central playpark opposite the school, which is well used and is within easy walking distance of all the housing estates.</p>	
<p>Jayne and Lindsey agreed that it's probably time to modernise the park equipment. Lindsey Stout said that a new steering group of interested adults (under the umbrella of Aird Community Trust) would need to be formed to consult the community, the children and fundraise for the more challenging new equipment that the schoolchildren are interested in. This is not something that the Community Council or the Highland Council would be able to provide, although we would certainly support it.</p>	

<p>Councillor Knox said that she had looked into the lack of a proper, safe bus stop for Charleston Academy pupils at Lentrans Station and had raised it with John Taylor, Road Operations Manager and Steven Grant, Roads Operations Manager. Councillor Knox said that it would be relatively inexpensive to do white lining to mark out a bus stop but a sign would be better as it would be more visible.</p> <p>In regard to finalising our submission to the Local Place Plan, we are still in the consulting process. We received an email from the Local Place Plans team with Highland Council on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024:</p> <p>“Further to previous updates we wanted to get in touch ahead of the date that had originally been identified as the date by which Local Place Plans (LPPs) should be prepared to inform a new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP). The team is busy pulling together all of the evidence for the new plan, and preparing to seek views on it, and your LPPs will play a vital role in that evidence base. At this stage we wanted to provide additional comfort to community bodies preparing LPPs that those submitted to The Highland Council and established as valid up to the end of 2024 will all be registered and taken into account in the preparation of this new Highland Local Development Plan. In addition, LPPs submitted in the first quarter of 2025 are still likely to be able to be considered in preparing the draft Local Development Plan although they may not be referenced in the formal Evidence Report. LPPs submitted after that period will be taken into account at the next available opportunity in the development plan cycle. The role of LPPs will also be reaffirmed in a report scheduled to be considered by the Economy &amp; Infrastructure Committee on 14 November 2024.”</p> <p>Lindsey Stout was concerned that we had not consulted widely enough and that we should have a wider consultation before we prepare the document. Jayne Macmillan said that we had had no online responses to date, so all we had so far were the responses on Gala Day and from the primary school children (refers to September’s minutes). Jayne Macmillan said that she could ask at the Tots Group on Thursday morning. Éamon Doorley suggested replacing the planned Community Council’s Planning article in the Crannog newsletter with an article about the Local Place Plan consultation. Lindsey Stout to action. Lindsey said that she would also re-share the Facebook post and pin it to the top of the Facebook page.</p>	<p><b>Jayne MacM</b> <b>Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>4. SSEN/Community Interaction</b></p> <p>Cameron Kemp said that Councillor David Fraser had taken the list of points required to be met and approached SSEN. There had been a series of emails back and forth. They had also contacted Councillor Helen Crawford. Cameron did not have any further information at this point.</p> <p>Inglis Lyon asked how we formulate a set of three to five key points to be met by developers to prove meaningful consultation with locals for a pylon line stretching from Caithness to Devon. The Highland Council need to set the bar in insisting that developers meet a clear criteria for meaningful consultation and there needs to be a consequence if these points are not addressed in that the planning applications are not waved through. If there has not been meaningful consultation with local communities, the consequence should be that the scheme goes nowhere. How do local Councils from all these areas process these aims through Edinburgh or Westminster? At present each area processes planning applications differently. Sixty four Community Councils should agree to these three or four key themes, supported and documented by a professional.</p> <p>Councillor Knox replied that Community Councils, if this is the case, need to unite to agree three to five common themes and find out where the expertise lies within their communities to support this.</p>	

Inglis Lyon also said that there should be compensation for those affected by the pylon lines whose land use or re-sale house prices have been affected. Compensation should be available and assessed independently. Access to compensation should not be replaced by a scheme for community benefit; they should run side by side.

Councillor Knox said that the companies will be generating power for the National Grid within the framework of the U.K. energy policy and, while Scotland is part of the U.K. this is the national policy.

Councillor Knox asked, what is the sought outcome? Kiltarlity Community Council has identified areas that meet the criteria for when the major planning application drops. They have a consultant on hand, paid for by crowdfunded money. She said that there should be a reasonable, agreed, consensus position formed by gathering evidence of community views. Once that is done, communities should approach their Councillors and politicians and they can help bring it forward. There needs to be a united approach and clear themes. Inglis Lyon replied that it should not be up to local communities to crowdfund to afford the help of a professional to deal with the issues generated by this unfair balance of power.

Inglis Lyon asked, why is this work is being given to independent multinational companies? An opportunity for community involvement and raising locally generated income for communities has been missed. Éamon Doorley added that the Scottish Government has power to build infrastructure and has control over planning. He said that people not only feel, but are, disenfranchised just now and have no real control over the countrywide linked-up mega pylon powerline planning applications, which are supported under the net zero policy by the Westminster and Scottish Governments.

Inglis Lyon commented, Highland Council could write to the Scottish Government or Westminster to ask that power is returned to local Councils and to the communities in order to address this issue. Inglis Lyon said that in many cases we are being told by Highland Councillors that it is not in their or our power to affect matters. It would be good to understand what powers Councillors/we don't have and what Councillors/we can't do to affect the outcome of countrywide planning applications, in order to empower communities and force proper consultation instead of planning applications being forced through with token consultation.

Cameron Kemp, Chairperson, said that we had been asked to respond to an Electricity Infrastructure Consenting in Scotland paper from the Scottish Electricity Consenting Team within four weeks (received at the end of October and due by the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024), which is not long enough to consider a response. Reading between the lines, one of the proposals of this paper would take away the rights of local Councils to hold a Public Inquiry. This is very concerning.

Cameron Kemp asked Councillor Knox to support Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Council in supporting an application for an extension of time. He said that three months would be more suitable than one. Cameron Kemp is to reply to the email to request an extension of time. Councillor Knox is also to request an extension of time on our behalf. We received an email request on the 29<sup>th</sup> of

**Chair  
Cllr Knox**

<p>October 2024 from the Scottish Government under the Electricity Act 1989, the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, Regulation 12 as one of the Consultees in scoping opinion for the proposed Section 37, planning application for the Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400kV overhead line connection, ECU00006008. Cameron Kemp is to consider, consult with others and write a response on our behalf by the due date of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Cameron said that he had already spoken to Ron Macaulay of Strathpeffer Community Council about this. Councillor Knox advised that the proposed infrastructure could have an environmental impact on trees (Forest &amp; Land Scotland, The Woodland Trust), birds (RSPB), insects and animals (NatureScot) as well as water (SEPA) and it is important for Kirkhill and Bunchrew Community Council to have time to consult with experts and consider a response.</p> <p>Councillor Knox said that the meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 in which Councillor Helen Crawford's motion had been discussed and approved resulted in Highland Council mapping of the proposed route of the power line proposals going ahead. There is also money earmarked for two job posts. It is proposed that one of the posts is earmarked for an independent planning expert to give advice to Community Councils. There is also an argument for an additional planning fee to be sought from the developers to pay Community Councils to cover their costs in supporting community engagement and communications. Councillor Knox will talk to Councillor Crawford about this.</p> <p>Cameron Kemp said that there is a group of four Community Councils meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to discuss the next moves regarding planning applications and strategic approaches.</p>	<p><b>Chair</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Knox</b></p>
<p><b>6. Police/Rural Watch Report</b></p> <p>Éamon Doorley asked Councillor Knox why there were still no road markings or cat's eyes on the newly surfaced section of the A862 Beauly to Inverness. The lack of white lines at the edge of the road makes it difficult to see where the edge of the road is when travelling at speed in the dark. Councillor Knox to investigate.</p> <p>Councillor Knox said that the Active Travel Path also needs some work on cutting back tree branches and vegetation. Some tree branches are falling onto the path.</p> <p>Councillor Knox also said that the Highland Council has been exploring buying a bus company so that in future the Council would have better control over bus services, maintaining rural bus services at appropriate times.</p> <p>Lindsey Stout mentioned an invitation by email on 30<sup>th</sup> October to respond to the Highland Council's Local Transport Strategy's themes and policies, responses due 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. Lindsey Stout is to bring a list of matters to Cameron Kemp that we wish to see in it. It is hoped that we can detail local issues discussed in previous meetings. Lindsey Stout to action.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us">https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us</a></p>	<p><b>Cllr Knox</b></p> <p><b>Chair &amp; Secretary</b></p>
<p><b>7. Planning Issues</b></p> <p>Jayne Macmillan said that she had looked at the planning applications as they came in and that there was nothing that required K&amp;BCC to submit a request to be considered a Statutory Consultee.</p>	

<p><b>8. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Lindsey Stout wished to thank Councillor Emma Knox on behalf of Kirkhill and Bunchrew Community Council for escalating the issue of the removal of cemetery bins with the Strategic Lead and getting results. This had been raised as an issue by several local residents. 240 litre mixed waste bins will now be reinstated by Highland Council at the gates of Kilmorack, Wardlaw and Tomnacross cemeteries, which will be uplifted by waste teams on a fortnightly cycle. Councillor Knox gave her thanks to all who sent her photos and forwarded complaints on behalf of residents and bereaved relatives.</p>	
<p><b>Further 2024 meetings: Tuesdays at 7.30pm to 9pm, The Williamson Room: 17th December</b></p> <p>If you would like to attend a meeting by telephone or Zoom if you cannot attend in person, please contact us well in advance on <a href="mailto:kandbcommunitycouncil@gmail.com"><b><u>kandbcommunitycouncil@gmail.com</u></b></a></p>	