

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

**Minute of Meeting, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

**Community Councillors present:**

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

**In attendance:**

Erik Lundberg of Aird Community Trust. Local residents Jamal Abdulla, Neil Barraclough, Clare Beeston, Heather Finch, Penny Hepburn, Erik Lundberg, Liz Robertson, Margaret Szczepanska and Daniel Ward.

The meeting was held in person at Kirkhill Community Centre.

<b>1. Apologies</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<p>Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Ballance and Councillor Emma Knox, Community Councillor Inglis Lyon and George Hogg of Aird Community Trust.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Annual General Meeting were circulated online. There was one correction. The minutes were proposed for acceptance by Judith Rumbold and seconded by Jayne Macmillan.</p>	
<p><b>3. Matters Arising from the last meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>• Dog Waste bin, Kirkhill Playpark</b></p> <p>No new dog waste bin will be provided. There is not thought to be a need for any more dog waste bins to be provided as there is a wheelie bin at the Millennium Garden, at the Community Centre and in the park itself. It is not ideal for dog waste to be put in a bin used by children for disposing of litter but as the bin is already being used for dog waste, this means that the owner does not need to take the dog into the park to reach the bin, as dogs should not be in the playpark. Erik Lundberg suggested turning the bin inside the park so that the lid faces the pavement, enabling people to access the bin. Lindsey Stout, Secretary, to contact the Highland Council to support the enquiry and to ask for the vandalised stand to be removed.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>• Community Noticeboard</b></p> <p>Erik Lundberg said that he would discuss the possible location of the noticeboard with Aird Community Trust's Kirkhill Community Centre management group. He suggested locating it within the park, on the school-facing side of the park because this is an area with high visibility. The park land is leased to Highland Council and subleased to Aird Community Trust. Cameron Kemp suggested that it might be better if A.C.T. move forward with plans for the noticeboard. Lindsey Stout agreed, as the Community Council has been hitting problems with the location (underground services at the bus stop) and the Community Councillors lack the skills and time to drive the project forward so it has been stalling for several months,</p> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Secretary</b></p> <p><b>E.L.</b></p>

although strongly supported by the community. Erik Lundberg to enquire with the Planning Department and check whether it would require planning consent. Once complete, a Ward Discretionary Fund application could be made.

- **Community Shop**

A number of issues were raised by the residents who attended the meeting about a possible shop. We explained that this issue arose from our canvassing during last year's Gala.

Erik Lundberg said that in 2016 Kirkhill and Bunchrew Community Trust ran a project and identified the need for a shop. Analysis of potential sites was done and a commercial operator was consulted. For various reasons, seven potential sites were whittled down to one viable site but the landowner did not release the site. Old Surgery site was too small and the Roads Department considered the access at the corner and a junction unsafe. The Community Centre had no street presence and would not attract passing trade.

Erik explained that there were different models of running a village shop. A café/shop/exhibition space was mooted. Liz Robertson said that the Community Cupboard during Covid was a success and from this the Village Market and the Friday café developed. The Village Market has been running for over two years.

Erik said that their project showed that if it was a Community owned building and enterprise, a high number of volunteers (thirty) would be needed to make it viable and there are already limits on the number of volunteers in the village with the pension age going up. If a Community enterprise, who would be responsible for it – a brand new organisation or a branch of A.C.T.? There would need to be a group to organise it, dealing with planning consent and employing architects and a design team. Who would manage the building? Would the shop be run by a commercial operator? The land take is large and would include both the shop and the parking and the access road layout.

A map was shared of the area proposed to be set aside for a shop in the Tullochs development in Newton Park. This area is for any use which benefits the community, not only commercial use – a shop does not have to be built there. A number of residents asked about maintenance. If the area is not yet in full use and is fenced off at present, why should residents pay a fee towards its maintenance? Should this not be maintained by Highland Council?

All present discussed the proposal to site the shop in Newton Park. Would there be enough passing trade? Residents of the new development in Newton Park said that they were concerned about the effect on domestic traffic, potential speeding and the safety of children. Newton Park is at present a safe area for children to cross the road and a quiet area to live in. A shop in that location might attract antisocial behaviour and noise and would increase litter.

Jamal Abdulla attended to discuss various ideas. A new build shop could be constructed, plus five to six car parking spaces and a section of road including a small white roundabout, including two upstairs units for small businesses such as a hairdresser or beauty salon and a takeaway. He would be interested in being the sole operator but only if the community wants

it and if he could secure funding. Otherwise, if there was enough demand, a mobile shop could be sited at the Community Centre. Daniel Ward said that there would be no room at this site for a roundabout – there is a narrow road turning onto Firthside. Since 2016, a lot of people do online shopping and most people can commute to shop in Beauly or Inverness. Jamal Abdulla to check that the proposed site at the Tullochs development in Newton Park would be suitable.

Éamon Doorley said that there was already concern about road safety at the school and there would be an increase of traffic at both ends of Newton Park. It would make sense for a shop to be on the main road.

Erik Lundberg said that Old Achnagairn Farm Steading, owned by Batten Homes, could be an alternative site.

Erik suggested another community survey, considering the views of people who live there. A.C.T. would be happy to provide an umbrella organisation to run it. Council officials should also be approached.

Liz Robertson said that many people came to Kirkhill originally because there was a shop. It was great for older people and the location was ideal, right in the middle of the village. Daniel Ward said that he is not against having a shop in Kirkhill but that the location in the Tullochs Development was not ideal.

The concern of residents present about a shop sited in Newton Park was noted. The proposed location of a shop in the old Crane Yard at the top end of Newton Park would be ideal but it has not progressed since our last meeting over a year ago. This brownfield site would be large enough, visible enough to attract passing trade and access would be off the main road through Kirkhill. It would also be on the edge of a housing development, rather than in the middle of one. Jamal Abdulla commented that the cost of dealing with the contaminated land would be a factor.

Regarding a mobile shop, Jamal Abdulla asked Erik Lundberg about location of a mobile shop at the Community Centre. Erik Lundberg replied that there would need to be a Committee meeting about the issues. There might be planning issues and parking obligations adding to the use of this site. The car park is sized according to the need and can be too small at the time of the Village Markets and Craft Fair. The need for a street trader's licence was also discussed. Jamal Abdulla to contact the Highland Council to check.

#### **4. S.S.E.N./Community Interaction**

Cameron Kemp, Councillor Helen Crawford and various other neighbouring Community Councillors including Gordon Beck (technical support) worked together to organise a Community Council Convention on the impact of renewable energy infrastructure, held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June, which was attended by between fifty and sixty Community Councils. We and other Community Councils have been consulted on a massive pylon line going through the area. There are a vast amount of documents, too many to peruse in the time allowed. A pause is needed to come up with a more sensible strategy. A resolution calling for a pause and for a Scotland-wide planning inquiry was made.

<p>There are many competing developments. If all of these go ahead, four times more electricity will be produced than is required by 2050. The Highland Council's online map shows that there are 1300 planning applications for the Highlands alone.</p> <p>Éamon Doorley said that it is especially alarming that changes are being made in planning law in order to facilitate these fast-tracked developments. Local Councils and the Scottish Government have been requested by Central Government, when looking at planning applications, to waive environmental impact studies and to apply them retrospectively.</p> <p>In Strathdearn, if all the wind turbines that are planned are built, 70% of the electricity requirement for Scotland will be produced in one glen. Jobs produced by the developments will be temporary.</p> <p>In Fanellan, land required for a sixty-two acre substation would be cleared and could never be returned to its original use. The fear is that, by 2050, the site will expand and may continue to expand.</p> <p>In Caithness, there is only one volunteer fire crew in the area and B.E.S.S. battery storage sites would present a real fire risk. It's evident from the wildfires throughout Scotland this year that containing a fire once it takes hold in moorland, woodland or peat bog is beyond the control of the fire service.</p> <p>Éamon Doorley said that the planning application for the 400kv pylon line which will be two hundred feet high and will extend from Newtonhill via the Great Glen Way and Reelig to Fanellan is expected to be live by the end of August. We will be advertising that the planning application is online so that residents are aware.</p> <p>The Community Liaison Group with SSEN, representing Kilmorack, Kiltarlity, Strathglass, Beaully and Kirkhill and Bunchrew Community Councils was reinstated on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July, having been in abeyance since March. A number of Community Councillors will attend.</p> <p>There will be a Social Charter meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July about possible community benefits, held online.</p> <p>Jayne Macmillan said that the Community Council Convention was a great event. All the representatives of the Community Councils spoke very well and clearly highlighted the issues that each Community Council was facing. She thanked Cameron Kemp, Councillor Crawford and the other members of neighbouring Community Councils involved in organising this event and bringing it all together.</p>	
<p><b>5. Finance</b></p> <p>Lindsey Stout to forward a hall bill for rent to Cameron Kemp to arrange payment.</p>	<p>Secretary</p>
<p><b>6. Police/Rural Watch Report</b></p> <p>No new local information or police report has been received.</p>	
<p><b>7. Road Safety</b></p>	

<p>Éamon Doorley mentioned issues with vehicles speeding through Inchmore. Could rumble strips be installed on the Inverness side of Inchmore? Instead of taking the Speed Indication Device from Kirkhill, could another S.I.D. be installed in Inchmore?</p> <p>Issues with speeding though Bunchrew were also discussed, as proposed by Councillor Chris Ballance in response to a resident's complaint and suggestion of a reduction of 20 to 30mph. During the national 20mph speed limit rollout and consultation with the public and the Community Council, a reduction from 40mph in this location was not supported and this will remain a 40mph speed limit. The issue is, as in Inchmore, drivers exceeding the speed limit on a straight, wide section of road. This would also be a good location for an additional S.I.D. and rumble strips.</p> <p>Issues are consistently raised with the speed of traffic on the B9164 from Kirkhill-Dunballoch-Lovat Bridge through the Long Wood, especially now there is a shop and café at the Lovat Bothy with a very limited visibility splay for traffic exiting the site. The route is regularly used by walkers, runners and cyclists. Community Councillors would be in favour of this section of road being reduced to 40mph.</p> <p>Councillor Emma Knox and Chris Ballance may be able with solutions for the above issues.</p>	<p>Councillors</p>
<p><b>8. Planning Issues</b> None.</p>	
<p><b>9. Any Other Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kirkhill Community Park – dead trees</b></li> </ul> <p>Lindsey Stout said that she was concerned about three dead trees in the perimeter triangle adjoining but outwith the park and provided a simple map. She said she saw two children climbing the tallest dead tree in May. It was also clear that a resident had cut some dead branches from another low tree that the children like to climb in. Trees within the park fence fall under the maintenance of the Highland Council and/or Aird Community Trust. Safety issues should be referred to the Highland Council.</p> <p>Erik Lundberg said that the trees in question, outwith the park fence, are owned by Highland Council and were planted in the 1950s. It is unclear who owns the land. Erik Lundberg is to pass the contact email for Grant Stewart, the Tree Officer, to Lindsey Stout and she is to write to request a tree inspection on the grounds of safety of the children who use the park.</p> <p>Lindsey Stout to cut back branches which are starting to reach through the fence in the autumn, to prevent damage to the fence. The main issue is on the school-facing side of the fence and at the corner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass encroaching on pavement at long verge beside Kirkhill bus stop and overgrown steps at Groam Crescent. Lindsey Stout to contact Highland Council to request taking the grass back and clearing the steps. To ask Councillor Knox for a contact.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Millennium Garden fence</b></li> </ul> <p>Lindsey Stout suggested that she could paint the Millennium Garden fence because it is</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p> <p>Secretary</p>

<p>looking very weathered and plain and asked for advice on paint colour. Olive green was suggested by Erik Lundberg. Once there is a base coat on the fence, a children's group such as the Scouts could be invited to add some artwork to the fence. The Community Council is to cover the cost of the fence paint. She also suggested contacting David Hendry, who gardens within the Millennium Garden, if she could weed the gravel. Erik Lundberg mentioned David Hendry's excellent upkeep and planting of the planters in Kirkhill.</p>	
<p><b>Future 2025 meetings</b> <b>Tuesdays at 7.30pm to 9pm, The Williamson Room, Kirkhill Community Centre:</b></p> <p>19th August 16th September 11th November 9th December</p> <p>If you would like to attend a meeting by telephone if you cannot attend in person, please contact us on <a href="mailto:kandbcommunitycouncil@gmail.com">kandbcommunitycouncil@gmail.com</a></p>	