

Glengarry Community Council (GCC)

Minutes of meeting held in Glengarry Community Hall on 8th December 2025 at 19.00

1. Present; apologies and conflicts of interest

Present: George Cross, chair (GX); Lea MacNally, treasurer (LMacN); Cecilia Dyckhoff, secretary (CD); Kevin Sutherland (KS); Ken Brown (KB); Philippa Maltby (PM); Gillian Carruthers (GC).

Members of the public and observers: about 50 people were present in the public benches. It was not possible to determine whether all were technically members of the Glengarry area community. Cllr John Grafton and Cllr Sammy Cameron were present amongst members of the public rather than as ex officio members.

Apologies: Cllr Liz Saggars.

Conflicts of interest: no conflicts of interest were noted.

2. Minutes of meeting of 3rd November

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November were adopted. Proposed: GC; seconded: PM.

3. Matters arising

(a) A question having been raised about intimation of SSEN's planning applications, Maren Ebeling (ME) had responded that she had in fact advised GCC of them by email.

(b) A draft resilience plan prepared by GX and LMacN will be circulated to members for discussion.

(c) No response having been received to our email about the light on the communication mast at Kingie, a reminder should be sent.

4. Financial report

LMacN had circulated to members copies of the monthly financial report and the invoice from the Village Officer (VO). Income in October had been £700 from Fearn PHS, which is ringfenced to Glengarry Community Liaison Group. Expenditure was as follows: £504.31 in respect of the VO's October invoice, which includes his public liability insurance; £526.80 for the October village skip; £79.99 reimbursement to LMacN for purchase of bulbs for village planters; and £6.75 for bank charges. The closing balance on 10th November was £16,883.38, of which £3,433.03 was ringfenced, leaving £13,400.35 available funds. The Post Office account received £52 income from rent and had no expenditure; it had a closing balance of £1,315.05, which is available for use.

The VO's invoice for 18 hours' work in the first half of the month included payment for the following: clearing fallen trees and branches at the War Memorial, also removing brush and scrub, weeding out paths and digging out a drain there; digging out a water catch and drain at the cemetery access; clearing a blocked culvert in the river path below Garry Bridge; clearing blocked drains and repairing flood damage on the river path below the hotel; cleaning the Post Office roof, clearing the gutters and

downpipe, and clearing the access ramp there; clearing leaves and debris from pavements between Garry Crescent and the hotel, and from Bank House to Garry Crescent; clearing growth obstructing the pavement below Bank House; clearing leaves and debris around the church and cutting back bushes at the door; clearing the school culvert; and cleaning the War Memorial.

LMacN noted that Robert Johnstone had kindly given the VO expert help in clearing the fallen tree at the War Memorial.

5. Correspondence

CD had circulated a handlist of correspondence since the last meeting. GX noted that the new Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils had also been intimated by Highland Council (HC), and that correspondence noted from Highlands Caravan and Campsite Association had not been directly relevant to GCC business..

6. Local Place Plan (LPP)

GX noted that GCC has spent more than six months drafting a LPP based on the research and extensive consultation behind Glengarry Community Development Trust (GCDT)'s Community Action Plan. The intention is that the finally agreed LPP will be submitted to Highland Council (HC) in January or February for inclusion in HC's Local Development Plan. The draft, which runs to about 50 pages, will be ready for publication soon in GCC's website and elsewhere, and to be shared with other local Community Councils and local Councillors. He asked councillors to confirm whether the draft was acceptable, and it was unanimously approved. (This item taken first in the agenda for public convenience, on account of its importance. Item 8(a) was then taken in order to allow members of the public to leave if they wished to do so.)

7. To consider representation on a local SSE biodiversity enhancement scheme

GX said that it would have been good to discuss this in person with ME. She had suggested that volunteers from the community could become involved in an environmental enhancement scheme organised by SEN to address repairing damage to the natural environment caused by infrastructure works. Tom Cooper (TC) of GCDT asked for information about this to be shared. A member of the public speaking with knowledge of the Tomdoun Estate's management said that the estate has environmental impact assessment data which could be shared. It was recalled that KB had noted an interest in becoming involved. He suggested that the proposal should be handled by the Community Led Liaison Group coordinating the impact of all the infrastructure project; and this was agreed.

8. Planning

By way of introduction, GX noted that GCC has received notification of 40 planning applications this year, including some for major infrastructure projects. Thereafter, the following applications were considered:

(a) Glengarry Viewpoint application

(This item was brought forward in the agenda, for the convenience of the members of the public present, some of whom left when it was concluded.)

GX explained that the purpose of this meeting, following usual practice, was to determine whether GCC would support or oppose the planning application by Black Sheep Management (BSM) in relation to the Glengarry Viewpoint site, or take a neutral position. This would be reported to HC, which would make the final decision. He pointed out that only relevant planning issues would be taken into account, as this would also be the approach of HC. So far, the only action that GCC has taken has been to obtain an extension to the period for responding, which was necessary because there would otherwise have been insufficient time to do so.

He summarised the information that had been obtained both at a public meeting organised by Glengarry Community Development Trust and the Community Hall committee, and at a private meeting arranged by BSM between Alan Farningham (AF) their planning adviser and two other BSM representatives, and members of GCC.

The public meeting had been chaired by Michael Foxley (MF), who is not a member of the community; it was attended by about 100 people, of whom 24 spoke. Two people were in favour of the application and the other speakers were opposed. There had been emotional expressions on both sides.

Those supporting the application had said at that meeting that the proposal had an attractive appearance and would improve the view; that it would provide jobs for local people; that it would improve the site and also improve road safety; and that the developer has a business-like approach.

Those opposing had raised the following points: the lack of consultation by BSM; the excessive size and scale of the proposal; that the proposed development was ugly; the large number of cars and coaches to be accommodated, including comparison with parking provision at Eilean Donan and Urquhart Castle; the proposal to charge for parking; the risk to traffic on the A87; the risk of flooding; the negative effect on water supply to neighbouring properties, including the failure to take account of a water supply pipe running under the site; BSM's present lack of significant employment of local people; the negative impact of the development on the Community Hall and other local businesses; the use of a public layby for private profit; the disproportionate nature of dealing with any perceived difficulties at the present site in the manner proposed by the application; the possibility of light and noise pollution; the deleterious effect on wildlife; and the impact on the scenery and landscape of the glen.

Summing up, MF had noted some of the points raised and the level of emotion aroused.

At the meeting between BSM and GCC, AF had mentioned the responses already made by some statutory consultees, which he characterised as approving, though Transport Scotland had asked for more information, and Environmental Health and SEPA will need to make investigations. In addition, a Construction

Environment Management Plan will have to be made, and it will be confirmed that any archaeological finds will be documented. He referred to details of the application: 166 covers in the café, a shop, a visitor centre, opportunities for local artisans to sell their products, lavatories, parking for 120 cars and also coaches. He said the site would be green-screened behind walls. It would take over the present layby because this offered the best view. There will be three categories of parking: (1) local residents would be allowed free parking; (2) other parking would be free for 15 minutes; (3) parking for longer than 15 minutes would be charged. There would be barriers at the car park entrance; and no overnight parking would be allowed. Any spoil created by the works would be kept on site. He said that BSM intend to comply with National Planning Framework 4: policy 25 (Community Wealth Building). He said that there would be 30 full time and 20 part time jobs created. If no local employees are available, that is a national problem, and the positions will be advertised widely, including Inverness in the catchment area. There is no policy of blocking local applicants. Accommodation for employees could be provided on the site or alternatively in the village if a site could be found there. He said that the development of the site would remove any current litter or other public nuisance problem and improve road safety. He said that there would be no landscape impact by the development and no impact on local businesses. He said that conditions could be imposed on any planning permission in relation to lighting. He said that there had been no necessity for public consultation as the size of the proposed development is less than 2 hectares. A drop-in session was nevertheless arranged. He also said that there was no alternative plan if this one is refused. It was noted that there are fears that HC might grant the application if it believes that there might be an appeal against refusal.

AF had also said at the meeting that BSM were astonished at the report of the vitriol expressed at the public meeting, and were considering action in relation to racism and libellous comments.

GX continued his summary with reference to 16 emails intimating objection to the proposal, that GCC had received in the past two days, mostly reiterating points already made, but also including a reference to the effect of the proposal on the village filling station, and a reference to a previous planning permission that had resulted in the growth of trees at the site. The presence of cabins in the site plan had also been noted, along with a fear that there might be further development at the site, as well as a comment on the glare that could be expected from the large expanse of glass, and a further comment that the application effectively proposed to make a charge payable for what had previously been free to view.

GX then invited members of the public to bring forward any other relevant planning issues not yet referred to. There was no response; and he then proposed that GCC members should vote on their decision about the application, and said that the written report of this to HC would be prepared after the meeting, as usual.

At this stage one member of the public objected to this process strongly and at length, saying that GCC ought to have sought the view of every member of the community individually. There was discussion of this view, during which another member of the public read a prepared statement opposing the development, referring to the proposal's seeking "to enclose a public good for at least partially commercial ends", and stating that such enclosure should be subject to democratic process, and that the application had not met that criterion. He quoted to the Scottish Government Planning Circular 3/2013 which refers to the importance of trust and open, positive working relationships, which he said had not been achieved.

KS proposed that the view of those in the hall should be taken by a show of hands, and said that it would be possible to visit members of the public in person thereafter.

GX reminded the members of the public that comments can be made about the application to HC both through the planning portal, though there may be some technical difficulty in doing this, and also by email. It is also possible to send comments by post, though HC prefers this method to be used only for large documents. GX said that he would be prepared to help, or to obtain help for, any members of the public who find it difficult to use the online method.

After some further discussion it was proposed by CD, with LMacN seconding, that KS's suggestion be adopted; and this was agreed. A show of hands by the members of the public was taken, in which 6 were counted as supporting the planning application, and about 39 as opposing it; four of those present indicated a neutral view. It was not ascertained whether those present were all resident members of the Glengarry community whose views GCC sought to represent.

Thereafter, a vote of the GCC councillors was taken: of the seven members, one supported the planning application and six opposed it. GX confirmed that a response reflecting this will be made to HC.

(b) Energy infrastructure applications

Proposals for the following projects had been received and responded to: Coire Glas to Auchterawe power line; Beinneun 2 wind farm; Coire Glas switching station; Millennium East wind farm (response shared with Fort Augustus and Invermoriston Community Councils).

(c) Lower Ardoch Forest application

This is a re-application for a project for houses and crofts, in which GCDT is involved, and which has had a very long gestation. Notes of support have already been made. There was a brief discussion about whether individual GCC members' membership of the DT ought to cause them to abstain and it was decided that whilst this was open to them, it was not required. None abstained. TC said he would be happy to answer questions, but none were put. The council gave

unanimous support to the application. KB noted that the application contained a reference to the development's using the Inchlaggan water supply, the resilience of which had been called into question by residents there in response to a recent application for housing in Inchlaggan itself. He said that he had a document which suggested that the Inchlaggan supply extended as far as Ardoch, which is several miles away. Piping water from there would seem to be unreasonable. TC said that the Ardoch development does not require Inchlaggan water, and that boreholes have been proposed there for that reason. It was agreed that KB should write to Scottish Water for clarification of the position with regard to water supply and distribution.

(d) Any other applications

- (i) In respect of St Finnan's church, two applications have been withdrawn;
- (ii) 49 additional documents have been lodged in relation to the Loch Fearn project. These will be considered; and a reply is required by 19th January.

9. Any other competent business

- (a) New Scheme of Establishment for Highland Community Councils: This requires further consideration. GX will make a preliminary assessment.
- (b) Fallen oak tree at Garry Bank: It has been moved from the path and further work is being done on it. KS said that investigations are being made about the ownership of the timber. It may be the property of the Aberchelder Estate; and LMacN could be in a position to ascertain this informally. In the meantime, GCDT has kindly agreed to hold the timber at the Depot until the ownership question has been answered.
- (c) Lochaber Access Forum: LMacN had represented GCC at the meeting, for which he was thanked. Nothing relevant to the Glengarry area had been raised.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Community Hall at 19.00 on 5th January 2026.