

## Glengarry Community Council

Minutes of meeting held in Glengarry Community Hall at 19.00  
on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

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). Invited: Fraser Allison (FA) and Chris Pasteur (CP), Gilkes. Members of the public and observers: Tom Cooper (TC), Glengarry Community Development Trust; Malcolm Grant, SSE; Kenneth Knott (KK), Mars Projects.

Apologies: Cllr Liz Sagers

Conflicts of interest: KB intimated that as a fundraiser for Glengarry Highland Games he could have an interest in item 3 of the agenda.

2. Loch Fearna Project: meeting with Fraser Allison (FA) and Chris Pasteur (CP), Gilkes

FA and CP attended to explain the current status of the Loch Fearna (LF) pumped storage project and to answer questions. FA recalled that the pumped storage industry had been started by central government in order to support energy resilience; Window 1 of the cap and floor government support system is now in place to encourage investors with a low but guaranteed return. The LF project is not in that window because it does not yet have planning permission. Its design, planning and costs details are expected to be in place to allow it to be part of Window 2 in 2026. A number of other pumped storage schemes are already in the planning pipeline and hoping to achieve consents in early 2026. Some are pressing for early consent, but the LF project is not intending to do this.

National Grid are trying to rationalise grid connections for the very large number of projects currently proposed. There have been situations in the past when grid connections have been organised but never used. A Section 36 application on behalf of the project was made in March this year; and an application to SEPA for the movement of water from Loch Quoich is to be submitted this week. Temperatures in Loch Quoich have been measured in connection with this, in order to answer any questions in relation to aquatic ecology. An early contractor involvement commission is being considered to deal with matters such as the transport of materials. During June and July this year, machines have been on site collecting rock samples for testing. It is hoped that material there can be used as aggregate for the concrete required.

Reactions to the project have been received from a number of stakeholders apart from GCC, including SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland, RSPB and some, but not all, Highland Council (HC) departments. CP said that he had spoken to NatureScot but that they have not yet replied. He has also spoken to the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board (NDSFB). He is trying to find a basis for agreement. FA said that supporting biodiversity has been considered; and a number of measures have been listed which can be included in the development scheme both on site and in nearby forest blocks. Some of these have already been identified before by Forestry and Land Scotland

(FLS) as part of woodland regeneration in riparian locations by Gearr Garry and Kingie. CP said that a pair of scoters use Loch Fearna, and plans are being made with the help of RSPB to improve scoter habitats which have deteriorated elsewhere, in order to facilitate their relocation if necessary.

Before inviting questions, FA said that public concerns about the use of public roads had been noted. It is intended that the glen road should be used during the period of ground investigation until 2027. This will probably be undertaken from a self-contained compound on site in the quarry by Loch Quoich, where 20 people would be accommodated for twelve months. From 2027 to 2028 it is planned to use the information obtained, in working on tender documents and investment decisions for publication in 2028. This would be followed by twelve months of enabling work on the proposed southern access route over FLS tracks. This would involve track widening, bridge improvements, the creation of a works compound and making a bridge over the Gearr Garry to join the southern access to the public road. Making the bridge could involve constructing piers on both side of the crossing for a steel bridge, or might use a Bailey bridge launched from the south side, without needing to use the public road. FA emphasised that there is no plan for three years' use of the public road for construction traffic.

In reply to a question from GX, FA said that the planning application would confirm that the bridge would be left in situ after the LF construction works, and would be used during the life of the scheme, including for maintenance.

KB mentioned concerns that there is little information about the volume of traffic needing access through Invergarry village and on other local roads for group transport from the proposed external parking hub via the White Bridge, and also concern that the southern access road would not be useable until the end of year 3 of the project. FA said that the preliminary three year period would not be used for construction but for ground investigation. He said that there are two possible scenarios being considered and that the data for the worst case scenario was used when the first assessment was done. The data is to be reconsidered. The other one, involving decanting at a compound, would be preferable. He noted the importance of taking into account the fact that other major projects could be using the roads at the same time.

KK for Mars Projects said, in relation to scoters, that the views of some key stakeholders had been ignored by RSPB on previous occasions and that NDSFB does not have proprietors' agreement to its plans.

GX asked about the lighting at the site which had been mandated by defence agencies. CP said that the lighting would be infra red, and therefore not visible to the human eye. Whether it would have an impact on wildlife would have to be considered. GX also asked if there had been an assessment made of the project's impact on tourism. FA said that this had not been done, but that efforts were being made to minimise site traffic on the public road. CD asked if mountaineering and active tourism bodies had been consulted. CP has spoken to the access officers of HC

and the Scottish Mountaineering Club. Objections have been noted, though the views of mountaineering bodies' members have not been canvassed. There has been no further discussion since.

KB said that the proposed biodiversity gains are not new, as they have all been planned since before the LF project proposal. He asked if mitigation could be made for the new works, including on the southern access route, and in relation to the impact of the new bridge. CP replied that bringing regeneration tree planting into the area just below the dam is a new proposal, as is reforestation in the West Glenquoich estate, the removal of invasive rhododendrons and a substantial area of peatland restoration. FA said that they will be strict about which proposals are additional. FLS has little funding for removing non-native pines. The LF project is planned to last for 100 years, so it will be possible to commit long term resources. They are still discussing this with NatureScot.

KS asked where the peat that is removed will be moved to. FA said that some will go to the main compound, which has very little soil at present, to make screening bunds. Peat more than 0.5m deep cannot easily be transported.

GX asked about the impact of earthquakes on the project, referring to recent shallow shocks at the project site, which had been stronger than ones which would have stopped fracking. He said that the risk of earthquakes should be taken into account as a priority. FA said that the dam design includes provisions for seismic disturbance. It has been evaluated by engineers applying the usual safety criteria. It is the same as the present Quoich dam: a massive structure, employing a design used worldwide, including in earthquake zones. CP said that a risk assessment is mandatory, as is the appointment of a dam manager chosen from a list of approved specialists. FA said that consultants have been involved with the project for three years, and the Quoich dam engineer has also been reviewing the plans.

LMacN asked for further details of where the accommodation would be for those doing the exploratory work. FA said that the details would have to be confirmed with the contractors, but it was understood that having the workers living onsite in a contained environment at the quarry would be preferable, as less time would be lost on travel. CP confirmed that the HC Roads Department is being consulted and has asked to look at the LF programme alongside SSE's Skye Line one. He pointed out the difference between the workforce plans for the ground investigation and the construction works. The construction works would involve bussing in workers to their compound on FLS land by rota. FLS will not allow workers to use their own vehicles on the southern access route.

GX asked if Gilkes has a view about the LF grid connection corridor, as GCC is currently considering this matter. FA said that they know there has been consultation about this, but they have not seen the details. They have discussed this with the British Hydropower Association, because they are keen to have a combined approach. He is concerned that there is a potential large overprovision of power generation and feels that a more strategic approach is needed. GX said that GCC

supports the Community Councils' Convention (CCC) call for projects to be stopped until there is more coherent planning. FA is aware of that; he said that some projects are simply not moving and it is hard to know what will go ahead. Nevertheless, he is of the view that pumped storage capacity will be required, whatever generation methods are finally used.

GX thanked FA and CP for their input, and they left the meeting.

3. Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> August 2025

KB said that the last meeting had been informed that the Glengarry Trust (GT) had nominated a new GCC representative to its committee. He asked that the present minutes should show that the representative had not been nominated by GT but should be appointed by this meeting. It was agreed that LMacN should be the GCC representative. The minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> August were adopted thereafter. Proposed KB; seconded PM.

4. Matters arising

GX pointed out that GCC has apparently not minuted that it supports the several iterations of the CCC motion in relation to stopping current major infrastructure developments. It was agreed, with one abstention, that the four previously intimated motions and the new motion should be supported. It was agreed that subsequent votes on this would not be required for minor variations to the motion if they are not material, and that GX should determine whether this is the case.

5. Correspondence

CD had circulated to members a list of correspondence since the last meeting. GX referred to the email from Cllr LS, about the new bin collection regime. She had attached a useful explanation of HC's arrangements for sorting recycling, from the Lochaber Waste and Recycling Service. Some problems were to be expected in the early weeks after the change. There were no other comments.

6. Financial report

LMacN had sent members copies of the monthly report and the invoice from the Village Officer (VO). The income was £449.15 from the HC annual grant; the expenditure of £1,010.70 included hire of the Community Hall, skip hire, ammunition for the feral pig programme and bank charges. The closing balance was £14,840.74, of which £12,107.71 is available for use, after deducting the ring-fenced sum. The Post Office account had received £52 income and had had no expenditure. Its closing balance was £1,159.05.

The VO's work had involved clearing storm damage including branches and other debris blocking pavements, as well as a fallen tree and branches from the playing field, mowing grass at the Community Hall, church and war memorial, and repairing a hand rail damaged by fallen branches on the path beside the Post Office. TC was thanked for providing some timber for the repair. Some fence posts and other material had been purchased.

7. Post Office report

GX reported that the sub-committee is waiting for confirmation of a date for a private meeting with delegated interested parties at the Post Office to discuss the future of the site. The sub-committee is to meet to discuss this further.

8. Highland Council's statutory Glengarry Road Closure Orders and major developments in the glen

Cllr Kate Willis's email about roads issues and her meeting with Cllrs LS and John Grafton was noted. As Kristen McLeod (LMacL) of HC Roads Department has agreed to attend the next meeting, it was agreed to defer this topic until then. It was hoped that the councillors, including the new councillor to be elected on 25<sup>th</sup> September, would be present then. After discussion, it was agreed that it is not sensible to separate the two parts of the road to Kinlochhourn for administrative purposes. The meeting agreed with LMacN's repeated view that the individual residential communities along the road should be provided with the signage that is common in other rural parts of Scotland.

9. Local Place Plan (LPP)

GX reported that he is moving forward in his discussions with Athena for their help with providing written material for the LPP. The GT is considering GCC's application for funding to help with Athena's fee. KB demonstrated Parish Online, a map-producing computer application using Ordnance Survey data under a public service government agreement, which can produce detailed local maps with relevant overlays. Using this app will save a considerable sum. The maps generated can be added to the GCC website for planning matters as well as to illustrate details of the LPP. KB will send a link to members for their information and will provide help in using the app.

10. Planning

- (a) LF grid connection: the possible route of the grid connection for the LF project is under consideration. SSE's currently preferred route follows the line of the present Skye Line connection. The issue for GCC is that the possible routes are shown as very wide, and that the actual line of the route cannot yet be determined and could be subject to wide variation. It was reported that undertakings by SSE to individual landowners may not be adhered to. It was agreed that GCC should press for an accurate and fixed route to be identified and used.
- (b) Planning matters on GCC website: GX said that he had made changes to the GCC website in relation to planning information. It is now in three sections: planning applications; infrastructure information; LPP. He will also add a link to the joint CCC motions.
- (c) New cottage at Kingie: LMacN mentioned that changes appear to have been made for the new stalker's cottage at Kingie as a result of HC's desire to retain trees.

11. Any other competent business

- (a) The next meeting of the Coire Glas Liaison Group will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- (b) A member of the public has asked if it would be possible for a permanent speed limit lower than the national default speed limit to be applied to the Kinlochhourn road. It was agreed to defer this question for KMacL's presence.
- (c) At KB's motion, and after reviewing and complying with the relevant sections of the constitution, it was agreed to discuss another matter in private after this meeting, owing to the sensitivity of the topic, including the necessity for a confidential discussion of names and circumstances in relation to a possible future business procedure.
- (d) LMacN has noted that the cemetery gates are in urgent need of repair and refurbishment. He will report on the details of the work required and investigate the cost.
- (e) LMacN referred to an email from a member of the public noting the lowered speed limits in other local communities and remarking on the unfavourable comparison with the position in Invergarry. GX will reply noting GCC's support for this approach and noting that keen attempts to improve matters have been made for several years and are ongoing.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Community Hall at 19.00 on 6th October.

Glengarry Community Council

Minute of private meeting held following business on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

- 1. Present: George Cross, chair; Lea MacNally, treasurer; Cecilia Dyckhoff, secretary; Kevin Sutherland; Ken Brown (KB); Philippa Maltby; Gillian Carruthers
- 2. KB had been approached by a member of the public asking for the reason why there had been no election to fill the vacancy brought about by the resignation of a community councillor. It was recalled that the reason was respect for the feelings of his family, owing to his having died shortly after resigning. It was also taken into account that there is no obligation imposed by the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils to hold such an election in the circumstances.