

Glengarry Community Council (GCC)

Minutes of meeting held in Glengarry Community Hall
on 2nd March 2026 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); Cllr John Grafton (JG); Cllr Sammy Cameron (SC).

Members of the public and invitees: Fraser Allison (FA), Gilkes; Chris Pasteur (CP), Gilkes; Tom Cooper (TC), Glengarry Community Development Trust (GCDT); Ross Lynn; Irene Rodgers.

Apologies: Cllr Liz Saggars.

Conflicts of interest: none were noted.

2. Road closure extension C1144/U1207

The period of closure of the U1207 from Quoich dam to Kinlochhourn has been extended by six months. The necessity of this and the inconvenience caused to residents and proprietors at Kinlochhourn was much regretted. Some concern has been expressed about the borrow pits to be created along the glen, the planning application for one of which has already been received. It was agreed that GCC's present view of this is neutral.

3. Meeting with Fraser Allison (FA), Gilkes, about Loch Fearna (LF) project

FA was thanked for the summary of updates on the project, which had been circulated before the meeting. GX said that the community still has a number of questions. He said that any withdrawal of their objection by NatureScot (NS) was regretted, and asked where it was written. FA said that their objection had related to the visual impact of the proposal in view of the wild land status of the area, and that adjustments to the plans had reduced this. In addition, new and existing biodiversity proposals had been agreed with local landowners. The proposal had been considered by NS's natural interest panel, to determine whether the scheme's benefits outweighed its deficits. When the revised application was submitted, the NS panel felt that the balance had been tipped in favour of the project. The NS response can be found on the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) website and CP agreed to send a copy.

GX then mentioned the issue of grid connection reform and said that it appears that the LF project will require a second line of pylons along the glen. FA said that that is the position at present but it is not known how much of the line would be overhead and how much buried. He said that a request has been made for the Skye Line to take the LF output, but the Skye Line planning process had been started before the LF application. GX said that the community would like the second line to be underground and regards the proposal for a second line as "madness". It was pointed out that the new pylons for the existing Skye Line, even without capacity for any LF output, will be twice the height of the present ones. Referring to the 40% NESO (National Energy System Operator) target in FA's email, GX asked what UK percentage and time frame Loch Fearna would provide. FA said that LF would meet 50% of

Scotland's energy need and 5-6% of the UK need. The stored energy would last for 20 hours.

GX referred to GCC's response to the LF project, in particular in relation to the additional information that the ECU had asked the applicants to provide, and pointed out that GCC had specified several heads of national policies that were infringed by the application; he asked FA to comment about this. FA said that the purpose of the project is to provide long duration storage to a greater extent than any other project. It was the equivalent of the sum of many smaller projects. Quoich provides the biggest water storage area in the UK, and this is the most efficient scheme in the UK and possibly in Europe, because of the short distance between the two bodies of water. It has been identified as a key project for the move away from fossil fuels. He said there is a clear need for a project of this size. A pumped storage scheme requires mountainous terrain. More projects may be brought forward in the future. GX asked whether the scheme would be before the Highland Council (HC) planning committee on 1st April. FA is waiting for confirmation of when that will be.

KB asked about the strategic spatial enquiry plan: FA said that this is not yet imminent and that it would not affect the LF proposal. KB also asked about alternative access to the site; FA said that negotiations with the landowner (Forestry and Land Scotland) about access through the forestry south of the village, as an alternative to the White Bridge route, are ongoing. Although there is Caledonian Pine there, a feasible route is being worked on.

Referring back to his updates summary, FA said that it is intended to provide all relevant information and that he believes the proposal is strong and that the issues have crystallised in advance of the HC planning committee meeting. He said that he has read GCC's draft Local Place Plan (LPP) and suggests that the LF project could provide employment opportunities and biodiversity enhancement between the village in the site, in accordance with some of the LPP proposals. He has been in touch with Ness Fisheries, RSPB and landowners about this. He would be happy to engage in LPP discussions in the coming months. He said that the long term benefits he envisages would be in line with those proposed in relation to the Loch Earba project. GX pointed out that community benefits, though welcome if they arrive, may be regarded with suspicion in a situation where many of the community do not want a development to take place, and that the community, in an open meeting, had clearly opposed the project.

In conclusion, FA said that he will continue to take part in the Community Led Liaison Group meetings, especially in relation to the issue of keeping traffic out of the village. He pointed out that the transmission queue for grid connections has reduced substantially, as many projects have been shelved. The result of this has not yet been published, but he will keep us informed. Finally, GX said that we would be grateful for a written response to our objections in relation to specific clauses of the National Planning Framework. FA and CP were thanked for their input.

4. Minutes of meeting of 2nd February 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February were adopted. Proposed: KS; seconded KB.

5. Matters arising

- (a) Post Office: the negotiations are ongoing; GCDT has intimated an interest in acquiring the property and its responsibilities; a meeting with their representative is to be arranged; and the sub-committee will report at the next meeting in accordance with the usual schedule.
- (b) Grit bins: a member of the community has intimated willingness to take this matter on and to co-ordinate winter resilience.
- (c) The Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils is now on GCC's website.

6. Financial report

LMacN had circulated the Treasurer's report and the invoice from the Village Officer (VO) for February. Expenditure for the month had been £455.25: £40 for Hall lets; £137.50 for secretarial services at the Community Led Liaison Group meeting, £273 for the VO's December invoice, and £4.75 bank charges. The closing balance was £16,260.73, of which £3,158.03 is ring fenced. The Post Office account had income of £52 and a closing balance of £1,4571.05. The VO's invoice showed that he had worked for 23 hours. He had repaired a section of the river path below the filling station, where a fallen tree had made a hazardous deep hole. He had also cut back scrub and rhododendrons and cleared two large branches on the river path below the shinty pitch, including cutting back a dangerous hanging branch with a pole saw. He had cut back trees lying on the cemetery fence, to stop deer crossing, and had removed scrub and trees to allow access to make a temporary repair to the fence, and for HC to make a permanent repair. He had cut back scrub, branches and a beech tree along the Hall access road and path, and along the pavement on the west side of Garry bridge. He had cleared litter in laybys and at the bus stop.

7. Correspondence

CD had circulated a handlist of correspondence since the last meeting, which was noted. Colin Grant, the GCDT chair, had asked if GCC could provide any information relevant to questions about the ownership of the Black Bridge and the old bridge beside the war memorial, and their repair. It was agreed that the records would be searched and that this would be done. TC said that GCDT's particular interest is in the old bridge, and that there will be correspondence in the period of covid lockdown.

CD said that there had been difficulty in acquiring a proper response from EE about the red light on the mast at Kingie. GX recalled that the planning officer who had been consulted had confirmed that there is no planning agreement in connection with this, and had mentioned the possibility of taking the route of enforcement. It was agreed that enforcement should be considered if there is no progress by other means.

8. Local Place Plan: to discuss and agree finalised LPP and Supporting Statement

GX had circulated a copy of the plan and supporting statement. A reference to the community garden group has been added. Members had commended it and had no

further immediate comments. Hazel Allen of Athena Solutions has advised that HC has a backlog of plans to consider, so recommended an early submission; and that a number of comments are to be expected from them.

9. Planning

- (a) Meeting of the Convention of Community Councils in Edinburgh: KB had attended. There was little to report. Some MSPs are already in agreement with the Convention's point of view. Calls for a planning enquiry had been rejected. A pause in permissions had also been rejected, on the grounds that there is a legal obligation to consider applications. The Convention is not yet engaged with the issue of pumped storage schemes; KB will circulate a link to a White Paper about them. Otherwise, he had been impressed by the knowledge and input of other representatives.
- (b) Viewpoint application: there have been enquiries about the progress of this. GX said that the planning officer is working through the comments and preparing a report for HC. The options are for her to recommend refusal or approval. The report is unlikely to be ready for the April Planning Committee meeting. The one after that will be on 13th May.
- (c) Beinneun 2 application: GX has circulated it. HC is raising an objection.
- (d) Coire Glas: GCC's comments on the planning process having been sent to several relevant officials, a reply had been received from Bob Robertson, Area Planning Manager, HC. It was agreed that GX would draft a reply to him. A member of the public mentioned concern about the location and effect of a workers' camp.
- (e) Borrow pits: see item 2 above.

10. Any other competent business

- (a) Skye Reinforcement Line community benefit fund: The Fund will amount to about £5,000,000. There is to be a consultation about this, with drop-in events including one at the Community Hall on 25th March, which will start with a presentation at 15.00. There will also be an online session. It has been noted that distribution of the fund will be arranged according to the size of switching stations and the length of line. KB reported that the Loch Lundie switching station does not appear in the maps. This should be reported.
- (b) Defibrillator: LMacN reported that he had sent GCC's donation to the charity Lucky2BeHere and has collected a replacement defibrillator which is to be installed. GCC will express its thanks to the charity.
- (c) GC reported that the overgrown hedge at the school is again provoking complaints. HC used to deal with it, and the VO has also trimmed the branches beside the pavement. It is understood that there is a desire for it to be removed. HC will be contacted about this. TC said that this had been a long-standing problem. SC expressed support and suggested a contact at HC.

(d) LMacN said that complaints are being made about the state of the derelict building in the Crescent. GCC wrote to HC some time ago about this and was told then that it is a matter for the owner; but it has deteriorated further since then. SC said that Fiona Docherty at HC deals with scrapped cars. TC said that there is a community right to buy derelict buildings. It was agreed to follow up this matter.

(e) SC said that he had arranged for a new waste bin to be placed at the Viewpoint, and was thanked for this.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Community Hall at 19.00 on 6th April 2026. In response to TC's noting and regretting that this will be a bank holiday, GX referred to the decision made about this at the last meeting.