

Morvern Community Council meeting 9 June 2026, Lochaline Village Hall, 19.00

Present: *Henriette Laidlaw (Chair - HL), Tom Frazer (Coran Ferry - TF), Rob Capell (Roads & Things - RC), Cara Bentley (CB), Jenni Hodgson (Treasurer - JH), Douglas Taylor (Planning - DT)*

Declarations of interest: None

Quorate: Yes

Members of the Public: (8)

AGM

1. Welcome & apologies: Minty, *Rowan Willis (Youth Counsellor - RW), Rebecca Jones (Youth Counsellor - RJ)*
2. Minutes of last meeting (approved) & actions arising
3. Chairperson's Annual Report and Questions from the Floor
 - HL Annual Report
 - i. Members on the Council
 1. We have welcomed Rebecca and Rowan as Youth Councilors and Tom Fraser as a new councillor while saying goodbye and a big thank you to Miles Welsh and to our first two youth councillors Helen Jones and Terra
 2. We are actively looking for more members of the CC, so if members of the public are interested please reach out
 3. HL will be withdrawing as chair from the CC by September (or sooner, if possible) – however HL will remain on the council as a member
 - ii. What CC has accomplished in 25/26:
 1. Our Local Place Plan has been accepted by Highland Council
 2. Ongoing: Housing and Planning Applications, with Douglas Taylor reviewing and researching any application
 - a. We encourage members of the community to join us for the meetings to share your thoughts and knowledge on this matter
 3. Village Tidy: We have been progressing the plans to manage the woodland within the village boundaries, and liaising with the landlords of the various parts of land, including Ardtornish, FLS and MCDC
 - a. MCDC have now secured a woodland management plan for Hazelwood
 - b. We are in ongoing dialogue with Ardtornish regarding the woodland they hold within the village

4. Ongoing: Verge maintenance
 - a. This year this proved quite challenging, as MCT was not able to fully finance the project, requiring us to find another source to fund the £5,000 deficit, and MCDC obliged on this occasion.
 - b. It was agreed that the MCC, MCT and MCDC will arrange a meeting to try and consider a long-term plan for this ongoing maintenance project.
5. Village Litter Pick Up (Thank you to all those who participated)
6. Yuletide Christmas Tree – Bob Jones created a metal structure in likeness of a tree to stand over the baby tree with lights (Thank you)
7. The MCC contributed to Remembrance Day by supplying the wreath that was laid in a lovely ceremony at the monument
8. Hosting the Yearly Christmas Lunch, supported by the Craig Sellar Trust – Thank you to the youth councillors for taking on the task of rebranding the event to Young at Heart and designing the lovely invites. There was a large turnout, and thanks again to the fire brigade and other volunteers who assisted on the day
9. During the year the council have been engaging with various bodies relating to health and social care, and we are pleased to learn that the delivery of a new Belford in Fort William is back on the agenda. (Thank you to Jenni for being our voice). We are saddened as most of you will also be at the decision not to re-open Dal Mhor.
10. Together with our sister councils we worked with the Kingairloch Hydro Fund to improve the access to the fund.
 - a. Thank you to Jenni for completing this work, as this income enables us to continue to support locally events like Remembrance Day, Xmas Tree and paying for the use of village halls.
11. MCC continues to play a part on the Corran Ferry steering committee, with Tom taking on this role and provided the MCC with renewed energy to tackle this very important transport link for the peninsula
12. We've worked with MCDC and local parents to explore opportunities for childcare in our community – we are very aware that there is a real gap in provision, and have taken

small steps but we know that a solution is necessary for Morvern

13. Storm Amy Aftermath: With the peninsula out of power and isolated for several days, it was great to see the community spirit and the help that was provided

a. A group has been put together to develop a resilience plan for Morvern, with Rhian Evans chairing this project, and thank you to all the volunteers

14. Continuous dialogue with HC regarding our roads, and a big thank you to Rob for taking this on – this year has seen some improvements at Torr Na Faire and lately at the Drimnin road

15. MCDC has been busy this year, and it is rewarding to see that the building of 14 houses has commenced

○ Questions from the Floor: None

4. Treasurer's Submission of the Financial Statement

○ Income for the Year Ended 31 March 2026: £30,228.47

i. Highland Council Grant: £448.67

ii. MCT Grant/Benefit: £20,800.00

iii. Other: Inter A/C Transaction: £8,979

○ Expenditures for the Year Ended 31 March 2026: £26,547.20

i. Minutes Secretary: £484.95

ii. Accounts Prep & Certification: £150.00

iii. Bank Charges: £63.75

iv. Hall Hire: £102.50

v. Grass Cutting/Willow Tree: £6,885

vi. Remembrance Wreath: £76.20

vii. PAS Fees: £9,800.00

viii. Lochaline PS Xmas Card Donation: £5.00

ix. Other: Inter A/C Transaction: £8,979.80

○ Last year we didn't get the income from the Hydro but those processes are now signed off and so when we get our payment this year it should be for two years

i. This is roughly 800 on average annually.

5. Election of Office Bearers

○ There are two official bearers, the chair and the treasurer, and as HL is looking to withdraw it is important to find someone to take on the role by September 2026

○ We thank Aukje for the work she did as Minute Secretary, and welcome Cara as she joins to take on this role.

- The role can be split into two, as Co-Chairs. The roles for a chair include a lot of communications and administrations in the background, putting together the agendas, etc.
- JH is happy to continue on as treasurer .
- Tom is representing for the Corran Ferry and Douglas is representing as Planning with Rob representing for road

Provisional Date for Next AGM 8 June 2027

Meeting closed at 19:21

Community Council Meeting – Commence 19.21

1. Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest
 - a. Welcome & Apologies from Minty, *Rowan Willis (Youth Counsellor - RW)*,
Rebecca Jones (Youth Counsellor - RJ)
2. Declarations of Interest: None
3. AOB Requests
 - a. Bench
4. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising
 - a. Maintenance of land in Kirk Brae
 - b. Clearing of Shrubland in Lochaline
 - i. TF had a meeting with Henry on Wednesday and he had thought it had been done with a scrub machine, believing that George had already done it, so was quite surprised to find that it hadn't been done. He's coming out this week to have a look and work on it, but there is the situation with the nesting birds that need to be considered. He may be able to take down some trees but not the scrub.
 - c. Roads (RC)
 - i. Kirkbrae is still poor surface quality/requiring repair, they still haven't done Savery and they've been condemned for it, as the council person in charge of it has told them they'll never be hired again. This is the bit that they had done going into Angus, and all the nice bits of grass that they've dumped tar on top of, whereas the passing places have many sharp drop offs as well. We were at the top of the standby list. It was agreed that another letter may be necessary as there are several bits that still require work, and that a new campaign may be necessary to put pressure on.
 - ii. Could we have a ten year Morvern plan for that road, because by the time we get the bits that are really bad the first bits will need to be

repaired, and many of the passing places aren't big enough for two big-ish vehicles.

1. Action: Communicate that we will want them to continue reviewing the Drimnin road.

d. Corran Ferry (TF)

- i. TF wasn't able to attend the last meeting, and unfortunately the minutes for that have not yet been done.
- ii. They are fixing the ramps on the old slipway, and TF has confirmed that this will be compatible with *The Maid* (the back-up ferry). The ramps will be ready before the new ferry is.
- iii. The Highland Council is in discussion with CalMac, and there is a question about what effect this would have on the prices and the discounts.

1. Action: Hopefully in August TF will be able to update more fully.

- iv. They are still in discussions about where to put the electric ferry, even though they're in progress with the ramps. Without a ferry to put on it, they aren't in a rush, and they have not provided a timeline but October 2027 is the idea and they have begun the preparation for the foundation on the Ardour side.

1. Public: What will the new queueing system be? TF is uncertain, as there isn't a large bit of land for queueing at the new location.

- a. Action: TF will enquire about this.

- v. Last month we made a complaint about a lady that was in labour that couldn't get onto the ferry, she went to the front of the queue and she had to wait for the next ferry and she required an escort on the other side. If we can get the ladies name and address, they would like to send her some flowers or a booklet (or both), and HC will pass these details on to TF.

1. If you have an emergency for yourself or an animal, go to the front of the queue and let the ticket person know. You have the right to book first in this situation.

e. Local Place Plan (HL)

- i. Available on [Morvern.org](https://www.morvern.org) website or in the Hub.
- ii. Highland Council don't have to adhere to it, but they do *have* to review it
- iii. Currently highland council is going through their local plan where they can adopt things from the various local place plans
- iv. The community itself can use this as a guide for creating policies, by reviewing it regularly when making decisions or reviewing things.

f. New Powers for Community Councils

- i. This has not been actioned – there was a web night that they hosted, but unfortunately Douglas had missed it. We still need to action this to learn more before making a decision.

5. MCT Update

- a. A couple meetings ago there was a discussion about the grass cutting contracts and members of the public were asking us questions about what MCT priorities were in making these decisions. MCT has been invited to respond to this.

- i. **MCT** (Chair and Secretary and **Treasurer**):

- 1. Brief Background of MCT as a Charity Regulated by OSCR

- a. Three Layers of Adherence: Trust, Trustee, and Regulations by OSCR
 - b. Their Accounts are now publicly available at the Morvern Community Trust website (last years uploaded today) as well as the Trustees Report

- 2. Trustees have a maximum 10 year term, and the Secretary and Treasurer only have a few years left

- a. Must be MCC area electoral Role
 - b. Must not be Community Councillors
 - c. Elected by existing Trustees

- 3. Funding Highlights

- a. Random selection of accomplishments, including business start-up grants, student bursaries, regular annual grants, financial support for Morvern Games and Gala week, the Hub and adjacent housing, Burach, Open Water Swimming and Sailing Club equipment, LA Village Hall, Lochaline Social Club, and Driminin Village Hall for renovations, the allotments, and CLAM

- 4. During the last 5 Years the trend between income and expenditures is trending down for income and up for expenditures

- a. The expenditures in excess of the income cannot continue – in the last two years we have spent around 300% of income, when the goal is 80%.

- 5. **Last 5 Years** Income (Unrestricted)

- a. Drop in income from Ardtornish Estate as they had a community benefit agreement, and they have paused those payments because of the treatment of hydro schemes has become less advantageous

- i. It is worth our while for the trust to try and sway them again considering all the work they are doing regarding environmental benefits and community engagement and benefit
 - b. Glensanda: There have been discussions going on for 2-3 years to agree to a new formula, however that has not yet been signed. We are optimistic. Variable payment depending on the output of the Quarry. If it had been in place last year, our income would have doubled and instead of an expenditure at 300% of income it would have been closer to 150%. They were going to take applications and we weren't going to have any input whatsoever, and then they would vet them, rate them and decide on payments but we were able to bring them back by showing them what we have been accomplishing as a community trust.
 - c. MCDC is a proxy from the Hydro and although the MCDC could keep it as they are also a charity, it was decided at the time to pay a certain amount to the trust based on usage
 - d. The other is a proxy for 5% shareholding, but we didn't get a number of that heading for many years and now they are paying dividends
6. Grant Award Policies
- a. Currently Trust favours applications which (the number of applications we've turned down can be counted on one hand)
 - i. Extend or support the educational opportunities open to local children and young adults
 - ii. Facilitate the start up or expansion of young businesses locally, especially where other possible sources of funding present bureaucratic or qualification requirements which the applicants would struggle to meet
 - iii. Lead to a tangible, long-term addition to community assets
 - b. Being able to demonstrate these things to Glensanda with these details, as it looks very good
7. Last 5 Years Grant Award by Purpose
- a. **Pie Chart**

8. Last 5 Years Grant Recipients

- a. See List

9. Last 1 Year Project Cost Funded

- a. Public had questions
- b. Receipts and payments was perhaps not telling the right story, but it was decided to continue on

10. MCC Grass cutting

- a. In 21/22 paid some of it (£1,000) but not the full amount, however over the past 5 years it has paid £25,543 which is a higher percentage (73%) than our usual financial support.
- b. Action: Get together in these 3 parts to solve this on a long-term plan
 - i. Question: How does the council play a role in this? There may be a solution with the council to reimburse some of it, if we applied in time.
 - ii. Sponsored Sections of Grass by This Business
 - iii. Ardtornish may need to be involved in this as part of the community benefit
 - 1. Action: Speak to Ardtornish as a group or TF can go alone; Speak to the Mine
 - 2. Suggested that the MCT (or group, for strength together) should speak to the mine due to when the income stopped but an agreed percentage annually
 - 3. Potential Solution (TF suggested) QR Code which would potentially discuss

11. Other Points

- a. There has to be a formal reserve policy to allow time to run the trust down if necessary. They gave their reasons after their last meeting: “Although we have been able to pay most of those expenses during the previous four years, as the main sources of funding and are re-emphasising our funding.”
- b. Question: Common Good Fund (The Mine gave that) does this pay for the Grass Cutting – Answer: Yes, it uses the Common Good Fund

6. Planning Applications

- a. None

7. MCDC update (HL)

- a. The houses are being built – progress is swift

- b. Is there a name for the street, however there was talk about having a competition to discuss this as well as a new post code

6. Treasurer's report (JH)

- One outgoing payment: The production of the accounts to Kirsty

7. Other Correspondence

- Application for a Bench: We have received our first application. An e-mail has been sent to Henry, at the bit across from the hub on the grass on the other side just at the top of the path. This is in memory of a lady who used to sail here a lot.
 - i. Action: Come back to them with a price from Kevin, as well as communication with Ardtornish. TF will speak to Henry.
 - 1. They pay for the production and they pay for the maintenance for a time limited amount, made of compressed wood
- E-mailed NHS highland last week, this has been going on too long without communication and now we have a one-hour meeting tomorrow that JH will update about. Big building.

Date of next meeting: August 11 – Drimnin Village Hall

Meeting closed at 21:05