

# AVIEMORE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7pm  
at the Community Centre

## 1. Present

Al Dargie (Vice Chair), AVCC  
Elspeth Byrne (Secretary), AVCC  
Eilidh McLeod, AVCC  
Audrey Turner, AVCC  
Beth Hay, AVCC  
Neil MacIver, Police Scotland  
John Grant, Rothermurchus  
Roddy Stevens, Visitor

Alexander MacLeod, FLS Regional Manager  
Euan Wiseman, FLS, Planning Manager  
Laura Nicoll, FLS  
Murray Ferguson, CNPA, Dir of Planning & Place  
Colin Simpson, CNPA, Head of Visitor Services  
Lauren MacCallum, CNPA, Board Member  
Paul Aarden, Visitor

## 2. Apologies for absence

Peter Long, AVCC  
Kathleen Cameron, AVCC  
Bill Lobban, Highland Council

Kirsty Bruce, AGCT  
Paul Hibberd, FLS

## 3. Welcome and introductions

Al Dargie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 4. Declarations of interest – none.

## 5. Minutes of June meeting

**Eilidh McLeod proposed acceptance of the minutes, seconded by Beth Hay.**

## 6. Matters arising from June meeting

Dalfaber crossing (June minutes item 6)

The noise issue with the lights had been fixed. The lights had been on/off since then. Al Dargie said that the junction was a bad one without the lights – worse than before.

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to contact Highland Council.**

Speed at north end of Aviemore (June minutes item 6)

Neil MacIver said that the police had been monitoring the speed with a speed gun.

BoS Aviemore closure in spring 2024 (June minutes item 9d)

Elspeth Byrne had written to BoS and had received an acknowledgement.

Removal of after-school care by HC after the summer holidays (June minutes item 9e)

Al Dargie said that no feedback had been received yet.

Flowers (June minutes item 9f)

Beth Hay said that the flowers had been planted and the tubs and the Village Green looked very nice. Al Dargie said that ACE had done the work for the hanging baskets.

## 7. Treasurer's report

**Beth Hay proposed acceptance of the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Eilidh McLeod.**

## **8. Police report**

Neil McIver said that there had been 165 incidents from 8 June to today – busier than normal but to be expected. He said that there had been some car parking incidents but the police cannot write parking tickets. There were lots of issues mentioned on Facebook but not reported to the police. Al Dargie said that people need to phone 101 for police to deal with parking incidents and 999 for fires.

## **9. Business**

Al Dargie said that item d. would be taken first.

### **d. Car camping and related issues**

Murray Ferguson, CNPA, gave an interesting presentation on CNPAs role, the issues, enforcement and steps that CNPA are taking. CNPA also provided a leaflet about Fires. See the AVCC web site 'News'.

Al Dargie thanked Murray Ferguson for his presentation and invited Alexander MaLeod, FLS, to speak.

Alexander MacLeod, FLS, talked to the FLS update – see 10e below. FLS were aware of concerns regarding irresponsible behaviours – the fires at Daviot and Cannich had alerted the public to the dangers. Euan Wiseman and Laura Nicoll were here with him to take part in discussions.

Al Dargie suggested that discussions continue under 3 headings – Parking (over night and on peak days), Camping and Fires.

#### Parking – over night

Al Dargie said that the FLS policy is for no overnight parking but they have no powers of enforcement. He asked if Highland Council enforced no overnight parking would this reduce the problems?

**It was broadly agreed that this would reduce the issue at Loch Morlich.**

Neil MacIver said that the police carried out patrols on Saturday until 2am. There had been campers at Loch an Eilein carpark – 14 campervans with awnings and 3 cars with tents beside them. The problem was not just at Glenmore.

John Grant said that they tell people that they can stay at Loch an Eilein for one night only and must be out by 9am. The Coylumbridge campsite has been less busy.

Al Dargie said that the Ciste carpark had been very empty but walkers' carpark often full. He thought that if no overnight parking was enforced it would improve the local problem at Glenmore but cause a displacement issue.

Colin Simpson said that there were similar problems elsewhere – Glen Nevis, Applecross, etc. - but this had been improved by some actions such as double yellow lines. He said that there was a danger you would catch out legitimate users e.g., someone walking cross

country who has to leave their car overnight. It was discussed that there could be a way of applying for an overnight permit in advance. He thought the high cost of camp sites was a problem and suggested we need a wide network of low-cost options for people not wanting a formal campsite and also to encourage visitors to quieter areas of the National Park.

### Parking - peak times

Al Dargie summarised the problems. He said that the issues at Glenmore had been exacerbated by the removal of loch-side parking – reduction of over 70 spaces. The Hayfield will only provide around 30 spaces leaving a shortfall on previous provision. Glenmore residents are complaining about the proximity of parking and there were tensions between visitors and locals. Most visiting families want to take things in their car, rather than using public transport and there is still a lack of public transport, a suggested frequency of 15 mins was mentioned. If families want to use public transport, where would they park? Tour bus parking in the Aviemore area was also a problem. Businesses in Glenmore need parking for their customers.

Al Dargie suggested that the family drop-off area be better publicised with trails signposted for the driver. He also suggested a locals pass. Murray Ferguson thought a local's pass would be part of a good solution.

Paul Aarden said that a plan was needed to 10 years hence e.g., parking in Aviemore at the Sugarbowl Ciste car park, with public transport running back and forwards to Loch Morlich. Laura Nicoll said that this could provide an opportunity for the community to benefit e.g., Tomintoul bowling club had been allowing people to park campervans to raise funds.

John Grant asked if anyone knew where the people coming to Glenmore on a hot day were coming from? Colin Simpson said that since May CNPA have been working with Highland Council using cameras to track traffic flows.

John Grant also asked what the arrangement will be for night time enforcement? FLS said that if Highland Council take on management of parking, then enforcement will be up to them.

### Camping

Al Dargie said there had been a meeting between AGCT, FLS and CNPA in which Glenmore locals expressed a desire for a local by-law banning camping at Loch Morlich. Everyone that had spoken to Al Dargie felt that by-laws were the only way forward. Many locals felt that rangers trying to alter behaviours had failed and there was no significant improvement – possibly it was worse than previously.

Eilidh McLeod said there needed to be provision for cheap camping. Elspeth Byrne agreed. Audrey Turner thought that if fires were stopped then the camping might disappear. Roddy Stevens was concerned about the dirty campers. John Grant thought that there was really only a problem during the worst 4-6 hot dry weeks, but said that cheap camping could be provided e.g., Loch an Eilein where there are already toilets and the loch.

There was concern that current legislation is not working and that there is not a clear understanding between the different organisations involved. Rangers are seen to be a

friend of people accessing countryside, but this would change if they became responsible for enforcement.

Neil MacIver said that the police patrols had not seen any outrageous fires and people had been reasonable.

Laura Nicoll thought that signage could be improved.

Alexander MacLeod said that other areas had introduced by-laws but these were sometimes ineffective where there were real problems with anti-social behaviour, vandalism and fires. FLS would be concerned about the introduction of by-laws without the resource to enforce these.

**Al Dargie asked the community council members if they would support a by-law for no camping around just Loch Morlich. This was not supported.**

Murray Ferguson said there needed to be action to share information to let people know what behaviours were appropriate/inappropriate. He also said that enforcement should be flexible – helping the police to deal with the small number of people who were causing problems. He said that timing was an issue with rangers going home at 10pm and people behaving badly later on.

### Fires

Al Dargie said that he used to be Watch Commander for Aviemore and had had 18 years with the Fire Service in Aviemore. He said that problems got worse during Covid with groups of people who had never camped, and would normally have headed to a resort abroad for barbecues and drinking. Some nights they had had to deal with 26 separate fires, several within the woods. He said that they had to go for zero tolerance, as trying to explain to one group under the influence why one fire was safer than another was challenging. Al Dargie said that problems were caused by open flames and disposable barbecues etc. There was public concern for fire risk locally. Other countries, e.g. Canada, had clearly defined rules about what you can/cannot do in certain conditions.

Audrey Turner said that there should be no fires allowed if it were hot and dry with heavy fines for anyone breaking the rules.

Alexander MacLeod said that the fires at Cannich and Daviot were on a large scale. Kate Forbes has organised an event next week to discuss the issues and there is also a Scottish Fire and Rescue summit soon. He suggested that we see what comes out from these events. The fire at Cannich was caused by a gas camping stove. The cause of the fire at Daviot is not known.

Al Dargie said that there used to be more fire breaks and more accessible tracks but these are now very overgrown, which would significantly hinder fighting large scale fires.

Murray Ferguson said that he and Colin MacLean were working on a plan.

**Al Dargie proposed a park-wide fire plan, seconded by Eilidh McLeod.**

Elsbeth Byrne asked what any responsible member of the public should do if they see a current or old fire in the woods?

**Al Dargie and Murray Ferguson agreed that they should phone the Fire Brigade if the fire is currently happening or contact the land owner if known, if not known phone CNPA if it is an old fire, and CNPA would contact the relevant land owner.**

Al Dargie said that the fine for an illegal fire is only £200.

- a. Planning – HC ref 23/02918/S42 – Aviemore Retail Park – application to vary use of previous Superdrug store to Restaurant/Café**

This unit was not previously allowed status as a restaurant/café. It is next to The Snug and Costa. The Snug does have food status which they, or a future tenant, may wish to use. There are 13 restaurants/cafes within 200m.

**Audrey proposed objecting on the grounds of over provision given that The Snug or a future tenant could provide food too. Seconded by Elspeth Byrne.**

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to submit objection.**

- b. Planning – CNPA ref 2023/0243/DET (HC ref 23/02572/FUL) – Coire Cas Cairngorm – formation of mountain bike track link and related infrastructure**

**Eilidh McLeod proposed no comment, seconded by Elspeth Byrne.**

- c. Highland Council Alcohol Licensing Policy 2023-28**

**Audrey Turner proposed no comment, seconded by Beth Hay.**

## **10. Reports from other organisations**

- a. CNPA report – see presentation provided under 9d.**

- b. Highland Council report – none.**

- c. ACE board member report**

Beth Hay said that the hanging baskets were now up.

- d. AGCT report**

Kirsty Bruce had submitted a written report as follows:

Aviemore Ice Rink

Through funding from Highland Council, CNPA and HIE the Trust took delivery of new energy saving chillers at the beginning of June. The rink was closed through May and June to allow the ice team to carry out essential maintenance, rink improvements and to allow for the swap out and installation of the new chilling plant.

The ice team are preparing to open the ice rink for the summer season from 7<sup>th</sup> July with a program of ice activities that include short curling, public skating and snow discos. The Trust continues to develop links with travel trade to promote the niche offering of short curling and the benefits of community led tourism. AGCT are also discussing with the Highland Folk Park and the Scottish Curling Trust the creation of a curling heritage trail which is hoped will link up the villages of Badenoch and Strathspey and signpost back to the community owned ice rink and ambition to return sports ice to the strath.

Local junior ice hockey training sessions will recommence and continue through the summer months.

AGCT are working towards making an application for community asset transfer for the lease of the Glenmore Visitor Centre. The Trust met with the residents of Glenmore to give an update on plans for CAT and given their on-going concerns regarding beach camping and fires the Trust took the opportunity to facilitate a Glenmore residents community meeting with key stakeholders (CNPA, FLS, Councillors, AVCC and a representative from Drew Hendry's office). The meeting was a constructive with both AGCT and AVCC agreeing to write to the CNPA to request that consideration be given to the introduction By-laws specific to Glenmore to assist with minimising anti-social behaviour and fire risk.

#### **e. FLS report**

Paul Hibberd submitted a written report as follows:

##### **Staffing:**

Our three Glenmore-based seasonal rangers for 2023 – Julia, Hector and Cameron – are focusing on site patrols, litter picking and engaging with visitors.

FLS rangers are partnering with CNPA rangers for evening patrols at Glenmore, aiming to engage with people before they set up camp / start fires.

The security firm (Granite Elite) that has been appointed to help operate the Hayfield overflow will also be helping with parking in the beach car park.

Partnering with CNPA, we have had a number of volunteer sessions recently within the visitor centre. We are arranging for future sessions with returning volunteers.

The Highland Council parking enforcement officer has been onsite and proved very helpful.

Evening Police patrols (funded by FLS, CNPA and Highland Council) have been confirmed for Fri 7, Sat 14, Fri 21, Fri 28 July.

##### **Parking / traffic management:**

The Highland Council work to remove areas previously used for informal parking along sections of the loch-side have been completed and will be monitored.

FLS are planning to open the Hayfield itself as a temporary overflow car park on the busiest days this summer (focusing on July and August).

Discussions around the Highland Council taking on the management of FLS car parks in Glenmore is ongoing.

FLS has responded to the draft Traffic Regulation Order for Glenmore.

##### **Infrastructure:**

There has been repeated deliberate vandalism at the beach toilets (smearing of human excrement on the walls), causing temporary closure and costly additional cleaning.

The delayed maintenance and resurfacing work in our current car parks are well underway - the beach car park and Allt Mor have been completed, with Lochside and Loch Morlich next. Work will then be paused and recommence in September to re-tarmac the apron at the Beach car park (as it necessitates closing the car park, it is too busy to do this at the present time).

We are continuing to discuss possible future management of the visitor centre and surrounding area with the Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust and are assisting with their Community Asset Transfer Scheme request.

#### Events:

FLS successfully hosted the EUSTAFOR international forestry conference visit at Glenmore.

We hosted a visit from Scottish Government and Nature Scot directors in June, to discuss visitor pressures at Glenmore.

#### Forest operations & environment:

Wild cats have been successfully released within the Cairngorms Connect area.

An increase in capercaillie numbers has been reported for FLS land in Strathspey Woodland regeneration around An Lochan Uaine due to deer culling was featured by BBC news.

#### Communication:

There has been considerable concern over irresponsible visitor behaviour, in particular the potential for wildfire. We have been actively promoting the 'no fires' message onsite with increased signage, in social media and press statements.

A new working group of land management agencies has been convened by CNPA to focus on Glenmore and Cairngorm Mountain issues.

We remain an active member of the CNPA 'managing for visitors' group.

We attended the AGCT meeting at Glenmore Lodge in June.

## 11.AOCB

LNER Communications Feedback Survey

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to send to AVCC members.**

**Action: AVCC members to complete the survey if appropriate to them.**

CNPA Local Development Plan

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to send to AVCC members and put on the Agenda for August.**

Braeriach Court play area

AVCC has received a letter from Highland Council Amenities Services (South) saying that the decision has been made to remove any remaining play equipment.

**Eilidh McLeod proposed registering AVCC disappointment and asking why capital funding is not allocated. Seconded by Audrey Turner.**

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to write to Highland Council.**

Planning application 23/02921/Ful – Dalfaber Industrial Estate – change of use of land for siting of fitness training tent.

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to contact Highland Council to ask for a delay to allow discussion at the next AVCC meeting.**

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to put on August agenda.**

Roddy Stevens said that there was a lot of rubbish and cans around the site of the Outdoor School.

**Action: Elspeth Byrne to email Neil MacIver to ask for a few police foot patrols in the area.**

## 12.Date of next meeting – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023

## 13.Close 9.50pm

# Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council

## TREASURER'S REPORT

### 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Aviemore Community Centre meeting room

<b><u>Treasurers Account</u></b>	£	£
Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023		£2,652.40
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Interest	£ 8.18	
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
SSE	£16.00	
<b>Balance at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>		<b>£2644.58</b>
Cyclists Club_balance	£135.00	
<b><u>Business Reserve Account</u></b>		
Balance at 31 <sup>st</sup> may 2023		£7,505.18
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Craft fair	£ 760.00	
Streamline joinery (highland home centre)	£1,070.00	
Deposit	£ 50.00	
Interest	£ 7.46	
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
Any jobs £40 over payment	£160.00	
<b>Balance at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>		<b>£9,232.64</b>
Deposit Craic events	£ 50.00	
Deposit Sam cairns	£ 50.00	
Deposit CSD	£ 50.00	
Streamline joinery	£ 50.00	