

AVIEMORE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

7pm Thursday 14 March 2024, Aviemore Community Centre

Minutes

1. Present

Al Dargie (Chair), AVCC
Peter Long (Secretary), AVCC
Elsbeth Byrne, AVCC
Grant Moir, CNPA
Lauren MacCallum, CNPA Board
Kirsty Bruce, AGCT
Brian Partridge, Resident
Nikki Hannay, Resident

Eilidh McLeod (Vice Chair), AVCC
Kathleen Cameron (Treasurer), AVCC
Paul Hibberd, FLS
Neil MacIver, Police Scotland
John Grant, Rothiemurchus
Kate Hannay, Resident
Liz Partridge, Resident
Roddy Stevens, Resident

2. Apologies for absence

Bill Lobban

3. Welcome and Introductions

Al Dargie welcomed everyone to the meeting and, for the benefit of attendees who had not attended before, described how Community Council meetings work.

4. Declarations of interest

Peter Long declared a non-financial interest in item 9a as he is a Volunteer Ranger.

Kathleen Cameron declared an interest in item 9f as she is a resident of the Burnside Road area.

5. Minutes of February Meeting

Kathleen Cameron proposed acceptance of the February minutes, seconded by Eilidh McLeod.

6. Matters Arising from February Meeting

Previous minutes, item 6 – streetlighting issues

Al Dargie said that Highland Council had started replacing streetlights that were not working.

Action: Al Dargie would check what replacements were still required.

Previous minutes, item 9a – AGCT community asset transfer of the Glenmore Visitor Centre and café

Al Dargie had sent a letter of support for the asset transfer of the Glenmore Visitor Centre and Café to Forestry and Land Scotland supporting Aviemore Glenmore Community Trust on behalf of the Community Council.

Previous minutes, item 9b – Community Action Plan

Al Dargie said that survey leaflets had been hand delivered and that VABS were collating responses. Public meetings would be held on Friday 22nd March from 2pm-4pm and 6pm-8pm in the main hall, and on Saturday 23rd March from 9.30am-12 noon.

Previous minutes, item 9c – Planters at the north of the village

Peter Long said he has submitted a request for just over £3,000 of funding.

Previous minutes, item 9d – Community litter pick

The Community Litter Pick would be held on 20th April from 10am-12 noon.

7. Treasurer's Report

Kathleen Cameron presented the Treasurer's Report. She said that the first craft fair of the year would be held on Easter Sunday.

Peter Long proposed acceptance of the report, seconded by Al Dargie.

8. Police Report

Neil McIver apologised for missing the previous two meetings. He said that there had been 133 incidents in Aviemore since 8th February. The biggest issue was lack of staff. In March there had been 18 days when at least one staff member had had to cover another area.

There had been a number of house breakings – in Aviemore, Kingussie and Newtonmore. These were not all holiday homes.

Eilidh McLeod asked if staffing over the New Year had been a problem. Neil MacIver said that there were no serious issues.

Roddy Stevens asked if anything was being done to reduce speed in Aviemore and regarding cars blocking the road at the petrol station. Neil McIver said that Police Scotland would not enforce speed limits within 20mph areas, other than outside schools. This applies to all villages.

Al Dargie said that if parking restrictions were required near the petrol station, then this was the responsibility of Highland Council, not Police Scotland.

9. Business

a. CNPA Fire Management Consultation

Grant Moir, Chief Executive of CNPA, said that there was concern about the potential for a wildfire and the effect it would have on people, property and nature. There had been serious fires at Daviot and Cannich in 2023.

There was a long dry spell in June last year. Rangers' statistics showed there had been 219 live fires and 200 fire sites last year. CNPA were looking at how to prepare for wildfires, to minimize the effect and were having discussions with Estates regarding action plans and mitigations such as fire breaks etc.

Grant Moir said that the James Hutton Institute had done work looking at consecutive dry/wet days and were looking to forecast what the climate over the next 50 years would be like. April to September will be drier and winters wetter.

The Consultation, which closes at the end of April, gives a number of options. Recommendations will be taken to the CNPA Board in June. If the decision is made to have a by-law, then there will be legal work to do – 12 weeks consultation then sign-off by the Scottish Ministers. A by-law would likely not come into effect until later in 2025.

The options are:

Option 1 - no bylaw – more education, signage and consistency of message to people

Option 2 - high fire risk option – by-law in place but only applies in times of high risk

Option 3 - all year-round by-law – no recreational fires all year round

There had been 330 responses so far.

The chosen solution should be sustainable and deal with recreational fires in the wrong places at the wrong time.

Peter Long said that there had been fires at Loch Morlich beach in the last three years, but asked why a park-wide solution was sought? He also asked if a by-law solution were selected, would this be likely to have political support?

Grant Moir said that there were a number of 'hot spots' - not just at Loch Morlich. This was a park-wide issue in popular visitor locations, usually close to water. The by-laws regarding camping at Loch Lomond had been approved by Scottish Ministers, but this case would be up to them for decision.

Al Dargie explained he had almost 18 years Fire Service experience, with a decade in charge of the local station. He expressed that the type of woodland, and the relevant fire risk, had changed greatly. Whilst being great for biodiversity the more natural vegetation gave a much higher fire load and risk from the forest floor. This is not explained to the public as part of the consultation.

Johnie Grant said that the consultation paper was well set out. He thought that use of Countryside Rangers had been better than using laws. There were fewer police available now for enforcement. Neil McIver said he thought Police Scotland would still be able to offer support. Grant Moir said that messaging and education was very important, but it might be useful to have a by-law backing this up.

Paul Hibberd said that FLS would be putting in a formal response. He said that communication and education solve most issues but the experience at Glenmore is that there is still a significant minority who will not follow guidance. He thought that Option 2 left room for people to misunderstand, or say they had misunderstood, that fire restrictions were in place. It would be confusing if there were different ratings and conditions in different areas of the national park.

There was also the risk that the problem would be displaced to areas outwith the park. Paul Hibberd said that there would need to be monitoring and management.

Roddy Stevens thought that a year-round by-law for the whole national park was the best solution.

Neil McIver said that the working hours of the CNPA rangers needed consideration. They usually finished between 6pm and 8pm but the fires often started later and went on until around midnight/1am. Enforcement was required at nighttime – little enforcement was required during the day and early evening.

Peter Long proposed that AVCC should adopt a position of support for a year-round ban on fires, and comment acknowledging concerns about some of the difficulties in enforcing such a ban. Seconded by Al Dargie

Action: Peter Long and Al Dargie to formulate a response on behalf of AVCC by 16th April.

b. CNPA Net Zero funding update

Grant Moir spoke about Cairngorms 2030. Lottery funding was providing £42 million. There were 20 projects including such things as an Outdoor Dementia Centre and Transport and Travel. The projects would run for 5 years.

The CNPA Board will be approving the plan next week, providing capital grants (ie one-off) funding for communities up to £200,000 for projects like adaptation to climate change. The fund will open around the end of April and the funds would have to be spent by March next year.

Al Dargie said the drive to Net Zero was positive, but the biggest emissions came from the communities where the main requirement was for housing, including workers' accommodation, and infrastructure like a swimming pool. He said that CNPA Net Zero should not just be about nature but also about communities, and there was a lack of infrastructure. A strategic plan must include these things.

Elsbeth Byrne said she thought a park and ride carpark in Aviemore was required given that there is limited visitor parking in the Glenmore area but we want to encourage visitors to the area.

Eilidh McLeod said that people should not have to commute into the area for work as this was not 'green'.

Grant Moir said that 45% of new build housing now had to be 'affordable' and it was hoped to increase this to 75% in the future.

Grant Moir, Lauren MacCallum and Neil McIver left the meeting after this discussion.

c. Other CNPA issues – discussed above

d. Short Term Let Control Zone – AVCC approach to applications

Al Dargie said that the Short Term Let Control Zone came into effect for Badenoch and Strathspey on 4th March and applies to properties with 3 bedrooms or less. Planning consent is now required to start using an existing domestic property for short term let, this applies to the property, not the owners. The Short Term Let Control Zone is not the same as short term let licensing which is just to ensure that a property is safe to stay in and applies nationally.

Al Dargie proposed that we agree a policy for the next 12 months objecting to changes of use for existing domestic properties being used for short term lets. Seconded by Peter Long.

Action: Peter Long/ Al Dargie to draft the standard response objecting to applications.

e. Planning – Consultation request from Highland Council on proposed Clune Windfarm, Tomatin 24/00690/SCOP

Peter Long proposed that AVCC object on the grounds of visual impact of the 200m tall turbines which would be visible from large parts of this area. Seconded by Al Dargie.

Action: Peter Long to submit the AVCC objection.

f. Burnside Road Flooding

A number of residents of the Burnside Road area attended the meeting. They explained that there had been problems since 2021 when a large tree had grown into the sewage pipes. Although this was supposedly resolved, ever since then the area often floods when it rains. A resident passed around large photos showing the extensive flooding, which clearly restricts access and is damaging to property.

Several of the residents have reported the problems to Highland Council by phone but the situation has not been investigated or resolved.

Action: Peter Long will write to Bill Lobban asking for an investigation.

g. AGM 2024

The AGM will be held at 7pm on 9th May. The normal AVCC monthly meeting will start at 7.30pm.

Action: Peter Long to contact Bill Lobban to ask him to attend the AGM as Chair.

10. Reports from other organisations

a. CNPA report - none

b. Highland Council report - none

c. ACE board member report

Kathleen Cameron said that there will be hanging baskets this year.

d. AGCT report

Kirsty Bruce said that she was awaiting the result of the asset transfer request and hoped to hear around the end of the month. The Ice Rink had had a successful Christmas period. The new chillers have halved the electricity charges. All Badenoch & Strathspey P7 school children will get to try curling. The ice rink has been important for visitors given the lack of the funicular and lack of snow.

Al Dargie asked if there were discussions about getting a site for a full-size permanent ice rink, as MacDonald Resorts have not included space in any planning applications for the resort? Kirsty Bruce said that they were continuing discussions about the future with MacDonalds.

e. FLS report

Paul Hibberd had provided a report which was previously circulated. He said that FLS was waiting to hear whether Highland Council were going to take over the FLS carparks. Al Dargie also expressed concern at the lack of progress on this, especially since the council had now agreed charging routines for their spaces.

The café had had staffing issues which meant it had been closed, but a new manager had now started. Al Dargie was concerned that the toilets were not available if the café was not open and this would cause problems during key periods.

Paul Hibberd said that work had been done to slow bank erosion.

11.AOCB

Glenmore Gathering - Peter Long said that this was being held next week.

Action: Peter Long and Al Dargie to attend the Glenmore Gathering.

Banking Hub – Peter Long had been contacted by the coordinator of the Senior Citizens Network who was requesting support for a banking hub in this area. This group had successfully campaigned for a banking hub in Forres with 5 different banks using the hub on different days.

Action: Peter Long to reply giving Community Council support in principle.

CNPA/VABS meeting and workshops

Action: Elspeth Byrne to attend for AVCC and report back to the group.

Dunromin – their appeal was rejected.

Old Bridge Inn – they had been granted a 2 year temporary consent for change of use of land but there were several issues with the CNPA process.

AVCC Highland Council support – Peter Long said that Mark Mackay had taken over from Lewis Hannah.

Phone mast at Ryvoan Bothy - Peter Long said that a planning application was coming in for a phone mast near Ryvoan Bothy. We would comment when it comes in.

Village Green – the AVCC and ACE lawyers were still progressing the transfer of the Village Green from AVCC to ACE.

12. Date of next meeting – Thursday 11 April 2024.

13. Close 9.45pm

Aviemore & Vicinity Community Council

TREASURER'S REPORT 15th March 2024 Aviemore Community Centre meeting room

<u>Treasurers Account</u>	£	£
Balance at 31 st January 2024		£3,830.84

Income

Expenditure

SSE	£ 28.00	
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Balance at 29 th February 2024		£3,802.84
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Cyclists Club_balance	£135.00	
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Business Reserve Account

Balance at 31 st January 2024		
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<u>Income</u>		£9,827.14
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Craft Fairs	£40.00	
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Interest	£11.32	
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Expenditure

Balance at 29 th February 2024		£9,878.46
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Deposit Craic events	£ 50.00	
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Deposit Sam cairns	£ 50.00	
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Streamline joinery	£ 50.00	
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