

Secretary, Community Council Stromeferry & Achmore, Fernaig House, Achmore, Stromeferry,
Wester Ross IV53 8UW.

6th February, 2012

Dear Mr Gillies,

Further to the meeting held on the 18th January, 2012 in Achmore Hall to discuss the 'fallout' of the closure of the A890 between Strathcarron and Stromeferry, I am writing on behalf of the Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council to inform you of the impact this is having on our communities.

Firstly, we appreciate the efforts that have been undertaken by the Highland Council to get physical connections in place so that traffic can use the only route North from Achmore, to Lochcarron and beyond, without us having to do a 140 mile detour, via Inverness.

However, the current solutions are imposing impossible time restrictions on our movements, and are likely to be disrupted by adverse weather conditions. Hence, these interim solutions, though appreciated, are barely meeting the business and social transport needs of our communities.

One of the key concerns raised at both meetings, Lochcarron and Achmore, was the length of time taken to get contingency plans into operation. If a proven contingency plan had been in place then the scale and length of the disruption, could have been kept to a minimum. Instead, the first two weeks after the closure were spent discussing various options, rather than implementing a proven solution.

Would you please explain, why in this instance, it was not possible to use the railway with a 'sleeper track' for road traffic, given this method was used in the past?

All solutions have to include more signage informing motorists of the A890 closure on all the exits routes leaving Inverness and beyond. Currently the advance signage warning of the closure is inadequate.

The A890 Strome Bypass has a history of suffering from rock fall resulting in closures, so the Highland Council Roads department have experience of the Bypass rock fault lines and what is required to keep the A890 open. So why was this not achieved?

We understand that once this interim phase, 'to get us up and moving' is finished and the A890 is fully open to traffic, the Highland Council have committed to finding a long term solution for the Strome Bypass. We, as a community want to be involved in all aspects of the future discussions, short and long term. Never again do we want to be in the situation where our practical route north is effectively closed for weeks.

Surely with today's construction technologies a superior route can be constructed which meets the need of rural communities, where road transport is vital.

Yours faithfully,

Mary MacBeth, Secretary Stromeferry and Achmore Community Council.