

Beauly Community Council Minutes No 58

June 2025 Held at Phipps Hall

30th

In Attendance

Community Councillors

Jane Cumming (Chair)
Fraser (Treasurer)
Campbell
Angela Blake
Rosie Macdonald
James Campbell

Councillors

Emma Knox

Associate Members

Liz Watt
Ann Ashton
Seona
Ivar

Apologies: Councillor Helen Crawford who is on holiday, Councillor Chris Ballance, also on holiday and Councillor David Fraser attending Glenurquhart Community Council. Sasha Thureau and Tony Boyland Associate Members.

Also in attendance were various members of the public.

1. Welcome

Chair of the CC Jane Cumming welcomed everyone. Mark Simmons has proffered his resignation in an e mail to his fellow community councillors and the community council thanked him, in his absence, for his hard work over the years.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from any of the community councillors.

2. Minutes

There was a discussion about the minutes of the April 28th and it was agreed there would be different versions included within the Minutes, reflecting the different recollections from people at the meeting and an explanation that there was no agreement on the actual words used by Councillor Balance in relation to Fanellan Substation. The Minutes will be amended and come back to the next meeting for final approval.

The minutes of the meeting of 26th May 2025 were approved by Angela Blake, seconded by Rosie Macdonald. This included the presentation by SSEN, which incorporated the clarification on the traffic movements figure, as well as the Q and A document which was produced by SSEN with responses to the CC questions, as well as the questions from the floor. These documents will all now be put up on the CC website.

The minutes of the meeting of 9th June were approved by Ivar Campbell, seconded by Angela Blake.

ACTION Approved minutes from May 26th June 9th to go up on CC website, Minutes from 28th April to come back to next meeting for final approval.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes

Fanellan Substation

The objection from the community council has now been submitted to Highland Council. It included some material from Chris Boyle on Health Impact Assessments and the objection ran to 15 pages or so.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions around traffic management plans, location of accommodation villages etc and the CC will continue to seek answers. The result of the local survey showed a large majority in favour of negotiating mitigation and conditions with SSEN and the Chair has written to SSEN seeking a meeting to take this forward.

Clarification was sought from a member of the public on whether it was appropriate to talk about community benefits in advance of planning. The Chair explained it was important to seek mitigations in advance of any planning decision as any conditions had to be discussed at the committee meeting and applied as part of the planning consent. Councillor Knox confirmed it was councillors who decided on the mitigations and what conditions needed to be applied – these may well be things SSEN were not agreeing to, but the council could try to ensure they were included as part of the consent process. Things like air quality monitoring, a pre and post construction condition survey, traffic management, could all be looked at as conditions.

Time was of the essence as Fanellan was in the schedule of the Planning Committee to be decided in October and while this may be delayed, it might still be determined by Highland Council before the end of the year.

It was agreed that the Community Council should work with Beaully Community Trust to discuss mitigations and conditions, as well as any compensation. They would look to create a liaison group which could include other organisations in the village such as the Beaully Business Group and the school.

ACTION CC to hold meeting with SSEN. CC to invite Trust and other groups to get involved in meetings going forward.

Bingally Substation

The Chair had circulated a second version of the Bingally letter and was waiting for a response from the community councillors.

Tree Preservation Orders

There was a discussion about whether the trees on the main route through the village were all subject to Tree Preservation Orders, as there is concern about them being damaged during the construction phase of some of the works. Most thought they already had TPOs but Councillor Knox agreed to seek confirmation from the council

ACTION Councillor Knox to seek confirmation of status of the oak trees lining the main route through the village.

Grass Cutting

Seona Fraser had arranged to get various places strimmed, including the path up to the station which was becoming so overgrown.

Ballach Wind Farm Met Mast

It was clarified that the CC had agreed at the previous meeting not to object to the met mast application. The decision was not to support the met mast application, despite suggestions to the contrary.

Following last month's meeting the CC had requested additional viewpoints from areas chosen by Sasha Thuru. One, at Teawig, is outside our area so we asked for the closest point to that which is Beaully Station car park. The additional one was at the end of the Beaully straight, near Logic alarms. The developer has confirmed there was no visibility from either point, based on the wireline assessment, so Highland Council had agreed there would be no viewpoints expected from those locations. The CC Chair had written back requesting if it was possible to get a nighttime view of the wind farm.

ACTION Chair to chase EnergieKontor for nighttime viewpoint of Ballach wind farm

Convention of Highland Community Councils

The community council members had previously been circulated with a draft statement following the meeting of some of the community councils in Highland Council area on 14th June. This had been drafted following a number of requests seeking a statement from Beaully CC. The statement, acknowledged the passion of those involved, but was seeking a way forward, given the community's clear wish for the CC to negotiate with SSEN.

A member of the public expressed her view that all the community councils should be working together. The CC acknowledged this would be preferable but it would be difficult to achieve while the neighbouring community councils continue to refuse to negotiate mitigations with SSEN, given the clear mandate for that course of action from the Beaully community.

The draft statement was approved unanimously and becomes the CC's view on the issue. A follow up meeting of the Convention is to be held on 12th August with local MPs and MSPs, time to be confirmed.

4. SSEN CLG meeting

The SSEN Community Liaison Group had finally met after more than a year to discuss Terms of Reference and ways of working going forward. Sasha Thuru and Jim Stewart had attended and Sasha had produced a minute, but was concerned she had not included everything discussed. It was agreed to wait until the official minutes were issued and these could be included as part of the minutes of the CC meeting, once approved.

ACTION Upload approved minutes of SSEN CLG meeting onto the website, once approved by the CLG.

5. School Stakeholder Group meeting

Seona Fraser attended the meeting on 25th June 2025 and reported back that no decision had been made on the site of the new school. They were still looking at issues around Safer Routes to school particularly in relation to junctions. The consultation session had been attended by some and options being considered included a badminton court, fitness suite, the possibility of using the canteen for a breakfast club or daycare, relocation of library from Phipps Hall. Will need to think about the consequences of that however. Historic Environment Scotland are currently considering listing the existing school buildings.

ACTION Seona to attend next Stakeholder Group meeting on 27th August 2025

6. Maple Vale/Aird Road Playpark

Angela Blake reported back on her discussions with the Highland Council about their £20k contribution to a playpark at the existing site. It's likely the improvements could cost closer to £80k so they are hoping the Trust, or somebody else, might come up with some funding or apply for funds from various sources.

A consultation was underway for suggestions on what should be included and Angela would distribute a leaflet and circulate the QR code looking for ideas from local residents.

There was a discussion about fences vs shrubs and also the whole issue of what should be maintained/strimmed and what should be left to go wild. It may be the community orchard planned for the Aird Road field might be more of a wild area although it was pointed out they can take as much maintenance as more manicured areas.

James Campbell left the meeting part way through this item.

ACTION Angela to distribute leaflet and QR code and attend next meeting

7. Planning

The CC Chair had attended the public information session at the Phipps Hall re the Western Isles Undergrounding. Apparently it is Permitted Development and does not need planning permission, as it's an underground cable. RJ McLeod are the contractors, a relatively local firm, and the CC Chair had taken the opportunity to ask if they might consider demolishing the derelict rifle range building while they were working here. A member of the public highlighted the danger it represented as local kids have been climbing over the roof again – it was an accident waiting to happen.

The three substations up the Glen had been given planning consent. There was a discussion about the traffic impact and the smaller quarry up near Aigas which nobody seemed to know existed.

Under the new community benefit guidelines for electrical infrastructure these substations should attract community benefit of more than £500k each, according to the report to the planning committee given by SSEN.

ACTION Jane to chase up RJ McLeod re rifle range demolition.

8. Flowers/Paths/Open Spaces

The flowers had arrived and watering, feeding and deadheading were well underway. Ann Austin said a number of people had commented they thought the flowers on the pillars were dull but it was pointed out the colourway was picked to commemorate VE Day.

The discussion opened up to a wider debate about the paths and open spaces, including care of the Lovat Memorial Garden. The Men's Shed volunteered to take this on, both in terms of weeding and maintenance, which is most welcome.

There had been various comments made about the condition of various walks and it was explained that the community council was not responsible for the maintenance of the paths, and some of the areas were disputed in terms of ownership. It is something the Trust hope to take forward in terms of improving and extending the path network. It was suggested the community should be actively involved in deciding which areas of the village are left wild and which areas should have a more manicured look, such as around the Priory.

9. Correspondence

There was an e mail from SEPA about a consultation but nobody had enough time to respond in time.

Seona has written to the Shinty Club confirming our support for the Community Asset Transfer.

10. Outstanding Business

- A. Braeview Park Lining – still waiting on council to carry out the work
- B. Toll Junction lining - still waiting on council
- C. Resilience Plan – need to find somebody to take this forward
- D. Belladrum – need somebody to attend local community liaison meetings
- E. Need somebody to take over reporting potholes and abandoned vehicles

11. AOB

Members of the public raised a number of issues of concern. One was the continued poor state of the old Co-op building which has long been an eyesore. There is an ongoing saga with the owner as a result of an insurance claim following the tanker accident and while that remained outstanding there was nothing the CC could do about any option to seek a community buy out. However, if the building is now unsafe – bits are falling off it – we could pursue this option. Councillor Knox agreed to report the poor condition of the building to the council.

Another issue raised was the hedge at Lyndale which was proving to be a hazard, particularly during the Highland Cross. Councillor Knox will chase that up – apparently the owner of the house has died so the maintenance team are cutting the hedge back when it becomes obtrusive as a goodwill gesture.

SSEN are delivering two abnormal loads on Tuesday and Thursday this week it will be interesting to see how this works out. Councillor Crawford had asked for motion sensors to

be put in place and Councillor Knox said she would check up on the status of that request. There was concern expressed about the bridges and how they would cope with the heavy loads.

White lining was raised as an issue of road safety, particularly around the area outside the Catholic Church. This has been raised by the Community Council repeatedly although the roads engineers insist the lack of white lining reduces the speed of the traffic.

There was discussion about the potential for holding meetings on line, or hybrid meetings, in the future. This had proved very unsatisfactory in the past when it was trialled and it was agreed by the Community Council they would continue to meet face to face.

The CC Facebook page is now up and running and will be used as an authoritative source of information about CC business. Posts on this facebook page should only be from CC members and should be agreed in advance by office bearers.

Beauly on line will become a general source of information about Beauly and the surrounding area. Seona will continue as an admin but the other admins will withdraw over time and any volunteers to become admins would be welcome. The description of the page needs to be changed to remove any reference to the CC.

ACTIONS: Councillor Knox to let council know re unsafe condition of old Co-op building.
Councillor Knox to seek clarification on response to sensor monitoring of abnormal loads.
Councillor Knox to ask maintenance team at council to cut back Lyndale hedge again. CC to write once more to the council seeking white lining.

NEXT MEETING: Monday 25th August 2025