



Mull Community Council Minutes of Meeting 4th June 2025

Held in-person and on-line via Zoom on Wednesday 4th June, 2025 at 7.30 pm.

Attendees

Community Council

Emily Greenhalgh (acting convenor)
Sharon Worrall
Rupert Ormond
James MacLennan
Billy McClymont
Susan Ringwood

Cllr Amanda Hampsey

Guests

Iain Stirling (Highland Forestry)
Tracy Mayo (Mull Campus Working Group)
Andrena Duffin

Members of the Public including

Terry Hegarty (on-line)
Rob Claxton-Ingham
Colin Morrison (on-line)

1. Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from: Michelle Devlin, Steve Fisher, Cllr Willie Hume, and John Maughan.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of 7th May 2025 were approved (Proposed by JM, seconded by RO).

4. Community Council Matters

- (i) New members. Ben Donovan had expressed interest in joining the Council and hoped to attend the next meeting.
- (ii) Mentoring. A scheme of mentoring for new members (SR and MD) was agreed.
- (iii) The table of members' responsibilities and of topic leads was reviewed and revised. The agreed revisions are shown in the revised table attached as Appendix 1.

5. Glen Cannel Afforestation Scheme

Iain Stirling from Highland Forestry summarised the afforestation scheme planned for Glen Cannel (SE of Loch Ba) and answered questions from members. The 220ha area would be planted with native birch woodland that including a mix of oak, alder and (if available) aspen. There would be no coniferous trees. A breeding bird survey had been conducted, and curlew nesting areas would be avoided. The area would need to be enclosed by deer fencing for 10-15 years, but it was anticipated that gates be provided and new paths constructed through the

woodland. Insecticide treatment of saplings would not be necessary. The secretary was asked to recirculate details of the scheme.

6. Education

New School Campus. Tracy Mayo reviewed developments concerning the planned new School Campus.

- She thanked schools, parents and pupils who had recently been so active in fund-raising for school resources.
- School annual examinations had been completed with very few issues and those who had assisted were also thanked.
- Argyll & Bute Council (A&BC) had emailed parents of current inviting input concerning the design of the new school, and this information publicised on Facebook.
- The Community Sounding Board previously formed by A&BC had apparently been stood down. The Working Group was therefore trying to liaise on behalf of the community with the A&BC Campus Team.
- The budget for the New School Campus was understood to include a contingency line of £3.2 million.
- TM, EM and Rob Claxton-Ingham had travelled to Holyrood (at the suggestion of Tim Eagle MSP) to attend the Empowering Scotland's Island Communities debate¹ in the Scottish Parliament, where they also met with other MSPs.
- It had been emphasised to MSPs that the community preferred a split site for the New Campus i.e. split between a Tobermory Primary School and a central Secondary School.
- Some pupils had asked if it was possible to meet with some MSPs and this was being arranged.
- The Group were still taking legal advice and expected to reach a decision within a week as to whether or not they should instigate judicial review proceedings against A&BC.
- She emphasised the New Campus Working Group was open to everyone and that all information about their work can be found on the Group's website.

Other points made in discussion included the following:

- In recent surveys of residents 63% of respondents preferred a split campus, 75% considered that site options should be investigated further, and >80% considered that A&BC had not consulted residents adequately.
- In the debate at Holyrood, four MSPs from four different parties had mentioned the Mull School Campus issue as exemplifying the problems encountered by island communities.
- MSPs now realised that the controversy over the site of the new secondary school was not because different sets of residents each wanted the school close to them, but rather because most residents wanted a site accessible to the whole island.
- Jenni Minto MSP had invited all parties, including the Working Group and Community Council representatives to an on-line round table meeting².

7. Viking Cruise Tour Guides

Andrena Duffin explained to members that she had been approached by Viking Cruises with a view to recruiting and training tour guides to show cruise ship passengers around Tobermory and nearby areas. Viking Cruises were planning for 12 visits per year from 2027. Tour guides would need to be trained to a recognised standard over the coming winter. Guides would communicate with the group they lead via a microphone and earplugs carried by each passenger. Interested residents were asked to contact her.

8. Planning

The only significant planning application submitted during the past month was for four houses in Salen on land across the road from Kennedy's garage. Disappointment was expressed that an earlier change in planning application in Bunessan for the erection of 12 single bedroom self-catering units in place of one shop and one café appeared not to have been highlighted to the Community Council despite a number of strong objections from local residents.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dVmTvM9r2Q>

² This round-table meeting was subsequently cancelled following the refusal of A&BC to participate.

9. Countryside Access

SR reported that she had written further to both the landowner at Torosay and the A&BC Access Officer about the provision of access through the gates in the new deer fence. She had provided details of the locations of the gates concerned. The landowner had agreed to provide kissing gates, but the Access Officer was now requiring self-closing gates that would also allow use by disabled persons and horses. BBC Alba had been in touch and were interested to cover the issue.

10. Energy, Climate & Environment

MachairWind. MachairWind had advised the Community Council that in relation to their Offshore Wind Farm proposal for the Colonsay area, they would be holding public consultation events on Mull (Tuesday 17 June, 3pm to 7.30pm, Creich Hall, Fionnphort) and on Iona (Wednesday 18 June – 3pm to 7.30pm, Iona Village Hall). There would also be on-line seminars concerning the project on Tuesday 10 June 2025 (6.30pm to 7.30pm) and Monday 23 June (6.30pm to 7.30pm). These events were being publicised.

11. Housing

Bowman Court. BMcC and Moray Finch had met with Douglas Hendry of A&BC to discuss whether £1 million might be available from the UK Government as part of the funding for the proposed scheme for Bowman Court, but Mr. Hendry indicated that to qualify the scheme had to be free of any burdens. The council itself were supportive but could not consider the scheme until 2026 at the earliest. There would also be a clawback of likely £650,000 by the Scottish Government because of the change of use. Subsequently there had been a meeting with Jenni Minto MSP to discuss whether the clawback could be waived; she would investigate whether it could at least be reduced. The situation was very discouraging given that the project was badly needed by the island and was very do-able.

12. Utilities

Decommissioning of Phone Boxes. RO reported that he had investigated further the possibility of converting the telephone kiosks, that were to be decommissioned at Croggan and Aros Bridge, to locations for defibrillators. However he had been informed that a power supply was required to run a defibrillator, and these two kiosks, in common with many others, were not supplied with electricity. Further the Aros Bridge kiosk was in very poor condition. It appeared that the idea was unlikely to be worth pursuing.

13. Councillors Reports

Councillor Hampsey described that she had mainly been occupied with communications concerning the new Mull Campus and the visitor levy, but had also been working on the issue of a reduction in SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) hours. She drew attention to the fact that Argyll & Bute Council's full Council meeting would be accessible on-line near the end of June and that the Oban Lorn & the Isles Area Committee was being held on Mull on Wednesday, 11 June 2025, at 11 a.m. at An Roth. She highlighted the value to members of observing these proceedings.

14. Matters Arising

Septic Tank Discharge. Scottish Water were still maintaining that they could not allow Kangley Construction access to the water treatment works unless a member of their staff was present. John Maughan had written to Scottish water requesting a meeting. It appeared that the same restriction was being imposed on other independent contractors emptying septic tanks on the island, and it was understood, on other islands. It was understood that this followed a decision made at a higher level in Scottish Water potential without their realising the consequences for island communities.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday 2nd July 2025, to be held at 7 pm at An Roth, Craignure.

Mull Community Council Members Details:

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