

Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Mhuile

MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Coinneamh na Comhairle 5mh Lùnastal 2026

Meeting of the Council 5th August 2026

Minutes / Geàrr-chunntas

Attendees

John Maughan
James MacLennan
Sharon Worrall
Billy McClymont
Susan Ringwood

Guests

Will Gregory, Iona Music Festival
Finlay MacDonald, Hebridean Horizon
Rob Claxton-Ingham, member elect
Kim Vallance, member elect
Professor Wendy Russell, Aberdeen Uni
PC Daniel Ferry
Joe Reade, Mull and Iona Ferry Committee
and other members of the public in person and online

In opening remarks, JM as Convener stated this was the last meeting of the current Community Council's term. He thanked all members for their work, and particularly those who had not sought re-election. The Council is at the statutory minimum for elected members, but co-optees can join at any time. JM urged anyone interested to get in touch for an informal discussion.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Rupert Ormond, Claire Graham, Norma McInnes, Steve Fisher and Ben Donovan.

2. Declarations of interest

None to declare

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 1st July were approved. Proposed by SW, seconded JMcl

4. Police Report

PC Daniel Ferry gave a report for June. 45 calls were received in the month, 18 from Tobermory, 10 from the Ross, 9 from Craignure and 8 from Salen and 5 crimes were recorded. In June, Royal Mail staff reported a parcel to the police that they were suspicious of containing controlled drugs. It was found to be cannabis. The intended recipient denied any knowledge of the contents.

In July, 45 calls had been received, 17 from Tobermory, 13 from Craignure, 9 from Salen and 6 from the Ross, but the details of any crimes are not yet available.

PC Ferry warned residents that fake £20 notes are still in circulation in Mull. The police speed gun has now been re-calibrated, and officers have been undertaking speed checks. Further checks will be made as resources allow.

5. Iona Music Festival

JM stated that residents in Fionnphort had reported issues with parking caused by the Iona Music Festival. Will Gregory, of the Iona Music Festival, was invited to speak. He stressed that the festival organisers are keen to do what is needed to resolve the problem. Suggestions included signage, a parking attendant and getting permission to use a field or other suitable space for overspill parking. Festival goers are encouraged to use public transport. A plan for next year's festival will be in place by the end of August and will take account of parking requirements. RCI stated that the Ross of Mull

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Community Transport has two minibuses which could be used to carry people from any overspill parking to the Iona ferry. WG invited anyone with suggestions or views to contact him directly.

6. Food Security

Prof. Wendy Russell of the Rowett Institute at Aberdeen University gave a presentation regarding a proposed project. She gave a brief background to the Institute. The main areas of research are: decarbonising livestock production, primarily by replacing soya in their foodstuffs; replacing palm fat in processed foods, by growing locally sustainable alternatives; and replacing peat and coir-based composts with locally grown alternatives. Prof Russell then outlined a potential new 5-year research project to begin in April 27. This would be a feasibility study. A workshop held in Tobermory in July raised awareness of the project, and more partners are being sought. Prof WG asked if MCC would endorse the project and it was agreed. Questions followed about the importance of involving land and estate managers in the control of deer populations, and the opportunity to involve domestic gardeners as well as farmers.

7. MachairWind (Wind Farm) Planning Consultation

JM reminded all that the formal planning consultation ends 15th August. MCC (and others) had asked for an extension, given the complexity of documents to be read and understood, but this was declined. JM thanked everyone for the comments they had submitted, and for the work that Hebridean Horizon and representatives from other islands had done. This had helped MCC to understand how other islands viewed the proposal. Mull residents had not responded in large numbers. Fewer than 20 people had emailed objections, and 3 had written in support. MCC members held a private meeting to discuss the submission we will make and agreed to follow the example of Tiree by summarising the comments that we have been sent, including the main objections. Some discussion followed. It was explained that although there had been more comments on the Facebook site than e-mails received, the MCC's statutory responsibility is to represent residents. Where it was possible to recognise those made by residents, those comments have been noted.

Finlay MacDonald of Hebridean Horizon re-iterated their main objections to the proposal and encouraged everyone to respond with their views.

8. Argyll & Bute Councillors' reports

None received

9. Planning

i) Planning Applications. The proposal to build affordable homes in Salen was discussed and the plans were welcomed. There was a concern that the area of the current speed limit should be extended to take the access road to the new homes into account, and that this requirement should be included in the list of places where MCC is calling for new 30 and 20mph zones to be instated. ACTION JMCL to write the A&B.

ii) Local Place Plan. JM reported how the Place Plan will be important to influence Argyll and Bute planning, and the work of both the MCC and MICT. Interested groups and individuals are on a short life working group. Members include representatives from MICT, MCC, SWMID, NWMWCW, THA and the farming sector. The short life group is due to conclude in January 27. A draft plan has been produced. Anyone with an interest in this work is invited to join.

10. Health and Social Care

Nothing to report

11. Transport

i) Ferries. JR explained that the Craignure passenger access system is going to be removed by CMAL, meaning passengers will have to continue to use the car deck. A&B Council and Calmac will replace it, but it will not be as before. It will most likely be a ship-side gangway. This will be open to the elements and steep to climb and it may not be possible to use at extreme states of the tide or in high winds. Anyone with mobility issues or carrying heavy items will not be able to use it. JR felt extremely strongly that this situation need not have arisen, had CMAL accepted that the current system could be repaired, rather than refurbished.

ii) Roads. A concern was raised about general road management and signage in Tobermory. The recent filming of Balamory had highlighted this, but the fundamental issue is of large delivery vehicles. ACTION JM to write to Cllr WH.

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12. Gaelic

JM gave a report on behalf of Alasdair Whyte. On behalf of Ionad Gàidhlig an t-Sàilein C.I.C, AW has fed into A&B Council's application to the Scottish Gov's Areas of Linguistic Significance Fund. A designation will be made by September 27. If successful, Mull will receive funding to deliver pilot events focused on increasing Gaelic use and learning.

AW also reported on a virtual reality pilot which involved animating a 17th century Gaelic song- A' chnò Shamhna (The Hallowe'en Nut). Participants reported that viewing the virtual reality experience increased their interest in Gaelic, their understanding of the song, and felt encouraged to learn more Gaelic. The event was covered in the media, and a video is available on YouTube. JM encouraged people to complete the A&BC consultation details of which can be found at: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/draft-gaelic-language-plan-consultation>.

13. Education

SW gave a report. The Exam results were issued to all students on 4th August. Argyll And Bute Council announced that pass rates were encouraging across all levels based on A-D results. Full details can be found on their website news. Families are urged to check A&B Council information about Clothing and Meal financial assistance ahead of the new school term. Details can be found here <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/benefits-and-grants/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grant>

The MCR Pathways Mentoring Programme has shown positive results across A&B and the programme is being expanded further. Additional mentors are needed to support Tobermory High School and matching will take place once the schools return. Please contact <https://mcrpathways.org/become-a-mentor/> if you would like further information.

Mull Community Council and MICT are working jointly to create a Youth Council. Plans are being put in place for a monthly meeting, planned to get underway once the new school term starts. Focus will be given to providing a structured voice for the young people from Mull, Iona and surrounding islands. It is also planned to invite guests from organisations such as Police Scotland, CalMac and the Young Islander Network to give the Youth Council the opportunity to ask questions and share their views on services affecting them. Engagement plans and advertising are currently being reviewed. Further details will be shared in due course.

TM has asked that people be reminded that the formal consultation on the new school site will be opened on August 17th. This consultation is only available to parents from the existing catchment area, meaning the parents on the Ross cannot give their views.

13. Royal Mail

SW and SR reported on a recent meeting with national and regional Royal Mail staff where the specific problems being experienced in Mull were discussed. While some progress was made, there remains a concern that the full picture is not known or acknowledged by senior management, even though further resignations have taken place. RM staff have agreed to implement a rolling programme of recruitment and to investigate alternative premises for use as sorting offices. They confirmed there will not be an opportunity for allocation of routes to be reviewed until 2027/8, since this forms part of a national programme of work. They have offered to investigate why tracked post appears to get 'stuck' in Glasgow for several days rather than being delivered to Mull. Any residents who have experienced this are asked to send the post tracking reference number to the MCC to be passed on to RM. Questions followed. It was agreed that the new postie hires are settling in, and that all staff should be thanked for their efforts. BMC specifically asked about whether RM were in breach of the contractual agreements for providing a postal service.

14. Visitor Levy

JM reminded all that a consultation is out from A&BC about the proposed visitor levy. There are separate surveys for residents, businesses and visitors. The survey form is not easy to complete. All the questions must be answered and the questions do not give the opportunity to say if you do not agree with the Levy. It is proposed to have a flat rate, rather than a percentage. There are very few exceptions, and if eligible for a waiver of the levy, people must pay and claim it back from the Council. MCC will submit our own response, and residents are encouraged to send in their views. Argyll and Bute Business Alliance Facebook Page has a lot of information to support businesses with the proposed levy.

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15. Balamory TV

Filming for the next Balamory series had caused traffic problems and taken up a great deal of space on the High Street. Duncan Swinbanks had asked if the production company Lion TV would consider making goodwill donation towards some items of community benefit. JM had written but Lion TV had not responded beyond saying they were currently busy filming. It was agreed to write again ahead of any further filming.

16. Emergency Planning

i) No specific updates from Warm Centers groups, and concern was raised that some momentum is being lost. Discussion followed and it was agreed that there would be some benefit from individual groups collaborating over funding applications etc. The suggestion was also made of having generators supplied under contract, rather than each group buying their own and therefore being responsible for its maintenance.

ii) The Housholder's leaflet should be available soon. SW will look at the cost of using the Royal Mail household insert rather than posting each one. It was agreed that holiday properties also need to receive the leaflet. ACTION SW

17. Notice Boards

SW reported that she is awaiting more information about locations etc. before these can be ordered. ACTION JMCL will follow up with Salen Spar. SW will contact Calmac at Craignure.

18. Action register. SW will circulate an update. MCC members were encouraged to send in their completed actions for recording.

19. AOB

JM referred to the open letter An Tobar had published listing individuals, organisations and businesses who were supportive of Pride events, following the hate messages made after the recent Tobermory Pride event. JM has contacted An Tobar to ask to be included on the list.

16. Date of next meeting

The inaugural meeting of the newly elected Community Council will be held on Mon 31st August. It is a public meeting and all are invited to attend. Following this, the next meeting of the Mull Community Council will be on Wednesday 2nd September 2026, this meeting will be held on-line.

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