

DUNVEGAN AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING ON Tuesday 27th May 2025 at 7:30pm

Present – John Laing (JL), Donna Campbell (DC), Philippa MacRae (PM), Sylvia Meyer (SY), Mandy Boswell (MB), Drew Millar (DM), Jason Bold, Dunvegan Trust (JB), Rachel Jackson (RJ), Colin Ewing (CE).

Apologies – Tim Wallis (TW), Christine Brennan (CB)

1	Chairman's Welcome – JL opened the meeting, welcomed those present and gave apologies.
2	Declaration of Interest – DM confirmed that in regard to planning discussion around 18 Roag, he can sit and listen.
3	Minutes of last Meeting – The minutes were agreed. Proposed by SY seconded by PM.
4	Police Report – None – the meeting discussed that this item will be removed from the agenda as it seems unlikely we'll get a regular update; it is hoped we might get an annual update.
5	Treasurer 's Report – Last month there was £350 to Murdo Maciver for grass cutting and £60 (3 x £20) Amazon vouchers as prizes for the Millenium Stone Celebration. A hardship grant was given. £7330.63 is in the bank – but £4,100 is ring fenced for the hardship fund. PM said she's no funds left in the post office and DC said she'd provide a top up for PM.
6	Council Update – DM confirmed that roadworks are continuing to be worked on. Surface dressing has started between Edinbane and Portree. Work has moved out of our area for a while – Trotternish and Portree. DM said the Sconser Quarry has never produced as much tarmacadam as it has recently for the extensive roadworks being done on Skye. DM admitted the roads are still not great – but at the end of this financial year we'll have spent the £3million we'll have got this year and have the same promised for next year. By the end of 2026 we should have seen a vast improvement. The team are still waiting to start on the Claigan Road (installation of additional passing places, stretching existing ones, and signage) Mackenzie Sutherland was hoping to talk to SCRIPID about this. DC asked about the Feorlig Road, DM said he didn't have details to hand. JL said it was the whole 'Harlosh loop' DM said he'd enquire and let JL know via email. DM said that it is hoped Craik and MacRae can be employed to do more of the hot patching. JL brought up again access for Jill Gentleman, a disabled lady who uses a wheelchair. The road is not adopted. DM confirmed he'd had correspondence from us before about this which he's passed to the roads department. JL said even a half decent footpath would be a help – SY confirmed it would need to be wide enough. DM asked if Dunvegan Trust could perhaps help out, MB said that she thought their money couldn't be spent where the council should be funding works. The meeting went on to discuss that the we don't think the road has been adopted – is not classified. DM said he'd check and let us know.

	DC and PM said that the pavements in the village were in a terrible state. DM said that there were no budget for pavements. DM said he'd raise the matter but doesn't hold out much hope. MB said that she was very grateful to see the 'vertical lines' now painted on the roads, but we – like much of the island – are in desperate need of horizontal lines – at road junctions, like outside The Dunvegan Hotel. DM pointed out that it's a different machine and it is due to come sometime this summer and most of Skye needs junctions painting. DM said he'd already raised the need for junction and pedestrian crossing lines with Mackenzie Sutherland. DM said that there was a local ward business meeting on Monday and the council are intending to put a campervan/motorhome waste disposal unit in at Dunvegan car park. DM asked them if they'd spoken with us and they confirmed they had not. DM said they'd intended to put it roughly where the bottle bank is and he stressed that they must liaise with us. It is also intended that the toilet block will be upgraded too. SY confirmed that the campsite in Dunvegan already offers a waste disposal service and pointed out that the bottle banks we were planning in another location were in addition to – not instead of – what's in the car park. MB said perhaps the clothing banks could move to the new location along with considerably more additional bottle banks. The meeting agreed that this is an excellent initiative. DM said that the council have just signed a contract with a new firm to supply and maintain EV charging points. There are guarantees of prompt attendance to faults with the charging stations.
7	Planning Matters – 18 Roag – RJ referred to the letter already sent to the council members. She provided photographs supporting her assertions. She said that the development – and amended planning doesn't truly reflect the development as a whole. She fears that the stated intention to relocate the two units is actually an additional two units. CE said it is presented as if it were an amendment, but is in fact an addition. JL asked for confirmation that the applicant already has permission for two units and a house, below the road, and CE confirmed. RJ said they've got an entrance road, an access to the croft, the groundworks are in, and the septic systems for the existing plan and they've already built the hardstanding (which is in the new application – not the original). RJ said that her issues include a dispute over the parking area across the road from her home. She said she has a servitude of right for parking there. She stated the applicants (who do not reside on the croft) already have an access to their croft; they already have a road to their development – they don't need a second driveway or another access on to the croft. She said the original planning application and the new application should be viewed together – because they look like two different parts of a larger development. RJ (a paramedic who's based at home) said she's nowhere else nearby to park her ambulance. Her home has always had the area across the road from her home for parking – she's photographs going back 50 years showing the occupier's cars parked there. If she has to park the ambulance on someone else's land that will cause a two to three minute delay in her getting out to an emergency (it also means that the ambulance is out of her sight and immediate vicinity). She reiterated that they don't need <i>another</i> access.

	SY said she feel the applications made, withdrawn, and making new applications which purport to be amending previous ones is an absolute mess of planning permission. SY also said she was shocked at what had been done to the trees and what had been done to the landscape. JL asked RJ if she'd let the planners know of her objections and she said she would be doing that this week. She said that she'd objected to the previous application in regard to the soak away which is also a servitude right for her house and is where they wanted to put a driveway. She feels her objection was ignored by the planning department. RJ said that without any consultation with her they dug up her soakaway and put in a 'buckshee' soakaway which she believes is 'not up to standard'. She wrote a complaint to the building warrant officer who she said told her "it would be OK but that they needed to apply for retrospective planning permission" for this new soak away. RJ said she's no idea what they did – how it's been constructed. They told her that she'd have to apply for the retrospective planning permission – but it's not her land nor has she any idea what's been done. All she was given was a map with a line on it and a box at the end. No specification. CE pointed out that all of this building work is being done on land which has not been decrofted. RJ says she's tried to talk to them to explain that she and they need to communicate – but they're not interested which is why she's sought help from the community council – because it affects her, her job and the wider community. JL said he advises that all of this is sent to the planning officer. JL asked DM if this will go to the committee (rather than be a delegated decision). DM confirmed that five objections guarantee it will go to the planning committee. JL reiterated that we're not the planning committee and that we can express our concerns about the issues. CE said that RJ has a real and valid complaint and he's not directly affected, but that he's very indignant at the abuse of process in taking the whole community for fools. The meeting went on to discuss the committee's stance and it was agreed that we should formally object to both applications. MB asked about the Crofting Commission because the land has not been decrofted. The consensus is that they're 'toothless'. RJ said she'd made representation to the Crofting Commission about the initial application and had no reply. Application maps say 'to be decrofted' but RJ does not believe that they have yet done so. MB said that she was terribly disappointed to read in RJ's letter that a planner had told her where she parks her ambulance is her business.
8	Trust Report – SY said that the traffic near the playpark was not observing the 20mph zone and it has been asked if we can have one of the flashing signs installed which show your speed should you exceed the limit. MB pointed out that we'd already been approached by the alpaca shop about excessive speed in that area. DM said he'd enquire and let JL know.

	JB said that in terms of bigger picture the trust were trying to generate as many new projects as possible. Gaeltec is a flagship project, but still in the conveyancing stage. JB went on to say that the provision of funding is tough and the trust are looking at multiple ways to fund the refurbishment. He's hoping for some success with some new funds which are opening up. Windfarms are ongoing with local developers and Skye-wide community benefit discussions. Ongoing work at Orbost and Cruachan and an interest in the police house in Dunvegan. SY mentioned that there was an interest to be shown in the BT building in Dunvegan. The meeting went on to discuss the merits of an electric minibus. Currently the number of seats needed mean a diesel one is required. The current minibus is 12 or 13 years old. SY said that the trust are looking for a new admin officer.
9	School update – JL asked for confirmation from DM that funding had been approved. DM said it was hoped that the build would be run in tandem with Broadford's build. There was some debate about whether the school build would start mid-2026 or later.
10	25th Anniversary of the Millenium Stone – Durinish Stone Celebration – Saturday 21st June. DC said that there'd been a lot of opposition to the bar not having spirits for sale – it had been intended to serve beers and wine. It was decided that another subcommittee planning meeting was necessary. DC said we could get tickets printed by Strath Print for £63 for 250 tickets.
11	Wrap Signs – MB said that that there's not much to report. She's been in contact with the Police Scotland inspector. MB confirmed she'd also been in contact with the Highland Council access officer in Fort William and she's forwarding it to various bodies at Highland Council for comment on content.
12	Any Other Council Business Windfarm Developments – Katy Lawrence wrote regarding the split of Skye wide fund might be managed and a new working group. Eight out of 15 community councils need to respond by 30th June. JL suggest we should all read the email in full and if agreed say yes and yes to getting someone on the working group either from Dunvegan Trust or the community council. We agreed this would go on the agenda for the next meeting. The meeting discussed that aspirations seem to be changing and that it was being suggested that community benefit money should be used to fund housing. CE said he'd been trying to get Energy for All to offer consultancy on these issues on 'social terms'. Highland Energy Training for Community Councils – Planning Aid Scotland – MB agreed to attend the Zoom meeting. DM said there were huge concerns from members of the public throughout the Highlands about why they're not being listened to and why their objections are being ignored and it is felt if we (community councillors) understand the process better and the complexity of the applications it may help.

	SRUC – Natural Capital Community Benefit Survey – JL said he didn't think it of benefit to us. Highland Council Discretionary Fund – MB Confirmed that we'd had our letter of award today. Highland Council Phase 2 of Community Council Restructure – response needed by 13th August – We're to read in preparation for next meeting. IT Help – SY said please spread the word that Hazel is in the community café on Mondays to help people with IT and phone queries. Macleod Parliament – SY confirmed that she's started a list of jobs for helpers at the parliament in 2026.
13	Next Meeting – Next meeting is 24th June at 7:30pm.