

Minutes of meeting
Tuesday, 15th April 2025
At Brora Community Centre

Present: David Andrews DA (Vice Chair), Gina Stewart GS (Secretary), Robbie MacLennan RM, Peter Fassen de Heer PFDH (Treasurer), Dawn DeHavilland DDH (Minute Secretary) & Richard Gale RG (Highland Councillor)

Also Attending: 6 members of public.

Apologies: Russell Rekhy RR, Becky Clay BC, Ruwan Uduwera-Perera RUP (Councillor)

Welcome: The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes meeting 18th March 2025:

The minutes of last meeting were circulated and accepted on the proposal of Robbie RM and seconded by Peter PFDH.

Police Update:

BCC received an email update:

1 Domestic aggravated assault, 2 males charged.

Overall, the crime rate has increased, however this is due to 20 caravans being broken into in Dornoch, CID have an ongoing investigation.

Peter PFDH advised the police have apologised regarding the lack of updates, they now have a system in place to ensure there is more dialogue & interaction with BCC, however this will not be in person regular email communication is the preferred option. The police will attempt to attend four meetings a year. Peter PFDH & Gina GS attended a meeting last week, Gina will get an email address that the public can use, it was stressed that for urgent issues 101 should still be the main point of contact, for ongoing non urgent issues the public can contact BCC or email the police when the email address becomes available.

Action: Police Email for public to use **Responsible Member:** Gina GS **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Matters arising:

Ongoing from September: Diana Royce DR the red barriers at the bridge are an eyesore, who is responsible for the repair work?

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions)

David DA advised Russell RR has been liaising with a colleague & trying to arrange a face to face visit with SSE will update at the next meeting.

Richard RG it was SSEN who damaged the bridge & working with two separate agencies is causing the frustrating delays.

Action: Russell to update **Responsible Member:** Russell RR **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Ongoing from September: Handrails / white fence opposite the Royal Marine Hotel have now been dismantled, however these have been left in an unsightly pile, the manager at the Royal Marine has been spoken to about this by a member of the public he is unable to remove the items at present, a member of the public has offered to remove the items, all present agreed this was an excellent idea, Gina will contact the Royal Marine to advise.

Robbie RM felt that now there is not a barrier it could be a safety issue, Gina has been in dialogue with the Royal Marine who advised their inhouse health & safety department have no issues & the area is covered under their Public Liability insurance Gina GS has this in writing, should it be required in the future.

Ongoing from October: A member of the public has asked if the Jackie MacLennan memorial stone can be cleaned?

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not discussed.

Action: Update information from stonemason **Member:** Russell Rekhy **Review Date:** 20.05.25 Stonemason contacted – awaiting date & cost

Ongoing from September: Fountain Square repairs are still to be carried out.

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not Discussed.

Action: Chase up repair work **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 15.04.25

Ongoing from September: Clyne Kirkton, Old Parish Church and churchyard 40m N of Balranald, Ellen Lindsay reiterated that Clyne Kirkton is a listed building & the trees are now dangerous.

Richard RG reported a site visit has been carried out by John MacLean from the Highland Council, once the report is completed Richard RG will update BCC.

Ongoing from March: David DA to discuss this with Richard Gale & the Highland Council. If ownership or a course of action can be agreed upon maybe existing Heritage funding can be utilised or an application made for specific funding applied for to enable the work to be undertaken. (See previous minutes for past actions) Gina to contact Nick Lindsay to get up to date information.

Action: Contact Nick Lindsay **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Action: Update on Highland Council Report **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Ongoing from August: Russell RR asked Leslie-Anne if the budget cuts would impact Brora Primary School.

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not discussed.

Action: Update on Primary School **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** Ongoing

Ongoing from September: A road off Cemetery Road (does not have a name) Mosshill, is rarely gritted & has no yellow salt bin. From the floor, graffiti on signs at the top of Academy Street.

Richard RG asked the concerned residents to raise the issue in September when the winter plans are reviewed.

Ongoing from October: Diana Royce reported the handrail at Manse Park needs urgent repair.

Richard Gale RG advised the local council depot are looking to make it safe, he will chase to expedite this.

Action: Request Repair **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Ongoing from October: Nick Lindsay there are no AGM minutes for the last two years.

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not discussed.

Action: Update Facebook **Member:** Russell Rekhy & Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Ongoing from January: Nick Lindsay as the Pylons route has been confirmed which will be directly in front of Carrol Rock asked if the BCC will make representation against this?

15.04.25 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not discussed.

Action: Make representations **Member:** Russell Rekhy & BCC **Review Date:** Ongoing 20.05.25

Ongoing from February: Back Shore sewage pipe has been repaired. However the old pipe has been discarded on the beach, Richard Gale to chase Scottish Water as this is a health hazard.

Action: Contact Scottish Water **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Ongoing from February: From the Floor: What is the timeline for the Website & the Facebook page to be live? Ruwan (RUP) refused to be held to a timeline due to other commitments.

15.04.2025 Not Discussed

Action: Update on Website going live **Member:** Ruwan Uduwera-Perera **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Ongoing from February: From the Floor: What is happening with the Brora Place Plan

15.04.2025 Please see Community Feedback (See previous minutes for past actions)

Action: Complete Place Plan **Member:** Brora Community Council **Date:** Review 20.05.25 - Ongoing

Ongoing from February: From the Floor: Can something be done about the 30 Mile sign when entering Brora from the North as it looks unsightly, due to the fact it has been stuck over the previous sign. Richard RG will contact Transport Scotland & BEAR to request the signs are corrected.

Action: Contact Transport Scotland & BEAR **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Ongoing from March: From the Floor: Upgrade of the Sub Station in progress although no prior notification has been received. David DA will investigate & report back at the next meeting.

15.04.2025 Not Discussed

Action: Visit Sub Station **Member:** David Andrews, BCC **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Councillor Update:

Ongoing from September: Richard RG: Manhole cover & the broken lamppost at 16 Johnstone place have both been repaired.

Richard RG advised that residents can report any issues directly to the Highland Council either through the Website or by telephone.

From the floor: A resident from the sheltered housing complex, asked when their properties would be updated, 11 homes, as others in the area have had the work completed, Richard RG will update at the next BCC meeting. The residents are also disappointed by the new bin system, as it's felt that the residents already pay more council tax than other properties in the local vicinity, Richard RG explained the background behind the new bins landfill bill etc.

Richard RG advised that regarding the War Memorial a survey had been carried out by Fairhurst Consulting and Structural Engineers. BCC has past information that may be useful Gina GS to forward the relevant emails to Richard RG.

Action: Update BCC with report details **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Action: Email information to Richard RG **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Correspondence:

15.04.2025 Not Discussed.

Ongoing from March: Email received from Brora Development Trust with regards to Local Energy Scotland request a meeting be set up between BDT & BCC. Gina to contact Sarah to arrange this.

Action: Contact BDT **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Planning Issues:

Bess Sub Group meeting:

BESS nothing significant to report.

Peter PFDH has received a reply from SSEN, whilst not totally unhelpful many of the answers are quite vague, therefore the Bess Sub Group will discuss and update at the next meeting.

Pollie Hill following the site visit there was confusion about the boundaries, Richard RG advised there is an interactive map available on the Highland Council website, Peter PFDH to liaise with Liam Clancy (Highland Council) for more details.

Ongoing from March: Following discussion, it was agreed the Sub Group would work with the community to set up a campaign to encourage Brora to be informed & working together to have a valid say.

From the Floor: Attendees of the Pollie Hill sit visit felt that Nick Lindsay passed on a wealth of information about the significance of the area regarding historical & archaeological sites, much of which locals weren't aware of. It was felt more work needs to be done to protect this area not only from the Pylons but also the ground works, as the heritage of the area is in great danger of being destroyed & it cannot be replaced.

15.04.2025 Not Discussed

Action: Campaign **Member:** Sub Group **Review Date:** 20.05.25

Action: Access interactive map **Member:** Peter PFDH **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Ongoing from October: Clynelish Distillery, BCC to approach Diageo asking for an official response on the prospect of having a BESS so close to the Clynelish distillery.

15.04.2025 (See previous minutes for past actions) Not Discussed

Action: Contact Clynelish Distillery **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Ongoing from October: BCC to approach Golspie Fire Department for their view on the BESS proposal.

Action: Contact Fire Department **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Treasurers Report:

£8254.85

3 Payments: Minutes, Micro Grants.

Kirsty Partridge from the Gordon Bush Community Fund, following discussions with Peter PFDH, advised £3000 will be transferred to the BCC imminently, initially £4000 has been requested this was reduced to £3000 as previous funding going back to 2021 had not been used.

All present felt the micro grants need more publicity as not all Brora residents realise what is available £250 per individual & £500 per group, Gina GS to produce posters & ask for it to be put on the BCC Facebook page. Richard RG advised there may be a discretionary fund available to help support the Annex, Gina GS to contact Liam Clancy for more information

Action: Poster & Facebook **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Action: Contact Liam Clancy **Member:** Gina Stewart **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Community Feedback

From the Floor: Academy Street road repairs have been carried out, however the graffiti on the signs at the top of Academy Street still need cleaning, (Salt Bins covered in Matters Arising)

Following discussion Richard RG advised BCC to check who needs salt bins over the summer then report back to him in September. BCC to discuss how this will be carried out.

Action: Contact relevant Departments **Member:** Richard Gale RG **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Action: Survey residents re Salt Bins **Member:** BCC **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

From the Floor: Place Plan, why isn't it ever discussed in matters arising? Extreme disappointment this still hasn't been completed, following discussions David DA (Chair) advised Russell has been liaising with a consultant who has carried out much of the work, BCC are awaiting the outcome of a funding request from Kilbraur Wind Farm Community Benefit Trust for £2500. It was pointed out that it would only be a paper exercise as no community consultation has been carried out, which is the basic premise of a place plan. There was confusion as to what extension time BCC had been given to complete the work, after checking the Highland Council Website Peter PFDH gave the following information Local Place Plan submissions that pass the validation check by Friday 27 June 2025 will be registered, if that deadline is missed then the next validation check is Friday 12 December 2025, Richard RG advised the place plans must be submitted well before these dates in order for the validation checks to be processed.

Ellen Lindsay once again offered the services of the Brora Development Trust to work with BCC to complete the Place Plan if the BCC are aiming to work to the December 2025 deadline. BCC to Liase with BDT to decide how to move forward to get the Place Plan completed. Ellen Lindsay also confirmed no charge would be made for their work.

All present agreed the Place Plan should include the aspirations of the local community.

David DA (Chair) will discuss with the BCC & ensure the Place Plan is an ongoing & updated item in future BCC meetings.

Action: Ensure always discussed in Matters Arising **Member:** BCC **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Action: Liaise with Brora Development Trust **Member:** BCC **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

From the Floor: It was agreed the light up "Slow Down" signs are very effective as a speed deterrent.

Peter PFDH (on behalf of Ruwan RUP) There is a concern about campfires, BBQs etc especially on the beach near the Harbour given that Wildfire Alerts have been issued across the Highlands, following discussion it was agreed BCC would put up posters in the local area stating "No Fires", the exception to this is the Muirburn, a traditional practice in the Scottish Highlands, involves the controlled burning of heather and other moorland vegetation to promote new growth, improve grazing, and manage habitats, the standard muirburn season runs from 1 October to 15 April. Richard RG Rangers are to educate (mainly tourists) they have no powers of enforcement, if necessary, they will call the police, the public should call the Fire Brigade if they are concerned about campfires etc. They should be aware of their own safety if approaching anyone about fires.

Action: BCC & Gina to produce Posters & Signs **Member:** BCC, Gina GS **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

David DA (Chair) informed those present that the Loth Burn bridge on the John o' Groats Trail has been completed & all are invited to the opening ceremony on 24th April 2025 16.00 18.00, parking is available at Crakaig Farm.

David DA (Chair) Brora Rangers Football Club have won the Highland league title & there are more games ahead for people to show their support: 3 games left, the HL cup final this Saturday, a two game playoff against East Kilbride, If they win on aggregate, they will play the bottom team of SPFL2 home and away on dates yet to be decided.

Action: BCC & Gina to produce Posters & Signs **Member:** BCC, Gina GS **Review Date:** 20.05.2025

Micro Grant Applications: Discussed in Follow on Meeting.

Date & Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 20.05.2025 7PM, BESS Sub Group Monday 12.05.2025