

**Islay Community Council Meeting  
Minutes  
Service Point, Bowmore – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 18:30**

Item		Action
1	<p><b>Present &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p><b>Present:</b> Islay McEachern (IME), Convenor Jim Porteous (JP), Secretary Richard Mansbridge (RM) Tom Skinner (TS) Colin Fraser (CF), Joint Treasurer Frazer Campbell (FWC), Joint Treasurer Councillor Dougie McFadzean (DMF) Sgt Matthew Shaw – Police Scotland Meghan McLoone – Police Scotland Lucy Schwind (LS) Minute Taker</p> <p><b>Apologies/Absent:</b> Jim MacCalman (JMC) Alyson MacGillivray (AMG) Garry MacLean (GML), Vice Convenor Councillor Alastair Redman (AR) Councillor Anne Horn (AH) Chris Abell (CA) Sandy Taylor (ST) Scott Currie (SC)</p> <p><b>Members of the public:</b> Greig Morrison Jean Knowles</p>	
2	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> None</p>	
3	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026</b></p> <p>The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by CF and seconded by RM.</p>	
4	<p><b>Matters Arising/Action Points</b></p> <p><b>Waste Bin at Uiskentuie</b> DMF – requested this stay as an action until the bin is back in situ. He has been promised a weekly update from A&amp;B Council. (June) <i>March Update: This is very sensitive because of the new fencing which has been installed. JP proposed that the council consider positioning the waste bin in the cross houses area as an accessible alternative. DMF to will ask the question.</i></p> <p><b>Julian Green Update/Flooding at Port Ellen</b> (December 2025) <i>March Update: DMF spoke to CA and ST a few days ago. Mark Calder at the council will be liaising with CMAL regarding the works starting at Port Ellen in the summer as part of the plan is to dredge the bay to make it deeper which may have a positive impact. SEPA are not marking this as a problem area under their current plans, and it will be 2028 before these are updated. Mark Calder is taking this on as a project and DMF has signposted CA and ST to him.</i></p> <p><b>Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP)</b> GML to complete statistical analysis graphs/charts. Meeting to be held after this <i>February Update: GML unable to attend the meeting, action carried forward.</i> <i>March Update: No update from GML, action carried forward</i></p> <p><b>Planning</b> JP – Laphroaig deforestation project. IME expressed concerns over road suitability for the amount of heavy traffic that will be generated for this project. ICC should request the council provides some detail regarding their plans to repair/maintain this road. IME understands that Laphroaig do intend to consult with the community on this project. AH/AR are happy to be included/involved and support this action with the council <i>February Update: DMF will pick up this action with A&amp;B Council</i></p>	<p>DMF</p> <p>GML</p>



	<p><b>Correspondence:</b>  Proposal of new powers for Community Councils is being led by the Isle of Mull, who have suggested a petition. ICC will need to prepare their thoughts on this. IME to recirculate the correspondence.  <i>March Update: JP has circulated a survey which proposes community councils should have same powers as parish councils as England. Is there sufficient enthusiasm and drive on Islay for this? JP will recirculate to the ICC committee</i></p> <p>Emergency Action Plan – who is going to lead/chair this (was this going to be led by the Police)? MML and GD to take this action and find out who is dealing with this.  <i>March Update: DMF it will be the police who manage this</i></p> <p>Loganair Action  <i>March Update: JP been in touch with the director of Loganair who would like to liaise with ICC. JP to follow up for a meeting date.</i></p>	JP
5	<p><b>Police Report</b>  MML from the start of February calls for Islay and Jura totalled 30 of which there were 10 crimes recorded. On a positive note, the team have been gathering intel on drugs in the local area which will enable them to be more proactive in the future on both Islay and Jura. They received a few public protection calls which has instigated liaison opportunities with the school and more engagement is planned for April. Both MML and Georgia will be leading on a traffic/driving initiative for older students who are about to start driving/driving which will also include general drinking/vaping etc.</p> <p>The team now have one full time member of staff back in service, so they are back to 4 officers. They are expecting another 2 officers in May and another secondee for 6 months. Meghan and Georgia will stay on Islay until July.</p> <p>Follow up on Feis Ile – this has now been passed on to operational planning. A paper has been submitted which highlights the population uplift during this time period and this is now with the planning team to allocated the resources that are required.</p> <p>Sgt Shaw (MS). MS is undertaking a fact finding project to review the Southern Hebridean Policing Model, in line with the Chief Constable’s 2030 Vision. He will be making evidence-based recommendations, to drive continuous improvement in policing for the communities of the Southern Hebrides. It will link to the 4 pillars of the 2020 vision – Safer Communities / Less Crime/ Supported Victims / Thriving Workforce.</p> <p>Scope of review covers everything connected with Policing the Islands: Office numbers, shift patterns, estate strategies, fleet, service delivery, response times, Officer welfare, public engagement strategies, victim support, stakeholder support, etc. The project will review evidence from data, crime records, stakeholder engagement (internal and external) and create a series of recommendations. It is important that the community voice is part of this.</p> <p>From the above field of information evidence-based recommendations will be developed that will be put forward for consideration by Police Scotland’s leadership and become potential projects in their own right.</p>	
6	<p><b>Councillor A Horn</b>  Councillor Horn was unable to attend the meeting.</p>	
7	<p><b>Councillor D McFadzean</b>  Update from DMF – full details are in Appendix C  Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New housing at Port Charlotte – he is looking to confirm an ‘opening ceremony’ of the new street. The next phase will be about 20 more houses. Emerivale should be complete by the summer.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uptake in benefits enquiries – people are struggling now.</li> <li>• He will be taking on the roll of chair of the corporate parenting board</li> <li>• Roads DMF has been lobbying for additional funding and has managed to secure around £1.1m for Islay and Jura to support roadworks.</li> </ul> <p>JP has circulated an email to ICC committee regarding the footpath proposal from Port Askaig to Bowmore.</p> <p>FC – are the complaints regarding the gate at Kilnaughton similar to those at Uiskentuie. DMF is aware of the details of this.</p> <p>IME: Public toilets, what’s happening with these? DMF – there is a high potential that these would be given back to the community to manage as they are able to apply for funding to support this (when the council cannot).</p>	
8	<p><b>Councillor A Redman</b></p> <p>AR summarised key elements of his monthly report. The full report is in Appendix A</p>	
9	<p><b>Treasurer’s Report</b></p> <p>FC bank balance as of 6/3/2026 £2709.75. 4 cheques overdue and another 2 today. £650 to return to ICAP.</p> <p>DMF believes there will be an uplift in grants to community councils in the next financial year.</p>	
10	<p><b>ICC Ferry Committee</b></p> <p>See Appendix B for the full report. This has been circulated by JP.</p> <p>JP has been reassured by CalMac today that IOI will be in place for the summer timetable on 27<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>ICCFC were told there would be a community event when the ship arrives, which CalMac have not yet delivered. A competition was held for the local school children to design pictures for display on the new vessel but the winners are still not aware when a promised onboard viewing will take place.</p> <p>ICCFC recently found out that there is an issue with carriage of certain Dangerous Goods on new vessels, including petrol, due to changes in application of MCA regulations – the committee has chased CalMac for an update and has meantime requested that MV Finlaggan remains on the service with IOI until or unless an alternative solution is found.</p> <p>Winter timetable – the ability to get off and on the island for a full day on a Saturday is key. The current draft does not meet this requirement. ICCFC have requested a change and have suggested a possible solution.</p> <p>RM: servicing schedule for new ferries. JP: ICCFC were given the option of ½ day per week or 1 day per month. ICCFC chose the least disruptive ½ day per week option</p> <p>Port Askaig – a traffic management plan is needed to deal with the increased volumes at Port Askaig. CalMac have engaged consultants to create a report, which is now overdue for release and further discussion with ICCFC.</p> <p>IME: despite asking the question, it remains unclear who has overall responsibility for health and safety at Port Askaig.</p> <p>Port Ellen development - £107m funding has been confirmed and the port is expected to be closed to ferries for 2.5 years from June. ICCFC have requested additional funding for the roads to help enable them to cope with the increased volume of traffic moving between North and South of the island. There is also a question of increased congestion at Bowmore which will additionally be affected by the current closure of the high road. This request is now sitting with A&amp;B Council and the Cabinet Secretary.</p>	
11	<p><b>Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP)</b></p>	

	No updates	
12	<p><b>Planning Reports</b></p> <p>SC has sent planning report on email which has been circulated –</p> <p>Solar Panels - on the swimming pool and Donald Caskie square  4 new houses at Neriby Cottage, Bridgend  Peat restoration on the Oa and peat harvesting at Glen Machrie  The use of room at Consiby for an on-line whisky shop  Gearach Farm (Distillery) variations.  Erection of water treatment works facility and formation of access road at Lotts</p> <p>A key point of note is the feasibility study into a Port Askaig to Bridgend foot and cycle path</p>	
13	<p><b>CNI (Carbon Neutral Islands) Project</b></p> <p>TS will provide an update after the end of the financial year</p>	
14	<p><b>Bowmore Hall Update</b></p> <p>DMF has received an email from IDI to advise they have now completed the procurement process and have offered the contract (although they will still be £24k short of the planned total costs). They hope to start work March/April with an aim to be completed by November.</p>	
15	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Power – Deborah Bryce is hoping to attend next meeting to deliver a presentation</li> <li>• A resident complained about decisions made by ferry captains and requested this was raised with CalMac. The question of apparent inconsistency in some decisions has been raised by ICCFC on several occasions.</li> </ul>	
16	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>RM is a trustee of This is Islay Podcast which is now an award-winning podcast after winning the Highland and Islands Podcast of the Year. As a result of this there is now a new mobile mast on the island, to the north of Machir Bay.  FC – there has been an issue in the Port Ellen over the last few days area with a poor phone signal. DMF advised this was due to lightning strikes a few days ago.</p>	
17	<p><b>Date/venue for Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 18:30, Service Point, Bowmore</p>	

## **Appendix A – Councillor A Redman – report**

It has been another busy and productive period representing residents on Islay and across the Kintyre and the Islands ward, with a continued focus on the key issues that matter most to people living and working in our communities.

Over the course of the month, I have spent time out and about speaking directly with constituents across a wide range of areas, including Portnahaven, Port Wemyss, Bruichladdich, Port Charlotte, Port Ellen, the Oa, Bowmore, Port Askaig and Keills. These conversations remain invaluable, providing a clear and honest picture of the day-to-day challenges facing our communities.

### **Council Tax and Cost of Living Pressures**

A dominant concern raised repeatedly with me is the continued increase in Council Tax. Residents are rightly frustrated at what now amounts to a near 20% increase over the past two years.

I want to be absolutely clear: at the Full Council meeting, I opposed these increases and voted against them. I do not believe it is acceptable to place this level of additional burden on households, particularly at a time when many people are already struggling with the wider cost of living.

The strength of feeling on this issue is significant and entirely justified, and I will continue to reflect that in my work and challenge decisions that place undue pressure on local residents.

### **Value for Money and Local Services**

Linked closely to taxation concerns is the question of value for money. Many residents have raised concerns about missed or delayed bin collections and a perceived decline in the consistency of basic services.

People are asking a simple and reasonable question: if they are paying more, they should expect reliable services in return. I have raised these concerns and will continue to press for improvement and accountability where standards are not being met.

### **Patient Transport and Reimbursement Delays**

Concerns have also been raised with me regarding NHS patient travel and the length of time it is taking for expenses to be reimbursed.

Residents are often required to pay significant sums upfront for travel and accommodation in order to attend medical appointments off-island. Delays in reimbursement are causing real financial strain, particularly for those already under pressure.

I have written to NHS Highland to raise these concerns and to seek clarity on how these delays will be addressed. Access to healthcare should not depend on an individual's ability to carry upfront costs for extended periods.

### **Roads, Infrastructure and Local Environment**

Concerns around road conditions remain widespread, with potholes and general deterioration continuing to be raised in multiple areas. These are not minor inconveniences — they affect safety, vehicle costs and day-to-day life.

In addition, issues such as dog fouling have also been highlighted by residents, particularly in and around village areas.

Flooding and drainage issues also continue to be raised, reinforcing the need for sustained investment in infrastructure across the island.

## **Kilchoman Cemetery**

I have continued to pursue concerns relating to Kilchoman Cemetery, where issues around maintenance and the condition of the area around the old church remain a concern. This is not a new matter, and I have raised it previously.

While I understand that there are health and safety considerations linked to the ruins of the old church, residents are entitled to ask why some areas are being maintained while others nearby are not. I will continue pressing for a sensible and respectful resolution to this issue.

## **Housing and Social Conditions**

Housing remains a significant concern. I have been contacted by residents facing challenges with the condition of social housing, as well as ongoing difficulties in accessing suitable accommodation.

These are not isolated cases, and there is a clear need for stronger oversight and improved standards. Safe, secure and well-maintained housing should not be a luxury — it is a basic expectation.

I will continue engaging with housing providers and the Council to ensure that these concerns are taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

## **Benefits Enquiries and Support**

During this period, I have also dealt with a number of benefits-related enquiries from constituents, reflecting the wider financial pressures many households are currently facing.

In some cases, residents are seeking support simply to navigate systems that can be slow, complex and difficult to access. These are not minor issues — they directly affect people's day-to-day stability and wellbeing.

Where I am able to assist, I will continue to do so, and I remain mindful that access to clear information and timely support is essential, particularly in rural and island communities.

## **Support for Local Foodbanks**

I also want to recognise the vital work carried out by foodbanks across Kintyre and the Islands, and more widely across Argyll and Bute.

These organisations provide essential support to individuals and families facing real hardship, often stepping in where other systems fall short. Their work is carried out with dedication, dignity and a strong sense of community.

Where possible, I make a point of supporting local foodbanks, including on Islay and in Tarbert, through donations made via the appropriate collection points. That is not something I speak about for recognition, but it is important to acknowledge the value of these services and the people who keep them going.

## **Food Security and Local Producers**

In discussions with residents this month, I have also heard continued concern about food security and the importance of backing local producers.

I have spoken with constituents about the vital role played by our farmers, crofters and fishermen in sustaining island life and strengthening local resilience. Their contribution is fundamental not only to the economy, but also to the long-term wellbeing and self-sufficiency of our communities.

These sectors deserve practical support and proper recognition, particularly at a time when many are facing continued pressure and uncertainty.

## **Supporting Small and Family-Run Businesses**

I have also heard clearly from residents the importance of supporting our small local businesses and family-run enterprises.

These businesses remain central to community life. They provide employment, keep money circulating locally and offer essential services, particularly in areas where choice and access can be limited.

Supporting local businesses and encouraging people to shop local wherever possible remains an important part of maintaining strong and sustainable communities.

### **Local Economy and Fair Funding**

There is also a growing sense of frustration regarding the balance between what Islay contributes economically and what it receives in return.

The island plays a significant role in Scotland's economy, particularly through the whisky industry, which generates substantial revenue. However, many residents feel that this is not reflected in the level of public investment or infrastructure support provided locally.

There remains a strong feeling that communities which contribute so much should see a fairer return in the form of better services, improved infrastructure and more meaningful local investment.

### **Welcoming the MV Isle of Islay**

I also welcome the arrival of the new MV Isle of Islay, which is a positive and much-needed development for Islay and the wider network.

Our communities have endured far too much disruption and uncertainty for far too long, so any increase in resilience and capacity is to be welcomed. The MV Isle of Islay should help improve service provision and support residents, businesses and the movement of vital freight.

I also want to place on record my appreciation for CalMac's front-line staff, both on board and in port, who have continued working hard in difficult circumstances. Many of the frustrations felt locally — many of which I share — are entirely understandable, but those workers have often had to carry the burden of wider system failures not of their making. They deserve recognition for their professionalism and continued service.

### **Council Meetings and Representation**

During this period, I participated in the MAKI Area Committee meeting, where I raised a number of important issues affecting communities across the ward.

This included ongoing concerns around flooding and drainage, housing matters, and planning regulations — particularly where restrictions can be overly rigid and not always reflect practical realities on the ground.

I also contributed to discussion around education, specifically raising the importance of ensuring that young people are being taught a broad range of subjects beyond literacy and numeracy. It is essential that pupils in our rural and island communities receive a well-rounded education that properly prepares them for future opportunities.

### **Engagement and Ongoing Work**

I remain committed to being visible and accessible across the island, ensuring that residents' voices are heard and represented.

The concerns raised with me this month are consistent and clear: people want fair taxation, reliable services, better infrastructure, and meaningful support for the local economy.

These are reasonable expectations, and I will continue to press for progress on all of these fronts in the weeks and months ahead.

## Appendix B – ICC Ferry Committee Update

**ICCFC** - last regular meeting 16th March. Draft Minutes to be posted in ICC website.

Other meetings: 6 March JP FCB meeting; 12 March JP CalMac customer steering group; 26 February Port Askaig traffic planning with CalMac/Haskoning; 27 February IME, JP with MSP Jenni Minto.

### Key issues:

Again, a number of sailings were cancelled/diverted due to weather. The point has been made with CalMac and with our MSP about the ongoing apparent inconsistency of some weather-related cancellation decisions.

**Block Bookings** - CalMac's tightening of their management process from 20th October, to help enable better use of available capacity, has coincided with a downturn in distillery production, thus lower volumes. CalMac has reported an overall improvement in block bookings take up, increasing after temporary slippage Dec and Jan, to 78% for February. (There were however 155 reported 'no shows' in Feb, and ICCFC have requested that this is investigated) It is hoped that target of 80% can be exceeded for the future.

**Bookings system.** The long-awaited fix for the unwieldy Islay 2-port booking system for ports staff is now expected to be included in CalMac's June amendment update. Former Waitlist procedures are under review, with Islay and Little Minch due to be used as pilots to test a revised process which CalMac is planning during a four-week period in May/June - ICCFC is awaiting further news and consultation from CalMac.

**New vessels.** 'Isle of Islay' is expected to be able to join service in time for start of the summer timetable on 27th March. ICCFC has chased up CalMac in respect of their earlier commitment regarding her introduction to the Islay community and has expressed disappointment at the lack of engagement on this.

The report which CalMac are expecting from independent consultants, Haskoning, regarding marshalling and parking areas and traffic control measures at Port Askaig has been delayed until later this month. ICCFC has expressed concern regarding this further delay and has requested more consultation prior to finalization, including timelines, with clarification as to who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with all associated Health and Safety regulations.

Funding of £107m for the required development of Port Ellen port has been agreed, with a likelihood of commencement in June. Further to ICCFC's meeting with the Cabinet Secretary in January, Transport Scotland has asked ICCFC for written details of their request for additional funding to assist with road improvement between Port Ellen and Port Askaig to help cope with increased traffic volumes during the estimated two and a half years' closure of Port Ellen ferry terminal. This was done by IME and JP. TS have responded that they will be discussing with A&BC later this month.

**Carriage of Dangerous Goods (DG).** Some weeks ago, ICCFC informed CalMac that a possibility of carriage restrictions for DG on the new vessels had been raised and urgent clarification was needed. After much chasing by ICCFC, CalMac advised that MCA exemptions will not apply to new vessels, meaning that if carrying petrol or some other listed DG products, there will be a severe limit on passenger numbers - only around 30 compared with ship's capacity for 450. Such a major restriction calls into question the practicality of using two new vessels. ICCFC, has been approached by affected users and has subsequently been chasing CalMac for an update on quantities and for their proposals to enable carriage of the amount needed. CalMac has promised to respond as soon as they have reviewed this.

**Winter 2025/6.** Current timetable is based on Finlaggan single vessel despite ICCFC having confirmed the need for the two vessels working together throughout the winter. It had been hoped that Isle of Islay could join the service before the end of this timetable.

**Summer 2026.** ICCFC has requested a reliable two vessel service with timetables that enable travel to/from the island between early am and evenings to enable reasonable time for users to conduct their business in a single day. Also, adequate capacity to meet demand for all, and good public transport connectivity at either end, with a split of calls as near as possible to 50/50 while both Islay ports remain functional. CalMac has agreed to provide two vessels - adding an alternative vessel to the booking system during Finlaggan's drydock in April/May. It has been agreed that Islay will retain Finlaggan, at least until Port Ellen closes.

**Winter 2026/7.** CalMac has sent timetable proposal options to ICCFC based on:

1. Isle of Islay + Finlaggan
2. Isle of Islay + Loch Indaal

ICCFC has asked CalMac to look at how best to carry restricted DG and to consider the earliest Saturday am sailings from Islay going direct to Kennacraig instead of via Colonsay, to facilitate sports and other activities.

**Other -**

**Ferries Community Board** - still seeking a replacement chair. There are some board member vacancies. At the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March, the board discussed a revised remit, which they had drafted to help fit with the revised criteria of the new ferries contract and this must be approved by the Tripartite (CalMac, CMAL and Transport Scotland). Individual members, including JP, have picked up a range of tasks in this connection.

## Appendix C – Islay Community Council – Dougie McFadzean Update

Since the last community Council meeting, some of my local activities (over and above the more routine enquiries) have included –

- I pushed on the hand-over date for the new houses at Robin Currie Way, Port Charlotte after repeated delays. I directly helped three families secure a new tenancy at this location and am delighted, as are they, that they are finally in their new homes. I will continue to positively influence house building on Islay as the need still exists.
- I am involved in re-designing the dialysis service for Argyll and Bute, with several patients here on Islay hopefully benefitting from an improved service.
- I have been arranging an increasing number of benefits support appointments and supporting island residents in securing the most financial support they can get, along with continuing to signpost people to our amazing foodbank.
- I have met with the Council Chief Social Work Officer on several occasions to deal with island issues, some of which appeared on social media.
- I am currently re-designing the Corporate Parenting Board which has responsibility to ensure our cared for young people have the best lives possible. There are quite a few people on Islay supported by the Board and my aim is to make it better, more visible and more engaging.
- I have met with Tom Murphy and Mark Calder from the Roads and Infrastructure team where we talked in detail about several issues on Islay. There are plans afoot to resolve these issues, but some will take a considerable amount of time to resolve.
- I am helping the community of Port Charlotte deal with and address the ongoing, and urgent coastal erosion issues in the village. I visited the site again today.
- I have had a couple of in person meetings with Jenni Minto where we are working jointly on local issues, including infrastructure, health and social care and housing.
- I have been working away on the Health and Social Care budget, which will be decided next week at our Integration Joint Board. This directly affects our islands with regards to hospital care, wider medical care, social care, care at home and our third sector care providers.
- I have been actively lobbying for additional spending on Islay and Jura's roads and am pleased to say that we will be allocated around £1.1 Million this coming financial year. This is significantly more than previous years.
- The work will include resurfacing around 5000 m<sup>2</sup> of the A847 south of Port Charlotte, which is much needed.
- The first batch of funding for a new Jura ferry has been secured from the Scottish Govt. The final batch will be delivered next year and a new ferry will be built. I will ensure community consultation take place.
- I attended the recent Home Energy roadshow at Port Ellen and have been publicising the great work the team are doing.
- I had the honour to be invited to the formal naming of the John McAlpine play park in Tarbert. Named after the late Councillor who worked to get this park delivered, along with the help of others.
- I am working with a few schools to help highlight the issue of speeding past the schools and will be trying to get the speed limits reduced to 20mph.
- I have been dealing with a few cemetery issues re rabbits and general condition, which are all being sorted now.
- I helped push on the signing off of the new play park at the Ramsay hall and am very grateful to Hugh O'Neil from the Council and SID for their efforts in getting this over the line.
- I am working with several groups on Islay and Jura re new funding opportunities and talk with the council funding team very regularly. I am meeting them on Friday on the mainland re a number of projects.