

**Islay Community Council Meeting
Minutes
Service Point, Bowmore – 29th October 2025 at 18:30**

Item		Action
1	Present & Apologies Present: Garry MacLean (GML), Vice Convenor Islay McEachern (IME), Convenor Jim Porteous (JP), Secretary Frazer Campbell (FWC), Joint Treasurer Councillor Anne Horn (AH) Councillor Alastair Redman (AR) – Video Link Alyson MacGillivray (AMG) Tom Skinner (TS) Richard Mansbridge (RM) Chris Abell (CA) Sandy Taylor (ST) Gillian Neal – Adult Services Manager for Health & Community Care Fiona MacGillivray – INHT Secretary & Project Coordinator – Invasive Plant Project, Islay & Jura (FMG) Lucy Schwind (LS) Minute Taker Member of the Public Dietmar Finger Apologies/Absent: Colin Fraser (CF), Joint Treasurer Jim MacCalman (JMC) Scott Currie (SC) Councillor Dougie McFadzean (DMF)	
2	Declarations of Interest None	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting 25th September 2025 The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by ST and seconded by CA.	
4	Matters Arising/Action Points Presentation from SSE <i>October Update: Action Closed</i> Waste Bin at Uiskentuie DMF – requested this stay as an action until the bin is back in situ. He has been promised a weekly update from A&B Council. (June) <i>October Update: No update. AH has met with a councillor last week – about bus shelters and the waste bin. Still waiting for a response. AH will also chase again.</i> Julian Green Update Flooding at Port Ellen. <i>October Update: CA updated the committee. CT has received some anecdotal information from residents regarding previous flooding events. Proposing a leaflet drop to garner more factual data. Help is requested from AH/DMF/AR in order to gain a clear understanding of what the current position is.</i> IME – ACHA had houses flooded on Frederick Crescent and during the process of restoration these have been flooded again	DMF/ AH ST CA AR AH DMF

	<i>DF – suggested that the questionnaire includes a section for any ideas/proposals from residents.</i> Treasurers Report – to be within the meeting CNI – to be covered in the meeting. Councillor A Horn Attended A&B Council 'Here to Hear' event. Some concerns were raised with Pippa Milne and Jim Lynch by ICC regarding infrastructure on Islay. ICC also requested feedback from the discussions so that this could be noted and checked against key items raised in the ICAP surveys. It would be useful for ICC to compare and check whether any new issues had emerged. AH will chase this up. Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP) GML to complete statistical analysis graphs/charts. Meeting to be held after this <i>October Update: Action to be carried forward</i> CNI (Carbon Neutral Islands) Project – will be covered in the meeting Bowmore Hall Update – will be covered in the meeting AOCB Mobile Library on Islay. <i>October Update: RM has been in touch with David Protherough and understands that replacement post has been advertised. AR understands there have been no applicants for the role. The organisation who manages this is Live Argyll. AH will get in touch with her contact there to see what can be done.</i> JP – beach cleaning. JP will ask AH regarding any funding available for this. <i>October Update: AH will get in touch with The GRAB Trust who support beach cleaning and see if there is any funding/equipment available. AH will also check with David Gibson regarding community service.</i>	AH GML AH AH
5	Police Report No-one able to attend the meeting due to existing calls. A monthly summary report for the area has been received from the local police force.	
6	Update from Gillian Neal GN informed the group that her remit covers Kintyre, Gigha and Jura as well as Islay and she has been engaging with local communities. Locally, services are run very well. These are supported by committed employees, and they have now managed to recruit to vacancies. They are hoping to start a quarterly newsletter in 2026 to keep local people informed. FC questioned the lack of social workers it was understood it should be 2.7 posts/people and is 0.7. Currently 0.8. GN advised that aspects of the roles are now managed by mainland social workers and this can take the form of in person or remote support sessions. On island is mainly just adult social work provision. CA – What is happening with housing for key workers? GN, they have set up a group to look at accommodation and worked with HSCP/A&B council to provide rental properties for key workers.	
7	Fiona MacGillivray - Invasive Plant Project FMG updated ICC on the project. They are currently mapping invasive plant species across the island to identify where the problem areas are.	

	The Botanist funded a consultancy project in 2024 to establish what budget would be required to remove invasive plants (Gunnera, Himalayan Balsom, Japanese Knotweed). This would cost approximately £52K per island using external contractors. The funding received this year will enable them to plan out the project and they are currently working through all the map sites as well as building up community support. They hope to have sufficient funding for up to 5 people to complete herbicide training. They would like village/island communities to champion someone within their location who would be the key person to identify new outbreaks, undertake the training, and deliver herbicide treatments. FMG plans to complete a leaflet drop in areas where invasive plants have been found to garner support for their removal. TS will put FMG in touch with the invasive species project on Raasay	TS
8	Councillor A Horn AH attended A&B Council's 'Here to Hear' event. This was also attended by ICC and concerns were raised regarding infrastructure on Islay. ICC have requested feedback from A&B Council of any items raised that would be useful for ICC to be aware of. AH will chase this up. Update Report from AH: • I attended the meeting for the update on the Machair offshore windfarm. It was good to see that many of the community concerns that had been raised at earlier presentations had been acknowledged within the updated plan. • It was good to attend the Here to Hear event with Council Leader, Jim Lynch and Chief Executive Pippa Milne on Islay. The audience at the Islay event asked many pertinent questions and raised relevant issues. I will be looking for an update from Councillor Lynch and Ms Milne how they will progress these matters. Unfortunately, following advice against sailing with adverse weather the event on Jura had to be cancelled. I will be expecting a rescheduled meeting as soon as a date can be arranged. • As I travelled round Islay last week on public transport, I noticed that the missing or broken bus shelters have not been repaired. I have raised this with Officers and Councillor Armour as Policy Lead and have requested that there should not be any further undue delay in having the shelters replaced and repaired. The lack of shelter is unpleasant for local people and for visitors travelling around Islay. • I am delighted that the Dog Management Classes will commence shortly in Portnahaven and hopefully other communities can reflect the initiative. • Councillors attended a presentation today on the new method of providing Additional Needs Support to children and young people who require further support. Officers have assured us that pupils should receive the appropriate support according to the assessment of their needs. If parents feel this is not being addressed the relevant Head Teacher should be their first point of communication. I am always available if parents or carers wish to contact me about any issue. • I am happy to continue to give my support to the Friends of Portnahaven Church in their endeavours to bring the Church building in to a community asset. I must commend their efforts. • I was happy to help with several issues raised with me while I was on Islay and I am progressing them with the appropriate department.	AH

	As always Councillor McFadzean has been very supportive with care issues raised by constituents, and I thank him for that.	
9	Councillor D McFadzean Full report on Appendix C In addition, DMF advised the following regarding Bowmore Hall. There has been very little progress because the funding for the hall has not been announced yet. It will be very soon (next week) and then I am assured the work will commence at pace. Contractor quotes have been secured and a timeline for schedule of work is being pulled together. I have spoken with Jonathan re the desperate need to get this over the line and am assured that Council Officers will be working very closely with IDI to make it happen. There should be far more news and progress by the time the next ICC meeting takes place.	
10	Councillor A Redman AR summarised key elements of his monthly report. The full report is in Appendix A	
11	Treasurer's Report FC proposes to wait until the start of the new council term to make any changes to the bank account. No update on current balance. CA – updated the committee that the ICAP grant extension runs out 31/12/2025 (£890 left)	
12	ICC Ferry Committee ICCFC have been successful in obtaining a second vessel for the Islay route. Although this is not providing the level of service that was anticipated due to staffing issues at CalMac as well as berthing issues at Kennacraig. This solution provides extra sailings for the Islay route. Two key concerns are: staffing once the new ferry arrives and health and safety at Port Askaig. ICCFC are now being asked to input into the summer timetable for 2026. TS – are bus connections being taking into consideration with the new timetable? With current sailing schedule it does tie in with foot passengers' onward journeys. JP - we need evidence/complaints where this has been the case in order to raise this with CalMac. ST, ICCFC can use the ICAP feedback data as this also raises similar complaints. See Appendix B for the full report.	
13	Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP) No further action at present.	
14	Planning Reports SC has sent a report which JP has circulated.	
15	CNI (Carbon Neutral Islands) Project TS – CNI are now in the third round of capital funding bids. The first round enabled the installation of the solar array at Castle Hill, which has nearly reached 100mW hours, all of which is feeding into the community benefit fund. They are considering whether to increase the amount of solar in future. The second round enabled the community building solar and battery project which is nearly complete – for one	

	building this has already produced a 60% reduction in their power costs. The third round has been successful with a bid to put a further £400k into improving community buildings across the island. There will be joint island initiatives very shortly. JP – are CNI working with the distilleries ? TS have done some work with the distilleries, most of this has been around the expansion for the SSEN grid and future energy demands of the island (to put into the paper for submission to Ofgem).	
16	Bowmore Hall Update JP/IME – ICC are keen to schedule a meeting with Jonathan Welch and DMF. Ideally with both but if not DMF firstly and JW secondly. An email has been circulated today in which Jonathan has suggested dates to meet with the community council. If anyone is interested in participating in the meeting let JP know. ST: Islay Connections – at their last meeting were considering an Emergency Resilience plan for Islay. This would include ‘warm hubs’ and Bowmore Hall would be the ideal place to be a ‘warm hub’ – this consideration should be included in the future plans for Bowmore Hall. GN/AH/IME commented on their understanding of emergency planning/resilience planning for islay – it does not appear that this has been updated for some time and no update on any action that has been taken by the local council has been received. JP to follow up on this.	All JP
17	Correspondence • BEAR – JP has circulated updates regarding trunk road delays (AR and DMF also doing the same) • Presentation/event held by Machair Wind – attended by RM. ICC have circulated RM's report • Networking event – Rural and Island	
18	AOCB Dietmar Finger has provided DMF with photos of pedestrian crossings as he was taking this to the council. AH will check with DMF regarding this.	AH
19	Date/venue for Next Meeting Next meeting 03/12/2025 at 18:30, Service Point, Bowmore	

Appendix A –

Councillor A Redman – report

Rugby Pitch Vandalism

I have received a large number of inquiries regarding the recent vandalism at the local rugby pitch, where tyre marks have been left across the playing surface. This is deeply disrespectful to the club, its players, and the wider community who use and support the facility.

Sports pitches are important spaces for young people, families, and community events, and it is unacceptable that they are being damaged in this way. I will continue to raise this matter with the relevant authorities to ensure that those responsible are held accountable and that steps are taken to protect community facilities from further vandalism.

Ferry Cancellations

This past month has seen another series of ferry cancellations that have left island residents, visitors, and businesses deeply frustrated. Local people are rightly angry at the disruption this continues to cause for work, family commitments, and the wider economy.

I have been raising these concerns and making it clear that the community deserves better. Promises of improvement must be matched with action — reliable services, proper investment, and clear communication. I will keep pressing until islanders receive the dependable transport links they need and deserve.

Transparency and Governance

I have joined a cross-party campaign — involving Independent, SNP, and Conservative councillors — calling for far greater openness in how Argyll and Bute Council operates.

This campaign demands improvements to Freedom of Information responses, fuller disclosure of contracts, and a cultural shift towards openness. My focus is always to ensure that residents are given honesty and clarity in decision-making.

Bus Shelters

Several bus shelters across the area have been damaged, with some partially destroyed or blown away in recent storms. These shelters are vital for residents — particularly the elderly, school pupils, and anyone who depends on public transport.

I have been pressing for repairs and replacements to be prioritised, so that people are not left standing in unsafe or exposed conditions while waiting for buses. Local infrastructure like this may seem small, but it makes a real difference to daily life, and I will continue to push for quick action.

Port Ellen Maltings Noise Complaints

I have received a significant number of complaints from Port Ellen residents regarding alarms sounding at the Port Ellen Maltings during the early hours of the morning. On several occasions, these alarms have gone on for prolonged periods with no staff present to silence them. This has caused repeated disturbance to households in the surrounding area, leaving residents understandably frustrated.

To address this, I have written formally to the Council's Environmental Health Team asking them to investigate the matter as a potential statutory noise nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. I also requested that the Council engage directly with Diageo, as site operators, to ensure proper out-of-hours procedures are put in place so alarms can be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Residents deserve reassurance that their concerns are being taken seriously, and I will continue to press for action until this issue is properly resolved.

Budget Black Hole – A Failure of Local and National Leadership

A newly published report has revealed a £10.5 million budget gap for 2026/27, rising to £33.8 million within five years. This is a financial crisis that puts local services under huge strain.

Central government is to blame for delays in budget announcements, while the Council's administration has been too weak in challenging them. I will keep fighting for clear plans and stronger leadership so that residents are not left paying the price for excuses.

ASN Support Under Strain

Despite no official reduction in funding, the reality in schools is that frontline provision for children with Additional Support Needs has been reduced in many areas. Fewer hours of direct support and fewer classroom assistants are leaving vulnerable children without the help they need.

I am pressing the Council to ensure resources are directed to the front line, so that children receive proper one-to-one support, not just promises on paper.

Social Housing Concerns

Tenants across Argyll and Bute are raising concerns about damp, poor insulation, and unresolved maintenance issues in social housing. These conditions are not acceptable.

I will continue to push the administration and housing associations to prioritise repairs and improvements so that every resident has a safe, warm, and decent home.

Roads, Flooding and Street Lighting

Day-to-day infrastructure remains one of the biggest concerns I hear about. Potholes are damaging vehicles and creating safety hazards, flooding continues to affect key areas after heavy rain, and broken or poorly maintained street lighting leaves residents feeling unsafe.

I am raising these issues directly with the Council and pressing for quicker action. Residents deserve safe roads, working drains, and reliable lighting in their communities. These may seem like basic services, but they are essential to quality of life and should not be neglected.

Backing Farmers, Crofters and Fishermen

Farmers, crofters, and fishermen remain at the heart of our local economy and our national food security. Yet they continue to face rising costs, weak infrastructure, and damaging policies. Both the Scottish Executive and the UK Government are failing to provide the support they deserve.

I will keep speaking up for them, resisting harmful rewilding schemes, defending fishing rights, and pushing for fair treatment. Supporting our producers means supporting local jobs, sustaining island life, and protecting our food supply.

Closing Commitment

I will continue to work hard for every part of the Kintyre and the Islands ward, without fear or favour, always putting my constituents first.

Appendix B – ICC Ferry Committee Update

ICCFC - last regular meeting 29th Sept - next Tue 28 Oct. Draft Minutes posted in ICC website.

Other meetings: IME & JP round table meeting chaired by Jenni Minto 29 Sept and 'Gateway assurance review' meeting with SG representatives 2 Oct, regarding the Port Ellen terminal project.

Key issues progressed by ICCFC include:

Fri 26th Sept, same captain as before cancelled four of six Finlaggan sailings due to weather, causing major disruptions. Then a further two sailings on Thu 2nd Oct, four on Fri 3rd Oct, three on Sat 4th Oct, one on Sun 5th Oct and two on Fri 24th Oct in apparently moderate conditions. ICCFC has again protested and sought clarification, arguing that during single vessel timetable, a consistent reliable approach was essential. MSP Jenni Minto has passed a copy of this on to the heads of CalMac.

Summer 2025 - despite evidence of need for two vessels, CalMac reduced the Islay service to single vessel only, with Finlaggan - from 8 Sept until 19 Oct. After serious concerns raised by ICCFC with CalMac's CEO and Transport Scotland, copied to MSP, Jenni Minto, CalMac subsequently agreed a minor mitigation during these six weeks, returning Isle of Arran to the route from 15th - 18th Sept to relieve pressure. Also agreed to cancel the Islay/Colonsay link and to ask all block booking hauliers to review their needs and where possible, reduce to more realistic levels. (In the month of August, only 53% of block booked space was actually used). For the 6 weeks 8 Sept to 19 Oct, space equal to about 500 car spaces has been gained by this action. However, irrespective of these measures, the single vessel service as predicted, fell short of meeting demand which resulted in distress and inconvenience for many.

Isle of Arran had her scheduled drydock, until 23rd Oct and Caledonian Isles finally completed repairs after 18 months' absence. CalMac's earlier decision to reduce Islay to single vessel, was made on the assumption that C/Isles would remain absent. ICCFC pressed urgently for another vessel to be deployed to the Islay route to provide a much needed 2-vessel service. This did not happen in time for closure of the Summer 2025 timetable on 19th October but it has been implemented for part of the Winter timetable from 26th Oct to 21st Nov. The revised timetable is an improvement on capacity but falls short on frequency, with no 7.00 am sailings from Islay (said to be due to unavailability of shore crew). ICCFC has asked CalMac to reconsider.

Bookings system. Long awaited fix for the unwieldy Islay 2-port booking system has recently been introduced. Although an improvement for customers, unfortunately it does not yet work for port staff systems. ICCFC are continuing to press for a solution.

New vessels. 'Isle of Islay' is currently expected to join the service early December if all trials are successful. CalMac has commissioned independent experts to examine layout of marshalling and parking areas at Port Askaig, including health and safety aspects. They have agreed to inform ICCFC informed of progress and conclusions, bearing in mind the concerns previously raised by ICCFC with A&BC, and the difficulty experienced in obtaining information. We have recently been told that this is unlikely to be concluded before January, after arrival of the new vessel, and have asked what this means in terms of compliance with safety requirements.

Winter 2025/6. CalMac have opened the timetable based on Finlaggan single vessel but with Isle of Islay to be added when she joins service. ICCFC have confirmed the need for the two vessels working together and have asked that the booking system is updated to include these

as soon as possible. ICCFC has previously asked that calls at PE should be maintained by Finlaggan while this port remains open. ICCFC has also requested that a second vessel should be provided to work with Finlaggan from the start until Isle of Islay joins the service. So far, IOA has been agreed only until 21st Nov.

Summer 2026. CalMac is seeking to open consultations on this timetable and has asked for any proposals to be sent to them by latest 14th November.

Other -

CV Block Bookings - tightening of management control and firm application of rules implemented by CalMac on 20th October. Includes charging for 'no shows' that were not pre-advised and reducing allocations to align more closely with actual hauliers' take up. Closer monitoring of usage.

Advanced Standby procedures - ICCFC has for months been requesting copy of a paper from Alan Hood concerning proposed changes. E-mails to him have been ignored and finally, after escalating within CalMac, we obtained a message on 14th Oct from Caroline Black, head of customer experience, to say that Terry and Finlay would be consulting with us on the subject. To be raised again at the ICCFC meeting.

Ferries Community Board - A meeting took place with Transport Scotland to discuss progress regarding the new CHFS 3 contract, including KPI's. The next full board meeting is due on 5th December. The chair, Angus Campbell, will be stepping down to take over as Chair of HIE and a replacement for the FCB is being sought. Three new members have been appointed and there are still some vacancies.

Appendix C - Cllr Dougie McFadzean – Islay Community Council Report, October 2025

Since the last Islay CC meeting, I have had another extremely busy period. To summarise my work directly relating to Islay I can report as follows

- I have again been helping key workers secure accommodation on Islay in order they can take up permanent offers of employment, which is crucial to the resilience of our island community. These posts include health care, social care and emergency services. There has been significant success with these endeavours, and we are seeing an increase in accommodation being provided. The work will continue and gather pace.
- I have also been assisting several others to secure temporary and permanent housing on the island with a degree of success. This is a never-ending piece of work due to the continued high housing demand on Islay. I have also been trying to help individuals find the 'right size' of home by either downsizing or upsizing. Further, I am delighted to see that West Highland Housing Association's development in Port Charlotte is almost ready and homes there are in the process of being offered to potential tenants. That's 16 brand new homes for Islay! This should also have the effect of opening up housing across Islay with the movement generated with the addition of these new homes. I am also aware that the new houses in Port Ellen are nearing completion and hoping to be allocated early in 2026. I sit on the board of West Highland Housing and continue to advocate for more housing on Islay at board level.
- I continue to support the local social work dept and social care services with some issues. These relate to person centered care and resource issues. This is a growing area of my work. It is beneficial that the Chief Social Work Officer for Argyll and Bute makes himself very readily available to meet and chat about issues here on Islay, and beyond.
- I have attended several Carbon Neutral Islay steering group meetings. You will now be seeing the ongoing panel fitting at our community buildings. I am currently filling in as Chair of this group on a temporary basis
- I'm also working with several groups at looking into the possibility of a Single Authority Model for Argyll and Bute/NHS Highland. This is a project that could potentially be transformational for our people and services. I'm a member of the short life working group within the Council attempting to develop the thinking behind this model
- I have been attending more presentations from the Scottish Power Renewables team who are developing the Machair Wind project off the coast of Islay, Jura and Colonsay and am working with them and our communities. I'm also a member of an SSE steering group working on infrastructure projects across the MAKI area and we had a meeting last week where I raised concerns re some planned work for Islay and mainland Kintyre
- I have been liaising closely with the Policy Lead for Roads and Infrastructure and council officers regarding the ongoing road works and associated work to ensure all that we were promised is being delivered. Unfortunately, there has been issues getting materials over on the ferry, so some planned capital work will be delayed, which includes the A847 from Port Charlotte to Portnahaven. The jet patcher was working on this stretch of road a couple of weeks ago, but the surface requires far more in-depth work to bring it up to a decent standard
- As a result of flagging up several concerns, our Environmental Warden has visited Islay again enforcing legislation and will continue to do so. Parking in disabled spaces has long been an issue in Bowmore, so enforcement action will be undertaken
- Again, I have met with very many constituents and am helping them with concerns re housing, power supply, social care, community service and personal issues plus many other things. I'm always happy to help where I can and encourage constituents to contact

me if they think I can help. My Saturday job at the Coop often turns into an impromptu Councillor's Surgery, which I welcome

- I continue to support the community groups who are looking after Bowmore Church (Friends of Bowmore Church) and Kilmeny Church. Along with Cllr Horn, we have been attempting to help the community of Portnahaven/Port Wemyss in their efforts to purchase Portnahaven Church, which is proving challenging and any help from the Community Council would be much appreciated
- On 1st October Cllr Horne and I spent the day on Islay with the Council Chief Executive Pippa Milne and the Council Leader Cllr Jim Lynch, supporting the 'Hear To Hear You' programme where we met with Islay residents, listening to their concerns and aspirations for the island
- I have been attending cyber security presentations held by Police Scotland and would encourage everyone to learn about this crime type. It's scary to see how easy it is to be hacked and become the victim of cybercrime.
- Last Friday I attended the COSLA Health and Social Care Committee where I represent Argyll and Bute. There are some very difficult financial decisions to come in the near future, and we are lobbying both Scottish and UK Governments to ensure Health and Social Care funding is maximised
- Lots of additional work regarding our roads, littering, eco projects etc