

Islay Community Council Meeting Minutes

Service Point, Bowmore – 3rd December 2025 at 18:30

Item	Action
1	<p>Present & Apologies</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Garry MacLean (GML), Vice Convenor Islay McEachern (IME), Convenor Jim Porteous (JP), Secretary Richard Mansbridge (RM) Scott Currie (SC) Frazer Campbell (FWC), Joint Treasurer Joe Tuohy (JT) Thomas Rumgay Meghan Mcloone (Police Scotland) Chris Abell (CA) – Video Link Sandy Taylor (ST) – Video Link Councillor Alastair Redman (AR) – Video Link Councillor Anne Horn (AH) – Video Link Lucy Schwind (LS) Minute Taker</p> <p>Apologies/Absent:</p> <p>Councillor Dougie McFadzean (DMF) Colin Fraser (CF), Joint Treasurer Alyson MacGillivray (AMG) Tom Skinner (TS) Jim MacCalman (JMC)</p>
2	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p>
3	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting 29th October 2025</p> <p>The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by RM and seconded by IME.</p>
4	<p>Matters Arising/Action Points</p> <p>Waste Bin at Uiskentue 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>December Update: AH and DMF are continuing to chase this. Action carried forward.</i></p> <p>Julian Green Update/Flooding at Port Ellen <i>December Update: CA has provided a copy of the summary report. CA has had 3 or 4 residents who have sent information and videos. Out of 60 questionnaires only had 6 or 7 responses. Still wants to talk to the Co-op and go back to the residents to see if he can get some more information. The situation is very complicated.</i> <i>Several residents from Frederick Crescent have provided detailed information regarding what they have been trying to do to resolve the situation although no-one is clear who is responsible for which elements and how it should be taken forward.</i> <i>The report has made several recommendations. The three key ones are: Gather more data and evidence, advocate for remedial works, help individual householders to protect themselves. It is vital that there is a co-ordinated approach to this and needs one person to take ownership.</i> JP: AH and AR may need to be escalated beyond the community council. AH: attended an area committee meeting today. The situation is more complex than just clearing out the pipes/drains. Mark Calder (A&B Council) has been doing work on this, and AH will put them in touch with CA and ST.</p>

	<p>AR – at the recent MAKI committee he stressed the lack of action regarding flooding, lighting etc across the area.</p> <p>JT: If CA is passing out more information/interviewing residents, would he also be able to speak to the individuals in affected properties and see if they would be willing to be part of a ‘emergency contact list’ as part of the island’s resilience plan? They would just need contact information in case they need to be evacuated in future.</p> <p>Councillor A Horn</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>December Update: AH did chase this up, but does not have an update. JP has now received an update and was advised that the council were pursuing the issue of the roads and investing funding in infrastructure.</i></p> <p>Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP)</p> <p>GML to complete statistical analysis graphs/charts. Meeting to be held after this</p> <p><i>December Update: Action to be carried forward.</i></p> <p>AOCB</p> <p>Mobile Library on Islay.</p> <p><i>December Update: AH advised that the role has been advertised x 2 but there are also issues with the van itself and she is now waiting for an update as to what is needed for the vehicle.</i></p> <p>JP – beach cleaning. JP will ask AH regarding any funding available for this.</p> <p><i>December Update: Correspondence has been received regarding the opportunity for beach cleaning to be part of community service. AH understands that IDI have the required ability to supervise individuals. AH has provided the areas that need cleaning and is sure there will be further opportunity to include others.</i></p> <p><i>JP noted that there are still one or two vehicles marked as ‘beach ranger’ around the island and is concerned that residents are not aware that beach cleaning is not actually taking place.</i></p> <p><i>AH felt that GRAB was keen to have community work for people undertaking community service and will chase up again and ask for a timescale and logistics.</i></p>	GML AH
5	<p>Police Report</p> <p>JT updated the committee. 26 calls were received in October covering a range of issues. 25 calls were received in November. These were usual issues of drink driving, disturbances and an incident at Ramsay Hall. They have seen an escalation of the number of incidents of poaching on The Oa and Port Ellen area, primarily deer. Important to report these incidents, particularly as firearms are involved. The bulk of work is currently around firearms, licences and renewals.</p> <p>Ross and Kim have now left, and Megan and Georgia are new secondments. There are now 5 in the team until May 2026. A permanent post is being advertised but to date there have been no applicants. Work to secure housing options is ongoing.</p> <p>Police Scotland have asked for the committee’s assistance with tackling violent crime by reporting any antisocial behaviours or concerns. If each person affected, reports it, will enable sufficient resources to be allocated to a concern.</p> <p>AR – what is happening regarding the vandalism on the rugby pitch. JT no reports have been made to Police Scotland.</p>	

	CA – have there been any problems with shoplifting on the island. JT – there were incidents in October from mainland contractors, and this has been dealt with.	
6	<p>Councillor A Horn</p> <p>Key activities are listed below:</p> <p>Bruichladdich footpath. I was delighted to work on the funding bid with Councillor McFadzean and Councillor Armour and very pleased with the successful outcome. This will make much safer walking to the village and to the shop.</p> <p>I continue to work with officers regarding the flooding in Port Ellen. I appreciate repair work is long term and complex and I am grateful to officers for their updates and that they continue to work to resolve the issues.</p> <p>I have reported light defects in Bowmore and Port Charlotte and several potholes. I have been reassured that the ongoing situation with missing and damaged bus shelters is being worked on. I have personal experience as I travel around the island by public transport, I have identified several serious potholes near to bus stops having no shelter causes further discomfort to waiting passengers as passing traffic splashes on to the footpath.</p> <p>As always Councillor McFadzean has helped with enquiries regarding Health and Social Care and I much appreciate this.</p> <p>I have had some correspondence regarding budget proposals to close some public toilets or to have them managed by local community group. As always at budget discussions all issues that are not statutory provision are for discussion to identify monies to allow for provision of the services most important to our residents and communities. As the Council budget will not be known until mid-January much more discussion will take place and I will certainly read all correspondence that will then allow me to make a fully informed decision.</p> <p>The recent book sale for the RNLI raised an extraordinary amount of money and I congratulate everyone involved in organising such an amazing event.</p>	
7	<p>Councillor D McFadzean</p> <p>Apologies received from Councillor Mc Fadzean.</p>	
8	<p>Councillor A Redman</p> <p>AR summarised key elements of his monthly report. The full report is in Appendix A</p>	
9	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>FC bank balance as of 24/10/2025 is £2727.25</p> <p>ICAP funding must be spent by 31/12/2025 any unspent needs to be returned. CA reported that ICAP cannot produce a final information leaflet before the deadline and proposed that any unused funds are returned as requested.</p> <p>The motion was put to the vote and was approved.</p>	
10	<p>ICC Ferry Committee</p> <p>See Appendix B for the full report.</p> <p>JP has circulated an update on the ferry committee meeting; the last meeting was held 2nd December 2025. And the key takeaways are:</p>	

	<p>Block booking management has seen major improvements. The take up of block bookings has increased gradually over the last 3 months. RM - are cancelled block bookings returned into the general public booking system? JP yes, they are but as this is usually only the day before the sailing there is insufficient time to make a significant difference.</p> <p>The new ferry, Isle of Islay (IOI) will be delayed by a further month, and it is now likely to be the end of January before IOI is operational.</p> <p>CalMac plan to release the summer timetable in mid-December with Finlaggan and Isle of Arran (IOA) initially. For the period 18/4 – 12/5 Finlaggan goes to dry dock and there is no satisfactory solution provided by CalMac to cover this period as yet.</p> <p>Port Askaig – JP and IME will be attending a meeting with Royal Haskoning who are the consultants engaged by CalMac, to review the traffic management arrangements at Port Askaig. Their report is due to be completed and released in January 2026.</p> <p>Funding for the Port Ellen development has not yet been approved and there are concerns that this could be impacted by other large projects in the region.</p>	
11	<p>Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP)</p> <p>Covered in matters arising</p>	
12	<p>Planning Reports</p> <p>GML declared a conflict of interest for this agenda item</p> <p>RSPB Loch Gruinart – planning has been submitted for improvements in the car parking near the hides, including installing toilets.</p> <p>Number 1 Charlotte Street – planning has been submitted to install a permanent catering truck in the garden opposite.</p> <p>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</p>	AR AH
13	<p>CNI (Carbon Neutral Islands) Project</p> <p>No updates</p>	
14	<p>Bowmore Hall Update</p> <p>A meeting will be held 9th December with Jonathan Welch and Fergus Murray which JP/RM/FC will be attending – 6pm online. CA/ST will also try to attend.</p> <p>GML – would be good to have the local community councillors attend</p>	
15	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Workshop on emergency planning from the council attended by JP and IME. CA and ST also attended (on behalf of Islay Connections). They are looking for someone to lead/chair. There is a plan in place which needs to be updated, and it is possible that JT will chair this group.</p> <p>Machair Wind Project would like to attend a future meeting to discuss how they can assist the community with project funding</p> <p>RM suggested that ICC should start developing a position on Machair wind which can be shared with the other islands which are affected. Will then provide a joined-up approach to take to SBR with expectations for when they do have a funding stream.</p> <p>Community Benefits from Renewable Energy consultation – circulated</p>	

	Governance: JP has circulated documents from A&B Council regarding governance rules for the election of community councils. There will be an election next August. The document covers expectations and role of the community council.	
16	<p>AOCB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC & RM attended a meeting on the resilience of communications on the island on behalf of the ICC with the Scottish Islands Federation. Exchanges and phone masts will all have generator backup. • JT – a reminder of winter road safety for drivers • RM – will take down any residual Covid signs • JT – it appears that Kilarrow Centre is now charging for use by some clubs. AR/AH to have a look at this. • AR – council service points are also a savings options being considered in the next council budget 	AR/ AH
17	<p>Date/venue for Next Meeting</p> <p>Next meeting 20th January 2026 at 18:30, Service Point, Bowmore</p>	

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Appendix A – Councillor A Redman – report

Public Toilets Must Be Protected

Ahead of the latest council meeting, I sent four emails to senior members of the ruling administration, urging them to reject the deeply concerning proposal to withdraw from running almost 60 public toilets across Argyll and Bute. I called on the Leader, both Depute Leaders, and the relevant Policy Leads to put our communities before loyalty to a council group.

At the meeting itself, I voted to remove this outrageous proposal from the savings list entirely. Unfortunately, administration councillors — including both of my fellow ward members — voted to keep it on the table.

Public toilets are not a luxury. They are essential for families, older residents, workers, visitors, and anyone travelling in or through our rural communities. Closing them would hurt local people, damage tourism, and push unnecessary costs onto small businesses.

I will continue to oppose cuts that target the most basic services our residents rely on. Argyll and Bute must not be expected to balance the books by removing public conveniences. I'll keep fighting this proposal all the way to the final budget decision in February.

Standing Against School Cluster Plans

I remain firmly opposed to any attempt to reintroduce shared school leadership models in Argyll and Bute. A newly published report includes proposals for a shared leadership approach across multiple schools—closely resembling the previously abandoned “Empowering Our Educators” scheme.

Parents, pupils, and school staff across the area made their views clear when that model was rejected. Communities do not want remote or diluted leadership of their schools, and nor do I.

Our schools deserve strong, dedicated head teachers rooted in their communities—not a centralised system that stretches leadership thin across several sites. Any return to that structure, regardless of how it is rebranded, risks undermining confidence in our education system at a time when stability is essential.

I will continue to stand up for locally led, properly resourced schools and oppose any approach that weakens leadership at the expense of our young people's futures.

Exposing the Council's Budget Challenges

Argyll and Bute Council is now facing a projected £10.6 million budget shortfall—set to rise to £33.9 million by 2030/31. These figures are not just abstract numbers; they represent real strain on local services and communities.

At the recent full council meeting, I raised concerns about the administration's apparent confidence in closing such a significant gap. With services already stretched thin, it is simply not credible to rely on further cuts without seriously damaging support for local residents.

While administration councillors continue to insist the situation is “manageable”, I will keep pushing for real accountability and firm lobbying of the Scottish Executive. Our communities deserve transparency, leadership, and a plan that reflects the scale of the challenge.  You can read more in this article: <https://www.helensburghadvertiser.co.uk/news/25655120.argyll-bute-council-voices-confidence-gap-closure/>

New Footpath Secured for Bruichladdich

Over £200,000 has now been secured for the construction of a new footpath along the A847 at Bruichladdich on Islay—welcome news for a community that has long raised concerns about pedestrian safety on this busy stretch of road.

This much-needed investment will provide a safer walking route for residents, families, schoolchildren, workers, and visitors. It also supports active travel and strengthens links between key parts of the village.

This is a significant step forward for Islay's local infrastructure and shows what can be achieved when community concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.

Declaring a Health and Social Care Emergency

At this week's full council meeting, we debated a motion to declare a Health and Social Care Emergency across Argyll and Bute. I spoke in support of the motion, highlighting the growing pressures facing our local services—from rising demand and workforce shortages to the long-term effects of underfunding.

This is not a theoretical crisis. It directly affects vulnerable residents, older people, and families who depend on reliable care and support. Even the HSCP's own Chief Officer has acknowledged that demand has now outstripped available resources.

It is deeply disappointing that administration councillors chose not to support the position I took.

I will continue to press the Scottish Executive for fair funding and meaningful support for rural and island communities. Our residents need action, not assurances—and I remain committed to standing up for the services they rely on.

Ferry Failures Continue to Undermine Communities

Across the Islands and Kintyre, ferry reliability continues to collapse. Sailings are cancelled far too often, damaging businesses, tourism, and family life. This is not bad luck — it is the direct result of years of chronic mismanagement and Scottish Executive inaction.

I want to again thank our front-line CalMac crews and port staff, who work tirelessly under immense pressure. The real failure lies at the top. We have an ageing fleet, constant vessel delays, and the absurd reality of CalMac being rewarded with a new multi-billion-pound contract despite missing targets.

Our communities are not second-class citizens. I will keep pressing both the Council administration and the Scottish Executive for a reliable, properly funded ferry network that meets the needs of island and peninsula residents.

Rural Roads Still Neglected

Flooding and road damage remain among the most common issues raised with me. Too many rural routes are left unsafe or impassable after heavy rain, while blocked drains and poor maintenance make matters worse. These are not isolated incidents — they are symptoms of long-term neglect.

I am continuing to push the Council administration to prioritise drainage, resurfacing, and improved lighting, rather than endless short-term patch-ups. Residents deserve roads that are safe, dependable, and properly maintained all year round.

(I also raised this matter at today's MAKI meeting.)

Damaged and Missing Bus Shelters

A number of bus shelters across the area have been damaged or blown down and require urgent replacement. These facilities are vital for residents — particularly older people and families — who rely on local transport links.

I am pressing for repairs and replacements to be prioritised, ensuring communities are not left exposed or forgotten.

(I also raised this matter at today's MAKI meeting.)

🔊 Ongoing Noise Complaints at Port Ellen Maltings

Following numerous complaints from residents, I have written formally to Environmental Health regarding repeated alarm disturbances at the Port Ellen Maltings during the night.

I have requested an investigation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and urged engagement with the site operator to ensure alarms are managed responsibly. Local residents deserve peace and reassurance that their concerns are being taken seriously.

💷 The Ongoing Reality of Rural Poverty

Rural poverty remains largely invisible, yet it is an everyday reality for many households across Argyll and Bute. Higher living costs, limited job opportunities, and soaring energy bills leave many struggling to get by.

This issue must no longer be ignored. I will continue calling for policies that reflect the true challenges of rural life — from affordable transport and housing to fair energy pricing — so that our communities receive the support they deserve.

🌟 Portnahaven Bonfire Night a Great Success

It was a pleasure to attend another fantastic Bonfire and Fireworks Night at Portnahaven. My thanks go to all the organisers, contributors, and volunteers who made the event possible. Their hard work and dedication show what community spirit can achieve.

🎖️ Honouring Our Fallen on Remembrance Sunday

This Remembrance Sunday, I was honoured to attend the service at St Kiaran's Church on Islay and to lay wreaths at the Portnahaven and Port Wemyss War Memorials.

Across generations, our communities continue to remember and honour those who gave their lives for our freedom. We must always uphold the values they fought to protect.

🎄 Merry Christmas and a happy new year

As we look forward to 2026, I remain determined to push for real improvements, challenge poor decisions, and ensure our communities are never taken for granted. I wish all my constituents a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and every blessing for the year ahead.

Appendix B – ICC Ferry Committee Update

ICCFC - last regular meeting 2nd Dec - next TBA. Draft Minutes 28 Oct posted in ICC website. Other meetings: 12 Nov JP CalMac Customer Steering Group; 19 Nov JP/FC meeting with CalMac & Islay/Jura Sports club representatives re timetables; Also 19 Nov IME/JP with CalMac executive team re Port Askaig development including H&S concerns. Signage proposed by ICCFC is now planned in the vicinity of Port Askaig to divert traffic if/when the port may be full for vehicles.

Key issues include:

Late October/November, a number of sailings were cancelled due to weather. Isle of Arran was deployed to the Islay route from 31st Oct to 5th Nov and from 16 to 21st Nov, working with Finlaggan to provide extra support. Vessel had been assigned to the Islay route from 31st Oct until 21st Nov but was re-deployed to Arran temporarily due to a problem with Caledonian Isles.

Block Bookings - CalMac introduced a tightening of their management process from 20th October, to help enable better use of available capacity. This has coincided with a downturn in distillery production, thus lower volumes but CalMac has reported an overall improvement in block bookings take up and control. Since August, the take up has increased from 53%, to 64% in September and 65% in October. Target is 80% but the actual effects of the change will not start to become evident until the data for November becomes available - probably late December.

Bookings system. The long awaited fix for the unwieldy Islay 2-port booking system unfortunately has not yet been implemented for port staff use. ICCFC are continuing to press for this to happen.

New vessels. 'Isle of Islay' is now expected to be handed over by the ship yard late December and join service late January if all inspections and trials are successful. CalMac are awaiting a report in January from independent consultants regarding the marshalling and parking areas at Port Askaig, including health and safety. They have agreed to inform ICCFC of progress and conclusions, bearing in mind concerns previously raised by ICCFC with A&BC, and the difficulty experienced in obtaining information.

Winter 2025/6. Current timetable is 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 had also requested a second vessel to work with Finlaggan from the start until Isle of Islay joins the service but IOA was agreed only until 21st Nov.

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.

Other -

Ferries Community Board - A meeting took place of members on 17 November to discuss progress regarding the new CHFS 3 contract, including KPI's. A joint FCB-DML meeting is planned for 3rd December and a full FCB 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 chair for the FCB is being sought. Three new members have been appointed and there are still some vacancies

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