

Nethy Bridge & Vicinity Community Council

Minutes of meeting held on

Thursday 3rd September 2026

At 7:30pm in the Community Centre

Present: S.McCook (Chairman), H. Tucker (Secretary), L. Parker (Treasurer), E. Ibbertson, D. Black, F. Cormack, F. Gilchrist

In Attendance: Cllr B. Lobban, C. Boyle (Architect), T. Whyte (Tormore Estate), B. Jones (RSPB), I. Sargant (Nature Scot) E. Curley (Dorback Estate) and 3 members of the public.

Welcome: S. McCook welcomed everyone to the monthly meeting.

Apologies: J. Grant

Declaration of Interest: None

Minutes of last meeting: Proposed : E. Ibbertson Seconded : L. Parker

Matters Arising: The meeting concerning Dorback Estate has been moved to October. The damaged path signs have been repaired, thanks to Fraser & Fraser. The official opening of the new Aultmore bridge was on 10th July. A great asset to the village. A new bus shelter and bus stop sign at the Causer are in place.

Police Report: None

Members of the Public: Mention made of speeding coming into the village from The Boat end. This has already been reported to HC.

Wildfire: Updates given by Ben Jones and Ian Sargent. Still tracking some hot spots, RSPB using their own drone and surveys by CNPA. Areas checked daily. Hoping for cooler and wetter weather will help. Staff have been rotated to allow rest and all equipment has been repaired ready for use. Firebreaks around Forest Lodge, Ryvoan would remain and tidied up, realisation now that these would be required. Regeneration will happen, goats may be considered to keep areas of vegetation cropped. Suggestion made of a soft forest edge with fewer trees. Comment made that this allows taller heather growth which is a greater fire risk.

I. Sargent thanked the community for the great support during the incident. The created firebreak from Tulloch road through to Dell Wood along the old pylon line will be maintained. Vegetation kept cut back to allow for future access. Work will be undertaken to create a bog area and work undertaken to help stop silt entering the burn. Awaiting decision if any of the work requires planning permission. Hopefully the path will be restored in the next couple of months. Suggestion made that the break was not wide enough and that a deeper pond should be dug to give a water source if required. Unlikely SEPA would allow this. Agreement that keeping the bog areas was a good idea.

Request made that trees be trimmed back to allow better line of sight along path from Tulloch Road to Steel's Mill whilst work being done in the area.

T. Whyte thanked Sandy for his comprehensive updates throughout the period.

Grantown East: C. Boyle Architect for proposed Grantown East Project presented display boards to view. First phase to go to planning is for bespoke cabins, which would be in place next year. Final design for Farm shop and restaurant still being discussed and wouldn't be open until Autumn 2028.

Project aims to bring more people to the area and encourage them to visit Grantown as well. Cabins will be situated amongst the woods without the need to fell trees. Access roads and infrastructure will use the present route of miniature railway to avoid disturbance. Cabins will be manufactured in Scotland using local materials.

T. Whyte Estate Manager explained that the estate were increasing the stock levels on the estate, to supply produce to the farm shop. Also in discussions with other local producers to supply the shop and restaurant. Proposal to improve junction from main road into the site. There will be a wide range of whiskies and wine also sold. Old station building is being used to blend whisky for Tormore distillery.

Dorback Estate: The scoping meeting planned for August will now be at the end of October. There is a review of policies and management procedures, which will then be open for community discussion. Preventative measures also being discussed, retaining fire breaks and widening paths. There will be a Bio Blitz event of Junior Rangers next month. Hope to increase produce to feed into proposed development at Grantown East. Looking to increase the produce area and engage an apprentice for this area. Also looking if excess heat from Biomass could heat polytunnels.

Planning: Stl license for Lorient - has been let for several years so no objections.

Treasurer's Report: Balance is £4,182.42, this includes two donations towards sign refurbishment. These will be moved to new separate bank account when opened.

Councillor's Report: HC had been in recess over the summer. Consultation over the visitor levy will open from 7th September. There will be a full council meeting later this month.

Question was asked if certain situations would be exempt from levy charge. Such as staying to visit relative in hospital. Anyone in this situation could claim tax back from NHS, who would then claim it back from HC. Mention made whether workmen should have to pay if staying to undertake work not leisure.

CNPA Report: None

AOCB: Research being undertaken by local resident into the possibility of applying for grants to maintain Broomhill Bridge. The matter of the future of Balnaan bridge will go before the full council meeting.

Mention made of the edges of Coulmakyle area of road being very overgrown and causing obstruction. HT will contact HC.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 1st October at 7:30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.