Minute of a Meeting of Holm Community Council
Held on Thursday 11 June 2026 at 7pm at Ness Castle Primary School

Note on Abbreviations: HCC = Holm Community Council, HC= Highland Council

Present:

Community Councillors:	Becky Speight, Calum MacDonald, Gail Beveridge John Horne, Martin Gardiner, & Murray McCheyne (Chair)
Highland Councillors:	Alasdair Christie and Jackie Hendry
Apologies for absence:	Margaret Irvine & Councillor Andrew Mackintosh
In Attendance:	Seven members of the public

1. **Welcome and Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
Murray welcomed everyone to the regular meeting, which followed straight on from the 2026 AGM. Murray indicated he had a specific conflict on interest in relation to the MCA at Essich, (item 14) which would require special attention. No other new conflicts of interest were declared.

2. **Approval of Minute 23 April**
Having been earlier circulated, the minute of the meeting on 23 April was approved, it being noted that full planning consent has now been issued to St Columba Church of Scotland for their building on their site at Dores Road.

Murray explained that due to technical issues the draft minute had not been published on the website, but would be as soon as possible.

3. **Graffiti on wall on distributor road**
Since the previous meeting an unsuccessful attempt had been made to remove the graffiti from a very small section of the wall on the distributor road. A solution other than proprietary graffiti remover will be investigated further.

4. **Finance report**
John reported there has been no change to our finances since the previous meeting, funds currently held by HCC are at £4873.22, of which £930.02 are designated funds for Holm Grown.

5. **Dores Road roadworks for water main connection**
Murray reported on the overnight closures of the Dores Road and the west link road to permit a new water main connection for the housing developments at Ness-side. The closures have not been well received by the householders at Ness Castle as the road has been closed on some weeknights from 8pm to 6am. The householders on the C1040 Torbreck road have also suffered significant inconvenience with volumes of traffic using it being vastly increased from normal, the road simply not being suitable to cope. The private track at Ness Castle has also seen significantly increased traffic which has caused irritation to the householders off the track who require to maintain it, this being their only way to take access to their homes. Further works are to take place over a weekend soon

(to be confirmed) which will involve an overnight closure, details of which we will publish when they are known. It was acknowledged by the meeting the works are necessary and if they were to be done in a way which failed, the problems arising would be much more significant than the present inconvenience. Nonetheless it is annoying for all that the road is being closed. Requests are being made of Tullochs and their subcontractors for improved communications ahead of the work happening and they will also be asked to attend to the repairs of the road verges on the C1040, damaged by the recent increased usage of the road.

The householders at the top end of the track (closest to the Torbreck Road) are keen to meet with HCC to discuss what might happen for future road closures. Becky, Gail and Calum are willing to join Murray in such a meeting.

6. **Short term let control area**

Becky reported on her attendance at a seminar for community councils on the proposal to designate the majority of Inverness as a control area for short term lets. This would include our area. Councillors Hendry and Christie explained such a designation would enable greater screening to be made at the time of an application and thereafter, with more account being able to be taken of concerns expressed by those most directly affected by a proposed short term let. This is in contrast to the situation at present where very little can be done to prevent an application being granted as long as it complies with the requirements for a short term letting licence.

Having discussed this in some detail the meeting concluded unanimously a control area would be beneficial for our area. It would bring the possibility of preventing unsuitable properties in residential areas from being used for short term lets. It would also potentially keep more housing stock in use for much needed long term housing. Becky will circulate details of how to respond to the consultation which concludes on 23 June and it was agreed Murray could make a brief reply on behalf of HCC.

7. **Anti social behaviour at 1 Lochindorb Drive Other housing developments**

Linked to the discussion on item 6, and noting it was not in fact a short term let, the meeting was made aware of concerns having been expressed by a number of neighbours about the behaviour of the occupants of 1 Lochindorb Drive, a property being let to a construction company for its workers. Highland Council are well aware of the situation and enquiries are underway about what can be done to tackle the anti social behaviour of loud music, outdoor parties late into weeknights and attendant foul language being used within the hearing of young children in neighbouring properties.

8. **Abandoned vehicles**

A concern has been raised by a householder about vehicles being abandoned in Inverlochy Crescent. Councillor Christie reported he is aware that three of the vehicles have been removed and two others are now in the process of being removed.

9. Inverness Royal Academy Sponsored walk revised route

A new route for the sponsored walk for Inverness Royal Academy taking in most of our area in September was notified, the proposal being welcomed as it will raise visibility and awareness of the school's activities to many more in our area.

10. Obstructed road sign in Eilean Donan Road/ Urquhart Street

The sign which had been obstructed by a new fence erected by a householder has been made visible again. But Highland Council roads team are to be asked to look into whether permission should be sought to remove the sign from the posts and to attach it to the new fence.

11. Housing developments

Whilst the Barratt homes on the west side of the west link road have not yet started, progress is well underway on the site works for the next phase of the Ness side development by Tulloch Homes.

Martin reported none of the items identified at the most recent liaison group had been attended to and he and Murray shall pick that up with the site agent at Ness –side.

A question was raised about the finished level of the soil which had spread over the area which will become the allotments. This too will be mentioned to the site agent.

12. Play parks at Holm Park and Ardbreck Place

Councillor Hendry reported that, using funds provided by the Scottish Government, Highland Council are in the process of installing an adult sized and a child friendly sized new basketball hoop in Holm Park. Having identified during routine council checks that it needed work, the park at Ardbreck Place – next to Holm Primary School – has been extensively refurbished, with works costing over £34,000.

13. Insurance query

Becky raised whether the HCC insurance cover adequately protects against the risk of someone misusing the tools at Holm Grown, which are left unlocked and unattended. It was considered unlikely that someone taking and misusing the tools could claim for any harm which arose from that but the query would and should be raised with HCC's insurers which Murray and Becky will do.

14. Masterplan Consent Area – Essich

Since our last meeting HC had decided the MCA at Essich (as well as the others at Ardersier and Embo) should proceed to the next stage, despite significant local opposition and two of our ward councillors voting against the proposal. Murray reported having received an email from Tim Stott, the HC planner leading the project at present, requesting HCC provide a representative for the group which will meet regularly to take the project forward. His email recognised that whilst there

continues to be concern and objections, HCC's participation in the group is expected to lead to positive outcomes.

Having introduced the item Murray made clear that on account of a professional conflict of interest he can take no part in any discussions or decisions about the MCA. This has also been the advice given to him by HC officials and the Law Society of Scotland, his professional body. He had offered to step down from HCC altogether but it was felt by all other community councillors this was not necessary, provided a way could be found to shield all MCA business from him, before it was otherwise in the public domain. It was agreed that we would trial things on the basis that Martin would assume the chair for the parts of all HCC meetings relating to the MCA, and discussions relating the MCA would be timetabled to follow other normal business at the end of HCC meetings, with Becky minuting those parts of the meetings. A specific MCA email address will also be set up as quickly as can be done so all email traffic can be routed via it, Martin or Becky to monitor that account.

This having been agreed Murray then left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Martin took over as Chair of the meeting on Murray's departure.

Councillor Christie explained the next stage of the MCA process would be for the Highland Council to engage an external consultant to facilitate all three new MCAs, and that this might take some time.

Calum stated he was happy to represent the Community Council at the MCA meetings. It was discussed that a second representative would probably be needed to cover dates Calum wasn't available.

The members of the public in attendance were all opposed to the MCA, and explained the campaign group that had formed has now been named the Essich and Torbrek Community Association. The Association has approached the Council and been granted (by Tim Stott) a place at the MCA project group.

Concerns raised again were flooding, safe routes to schools, and a long discussion took place around the implications for traffic; not only along Essich Road but also along the distributor road. The Association had intended to share a traffic model with the Community Council however this wasn't available, but it was stated that the additional traffic would have significant implications for the already slow and stacked traffic at peak times.

The following was agreed as an initial way forwards:

- Murray to be approached about how to set up an MCA email – Becky.
- Visit to the site to be arranged for the Community Councillors – Martin.
- The letter submitted by the Community Council for the initial MCA consultation to be used at future meetings as a discussion point to facilitate ideas for potential solutions. – Becky.

15. Dates and location of meetings in 2026

The next meetings will be on 20 August, 8 October & 3 December venue tbc.