Minute of a Meeting of Holm Community Council
Held on Thursday 20 August 2026 at 7pm at Holm Primary School

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

Present:
Community Councillors: Gail Beveridge, Becky Speight (Secretary), John Horne (Treasurer), Martin Gardiner, Margaret Irvine, Calum MacDonald & Murray McCheyne (Chair).

Highland Councillors: Alasdair Christie, Andrew Mackintosh and Jackie Hendry

In Attendance: Five members of the public

1. **Welcome and Declarations of Conflict of Interest**
Murray welcomed everyone. No new conflicts of interest were declared. Murray has previously declared that because of a professional conflict of interest he will take no part in any discussions relating to the MCA at Essich.

Calum raised that he had received an email in which it was suggested he too has a conflict of interest regarding the MCA. This was initially discussed, but as it became quickly apparent that the conversation was straying into actually discussing matters about the MCA, this item would be curtailed, and put to the end of the agenda.

2. **Approval of Minutes 11 June 2026**
Having been earlier circulated, the Minute of the meeting as a whole was approved. Matters arising were:
-It was noted the short term let scheme has received initial approval at a recent meeting of HC;
-There were no updates about the let premises in Lochindorb Drive or the abandoned vehicles at Ness Castle;
-it was noted the disturbance from the installation of the water main on Dores Road had passed;
-It was also noted that having assisted at the Old High Church recently AB Masonry could be asked for advice about removal of the graffiti on the wall on the distributor road, which Calum will do.

3. **Finance report**
John reported there has been still 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. A fundraising effort undertaken by Hunter Oliver and his dad Simon was highlighted at the meeting, with the details of how to donate to be circulated.

4. **Housing developments**
It was noted Barratt Homes are now on site at Ness Side. The street naming request for their site provoked much discussion, the suggestion of Ness-side Gardens being agreed to and Ness-side Court also to be suggested. Murray will enquire with Barratts about a liaison group for that site. Meanwhile Margaret will follow up the next date and minute for the Ness side liaison group as well as the

apparent lack of progress on action points. Murray is also chasing up the bus gate installation. Martin mentioned that the dog fouling signs at Ness Castle are fading, which might be taken up with the factor and Tulloch Homes too.

5. **Update on Holm Play Park**
   Margaret met with the Brownies before the summer to let them know their request for a basketball hoop has been agreed to and will be installed later this year. Other improvements may also follow.

6. **Ness Castle football coaching**
   A request from the parent coaches of a newly established football team at Ness Castle for help with reducing the cost of letting the school facilities was discussed. Murray will enquire if the school themselves have made all possible requests for the charges to be reduced. The possibility of HCC making a grant was also discussed, and can be returned to again soon if there is no success in having the letting costs reduced. Murray will also connect the volunteers at Ness Castle with those who regularly use Holm play park for football practice.

7. **Mail delivery at Ness castle and other areas.**
   Gail reported that Royal Mail letter deliveries in the Ness Castle area are often only once a week, causing some important mail to be received late – e.g. hospital appointment letters. Others present commented on similar experiences in their areas. At the suggestion of the Highland Councillors this matter is really best raised at a national level by our MSPs or MP.

8. **Insurance for HCC**
   Murray and Becky have not yet been able to make the enquiry of our insurers about what activities are and are not covered for Holm Grown. Meantime it was suggested that if Holm Grown were to become its own entity, as had been suggested by HC when the ground lease was first made for Holm Grown this would remove any risk to HCC. Murray will raise with the regular volunteers of Holm Grown if this is something they might consider. It was also suggested that such a new entity could become involved with the allotments to be provided at Ness-side by Tulloch Homes.

9. **Community council interim elections**
   Those who are co-opted at present indicated they do not wish to stand at an interim election now and Murray will communicate this to HC in reply to their enquiry about this.

10. **Development plans consultation**
    It was agreed that Margaret, Becky and Murray would form a small group to prepare a submission in reply to the request for input about the new Development Plan.

11. **Planning enforcement charter**
    It was agreed to support the request received from Spean Bridge Community Council for their planning enforcement charter which asks HC to be more proactive about enforcing breaches of planning conditions. Councillor Hendry also

suggested that the matter be raised at the Inverness Community Council forum, which Murray will do.

12. Correspondence

Murray raised various matters which he has been contacted about since the previous meeting, which included:

- A complaint about barbed wire fencing having been added to the perimeter fence at F & R MacDonald's fields at Ness side. This is the subject of investigation with Highland Council
- The future maintenance of Ness Castle Drive. Councillor Christie has also met with a group of residents on the privately owned Ness Castle Drive who are considering their position over the future of the track, in light of increased use by those living and visiting the housing developments at Ness Castle.
- HC had asked that overgrown paths be highlighted to them. It was noted that over the last few months HC have attended to this and several improvements have been made, including the roundabouts and a path at Holm Park. Councillor Christie has also asked Tulloch Homes to attend to the path around their development bordering the River Ness.
- Murray is monitoring ongoing communications regarding the complaint about the lack of public access to the land at Ness side.
- A request from Simon Oliver for use of the notice boards will be replied to by Murray and a separate request from Simon about his son's charitable event will be publicised.
- The precarious nature of one of the trees on the edge of Dores Road at the junction with Brodie Road will be raised by Murray with the Roads team at HC.

Murray and Gail left the meeting at 8.30pm.

13. Essich MCA

Martin took over as Chair for this section of the meeting and commenced by giving his account of the first MCA engagement meeting, which was held with community representatives, Tim Stott of Highland Council, and the newly appointed MCA facilitator Stephen Tucker. The main purpose of the meeting was for the community representatives to meet Stephen in person and to set the scene and dates / times for the future MCA meetings. It was agreed at this meeting that going forwards the MCA meetings would be held on a Monday early evening.

A discussion arose around the MCA process and whether it was already determined that the housing development would go ahead. Councillor Christie clarified that the idea of the MCA process was that if all interested parties collaborated in the design, such that their concerns and issues were addressed during the MCA meetings, then it was likely that the development would go ahead; but it was not definite. Councillor Christie also explained that if any groups or individuals attending the MCA meetings were being obstructive and not working towards a consensus, they could be asked to leave the engagement meetings.

It was suggested that it may be helpful to have pre and post MCA meetings to get the most from the process.

The earlier item which Calum raised around receiving an email in which it was suggested he has a conflict of interest regarding the MCA was discussed again. During this discussion it was raised by a member of the public that at the previous Community Council meeting on June 11th 2026 it had not been stated nor minuted that Calum would be a Holm Community Council MCA representative. The minutes have since been reviewed, and it can be confirmed that this was indeed recorded. It was also raised at this time that the community council MCA email address had not been circulated. It was clarified that the address had now been set up; however, there were still access issues, with Becky currently being the only person able to access it, which was not ideal. Subject to this limitation, the email address is mca@holmcommunitycouncil.org.uk.

There were differing opinions on Calum's position, but Margaret suggested that according to Community Council guidelines it was ultimately for Calum to decide whether he had a conflict of interest or not.

The councillors and all members of the public left the meeting.

After further discussion around the "conflict of interest" email, Calum, as an employee of Compass, who own the land adjoining the MCA, declared An Interest (rather than a conflict of interest). Should that interest become "a conflict of interest" (such as discussing road and active travel connections from the MCA site to the Compass land) he will recuse from that section of any MCA meeting.

14. Dates and location of next meetings

8 October & 3 December both expected to be Ness Castle Primary School.