

Minutes

Laggan CC – Ordinary Meeting No 15.

15th September 2025 - 18:30 Laggan Village Hall

1. Attendees Present

A. Armstrong, A. Gallagher (Acting Chair), C. Hamill, G. Macpherson, V. Macpherson, A. Todd, W. Todd
Apologies. K. Fletcher, M Khazaka, K. Thew

2. Approval of Minutes July 2025

Approved. C. Hamill, A. Armstrong

3. Matters Arising and Actions from previous meeting

- Student Grant launch

A number of Laggan residents have successfully applied for the new student grant. There had been some questions on social media about the amount provided. To respond to these questions, a FAQ was prepared and circulated to residents along with the agenda for this meeting and will be posted on the website. CH to action.

- Feedback from Community Council Convention held in Inverness on the 12th August.

There is considerable anger around Highlands about the stream of planning applications for large infrastructure projects that are being planned, particularly windfarms and pumped storage schemes. The meeting was well attended by politicians but had the feel of being stage managed. Communities were able to express their concerns but very little in the way of practical help was forthcoming. Negotiating community benefits, road safety and managing logistical issues to ensure minimum chaos all require a huge amount of work from inexperienced volunteers who have no expert support. It is not clear at this stage that this group will be particularly helpful to Laggan other than as a lobby group.

- Meeting with MP. Graham Leadbitter

A. Gallagher met with Graham Leadbitter, MP and discussed the Earba project, in particular concerns around the suitability of roads and he was asked to follow up with Transport Scotland. He has offered to attend an LCC meeting if that is useful.

4. Loch Earba Pump Hydro Storage Update

- SSEN-T Coire Mashie

Lisa Marchi (SSEN-T) has advised that 3D modelling will be ready for the next community consultation. This is likely to be towards the end of September but we do not yet have a date

- The Earba Community Alliance (ECA)

The ECA is a joint group made up of representatives from the councils of Laggan Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, and Spean Bridge who meet regularly to address issues around community benefit, roads, coordination and communication issues. The Earba project, which received consent in Spring 2025 is currently waiting the UK Government to decide on Cap and Floor financial agreements (expected by early 2026). Some limited preliminary work has started (geographical ground surveys) but it is unlikely that Gilkes will proceed much further until additional investments are secured and these will likely depend on the Cap and Floor agreements, if any.

The UK government recently sent out a comprehensive questionnaire to community councils on proposed new regulations to make community benefits compulsory and to provide a standard rate of compensation. This initiative was welcomed by Laggan Community Council although the current draft regulations exclude projects that have already received consent such as Earba. This is unfortunate as negotiations with Gilkes over potential community benefit are proving difficult (Pump Storage schemes are currently not classed as renewables). The outcome from the Consultation results is expected by year end.

- Engagement with Transport Scotland

A major concern with the Earba project is the expected increased volume of vehicles both private and HGVs, including lorries carrying 5m diameter pipes and a 9m long transformer.

Laggan and Newtonmore wrote a joint letter to Transport Scotland, detailing the current problems with our roads, spelling out the additional problems that will result from the substantial increase in traffic and urging them to reconsider their assessment of our roads as adequate. In response, Transport Scotland have informed us that further approval is required from Transport Scotland prior to construction being allowed to begin and further conditions may be imposed. Two notable extracts from their response:

1. While it may seem that Transport Scotland did not express concern on the widths of the roads and lack of passing places at the ECU application stage, the conditions recommended by Transport Scotland will ensure that prior to the movement of abnormal loads, or construction vehicles that any required mitigation measures are identified and implemented.
2. Improved measures on the route, (enhanced signage, clearance of vegetation/ slopes to improve forward visibility and enhanced laybys/ passing areas to ease access) are measures that will be identified by the [abnormal load] assessment. It would be expected that the developer would fully fund any mitigation measures identified.

LCC will continue to apply pressure to Transport Scotland to have the roads improved ensure that the roads stay as safe as possible and that disruption and road closures are kept to a minimum.

5. Financial Report

1 July–31 August 2025

<i>Previous bank balance :</i>			£3411.40
	Previous sub-totals	+/- since previous meeting	
Council funds:	£574.56		
Community Hall hire. Earba/LCC meetings		-110	
Laggan Forest Trust meeting room hire		-30	
Printer for LCC use		-46.00	
<i>Balance</i>			388.56
Ringfenced:			
SSE Micro Grant money	£2785.77	0	
<i>Balance</i>			2785.77
CNPA funds for environmental/litter projects	£51.07	0	
<i>Balance</i>			£51.07
Current bank balance (388.56+2785.77+ 51.07)			£3225.40

Accounts prepared by C. Hamill

6. Statutory Items for Community Council to note and discuss

a. Planning Applications Update

- Nothing to report

b. New Planning Applications

25/02529/FUL - Renewal of temporary planning consent for padel court Cluny Castle. Deadline for comments 23/09/25

The council raised some concern that this is a renewal of a temporary application that has been in place for a number of years. LCC will request that Cluny Castle be asked to apply for permanent planning permission. The visual aspect of the padel court is felt to be detrimental to an historic building that is of importance to all of the community. AT to action by 23 September.

25/02988/FUL - Erection of extension Drumgask Cottage, Laggan Mr R Hamilton.

LCC is not taking a position on this application. Individuals may send in comments until 26/09/2025.

25/03278/PNO Construction of new forest track SW of Laggan Village. Opposite Feagour. No action.

9. Licencing Update

The discussion on whether to renew the small lotteries licence for another year was deferred to next meeting. Any resident planning to hold a raffle to benefit any cause and for which tickets are sold in multiple places and over multiple days should let the council know by 15 October so that we may secure the relevant licence.

10. Roads

- See above re transport Scotland

- The shared space signage for Glentruim road is not yet been installed. CH to contact Highland Council to follow up.

11. Public Sector Agencies – No updates

12. Highland Council

- Plants

The council supported the idea of applying for a SSE grant to install additional planters around the village and to purchase compost to refresh the existing ones. This will enable us to keep both the small Christmas trees, decorated at Christmas by young residents and to have summer flowers.

13. Laggan Community Action Plan - *Active Travel/Connecting Laggan, CNPA (Cairngorms 2030), Christmas Lights, Village Amenity Group, Public Toilet*

- Laggan Community Development Trust - progress report and next steps

The minimum number of Trustees has been reached to enable us to register Laggan Community Development Trust as a charity. This is a huge step towards Laggan taking control of its community benefit fund. The formalities may take up to 3 months but should be up and running by the end of the year. It is hoped that all residents will become members (there is nothing to do other than provide your email) and have a say in how the funds are used.

- Allotment update.

Ewan Grant has kindly given agreement in principle that part of a field bordering Laggan will be made over for the use of villagers for allotments. More work to be done on this and details will follow.

- Christmas Lights and other activities

- The Highland Lighting department has been contacted again re upgrading Laggan Lampposts (both to be suitable for dark skies and to be able to install Christmas lights) and we are waiting a response.

- The next Council meeting will discuss Christmas activities (children's party, Christmas lights, other events. If you would like to get involved, please come along.

- Paths update

- Work on the circular path in Balgowan woods has begun to make it safer and more usable.

- The path to the Memorial was delayed pending resolution of questions regarding, liability, responsibility, and land owner permissions and planning. These issues are being addressed, quotes have been procured and preliminary site visits will be arranged. Once funding is in, the work can proceed.

- A CNPA community paths group is being set up and a date will be set for a first meeting. LCC have been invited. A. Todd and A. Gallagher will attend on behalf of Laggan.

- Toilet update

A lockable toilet paper dispenser has been purchased to better control stock levels.

14. AOB

- Overnight parking

There have been some problems with the parking in Laggan and the inappropriate use of the toilet facilities by camper vans. In addition, it was noticed that the parking layby at Creag Dubh was largely taken over by camping vans during the summer and stayed more than one night, meaning that walkers, climbers and other visitors had no place to park. Concerns were also noted about the Balgowan parking where campervans are beginning to appear. The consensus of the council is that we should install No Overnight Parking signs and push camping vehicles to use facilities that are set up to accommodate their needs. CH to contact Highland Council to find out what is possible.

- Badenoch and Strathspety Access Panel

This panel has been set up to campaign for access rights for people, mainly those with disabilities e.g. better access to public buildings, buses etc. They are consultees to Highland Council for projects. They meet monthly and LCC will continue to attend their meetings. They are setting up a database on accessible places in the Highlands. One thing we have learned is that the bus route to Newtonmore should be a Request Stop whereby residents along the route can just flag down the bus.

It has been noted by residents at Feagour that the local bus has on several occasions turned at Feagour rather than Strathmashie to start its return journey. This is not currently part of the bus route but we will make enquiries as to whether it could be. AG to follow up on these bus issues.

- After Dark Club

This group is for our younger residents and will be restarted for the winter months. It is hoped that parents will step up to run it.

- Community Council members

Laggan Community Council periodically has difficulty in achieving a quorum for its meetings. There is currently one slot for a co-opted member available. Willie Todd offered to become a co-opted member. If other members of the community are interested in engaging with Community Council work or would like to join as a co-opted member, please contact secretarylcc@laggan.com.

15. Date of next meeting : 20th October 2025 at Wolftrax.