

St Fillans Community Council

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 11th February 2026
Sandison Hall, St Fillans

Welcome: Chair Tom Green welcomed 14 villagers, Baillie Rhona Brock, PC Pauline Smart.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillor Stewart Donaldson, Geoff Carter, Ruth Graham, Trish Forrester, Don Forrester, Andrea Hudspeth, Blair Crammond and Russell Cunningham.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 8th October 2025 were proposed as a true record by Donna Littler and seconded by Stewart Gavigan.

3. Police Update

PC Smart - There have recently been some speed patrols with 1 person being stopped for speeding. PC Smart also advised that the police cannot actually police the 20mph zones so patrols will be out with this area. These 20mph zones are meant to be self-regulating. Apparently, we have previously requested speed reinforcement signs saying, "Thank You for Driving Carefully".

As previously notified, our Community Police Officers will no longer be called to response situations but will be more visible in the village doing patrols around the loch providing support for the National Park.

4. Matters Arising

a. The planting/fencing at the weir has now been completed. Alex Butter will monitor the plants and check for any issues. Audrey Gavigan is chasing SSE for the Management Agreement. The trees opposite Weirside have been thinned, we will only know if this makes a difference to the properties opposite in the Spring.

b. Drainage update from Ian Woodcock, Transport Scotland - Contractors working in the village until the 11th February repairing drains following Bear's September 2025 investigations. Contractors are also carrying out further investigations as required and they have not reported any further issues with the drainage in the village to Transport Scotland. Ian Woodcock is aware of the issues with the culvert at Dundurn Lodge and will investigate factors contributing to the flooding. Ian has also instructed Bear to undertake inspections and cleaning regime on a quarterly basis, the usual frequency is annually. The issue is on Transport Scotland's list of commitments and will be discussed at their monthly progress meetings.

c. The Drummond Hotel's sale has gone through, and the new owners are currently working on the hotel and hope to be able to open some parts of the hotel in the summer.

5. Planning applications

2025/0268/TRE

Proposal: Tree works within a conservation area - Felling of 4 no. cypress and 1 no. horse chestnut

Location: Neish House, St Fillans

Applicant: Mr Nick Pye, Neish House, St Fillans PH6 2NF

2025/0265/DET

Proposal: Renewal of planning permission (appeal reference: 2021/0016/REVREF) for erection of dwelling house

Location: Land to the West of Tarken Lodge, St Fillans

Applicant: Mr Bill Shepherd, Rockcliffe, Garvel Terrace, Tarbert, PA29 6TR

2025/0194/LBC

Proposal: Reinstatement of original stone pillars at entrance of driveway.

Location: Earnholm St Fillans Crieff

Applicant: Ms Kelly Hillard, Earnholm, St Fillans, Crieff PH6 2NF

6. Village Working Groups

a. Garden Group

Audrey Gavigan had nothing to report but there is likely to be a village litter pick prior to Easter though.

b. Paths Group

Geoff thanked anyone who has helped to keep our paths clear of fallen trees and encroaching vegetation. Also, a special thanks to everyone who helped clear the culverts, drains and ditches during the recent heavy rain. Please let Geoff know of any access or maintenance issues so that we can deal with them asap.

Once the weather improves, we will organise a work party to cut back encroaching vegetation on a couple of Railway Path sections. (We will need as many volunteers as possible please.)

Work has recently started on the latest upgrade phases of the Loch Earn Railway Path Project.

c. Festive Committee

New marquees, flooring and lighting have been received.

Both the Festive Weekend and Bonfire Night were a great success, with visitors from surrounding towns and villages.

Still have over £3300 to put towards a new generator. This will be added to from monies raised at events to allow us to purchase a more powerful and quieter generator.

Festive Weekend will be 14th – 16th August this year. Details of events will be sent out nearer the time.

Will be arranging a meeting towards the end of Feb to meet with any people who are interested in becoming part of the committee. Richard, Audrey and Ruth will be joining me for 2026. We will work with new committee members, but will all be standing down at the end of the year.

SSE representatives will be invited to attend the Festive Weekend as a thank you from the community.

d. Play Park Group

The natural wood features are rotten and need replaced.

Jupiter Play has been approached. Funds will be required. When weather improves, Barry will cut down the “Stilt Steps” for safety reasons.

The original construction company has been approached about replacing features.

Gannochy Trust approached for funding and P&K may be able to get some match funding, also with fundraising within the village. We urgently need parents with young families to volunteer to look after the playpark.

Currently we need people to help prune the willow tunnel. The tower will also require repainting when the weather improves.

e. Cultural Heritage Group

Now have charitable status and will be able to apply for funding independently. We will however take heed of what other groups are bidding for.

Researching a suitable bank, currently with the Community Trust.

Insulated 4 metre by 4 metre building has been identified and has been ordered The land is to be cleared and a base is built. Hoping for completion in June.

Grant from PK Heritage Trust has been used to purchase appropriate IT, Software and preservation equipment. Further funding will be sought to purchase metal shelving, tables and chairs.

Calendars proved a great success, and we will be putting out a call to villagers to submit photos they are happy for us to use for next year’s calendar.

Kay Naitby has kindly agreed to allow us to use her print of the houses on the main street for printing on a tea towel. The Community Trust has agreed to a short-term loan and this money will be paid back. Other fundraising streams are being discussed.

Comrie Heritage Group have reached out to us. Sheila and Blair attended a meeting with them last week, and Comrie HG are keen to collaborate with us.

Blair has developed an excellent database, and we will start to catalogue, digitise, archive and conserve all heritage items we hold as soon as possible.

Continuing to liaise with Ishbel MacKinnon, Archivist from PK Archive, and Lisa Sneddon, Our Heritage Our Future.

Aquila CIC have funding from SSE which will be used to develop information leaflets /maps to help visitors and locals take part in self-guided nature/heritage walks.

f. Community Bus Group

Val Banwell reported that the Constitution was nearly ready to be sent to Oscar and is working at setting up a bank account.

g. Climate Change and Energy group

Apologies we cannot attend in person, we do intend to do so in future.

Our work is in three areas:

Firstly - resilience

We are working with a number of people in the village to establish the Village Hall as a refuge should we suffer flooding, power outages, and severe weather events, or any other threats to our way of life.

Our prime motivation is to preserve and protect village life and our community as much as possible.

We are working closely with Perth & Kinross council in order to apply for funding.

There are items which we can say are established needs - sandbags, power, communications, food, blankets etc.

There are some hurdles to overcome - perhaps the most challenging is providing the hall with enough power to keep the hall heated and lit in the event of a sustained power outages.

We are not experts in generators, but we are grateful for the advice and help from Steve Howell and Stuart Gavigan.

That work is ongoing.

The group has two more areas of focus – building greater landscape resilience and the community's domestic energy transition.

The need to repair and restore degraded landscapes is becoming increasingly urgent as communities everywhere face the effects of a changing climate. For our village, the recent period of heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding has brought this challenge into sharp focus. Tackling the complex landscape issues that put our community at risk is a significant undertaking—one that goes well beyond the capacity of our small group. Therefore, we intend to spend 2026 identifying the right partners to work with and mapping out the steps required to move this work forward.

We will also be exploring what a sustainable energy future could look like for our village, including the barriers that might stand in the way of a successful transition.

h. Community Place Plan

As a community we are expected to complete an annual review and a delivery plan of the CPP. This should ideally involve all community groups engaging in a discussion re what actions will be taken forward as a priority, who will do what, what is the timeline, for completion of the action, and are there any specific funding requirements. This will allow the community to determine which projects should be prioritised for grant funding.

CG and BF are happy to work with the CC to help complete an initial review and to develop a delivery plan. The CPP committee will then pass over all accountability for the CPP to the CC.

CPP is a living document. Any changes to the CPP must go through full community engagement before amendments are submitted, and ratified, by the National Park. Any changes will be added as an appendix to the original document.

Any new villagers who require a copy of the CPP should contact CG or can access this plan on the village website.

CG has been invited to present at the Rural and Island Place Standard Launch to detail our journey to our CPP.

7. AOB

a. Co-option of CC member

Proposal to co-opt Graham Palmer onto the Community Council

Proposed by Donna Littler

Seconded by Richard Graham

b. Councillors' updates

- a. Rhona Brock advised that there is no update as yet when the Thrust speed test on the loch will take place. She will chase this up with the National Park.

c. Aquila Community Interest Company

Since the last Community Council meeting which we briefly presented at in January 2025, we have been successful in securing funding from the SSE Hydro Community Fund to put towards the delivery of three projects, namely: Nature Mingle, St Fillans Natural & Cultural History Trail and the improvement of the area behind the War Memorial.

We had previously secured some funding from the PKC Health & Wellbeing Fund to start to buy the equipment needed for Nature Mingle and to employ a Project Manager for a few months. The extra SSE funding has enabled us to continue paying Fran Loots to manage this project for us. Unfortunately, we were not successful in securing continuation funding from this year's PKC Health & Wellbeing fund, so this project's future is currently uncertain.

For those who don't already know, Nature Mingle is a project targeted at those people within the Strathearn area who struggle to get outdoors and enjoy nature. This could be for a variety of reasons but mobility issues figure highly. Nature Mingle helps to bring the outdoors to them using camera technology either by placing cameras in their own gardens, or by buddying them up with one of our volunteers to watch the wildlife in their garden. Each participant has their own dedicated volunteer who checks that their cameras are working and chats to them about what has been seen. We also have a WhatsApp group where participants and volunteers share photos, videos, articles and observations of what they've seen. We have received lots of positive feedback from all involved, despite the technology giving us quite a few headaches!

The Natural & Cultural History Trail we hope to get started on in earnest very soon. We hope to deliver this in collaboration with the St Fillans Heritage Trust. The funding received should cover the cost of some small interpretation boards and leaflets, and we hope to be able to develop a spoken tour like the BliSS Trail on GeoTourist.

The improvement of the land behind the War Memorial has been on hold since November, so this has fallen behind our planned timetable of works. With more formal agreement from the community, we hope to get this going ASAP. If you have any questions regarding the slightly amended proposal, please address these to the CC using the members@ email address.

Natural Narratives started up again in September of last year and the last session will be in March. Attendance at these events has not been as good as the previous winter's series, so it is likely we will have to cancel the planned film at the end of this month as we would likely made a large loss. This project has been funded by us and donations have been requested to help us cover the costs. We have applied to two different funds to try and secure some funding to offer these sessions for free and to provide refreshments, but we have not been successful. We have tried to choose topics this year which mirror aspirations within the Place Plan that the St Fillans Futures Group are aiming to deliver on, but maybe

these topics are not of interest to many villagers. We would really appreciate some feedback on whether it is the topics, timings or the day of the week chosen which is preventing people from coming along. If there are any particular topics relating to nature or the environment you would like to learn more about, please let us know.

Apart from the above projects, Aquila has been continuing to offer talks, walks, training and ecology services to various individuals, organisations and community groups around Scotland. To give some examples, we are currently working for Bioregioning Tayside on a project to gather information so a funding bid can be made to restore the River Erich to its floodplains, we are also working for Cumbernauld Village Community Council to produce a Biodiversity Improvement Plan, and we recently delivered an Owl Pellet workshop in Crianlarich for the Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs' Wild Strathfillan Project.

As we turn 2 on 14th February, we are now in our second year of reporting to Companies House and the CIC regulator. Our full year accounts for 2024/2025 can be found on the Companies House website. At the end of the last financial year, we ended on a surplus of just over £2,000 after donating £1,000 to the Sandison Hall for the purchase and installation of a surround sound system.

As a reminder, the CIC has 3 current directors Andrea, Ruth and Hilary and Terry has now agreed to come onboard as a director to help manage the finances. Both Ruth & Hilary are completely voluntary, and Andrea only takes £1,000 a month for managing the CIC. Only Evey is in receipt of a full-time wage. The funding landscape is limited at the moment and is extremely competitive as so many social enterprises are struggling with increased running costs. It is likely that we will start to explore new ways of raising money such as fundraising events or corporate sponsorship as there is so much we would like to achieve. If anyone feels they can help us in any way such as by providing free professional advice, donating money or resources for projects, helping with events or even joining as a director, we would love to hear from you.

Many thanks, Team Aquila

d. Other points raised by attendees

- Stewart Gavigan wanted it noted that he didn't think the Chair should be reading out all Aquila CIC update and that there should have been a representative from Aquila there to read this out. Others at the meeting didn't see an issue with it being read out.
- Tom pointed out that the CC had had a very positive meeting with Aquila last week and that Andrea had updated her proposal. We agreed that once any villagers' questions were answered regarding Aquila's revised proposal that Tom would email Michael Aldridge saying that the villagers had no objections to this proposal, but that should the hub get funding in the future that both projects must be able to co-exist.
- Jim Brierly asked that we call the piece of land behind the memorial "An Eilean" as this is its correct name.
- Jim O'Donnell has asked where the ground, power and utility reports etc are regarding the feasibility study. Carol Graham will ask Denholm Partnership for these and send onto Jim.
- General consensus was that there is no reason why at this stage that the "Hub" site and Aquila's plans cannot co-exist but we will ensure the due process is followed.
- Barry Fisher pointed out the Place Plan aspirations involved 18 months of consultation with the villagers and that is why we refer back to this as there is a process around the place plan.
- Finally, Audrey Gavigan thanked the village for their support at Hogmanay. This year, we raised £755.63 of which £350 went to the Garden Group, £350 to the Community Trust and £55.63 to the Sandison Hall.

Date and time of the next Community Council meeting:

Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7:30pm in the Sandison Hall, St Fillans