



FORT AUGUSTUS & GLENMORISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT

Minutes of Meeting

Date:	09 March 2026, 11:30	
Location:	Fort Augustus Church Hall	
Attendees:	<p>Mike Anderson (MA) – Chair of meeting, Treasurer for Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston Community Council (FAGMCC), Dierdre MacKinnon (DM) – Chair of FAGMCC, Clare Levings (CL) - Community Councillor, Laura Blewitt (LB) – Minute Taker, James Prince (JP) - Community Councillor, Simon Canning (SC) – Community Company, Chris Ballance (CB) – Councillor, Hannah Cameron-Ross (HCR) – Emergency Planning Officer at Highland Council, Trish Wilson (TW) – Corporate Affairs at Scottish Water, Pamela Harvey (PH) – Resilience Lead with SSEN Distribution for Highlands and Islands, Gavin Steel (GS) – Corporate Affairs at Scottish Water.</p>	
Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome & Introductions MA welcomed all attendees to the meeting.	N/A
2	Review of actions from previous meeting	N/A 1 st meeting
3	Approve minutes of previous meeting	N/A 1 st meeting
4	<p>Agenda items: Opening statement & purpose</p> <p>MA explained the aims and scope of the group and this meeting is to identify what help and support is available from key partners to produce a community resilience plan for future periods of disruption for example from storms causing interruptions to utilities and services including power and water supplies, roads closed or blocked and internet and phone system outages.</p> <p>The informal sub group is engaging with communities in the areas of Dalchreichart, Glenmoriston and Fort Augustus as there are currently mixed resources and it is intended to combine and co-ordinate resilience strategies.</p> <p>The aim is to create a central location or ‘hub’ in each of the 3 areas for information and facilities during emergency situations for self resilience.</p> <p>Over 550 letters had already been sent to all residents in the area in December 2025 explaining what the FAGMCC are doing regarding resilience with a link to the community council website for resources in resilience and household emergency planning based on UK Government resilience planning advice.</p> <p>Community representatives met at Invermoriston on 2nd March to discuss ideas. CL added they have had input from all three areas and local groups including the churches, Senior Citizens’ Association, 3 Glens Care, Dalchreichart Hub in what has been done already, valid concerns, what people want, where are these groups</p>	

	<p>currently with plans, what further help is needed so that a cohesive plan can be developed.</p> <p>PH asked who will own the resilience plan.</p> <p>MA confirmed the aim is for one community resilience plan developed by the FAGMCC which may have slight differences for each area (due to geography and population) but the baseline will be applicable to each. It has already been identified the need to manage community level and expectations, not to overpromise and look at any trigger points in a plan.</p>	
5	<p>Baseline Resilience</p> <p>CL explained each of 3 individual hubs would have its own plan, within which they can identify vulnerable people in the area (complying with GDPR).</p> <p>DM confirmed the Senior Citizens' Association and over 60's within the areas will be identified as vulnerable.</p> <p>PH added it is important to consider all vulnerable groups, not just older people and appreciate that some may not request or accept any extra help although may need it in an emergency situation.</p> <p>MA added that the resilience hubs should not be considered as refuges.</p> <p>PH advised to use the same and correct terminology across the areas to avoid confusion.</p> <p>MA described the proposed three hubs (Fort Augustus Church Hall, Dalchreichart Hub, Glenmoriston Millennium Hall) as central places people can meet to access information, they should have heat and light, hot water including hot drink making facilities, internet access. It should be the same offering wherever residents live in the area.</p> <p>Further discussions need to be had concerning emergency power supplies as there have already been discussions with some expensive solutions. Dalchreichart have an existing issue with their generator and getting it serviced.</p> <p>PH added investing in back up electricity generators means they would need to be installed and maintained properly.</p> <p>CL doesn't believe anyone is assigned to look after the Dalchreichart generator and there is no provision for fuel storage, back up, or plans for who to do what and when needed.</p> <p>The Community Council aims to have a plan in place for October 2026 or before next Winter. It will need to be publicised.</p> <p>HCR commented it is not just winter storms but can be other times of year for example Storm Floris which happened in Summer 2025 causing wide scale disruption and just after some of the largest wildfires so all resources are stretched in these times. HCR also queried how the plan would be tested and how often to ensure it works in practice. Also explaining there are table top exercises with scenarios to show how the plan reacts, strengths and weaknesses and identify any gaps in the plan.</p> <p>MA asked if it is possible to get outside help with testing.</p> <p>HCR answered that the Highland Council has a model that creates a warning and scenarios, for example roads closed and you can feed into the model and react to scenarios. Currently looking into a hub to facilitate test exercises.</p> <p>CL asked what the trigger points may be in a plan for example food trucks deployed after 6 hours?</p> <p>HCR replied it can depend on the big picture and conditions. For example, weather such as snow, location and how widespread, timescales, storms where some people may be without power for 5 or 6 days, if trees are down preventing access. The scale for triggers changes on size of disruption and how many people are affected.</p> <p>MA asked how long in emergency planning should a household be able to survive without external support, communities or individuals, 24 - 48 hours? Some people are left for longer, vulnerable people will need help sooner.</p> <p>PH commented after 12 hours some people cannot cope especially if in social housing with reliance on electricity for cooking and heating.</p>	

	<p>DM added that there are lots of newer houses reliant on electricity only in the area (air source heat pumps or overnight storage) rather than some older houses which may still have fires or log burners.</p> <p>JP mentioned after 12 hours without any heating or power some houses could match outside temperatures for example 5°C.</p> <p>CL added that communication was the biggest problem in the last major storm. HCR also highlighted difficulties when communication systems are down co-ordinating a multi-agency response.</p> <p>MA agreed it would be impossible to provide emergency communication systems for the whole area but the Community Council will be looking into Starlink satellite internet at each hub as the equipment is currently free and at a reasonable cost. Although the electricity source would be needed first to power the internet and would need to be tested continuously and maintained.</p> <p>HRC said there may be other things available as some of the newest I-phones have this satellite technology already.</p> <p>MA added O2 and Virgin already have direct to cell technology with 82-95% coverage and other providers should not be too far behind with 1yr to 18 months roll out. The phones need to be kept charged which is difficult in a power cut but acknowledged communication with family or friends is important in times of disruption for reassurance purposes.</p> <p>Emergency power back up needs to be investigated for Fort Augustus Church Hall. PH has already informed the Glenmoriston Millennium Hall Association that they can apply for funding towards a generator up to £10k. PH also confirmed having a resilience plan in place, even if in draft helps with access to funding and grants. CL says the Hall and Dalchreichart can put these applications forward.</p>	
6	<p>Vulnerable People 3 Glens Care and NHS Highland were not present at this meeting. It was decided to discuss in more detail at the next meeting in April.</p>	Add to next meeting agenda
7	<p>Provisions, food/water drops GS described challenges to water supply during disruptions. Loss of power is the first issue with pumped water systems. Storm Amy provided challenges across the whole of the Highlands and Islands. They recognise they need to try and make the water infrastructure more resilient.</p> <p>CL and MA both agreed the problems Storm Amy caused and enquired about the water pumps failing.</p> <p>JP asked if there is a power back up for the generators, if they are tested and what is the expectation when there is no power/water.</p> <p>GS continued this varies by site as not all sites have generators and recognises the need for these to be fuelled and maintained when in use. Storm Amy caused major difficulties due to loss of electricity, problems with generators and loss of communication systems.</p> <p>JP asked what has changed, if anything since Storm Amy.</p> <p>GS advised telecoms issues have not been fixed and when the whole network goes down, the response is harder and the only solution is old satellite phones.</p> <p>DM queried that previously tankers and/or bottled water have been sent out but after Storm Amy when houses were without water this response was severely delayed.</p> <p>CL asked what the trigger time for bottled water to be deployed would be.</p> <p>GS said usually after 12 hours without water, bottled water would be sent out in small scale incidents. With Storm Amy, it was such a large-scale incident with roads closed and not enough resources that they could not provide the same level of response.</p> <p>CL informed water is pumped to Dalchreichart and after Storm Amy, no-one came out, there was no bottled water and no-one local appeared to be available to top up the generators.</p> <p>GS added the additional challenge of having a central contact centre to take calls but the information cannot get through to people locally. People were working</p>	

	<p>locally to get systems back up and running but may not have had the correct information in the right order and Scottish Water teams had challenges of wide geographical coverage.</p> <p>DM agreed communication from SSEN and Scottish Water was the biggest problem after Storm Amy.</p> <p>GS explained that gravity also plays a big part in who has water and when, if the whole network drains due to loss of power and has to be recharged with highest houses losing water first or ones served by smaller pumping stations.</p>	
8	<p>Household Self Help Support</p> <p>MA asked what households should do in terms of emergency drinking water and then other water (e.g. rainwater) for flushing toilets etc.</p> <p>GS mentioned the Priority Services Register for vulnerable people and vouchers are available for bottled water and advisable for people to have enough water for 24-48 hours for drinking and taking medication. Also highlighting the shelf life or Use By dates on bottled water and the issue of single use plastics to be considered. They are cautious giving advice of exact things to do as everyone is different.</p> <p>TW commented that Scottish Water only know the tanks last for so many hours in normal conditions so if everyone panics and fills containers of more water with storm warnings it will drain the systems quicker so they are harder to bring back into supply and this may cause further shortages if the supply is not brought back on-line properly and water may not be safe to drink.</p> <p>It was also discussed power cuts are not the only scenario referring to the recent polluted water in Killin creating a different situation and HCR suggested thinking of all the things that can go wrong should be considered in the plan.</p> <p>Utilities companies are happy to talk to customers but try not to overpromise or guarantee times and triggers as they are always different. In some scenarios, it is not possible to deliver depending if at household or community level.</p> <p>JP mentioned the plan may need to include details of a water drop after a certain number of hours without water. MA continued it could be up to 48 hours at household level then delivered within 48 hours if water remains off.</p> <p>GS agreed if Scottish Water knows where the community hubs are, they can use these locations and also support their vulnerable list of customers.</p> <p>CL commented this may create conflict where some people are on the priority list and other people are not and will feel left out.</p> <p>MA confirmed the hubs at Dalchreichart, Invermoriston and moving from Tarff Trading to the Fort Augustus Church Hall could all have water available.</p> <p>PH said also it would be good to have a Food Truck location if and when required at the hubs.</p> <p>MA added with the plan and community hubs, everything would be in one defined place per area. Even if water supplies cannot get to the hubs, there would be information at the hall as a point of contact.</p> <p>PH says a caveat for hot food vans could be added. SSEN will also cover reasonable expenses locally for providing hot food and drinks in power cuts including food and generators.</p> <p>DM highlighted the Fort Augustus Church Hall would be a better location than the main carpark for a food truck as there were problems with tourists on tour buses and coaches getting food for free last time.</p> <p>MA addressed the wider issue of tourists in the area during weather warnings or when utilities are not available and further discussions with bus and tour companies, Visit Loch Ness or other businesses may be required.</p> <p>PH raised that Storm Amy caused significant problems and this scale of event does not come around very often. SSEN staff were deployed from other UK sites but some could not do the jobs required. There is also often a lack of accommodation available for workers during these times.</p> <p>HCR agreed during Storm Floris in Summer 2025, there was no accommodation locally for workers trying to restore services. PH also agreed in other areas accommodation for extra workers to restore systems is a big problem especially in the main tourist season.</p>	

	<p>CL recognises the plan can not commit to anything that can't be provided and that personnel change as well as what can be delivered.</p> <p>PH reminded SSEN has a priority services register for customers who need extra support before, during and after a power cut.</p> <p>HCR mentioned that consideration is needed to what can be used safely by people if providing equipment and items need to be maintained.</p> <p>It was also discussed around the table issues of liability when volunteers offer to help for example with chain saws to clear fallen trees on roads. People need to be competent and confident working in a safe manner and decide to do it for themselves.</p> <p>HCR said it is worth noting resources and assets available in plans but not explicitly using names or jobs. Referring to the gov.uk website it has information about resilience and templates for community groups, health and safety and insurance etc. There are around 160 community councils/groups in the Highlands. Plan templates are available which outline lists of contacts, who have keys to halls, but each plan is different for what works in each community. Also useful to talk to neighbouring communities as they may already have a plan template which may be suitable.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>HCR informed that NHS Highland is currently the lead for care for people in the Highlands, not the Highland Council. Leona Jones from NHS has already communicated with 3 Glens Care and looks at emergency plans and advising communities with care for vulnerable people and adults but Highland Council does have responsibility for vulnerable children and the homeless although NHS may lead and help.</p> <p>PH asked what the next steps were for the resilience group.</p> <p>MA explained all information would be collated and reported back to the community group who attended in Invermoriston last week for discussion. Then looking at predicting timescales and possible triggers for utility companies or community triggers. There are likely to be another couple of closed group meetings before October. A draft plan will be prepared for utility company representatives and external companies to read and provide feedback.</p> <p>HCR offered to answer questions by e-mail whilst the plan is drafted. She also mentioned the 'Climate Hub' is relaunching with a new website and will forward details of this by e-mail along with the community briefing newsletter.</p> <p>Current links are: https://www.highland.gov.uk/climate-change-net-zero/climate-change-adaptation/3 & https://hiclimatehub.co.uk</p> <p>MA thanked everyone for attending</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th April, 11:30 at Fort Augustus Church Hall.</p>	