

Portmoak Community Council

Annual General Meeting – 11 Nov 2025

Chairman's Letter

As we close the Community Council year 2024 – 2025, it is, once again, a bittersweet task compiling the Chairs report. For those who follow the CC meeting minutes, it is apparent some items are geologically slow in terms of any tangible progress. That is not to say efforts are not continuing month on month, and I thank all members of PCC for their commitment in trying to move things forward for the benefit of all within our Community. While some of the central topics of discussion once again feature in this years report, on review, it is precisely these items which are communicated to us as being of local importance, and we will continue all efforts to obtain successful outcomes. The Chair and PCC would like to take this opportunity of thanking the current elected WCllrs (W Robertson, R Watters, N Freshwater & D Cuthbert) for continuing to assist, and addressing the various issues raised to them within Portmoak.

PCC completed the 2024-25 year with a full compliment of 8 members following the recent Community Council elections, and it is indeed pleasing to report representation from all areas of the PCC catchment. While this is excellent in terms of communicating issues within Portmoak, this is unfortunately not the case within some of the other CC areas within the Ward, who regrettably are struggling to secure representation or sufficient membership to form their local Community Councils. The Kinross-shire Committee Meetings continue to be held every 2 months, and the lack of local representation will inevitably impact on both the agenda and resolution of issues relevant to the whole of Kinross-shire and the 6 local CC areas. PCC would like to wish the other CC swift membership resolution – definitely a case of stronger together! Thanks to Cllr LHatch for continuing to attend these when possible/

As with previous years, the majority of PCC meetings have been held online and a couple of scheduled meetings having to be cancelled due to availability of members. Irrespective of format, Community engagement at the meetings unfortunately remains limited, although all of the elected members continue to report local issues communicated to them directly by members of the Community. I would wholly endorse this continues to be the case - and as your Community Council, we will endeavour to raise the relevant topics as necessary.

Sincere personal thanks, and those of all other CC members are once again extended to PCC Secretary - Cllr S McGregor for her tireless efforts in updating the PCC page on social media, and the Newsletter, communicating meeting information, minutes, events and issues of potentially local importance to the wider community. To that end, it is pleasing to report that members of the CC have agreed to 'devolved' responsibility of some of the monthly report items and queries, to try to assist and reduce the workload of the Secretary in month-to-month co-ordination. It is hoped that this can be reported successfully through 2025-2026 and will assist to provide additional focus.

The problem of road safety and speeding vehicles through our Community remains a high priority topic discussed at every PCC meeting. Serious ongoing concerns remain that the limits are being largely disregarded. The increasing reports to the CC in terms of unacceptable speeding behaviour, does however appear that the situation is worse than ever. PCC are unable to report any tangible progress in terms of the Community Speedwatch programme, which appears to have become entangled in participant vetting & approvals, however it is hoped that with devolved 'tenacity' amongst the PCC membership this may be advanced.

Recent communication received from WCllr W Robertson & WCllr D Cuthbert suggested that PKC possibly be requested to 'trial' the use of average speed cameras (ASC) in Kinross-shire villages. As has been minuted previously, Police Scotland have intimated they simply do not have the resources for enforcement. In terms of the suggested proposal for the introduction of ASC - PCC believe this would resolve the issue immediately. ASC systems are proven to be one of the few measures that actually change

Note: Minutes of Council can be viewed on the Village Hall noticeboard or found on the Community Council website. www.portmoak.org

drivers behaviour. Portmoak offers a fairly unique road and speed restricted arrangement that would be ideal for trialling, and this has been communicated to the WCllrs. From Loch Levens Larder to Achmuirbridge, the A911 (and B920 immediately south of Scotlandwell) is speed restricted 20-40mph along its entire length, comprising a single road with no alternative access or egress points. Covering Wester Balgeddie, Easter Balgeddie, Kinnesswood, Scotlandwell, Bowhouse and all developments between, each suffer from, and report, abject disregard to speed limits - particularly in the Villages. There would be no requirement for Speedwatch, Police enforcement, physical road cushions or expensive vehicle activated signage. This is precisely the thing the Kinross-shire Committee was set up to discuss, debate and enact under its devolved powers. This option also likely represents an 'economic' alternative for resolving a very long standing issue.

The absence of any reasonable Public Transport service within Portmoak remains an issue for all residents. It is recognised the current 4 services per day (and return timings), are inadequate. Ongoing discussions within the Kinross-shire Community Transport Forum, have been taking place regarding the possible provision of supplementary services. This is hoped to be provided in conjunction with Glenfarg Community Transport through introduction of their 'digital on demand' service through Portmoak. The initial commencement was due in August 2025 – however funding issues mean that this has required to be delayed. Once resolved, PCC will attempt to communicate details to all Portmoak residents and it is hoped uptake will be 'good'.

A review of Planning Applications within Portmoak continues to form part of monthly CC work, and over the last year the CC have reviewed and discussed a considerable number of Applications. Despite PCC obtaining increased Planning review powers, it is acknowledged this requires to be exercised with appropriate judgment and restraint. Regrettably, despite Individual and organisational representation, PCC have recently been informed that Craighead Wind Farm, which is sited immediately adjacent to the larger Brunt Hill Windfarm application, has been approved by PKC. It seems incredulous that the argument against cumulative visual and physical impact through the Ochils, and particularly to the Scottish Gliding Centre in Portmoak, go unheard, when we then see cases for applications for small domestic solar systems within the Community catchment, refused on spurious grounds. Planning will always be contentious. We do however welcome any movement towards public engagement and will find time at monthly CC meetings for individuals to present as required. PCC remain positioned that suitable development has to be considered – but not at a cost to the specific character and rural appearance of the Portmoak Communities.

The CC continue to participate at the liaison meetings for the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility and ongoing thanks are expressed to Cllr K Donaldson for keeping the CC informed of developments. It is understood that the Plant is now fully operational and running a full capacity. Ongoing issues regarding road signage, and particularly access road deterioration continue to be discussed. Of particular interest to voluntary and community sector organisations within Portmoak, is the ongoing availability of grant funding through the Westfield ERF Community Fund. PCC would urge any Groups that are seeking supplementary funding to consider applying. Grants of up to £2,000 remain available for qualifying applications.

The long-term efforts to provide a safe public 'off-road' path connecting the villages of Scotlandwell and Kinnesswood remains a constant PCC Agenda item. Communication with the Landowners for the southern section has however been made, and meetings held over the course of the year. It is no surprise that the Landowners wish to realise some development potential and have submitted an outline scheme to PKC under the LDP 'call for sites'. These proposals are within the public domain and include a 4-unit development within the Scotlandwell development boundary - and a larger mixed affordable and private development over the 'field'. I would stress these are not Planning Applications and consequently PCC cannot comment on the content. Indeed, there is no certainty that the site would be zoned or receive allocation. It is however clear from the discussions that the landowners consider the Path and Cemetery extension to be inextricably linked to their wider development aspirations. The Landowners did however give an undertaking that the Path would be installed and the cemetery extension 'gifted' by them (if approved) prior to any site works occurring. While there are other considerations - not least of which is

the LDP process – it is now clear the terms by which these elements are linked to Landowner assent. Other avenues remain open, however discussion and resolution remain the obvious key.

It is worthy of reporting that the Paths Group in Portmoak continue to work on path maintenance and vegetation clearance, maintaining access to the fabulous local path networks to the enjoyment of all. Of particular note is the intimated proposal by WCllr R Watters of the proposed launch of an App ‘routemap’ of the core path network throughout Kinross-shire with information and local POI. This will undoubtedly be of benefit to the Local Community and visitors alike. Another ‘devolved’ element proposed within the CC will be the appointment of members to specifically seek ways of improving and promoting the path and access network facilities within Portmoak. Members of the public are encouraged to recommend improvement and report problems. Indeed, it is pleasing to report that with the assistance of the WCllrs, an improved access gate from Levenmouth to the Heritage Trail was suggested and approved within a week, together with improved surfacing and access at Findatie. Proof ‘things can happen’.

“Portmoak – The Perfect Place to Live”. Strapline – or not – it has been suggested by Kinnesswood Development Trust that a Community Engagement Forum be arranged for early 2026. It is likely this will be held within the Village Hall and all organisations from throughout the Portmoak area will hopefully come together and share ideas, information and local opportunities to fundamentally make things ‘better’. It is hoped that such an event would be well attended by the public to see what is available in the area, engage with the various organisations, and perhaps even volunteer. Watch out for further details over the next couple of months.

Other newsworthy snippets from PCC meetings...

... It is pleasing to announce the Play facilities at the Green at Scotlandwell were completed earlier in the year with the ‘welcome’ sign designed by the Children at Portmoak Primary.

... This coming year is likely to see the commencement of the Well restoration project in Scotlandwell. Some significant reparations are required, and the Tenders are to be submitted soon. It is likely that a bespoke Charitable organisation will be formed to take ongoing fundraising for maintenance forward on completion.

... Congratulations to Kinnesswood in Bloom for their ongoing award success and shortlisting for the Green Living Fund. This really is a local community effort and ongoing thanks to all for the hard work

... Despite the latterly atrocious weather, I would also like to mention the success of the Portmoak Gala and thank everyone involved for their hard work in pulling the event together.

The Portmoak Festival Activities have also successfully continued and provide a fabulous week of events for all ages and interests.

... As always, PCC would like to extend thanks to all of the volunteers and groups who continue to maintain the Community Woodlands, orchards, paths, Moss, gardens, flowerbeds, Hall, Well & Washhouse and make our communities such lovely places to stay. As in previous years, it is worth re-iterating that these are all voluntary groups who would welcome additional members. If you feel you can give even a small amount of time, I am sure it would be welcomed.

There are undoubtedly many items which have not been mentioned or covered – for that I apologise. In closing however, I would like to once again thank all of the current CC members and WCllrs for their and valued input over the past year.

Best regards to all

Andy Miller – Chair Portmoak Community Council