

Dores & Essich Community Council – Meeting Highlights

Date: Monday 5th January 2025

Venue: Dores Parish Hall

The Community Council held its ordinary meeting with councillors, members, and residents in attendance. The main points are summarised below:

Chair's Position –

John Martin confirmed he will remain as Chair until the Community Council elections in June 2026, citing the need for continuity while key issues, including the Statkraft Pumped Storage Scheme, remain unresolved. He will consider standing again depending on progress.

Statkraft Pumped Storage Scheme –

The CC raised concerns about the proposed earthen dam above the village, highlighting potential safety and environmental risks. A retired geologist, Donald Fisher, has offered to provide an independent expert assessment and will be invited to a future meeting. Ongoing concerns remain around construction traffic, with strong support for a park-and-ride system to limit village disruption.

Cemetery Extension –

Progress remains stalled until the required road improvements are completed. The CC stressed the need to resolve landscaping and access issues to avoid delays beyond 2027.

Affordable Housing –

Plans for 17 new homes were discussed. Concerns remain about housing types, allocation zones, and whether local needs will be met. The CC will seek clarification on why planning gains are directed to Hilton rather than to Dores and will press for fair consideration of local benefits. A previous planning deferral was noted for overlooking housing.

SSEN Beauly–Peterhead Transmission Line –

The CC confirmed it submitted a formal objection before the deadline. Concerns include poor consultation and difficulties accessing planning documents. Over 2,000 objections have been lodged nationally, including from local estates and landowners.

Fish Farm –

Highland Council has accepted the current positioning of the fish farm. The CC is awaiting further correspondence on consent and compliance and will continue to monitor the situation.

Battery Energy Storage (Essich) –

Community benefit arrangements were discussed. Traffic management during construction remains a concern, and the CC will monitor impacts and Community Benefit allocation.

Ness Castle Access –

Concerns were raised about the proposed road layout. The CC supports improved safety measures, including speed reductions and junction improvements at Torbreck Road.

Dochgarroch Weir –

The CC agreed to review environmental and community impacts before submitting comments on the proposal.

Boundary Changes –

Recent boundary reorganisation was imposed without full consultation. The CC expressed concern about impacts on the rural character of Dores & Essich and will formally respond.

Speed Signs –

New village speed signs are currently displaying 30mph instead of the intended 20mph. The CC is following up with Highland Council and contractors to resolve calibration issues.

Police & Community Safety –

There is currently no named community police officer, and police reports are no longer provided. The CC will seek renewed engagement via the Inverness Community Council Forum. Road safety near the school remains a concern.

Community Updates

- Current CC balance: £8,944.97
- New heated defibrillator box purchased; installation pending building renovations
- Over £1,600 raised in the past year via the QR-code toilet system
- Website and mailing list to be updated; GDPR compliance prioritised
- Discussion held on potential village-wide text alert system

Next Meeting:

Monday 9th March 2026, 7:00 pm – Dores Parish Hall