

Meeting	Bingally - Community Liaison Group
Date	11 August 2026
Time	7pm
Location	Cannich Hall

Attendees	Position
Abbie Mcilgorm (AM)	Assistant Project Manager, SSEN Transmission
Irfan Ahman (IA)	Lead Project Manager, SSEN Transmission
Steven Miller (SM)	Onshore Development Portfolio Manager, SSEN Transmission
Jeff McKenzie (JMck)	Community Liaison Manager, SSEN Transmission
Keith Gibson (KG)	Project Manager, BAM
Lucy Ibison (LI)	Community Liaison Manager, SSEN Transmission
Adam MacGregor (AMac)	Lead Engineer, SSEN Transmission
Roddie MacLennan (RM)	Strathglass Community Fund (CSF), Strathglass Shinty Club (SSC), Cannich Sports and Recreation (CS&R)
Jeannine Mansell (JM)	Strathglass and Affric Community Company (SACC)
Brad Collins (BC)	Resident (Cannich Village Store)
Steve Towell (ST)	Resident (Tomich)
Carolyn Mecia (CM)	Tomich Residents Association
Cath Curd (CC)	Resident (Community Energy Scotland)
Cllr David Fraser (DF)	Ward 12 – The Highland Council
Ryan Bell (RB)	Community Benefit Manager, SSE
William (Bill) Smart (BS)	Glen Urquhart Community Council
Alexander Grigg (AG)	Strathglass Community Council and Strathglass and Affric Community Company
Apologies	Position
Jim McAuley (JMc)	Resident
Rupert Humphrey Clarke	Strathglass Community Council
Dr Georgina Parker (GP)	Strathglass Community Council
Kelly Scott (KS)	Lead Community Liaison Manager, SSEN Transmission
Heather Macgillivray (HM)	Stakeholder Engagement & Social Sustainability Coordinator, BAM

1.0	Introductions, apologies and approval of mins
1.1	Apologies were noted. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2026 were reviewed and approved Request for the meeting to be recorded Recorded on Irfan's phone, this is not to be shared, only for verification of minutes. Once this is agreed, this is deleted. Minutes approved: Circulated, with comments made. Agreed.
2.0	Actions from last meeting
2.1	Review options to reduce visual impact of bellmouth and entrance. Update to be provided by BAM. Minute note: BAM – we covered this in the last meeting, so I am unsure what else is expected on this point. DF- confirmed this can be changed to closed.
2.2	Confirm approach to traffic management around school times at Cannich, Balnain and Drumnadrochit. Update to include CTMP review position and confirmation of school-time considerations.

	Minute note: BAM – comments have come back on it, such as school times, this is being reviewed. JM has just sent the Cannich ones. Picked up Balnain and Cannich. DF – Children in Balnain that go to childcare in Drum, pre-school and after school. Will find out Balnain details – will send to Jeff. open
2.3	Potential improvement of local car park and ownership clarification. CLG members to report back from initial investigation; current understanding noted in slide pack that SSE do not own any of the car park and it is fully owned by the community. JMcK to update JM with further details once obtained from SSE Renewables and Land Team open
2.4	Hall connectivity for hybrid meetings. Price for hotspot/dongle has been forwarded and SSN Transmission are happy to support. closed
2.5	Species Protection Plans / monitoring reports. Black Grouse SPP sent alongside minutes as example. closed
2.6	Project team to confirm proposed bunding arrangements for the northern compound, including intended visual and noise mitigation benefits. Further clarification required on how the long-term cabins will blend in. closed
2.7	School times for Cannich, Balnain and Drumnadrochit schools and other local events. closed
2.8	Create a diary of dates for the rest of the year. Minute note: Dates agreed and circulated as 15 September, 27 Oct, 1 Dec closed
3.0	Project Update
3.1	IA provided a project update. Slide pack notes that 16 out of 21 pre-commencement conditions have been satisfied to date, with ongoing discussion with The Highland Council Case Officer. Key feedback from The Highland Council is still required for the Construction Traffic Management Plan condition. Start on site remains targeted for 31 August Discussion / questions: IA – project update now at 18/21 conditions discharged, waiting to hear feedback on documents from THC. Came back with comments Start on site – targeting end of August start of September, which is still subject to change, will send comms on this. CLG queried the radius of the maildrop. JMcK confirmed 10km radius from Cannich Hall was selected, but following discussion will be increased
4.0	How fire risk is considered and mitigated during the construction period
4.1	KG (BAM) presented on fire risk management during construction in response to concerns raised at previous CLG meetings. He explained that BAM's approach covers both fire prevention and emergency response, with controls including plant inspections and quarantine procedures, permit-to-work systems, housekeeping requirements, designated smoking/vaping and refuelling areas, fire risk assessments, fire safety coordinators, emergency response plans, fire-fighting equipment, trained fire wardens, toolbox talks and regular emergency drills. Discussion / questions: DF highlighted that the community continues to have concerns regarding fire risk and requested factual information and evidence of the measures being implemented. He emphasised that sharing information would help build confidence within the community and allow residents to understand what arrangements are in place should an incident occur. CM sought clarification on whether BAM's fire response plans were coordinated with the Fire and Rescue Service and requested visibility of those arrangements. CM also noted concerns about local response times and the unique nature of the site location. KG confirmed that BAM has engaged with the Fire and Rescue Service and acknowledged the request for greater transparency. He suggested that a future site visit could provide an opportunity to demonstrate the measures in place once the site is established. ST asked about out-of-hours monitoring and whether any incidents occurring in the evening would be identified. KG explained that site security and camera systems would provide monitoring, with remotely monitored towers and private security arrangements operating during relevant phases of the project. AMac clarified that while security personnel may not always be physically present, camera systems would continue to be monitored. DF encouraged BAM to demonstrate how emergency response arrangements would be communicated to the wider community and requested that feedback from fire drill exercises be shared with residents where appropriate.

	Actions arising: Share fire plans
5.0	AIS/GIS: Why AIS was selected as the preferred option for Bingally
5.1	SM started by noting Bingally is consented based on an AIS solution and the presentation was not to re-open that discussion. SM then provided a detailed presentation on the differences between Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) and Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS), explaining that AIS is the default starting point for SSEN Transmission substation selections and is the proposed technology for Bingally. He outlined the characteristics of both technologies, noting that GIS can offer a reduced footprint but is generally selected only where specific engineering, environmental or site constraints justify its use. Discussion / questions: AG challenged the rationale for selecting AIS, highlighting several examples of newer GIS technologies and suggesting that SF6-free GIS solutions are becoming increasingly common across the industry above all for locations as exposed and sensitive as Bingally. He questioned whether the potential footprint reduction (particularly on a peatland site) reduced fire risk and construction benefits associated with GIS had been fully considered and communicated to statutory consultees such as SEPA and NatureScot at site selection and final design stage. AG referred to the ongoing duty to review and mitigate environmental damage. SM and AMac stated they were unaware of other GIS 400kV developments from other transmission operators but are fully aware of the GIS projects on the SSEN Transmission network. BS queried whether cost had influenced the technology selection and noted that GIS appeared to have lower maintenance requirements. JM similarly requested clarification on whether SSEN's starting preference for AIS was driven by cost, operational considerations or company policy. SM explained that AIS is the default starting point for substation design and that GIS is typically considered when specific site constraints justify its use. For Bingally, he advised that assessments had concluded there were no engineering or operational requirements that necessitated the need for GIS. He also stated that any land take reduction achieved through GIS at Bingally would have been limited with GIS infrastructure requiring larger buildings than AIS. AMac added that AIS and GIS suitability is highly site-specific. He noted that lessons learned from other substations cannot always be directly applied to Bingally due to differing operational requirements, site conditions and potential future connections. He also explained that GIS is often favoured in coastal environments due to factors such as sea air corrosion and other exposure considerations. DF sought to keep the discussion focused and encouraged the technical presentation to conclude before opening the floor to questions. DF requested greater evidence to support the position being presented and highlighted concerns raised by the community regarding apparent inconsistencies between previous statements made during the Highland Council pre-determination hearing and the information presented at the CLG. A significant portion of the discussion focused on previous evidence provided to Highland Council regarding GIS benefits. AG quoted previous statements made by AMac during the hearing and argued that they appeared inconsistent with the current presentation. He requested clarification on why earlier comments on other SSENT substations referred to substantial GIS advantages, including reduced footprint and improved resilience, whereas the current presentation suggested more limited benefits. SM responded that the slides presented to the CLG had been reviewed by subject matter experts and reflected the most accurate information for the Bingally project. AMac reiterated that technology choice is site-specific and that examples cited by AG, including Alyth Substation, were not directly comparable to Bingally. CM questioned why Bingally was not considered an exposed site given local weather conditions and queried why GIS had been selected at other exposed locations but not at Bingally. SM and AMac explained that Bingally did not exceed the exposure thresholds that would typically favour GIS, although the exact criteria and testing information would be confirmed separately. DF observed that there remained a noticeable contrast between previous evidence provided to Highland Council and the explanations being given at the CLG. He requested a clear written explanation setting out the reasons for that perceived discrepancy and emphasised that supporting documentation would help community members understand the decision-making process. Actions arising: Why AIS is the starting point for SSE when selecting the technology for a substation and evidence this is SSE policy? When were wind speed tests conducted and what the threshold is for AIS AMac to provide written statement to clarify comments made at Highland Council pre-determination hearing Confirmation SEPA and Nature Scot involved in pre-consent process
6.0	Noise and Screening Consideration
6.1	SM provided an overview of the noise assessments and environmental studies undertaken as part of the design process. He explained that baseline noise surveys were completed in the local area, informed by community feedback on key monitoring locations, with the results feeding into the project design and the consented planning application. He noted that landscape, habitat and mitigation plans were also developed and incorporated into the planning application. SM and AMac advised that the substation's location, with the nearest residential property approximately 1.6km away, significantly reduced the potential for operational noise impacts. They explained that specialist assessments had been undertaken and that mitigation measures, such as noise enclosures, would be considered if required. KG outlined how construction noise assessments had been completed using worst-case construction scenarios. He explained that modelling had assumed intensive earthworks activities, including multiple large excavators operating simultaneously, to ensure potential impacts were fully assessed and managed.

	Discussion / questions: AG questioned whether blasting activities had been sufficiently considered within the assessments and expressed concern that blasting noise could exceed the thresholds presented. He queried where the impacts of blasting were addressed within the EIA. KG responded that the assessments concluded the relevant noise thresholds would not be exceeded at the nearest receptors. He noted that blasting events would be occasional and short duration rather than continuous sources of noise. DF sought clarification on where the baseline noise monitoring had been undertaken, while KG confirmed that monitoring had been carried out at three locations within the village and that blasting trials had also been undertaken at the site platform. ST asked for practical examples of what the quoted noise levels would sound like. AM explained that approximately 65 decibels would be comparable to a normal conversation, while the projected operational substation noise level of around 35 decibels would likely be quieter than a whisper and difficult to perceive. Discussion then moved to notification and communications around blasting activities. AMac advised that local residents would be notified in advance of blasting works, while KG confirmed that future CLG meetings could be used to provide updates on forthcoming activities. DF highlighted the importance of proactive communication and noted that Highland Council's Environmental Health team would also have a role in ensuring compliance with planning conditions. JMcK confirmed that internal planning meetings and four-week lookahead programmes were already being established to help identify activities requiring community communication. DF welcomed this approach and requested that updates continue to be shared with the CLG. AG asked whether public core paths would remain open during blasting activities. KG confirmed that core paths would be diverted during the earthworks phase and that arrangements were being developed through the Outdoor Access Management Plan. He advised that exclusion zones would be implemented during blasting operations and that public safety would be maintained at all times. AMac added that advance notification mechanisms, including updates through local groups, were being considered to ensure communities received sufficient notice of blasting activities. Actions arising: JMcK Share community updates and lookahead at future CLG meetings to include such items as blasting, exclusion zones, construction activities, transport etc Was blasting noises part of the EIA assessment
7.0	Car Park Improvements
7.1	The CLG discussed the ongoing condition of the Cannich Community Hall car park, ownership responsibilities and potential options for resurfacing and future maintenance. JM and JMcK provided an update on land ownership investigations. They advised that the majority of the car park appears to be owned by the community, with only a small section near the fire station believed to be owned by SSER. RM confirmed this aligned with information held by the shinty club. RM highlighted concerns regarding the deteriorating condition of the car park, noting that previous patch repairs had only provided short-term improvements. He suggested that a more substantial resurfacing solution may be required and asked whether the works could potentially be incorporated into wider project activities associated with the A831 improvements. KG confirmed that BAM would be willing to explore whether the car park improvements could be incorporated into project works. IA emphasised that any proposal would need to consider long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities to ensure the solution remained sustainable after completion. RM advised that the community would likely assume responsibility for future maintenance and noted that he had already obtained a contractor's assessment, specification and quotation for potential improvement works. DF supported exploring options further, noting that if resurfacing was completed to an appropriate standard, the lifespan of the asset should be significant. He encouraged the community to develop and share a specification for review. A wider discussion then took place around design considerations. AMac highlighted the importance of drainage design, while RM confirmed that surface water issues already occur in parts of the car park, particularly near the tree line where levels are lower than the adjacent road. SM sought further information about whether heavy rainfall currently affects the area, with RM confirming that drainage issues are an existing concern. AM noted that the choice of surfacing material would be important when considering future maintenance costs and raised Electric Vehicle (EV) charging provision as a potential future consideration if improvements proceed. BC advised that there is currently one EV charging point within the village. RM asked how any funding arrangement might work in practice, including whether SSER would directly fund works or support a contractor appointed by the community. IA suggested that using a locally appointed contractor may be beneficial, particularly if an ongoing maintenance relationship was required, although further discussions would be needed. KG confirmed that the project team is likely to remain active in the area for several years and that car park improvement works could potentially be coordinated alongside future project activities if appropriate. CM queried whether forestry traffic continues to use the car park, with JM confirming that she believed logging lorries still use the facility.

	Actions arising: JM/JMcK Confirm ownership of land and community to advise on type of car park requested
8.0	Any other business and date of next meeting
8.1	Any other business: JM raised the question of the internet dongle and there was discussion as to a quote from EE for a fixed payment. IA confirmed he'd be happy to look at sorting this if the CLG can send on documents regarding proposed solution. Future CLG Dates:- - 15th September – 1 hour – due to works commencing - in terms of agenda – DF wants draft 10 days before, agreed a week in advance - 27th October - 1st December

Actions.

Number	Action / Update	Owner	Open/Closed
1	Review options to reduce visual impact of bellmouth and entrance. Confirm visual mitigation proposals and any revised drawings.	BAM	Closed
2	Confirm the approach to traffic management around school times. Update on CTMP review and confirmation of school-time considerations for Cannich, Balnain and Drumnadrochit.	SSEN T / BAM / CLG	Open
3	Potential improvement of local car park and ownership clarification. Confirm ownership position and whether pothole repairs remain feasible.	CLG/SSE	Open
4	Hall connectivity for hybrid meetings. Outcome of hotspot/dongle investigation. Price has been forwarded and SSEN Transmission are happy to support.	SSEN T	Closed
5	Species Protection Plans to show monitoring reports. Black Grouse SPP sent alongside minutes as example.	SSEN T	Closed
6	Project team to confirm proposed bunding arrangements for the northern compound, including intended visual and noise mitigation benefits. Further clarification required on how long-term cabins will blend in.	BAM	Closed
8	Create a diary of dates for the rest of the year.	Group	Closed
9	Why AIS is the starting point at SSE	SSEN T	Open
10	Further clarification of when Wind Speed tests were carried out and what the threshold is	SSEN T	Open
11	Fire evacuation planning	BAM	Open
12	Community update lookahead document	SSEN T	Open
13	Was blasting noise part of the EIA assessment	SSEN T	Open

Helpful links:

- Visuals of compound from shinty pitch: [Cannich Shinty Pitch | 360° photo](#)
- Landscape and Habitat Management Plan: [RUKKXX](#) (other planning and Environmental Assessment docs available in 'Document' section of the project webpage): [Bingally 400kV Substation - SSEN Transmission](#)
- Link to The Highland Council Planning Portal, Planning Conditions can be found in the decision notice: [25/00592/FUL | Bingally Substation - Construction of a new 400/132kV outdoor Air Insulated Switchgear \(AIS\) substation comprising platform, plant and machinery, control buildings, access, temporary laydown and compound areas, drainage, landscaping and other ancillary works. | Land 1700M SE Of Glasha Tomich Cannich](#)
- Visualisation video for Substation: [SSE - Bingally 132/400kV Substation](#)
- Visualisation video for Access Track: [Bingally Access Track](#)