

Broadford Community Liaison Group Meeting
SSEN Transmission Skye Reinforcement Project

Thursday 12 February 2026, Broadford Village Hall, 2PM

Present: Lynne Adamson (resident), Martyn Ayre (CC), Rhona Coogan (CC, Chair), David O'Donnell (CC/SSCC), Shirley Grant (SSCC), Irene Kay (resident), Lucy Ibison (SSEN T), Haleem Mohammed (SSEN T), Simon Johnstone (SSEN T), Maren Ebeling (SSEN T), Phoebe Caulfied (BB), Kirsty McNamara (SSEN T), Ian Philp (HIE)

Online: Norma Morrison (BSCC), Ben Yoxon (BSCC)

Apologies: Margaret Clark (BB), Sam Crowe (BB), Cllr John Finlayson, Melissa Macdougall (BSCC), Joanna Rodgers (SSEN T)

1. **Welcome** – general introductions and opening of the CLG meeting. Apologies were recorded.
2. **Approval of Minutes 11/12/25** – edits received by Joanna Rodgers today. Minutes to be circulated and approved by email (Action RC)

3. **Matters Arising**

Old Corry Road residents express ongoing concerns regarding substation construction:

- Communication with residents and a need for a clear point of contact and communications group expressed.
- Lack of a formal footpath along the current road, and how pedestrian access will be managed during the construction.

4. **Old Corry Road – new road design and safety**

- The road is an adopted council road; improvements are tied to substation and access works, therefore an upgrade to the full length of the road is not deemed viable.
- Crofters have requested that cattle grid is relocated, and this is being incorporated into plans.
- The redesigned junction with the A87 must meet standards for:
 - Visibility in both directions
 - Slope/gradient requirements
- Expectation that the reprofiled junction will provide smoother and safer access.

Pedestrian access / paths connected to the Old Corry Road

- A frequently used right of way / walking route runs close to the works (~~not a formal footpath along the existing road~~).
- During works:
 - The contractor will manage temporary arrangements (cones, barriers, diversions) to keep pedestrians safe.
 - SSEN T stress that vehicle and pedestrian access will be maintained, and there is no intention to close off the path link permanently.
- SSEN T clarify that:
 - There is no existing formal footpath along that stretch of the A87 however there is a well-used right of way / walking route.
 - There is insufficient width to install a Transport Scotland-compliant footway ~~and crossing~~ at the preferred location.
 - Explore potential alternative crossing points.

Ownership and responsibilities

- The section on the opposite side of the road where walkers currently cross is Transport Scotland's land and responsibility.

5. Terms of Reference

The CLG Terms of Reference are formally adopted:

- Proposed by Martyn, seconded by David.
- Group confirms they have read and are happy to adopt the ToR as circulated by email.

6. Broadford Substation

6.a. Compliance Check

Martyn asks SSEN T whether all pre-commencement conditions for the Broadford substation have been signed off before enabling the works.

Specific concerns:

- Proper **peat handling** (segregation of high-quality peat and mineral soil, storage, potential for reuse).
- Appointment by SSEN of:
 - Environmental specialist / ECoW
 - Ensuring their independence and oversight.

SSEN T confirm:

- ECoW is in place.
- Required plans have been submitted and reviewed by the planning authority.
- They believe current peat handling and storage complies with these plans.

Community asks for evidence and visibility, not just verbal assurance.

6.b Biodiversity net gain

Community concern:

Repeated references in project documentation to biodiversity net gain (BNG), but:

- Benefits appear to be delivered elsewhere on Skye or in the Highlands, not primarily in Broadford & Strath area.
- No clear, cumulative picture of all BNG commitments across the **Skye Reinforcement** and associated schemes.

Specific points:

- Question whether Broadford is getting a fair share of on-the-ground improvements, given the scale of local disruption.
- Community requests a "helicopter view" of all BNG areas and measures tied to:
 - Substation
 - Borrow pits
 - Overhead line and related developments.

SSEN T responses:

- There are secured BNG areas for the project, but:

- Some net gain must be off-site (e.g., can't be inside a substation platform).
- Larger BNG parcels may be grouped in larger landholdings elsewhere.
- SSEN T agree to take away the request for a clearer, project-wide BNG picture.

Community suggestion:

- It would benefit SSEN to communicate BNG clearly and transparently to gain trust and support.

7. Old Corry Borrow pit

Peat management and reinstatement

- Concerns raised by **Martyn**:
 - Reopening of a borrow pit and its relationship to:
 - Substation platform construction.
 - Historic crofter use of the area for peat cutting.
 - Observations that peat appears to be mixed with mineral soils and stockpiled as a bund, risking drying and loss of future ecological function.
 - The reinstatement plan in the borrow pit planning documents appears weak:
 - Suggests the area may be left unsuitable for replanting.
 - Indicates compensatory replanting happening elsewhere (e.g. in another forest), not at Old Corry.
- SSEN T responses:
 - They believe peat has been stripped and stockpiled appropriately, with recognition of two peat layers and an intention to replace the upper layer on top.
 - Intention is to re-profile and reinstate with peat, not to leave an abandoned hole.
 - Reinstatement and BNG proposals are based on:
 - Surveys by specialist peat consultants.
 - Information that feeds into BNG calculations and restoration plans.
- Aggregate source:

Community suggests aggregate for the compound seems to come from a reopened disused borrow pit near Skinadin.

SSEN T state:

- For the substation, stone is to come from a quarry or from the proposed Broadford borrow pit, not the assumed pit identified by the community.
- Any further use of borrow pits (e.g., Broadford pit) is subject to ongoing planning processes.

National Scenic Area / restoration quality:

- Old Corry borrow pit lies on the border of a National Scenic Area, raising the stakes for high-quality reinstatement.

8. Ashaig workers camp

Planning status:

- Application for the Ashaig workers accommodation camp is still in progress.

- o Highland Council have raised concerns about the footprint and massing of the current layout (single-storey vs potential two-storey configuration).
- o Balfour Beatty is working with the council on revised layout and drawings.

Timescales:

- o There was an initial hope to reach planning committee on 11 March, but given outstanding layout and design issues, this date is now considered unlikely. The next realistic slot may be May, due to Easter and elections.

Transport & access:

- o Council's Transport Planning Team lodged a substantial objection, criticising:
 - The quality of information submitted.
 - Possible implications for junction design and safety on the A87.
- o There is another live planning application for the airfield storage / oversize loads opposite, including:
 - Proposed redesign of the bell mouth junction to allow large turbine components to travel west through Broadford.

Concern that:

- Two major, heavily modified junctions **facing each other / offset by ~10m** on a fast stretch of the A87 will be challenging.
- Coordination between Balfour Beatty, Highland Council, and others is essential.

Water supply / borehole:

- o A borehole water supply is proposed for Ashaig:
 - Geology reports suggest the site is unpromising for groundwater.
 - A nearby property with an existing borehole has raised objections.
- o Recent MSP report mentioned:
 - Another community (Farr) that lost its water supply after SSE-related pylon works. They are now reliant on bottled water.
 - Raises community anxiety about impacts on local private water supplies.

9. GE Verona

Discussion about whether to invite **GE Verona** and **RJ McLeod** (subcontractors) to CLG meetings: Some residents had previously raised concerns that subcontractors were not adhering to site conditions. Suggestion to rotate attendance of subcontractors so residents can meet those working on their doorstep.

SSEN T stance:

GE Verona and RJ McLeod are **several tiers down** in the contract chain.

Bringing them into CLG may:

- Not be efficient (they may not be able to answer many questions without going through principal contractor/SSEN).
- Lead to large meetings dominated by project staff.

Current view:

- SSEN representatives present should be able to answer most questions and take away others.
- They are open to inviting subcontractors if a specific, ongoing issue arises (e.g., serious access/safety concerns).

10. AOB

Communications and resident engagement

Agreement in principle to:

- Establish a residents' communications group / distribution list for updates.
- Provide contact details (including an on-site notice board or sign with telephone contact) for issues arising outside normal hours.

Suggestion of a site visit to Old Corry:

- To allow CLG members to see peat handling, compound, road works and borrow pit first-hand.
- SSEN T agree in principle, but prefer to wait until the site is safely established.

Venue & Wi-Fi

- Discussion about meeting venues and **connectivity**:
 - Current venue (Broadford Village Hall) lacks Wi-Fi.
 - Quotes received:
 - Starlink**: ~£1,500 installation, ~£35/month thereafter.
 - Focus Group**: ~£80/month.
 - Suggestion to approach **Highland Broadband**:
They have previously installed equipment for other community venues.
 - Desire to continue supporting local community facilities (e.g., Broadford Village Hall) for meeting venue.

Independent expertise / support for community

- Community members feel under-resourced compared to developers and authorities. Would value:
 - Access to independent peat / environmental experts (e.g., peat specialist at UHI in Thurso?).
 - Potential support/funding mechanisms to help the community company commission its own expert advice.
- SSEN T perspective:
 - They already employ environmental advisers and ECoWs.
 - If SSEN funded a community expert directly, true independence might be questioned.
 - Open to the community specifying what form of support they seek, so SSEN can consider it.

11. Date of next meeting

Next CLG meeting agreed as 19 March, 2pm (i.e. in five weeks' time).

Intention:

- Continue with monthly / six-weekly rhythm, adjusted to allow planning and technical issues (e.g. Ashaig) time to develop.
Possibility that by then:
 - There will be more clarity on Ashaig workers camp planning.
 - BNG overview and key technical documents (peat plans, CTMP) can be shared or signposted.

Agreed that a Wi-Fi solution for the venue would be extremely helpful to better facilitate meetings.

Date of next meeting: 19 March 2026 @ 2PM