PORT OF MENTEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the general meeting of the Port of Menteith Community Council

At 7.00pm in the Port Hall on Monday 17th August 2026

Approved Minutes

1. Members Present and Apologies for Absence

Jim Riach (Chair)	Martin Earl (Councillor)
Becky Saunders (Secretary)	David Mackie (LLTNP)
Martin Stewart (Treasurer)	Caitlin Cameron - Resident
	Fraser Wykes - Resident
	Harriet Donald -Resident

Apologies – Robin Armstrong, Alastair Orr Ewing, Peter Stewart

2. Declarations of Interest in the Items of Business
No declarations of interest were noted.

3. Adoption of the Draft Minutes of the OGM held on 15th June 2026
Minutes of the meeting held in June 2026 were passed and no corrections presented. **BS** proposed and **MS** seconded.

4. Local Place Plan & Community Action Plan JR & MS
JR noted that an action regarding meeting with Harriet Donald from the last meeting has not happened – this was to see if any funding was available from NP for LPP goals. **JR, MS and KH** were to progress this.

5. Roads and Other Issues

5.1 **Cardross Bridge**

BS updated that bridge will be closed in October to complete snagging issues that are ongoing. The communication between the **CC** and **SC** remain difficult often leading to miscommunication. The weight limit will be changing to standard limits, but the signage cannot be altered for at least another month. **ME** noted that the change couldn't be changed until the TRO was entered and this has just happened. Further explanation by **ME** to the **CC** as to why delays have occurred. **BS** asked why all the weight limit requirements and access couldn't have been done right at the onset during the planning stage for the bridge repair. **ME** noted that there will be signage regarding width of the road as well as the weight constraints. **JR** noted that this delay has caused much disruption and financial loss for local businesses, which isn't acceptable. **ME** would the CC be preparing an agenda for the meeting with SC CEO? **BS** replied, yes and this will be disseminated ahead of the meeting to give the CEO time to prepare. **BS** to forward an email discussion regarding the closure to **ME.**

5.2 **Lines at Kate's Brae**

The lines remain unpainted and no official date has been finalised. This is twelve months since the initial meetings took place. (**ME** noted to inform

CEO that Stephen Bly has been supportive with regards the issues, **BS** to action)

5.3 **Signage for National Park and Kate's Brae**

A sign has now been installed regarding litter at Kates Brae. **JR** has noted that the National Park signage has still not been installed even after this was initially meant to happen at Easter. **ME** noted that the signs from the NP are there the delay is now with SC and implementation.

5.4 **Flashing Speed Signs and Bus Stop**

JR informed that again these actions were meant to be installed again at Easter, but this remains outstanding. **JR** continued to discuss the miscommunication regarding the installation of the pathway. **BS** queried the width of the path, **ME** replied that it would have to be a statutory width. **ME** agreed that there had been a disjoint with regards communications between departments regarding these matters. **JR** to add points 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 into the proposed case study for the CEO's visit. **ME** spoke about including the term "co-design" when putting this document together. **BS** added that the lack of accountability and protocols within SC hasn't not helped with any of these issues. **ME** agreed.

6. Other Ongoing Matters

6.1 Low Flying Aircraft and Noise – Glyn Finney – Resident

BS to remove from the agenda.

6.2 Community Benefit (Cardross Bridge and Hall Car Park – Maria Lucey - SC

BS noted that no communication has been received. **ME** asked if they had specified what they would be completing. **BS** answered yes, a meeting had taken place and agreed but works undertaken by the contractors had actually made more problems. **ME** noted that as contractors are returning in September/October this would be the perfect time for those to community benefit repairs to be undertaken.

7. Correspondence

7.1 **Megan Green – School Transport**

JR invited **MG** and **HD** to summarise about the current situation. The families were informed that transportation would not be provided 10 days prior to term starting, although siblings are already receiving transportation to POM school. **BS** asked how long SC had known that the children were going to be attending POM school? The response was 3-5 years. A summary conversation regarding the numbers and current situation with the school bus and the health and safety issues as well as phycological issues for the families and children involved was undertaken.

It was noted that the lack of communication between SC and the residents has been very poor and if **ME** and **CC** hadn't been involved then the families would still be in the dark regarding what is happening. The families would like to have a face-to-face meeting, but all correspondence has been faceless, if at all. The current situation is causing families to lose out financially with regards to working situations.

ME summarised his frustrations regarding the timings of these changes and the impact it is having of the children and families involved and this needs to be addressed. After conferring with other Ward members if there were other issues with school transportation, the issues seem to be restricted to Trossachs and Teith districts.

A continued discussion regarding past precedents regarding school transportation, costing, administration costs for SC to pay the additional payments and how families are expected to the collate the payments required and forwarded to SC. Also, the legalities of parents refusing parental contributions and how this would impact on future provision. **MG** noted the safeguarding issues regarding the supervision of children that are dropped off at school at 8.45am. It was noted that the impact that all of this is having on the young children is not being considered at all.

ME noted where do we go from here, he is awaiting a response regarding the legality. **ME** has had a response from SC but hasn't responded as yet.

There has been a risk assessment on drop off at the school and the recommendations is that parents are to park at the Village Hall and walk with children wearing hi-viz jackets. **ME** asked if there was protocol in place for the school walking the children to the Village Hall for PE lessons? The answer was yes, two adults and 10 children. **ME** to have a conversation with Education Officers rather than Transportation next. **FW** to approach the landowner regarding the possibility of considering a footpath at the rear of properties. **ME** offered to attend a parent council meeting regarding wider issues regarding the school moving forward.

8. Financial Report – Martin Stewart – Treasurer

MS informed that there is £675.84 in account. **MS** has asked that interim payment to be made to minute taker and Village Hall. **BS** added that there needed to be a discussion with **MS** regarding the website. **JR** mentioned the Defibrillator needed new batteries £450 was needed, as well as Dykehead. **JR** noted that maybe a fundraising event should happen to help raise the funds to replace the batteries.

9. Reports

9.1 **Councillors Report – Councillor**

ME explained SC was just back from recess and things were starting to get moving again. At budget setting meeting a proposal to outsource school meals was proposed, which he opposed. Another report is due at the October budget meeting, there is currently not enough information regarding the proposal, costings etc. Public Utility Road Works, issues with a road closure on the day DTRH commenced, which caused chaos. **ME** noted that road closures lists should be disseminated weekly.

Questions:

HD asked about the food tendering fits with SC good food nation policy? **ME** asked **HD** to share additional information.

9.2 Port Hall &/or Combined Committees Report – Kevin Harrison

KH nothing much to report. Hall meeting beginning September. The Village Hall has been supporting the Kirk with events and parking.

Questions:

HD noted that a grant for electric strimmer has been given to the school and this can be shared within the community, it is accessible from the school.

9.3 School &/or Combined Committees Report – Natalie Bain

A new year has started at the school and the 5 new P1s are settling in well. We now have a total of 28 pupils across 2 classes. There are some staffing changes as well.

Miss Brown – P5–7 Class Teacher
Mrs Stewart – SLA
Mrs Thomas – SLA

Over summer the Parent Council received a grant from the Stirling Rural Housing Association to purchase some gardening equipment to help maintain the playground.

As has been raised by one of our parents separately to the community council there has been an issue around school transport this year which has had an impact on our school community. The school bus capacity does not fulfill the needs of our catchment families to a point that some members of a family has a space on the bus while their siblings do not. I understand the issue has been escalated by the parents directly impacted and we appreciate any support the community council can give to resolve this.

9.4 **Carse of Stirling Project Group Report – Jim Riach**

JR not much to report a contractor has been looking to create a farmers network which remain ongoing.

9.5 McLaren Community Futures – Jim Riach

JR informed that the climate action plan with all communities involved with the Mclaren High School, good work is happening in the background.

9.6 Strathard & Trossachs Visitors Mgmt – Jim Riach

JR no specific meetings and nothing to report.

9.7 Port Church & Cemetery – Robin Armstrong

The '' Rock the Kirk ''concert held on Sunday 21 June was a great success. Approximately 60 folk attended and approximately £ 800 was raised for church funds. We were very grateful to John Walker and the other members of the '' Hillaroos '' also Donald Finlayson playing in support. The programme of pop music got some up dancing in the aisle.. The old Kirk rocked and sparkled

On the 18th July the kirk hosted a concert of a different tempo. As part of the Three Rivers Festival, celebrated violinist Benjamin Shute played compositions from Bach, Biber, Brahms, Paganini also work which he himself composed. His talent and versatility was admired and the programme thoroughly enjoyed by all.

A "Songs of Praise" service was held in the church on August 9th at 6pm. This was something of a first as I cannot ever remember an evening service being held previously. It was a service of song, scripture readings and poems. Refreshments were served after giving a social and community feel to the occasion.

Kirk Community Connection is a new group headed by Julie Bowie. As the name implies the aim is to forge better links with the community including the school. We hope to engage the school and community in the life of the church its festivals such as Easter, Harvest-Christmas etc. plus the history of the building itself.

9.8 NPA Report & Entry Sign Progress – David Mackie

I am pleased to provide a brief update on activity across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park over the past six weeks.

National Park Board Elections

The National Park Authority elections took place in July, with five locally elected members returned to represent communities across the National Park.

I was delighted and extremely grateful to be re-elected as the Board Member for East Loch Lomond and Port of Menteith.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone within our communities who took the time to vote and, in particular, for the tremendous support I received. It is a privilege to continue representing our area on the National Park Authority Board.

I look forward to working with Port of Menteith Community Council and our other local communities over the coming four years, ensuring that local views and concerns continue to be heard and represented within the National Park Authority.

Across the three contested wards, average voter turnout was 33.2%, an increase of 2% compared with the 2022 elections.

Visitor Management

July was an extremely busy month across the National Park, with camping occupancy reaching 95–100% at weekends.

Motorhome permit bookings increased by 35% in June compared with the previous year, demonstrating increased use of the dedicated motorhome facilities within the National Park.

The public consultation on the Camping Management Byelaws Review also remains open until 21 September 2026. The proposed changes include further restrictions relating to fires and additional protections for National Park Rangers.

West Highland Way Improvements

The National Park Authority has been working in partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland to upgrade a section of the West Highland Way at Rowardennan on the east side of Loch Lomond.

The completed works include new rock pitching, path resurfacing and drainage repairs, together with recycled-plastic infrastructure. Existing materials were reused wherever possible.

Water Safety and Loch Lomond

The National Park Authority joined partner organisations at Loch Lomond Shores on 25 July to mark World Drowning Prevention Day. The event included rescue demonstrations, public activities and important water-safety information.

A further National Park water-safety event took place on 15 August at Milarrochy Bay.

There has unfortunately also been an increase in irresponsible behaviour involving some jet ski and boat users on Loch Lomond.

In response, the National Park Authority has introduced additional measures including CCTV on patrol boats, increased Ranger resources at hotspot locations and additional support from Police Scotland through Operation Ballaton.

Wildfire Prevention

With several periods of very high and extreme wildfire risk during July, the Ranger Service has continued to provide fire-safety advice to visitors and campers throughout the National Park.

This work is particularly important during busy summer periods when visitor numbers and pressure on popular locations increase considerably.

Trossachs Explorer

There has also been positive progress in sustainable rural transport.

Following the National Park Authority's successful pilot service, Stirling Council has taken over operation of the Trossachs Explorer for a further two-year pilot period. Although sadly not including Drymen

The service operates seven days a week with four return journeys each day

and provides connections with other public transport services, including links towards Stirling, Callander, Balfron and Glasgow.

Nature Heroes Exhibition

The National Park's Nature Heroes exhibition is now open at Balmaha Visitor Centre and runs until 27 August.

The exhibition celebrates people with a strong connection to the natural environment and the contribution individuals can make towards protecting and enhancing the National Park for future generations.

Looking Ahead

The coming months will continue to be busy for the National Park Authority, particularly around visitor management, the Camping Management Byelaws Review, sustainable transport, water safety and the protection and enhancement of the National Park's natural environment.

As the locally elected Board Member for East Loch Lomond and Port of Menteith, I will continue to keep the Community Council informed of matters affecting Port of Menteith and the surrounding area and, equally importantly, take local issues and concerns back to the National Park Authority.

Once again, thank you for the support shown to me during the recent election. I am very grateful for the confidence placed in me and look forward to working with the Community Council and the wider community over the next four years.

Questions:
HD noted that National Land Plan programme of engagement in the Autumn moving forward. Next phase two way process and **HD** to communicate with **JR**
JR asked why wildfire protection doesn't appear to be the same focus on prevention as in the Cairngorms. **DM** Fire management and Anti-social behaviour are the two keys areas of concern that are at top of the agenda. **ME** noted that this is something that needs to have a National approach on how to manage moving forward.
JR asked about the Rob Roy way improvements. **DM** has had conversations and this will continue to the end of the of the summer.

9.9 Police Report Compiled by PC Lorna Deans 13/06/26 to 14/08/26 Compiled by PC Lorna Deans

Antisocial Behaviour
You are concerned about antisocial behaviour including drunken behaviour.

None Reported

Road Safety
You are concerned about speeding, dangerous driving and indiscriminate parking.

During the day on 12/07/26 there was a 2-vehicle collision on A81 between Port of Menteith and Aberfoyle. Officers attended and carried out road traffic procedures.

On the evening of 12/07/26 there was a 2-vehicle collision on A81 between Port of Menteith and Aberfoyle. One driver has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

Theft
You are concerned about homes being broken into and travelling criminals.

No reported thefts in the Port of Menteith area however in the last week police have had reports of thefts from motor vehicles, theft of a pushbike and a housebreaking, all in the Aberfoyle area.

Community Engagement and Reassurance
It is important to you to have community officers who you know, who are accessible and who address local problems.

Should anyone have any Policing issues or concerns that they wish to discuss, we can be contacted via email at StirlingCommunityPolice@scotland.police.uk

Please note that this form of contact should not be used to report an ongoing incident/crime. This should be done by contacting 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Other Incidents
Over the weekend of 17-19th July 2026 Back Doune the Rabbit Hole event was on. There were no issues raised to police regarding this event.

On 13/08/26 police received calls regarding a blue 4x 4 vehicle attending at properties on B8034. Should any vehicles be seen in the area in suspicious circumstances, please contact police on 101 or by using the 'Contact Us' form on the Police Scotland website.

MG to share picture with BS
ME suggested that police presence at the next meeting.

10.10 Forestry and Land Scotland – Julie McAlpine
BS has sent the report out.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 Brian Roberts from Stirling Council now scheduled to attend October Meeting

10.2 Meeting with Martin Earl etc. at Smiddy 19th August – re communication process at Stirling Council

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting
OGM 7.00pm Monday 19th October 2026 Port of Menteith Village Hall

Appendix 1:

Correspondence for CC Meeting on 17th August 2026

Harriet Donald (resident) - **Martin Earl (SC)** – Megan Green/Thornton (resident) - Other SC employees – PoM CC Reads from most recent to original email.

Evening all,

Thank you everyone for continuing to pursue this, and Martin in particular for taking these further points back to the Council.

Having read the Council's response and Megan's update from the school, there are a few points which I think are important to draw together.

Firstly, the response now confirms that this isn't a situation where there is no means of transporting all of the eligible children. There are 11 eligible pupils, the current contracted vehicle has eight seats, and the operator has proposed a double run which would provide the additional capacity required. A double run has also operated on this route previously.

The decision therefore appears to be one not to commission that additional capacity and instead to offer parental mileage contracts to the three children who cannot be accommodated on the existing vehicle.

I am particularly concerned by the explanation now being given around supervision and safeguarding.

The Council states that a double run would result in children being dropped at school approximately 25 minutes early and describes them as being "unsupervised". However, we know that a double run has operated previously and Megan has now established from the school that early arrivals have historically been managed in practice by school staff.

I think this raises a really important question: <u>what has changed?</u>

If the previous arrangement was considered safe and acceptable, what has changed in the Council's safeguarding assessment, policy or requirements which means essentially the same arrangement is now considered unacceptable?

Conversely, if the Council's position is now that children being dropped at that time, before staff contractual hours begin, presents an unacceptable safeguarding risk, then I think parents are entitled to ask how that sits with the arrangements which have previously been permitted. Were those arrangements formally risk assessed and considered acceptable at the time? If so, what is different now?

I don't think supervision can reasonably be cited as a barrier without explaining that apparent contradiction. If there has been a change in policy, risk assessment or safeguarding requirements, it would be helpful for that to be clearly identified.

There is also a question around the financial comparison.

The Council has confirmed that the operator's proposed additional double run would cost £30 per day, or £5,700 over the school year. It has calculated the combined parental mileage payments at £6.44 per day and therefore identified a difference of £23.56 per day, or £4,476.40 per school year.

However, the response then refers to an additional cost for an SLA at the school to provide supervision as part of the reason the double run isn't considered appropriate, without quantifying that cost. If cost has formed part of the decision, I think it would be reasonable to understand the full cost comparison and exactly what assumptions have been included.

More fundamentally, I keep coming back to my conversation with Rob Plewes last week. My understanding from that discussion was that the existing contract was based on the number of seats required at the time and that ordinarily the numbers balance as P7 pupils leave and incoming P1 pupils take those places. This year, unusually, there have been no P7 pupils leaving the bus.

That makes this feel fundamentally like a capacity and contract-planning issue.

There are now 11 eligible pupils and eight contracted seats. The operator has identified a means of transporting all 11, but the consequence of the capacity shortfall is instead being transferred to the two families whose children happen to be joining P1 this year.

Martin's question about future capacity is therefore also really important. If another eligible pupil moved onto this route during the school year, what would happen? If additional capacity would then have to be considered, it is difficult to understand why putting appropriate capacity in place now for the 11 children already known to be eligible isn't considered reasonable.

Jim, I also think your question about whether similar situations are occurring elsewhere, and particularly whether capacity issues of this kind disproportionately affect rural communities, is a really useful one.

Alongside all of that, I really hope the human impact of this doesn't get lost amongst discussions about contracts, mileage rates and bus capacity.

Amelie starts P1 tomorrow.

Tonight should really be about celebrating and preparing for what is a huge milestone for her and for us as a family. Instead, on the evening before her first day, we are still dealing with uncertainty over something as fundamental as how she gets to school.

We have prepared both of our children for the current situation. Amelie has been visibly upset that she currently won't be travelling on the school bus. For the last few years she has watched her big sister get on that bus to go to school and, throughout her own transition towards P1, that has been her understanding of how she too would get to school.

Our eldest daughter is upset by it too. When she started at Port of Menteith in 2023 she was the only P1 from the village. The bus became an important source of friendship, connection and integration into the wider school community when she didn't have another child from the village in her year group.

For our children, therefore, this isn't simply about getting from A to B.

There is also a very real practical impact on us as a working family. With little more than a week's notice, transporting Amelie ourselves means my working day changing from approximately an 8.40am start to 9.10am, and my finish from approximately 3.20pm to 3.00pm. That equates to around 50 minutes of working time lost every school day.

The financial comparison provided by the Council appears to value the parental alternative purely by reference to mileage. Has any consideration been given to the additional time and loss of working hours being transferred to parents as a consequence of this arrangement? If parental transport is being considered the appropriate alternative to commissioning the additional bus capacity, I would also be interested to understand whether any provision exists to compensate parents for that loss of working time, rather than mileage alone.

I appreciate that the Council determines the method by which eligible school travel is provided. My concern is therefore not simply that a parental mileage contract has been offered, but whether it represents a reasonable and workable solution in these particular circumstances when the children are already eligible for assistance, the capacity problem is known, an operator-proposed solution exists, and the alternative has significant practical consequences for the affected families.

I genuinely hope those making the decision have some awareness of that wider impact.

Tomorrow morning we will of course make sure Amelie gets to school and that her first day is as exciting and positive as it should be. However, I would like to be clear that us making alternative arrangements to ensure she can attend school should not be interpreted as acceptance of the parental mileage arrangement or as this matter having been resolved.

For tonight, I really want to be able to put this down and focus on our little girl starting school tomorrow and celebrating the huge milestone that it is.

Thank you again everyone for your support and for continuing to pursue this.

Kind regards, Harriet

On Tue, 11 Aug 2026 at 18:51, Martin Earl <earlm@stirling.gov.uk> wrote:

Yes, I have the additional information from Megan and have incorporated that into my response to the Council that raises a number of points, including this one.

Regards Martin

From: Megan <
Sent: 11 August 2026 17:25
To: Jim

Re: URGENT FOLLOW-UP : Rejection of Mileage Contract & Appeal for Bus Provision – Scarlett & Lexie Thornton

Evening all Thank you for your support with this—it really is incredibly disappointing.

To add to this, a significant piece of information came to light today following a conversation with the school. The Council's primary justification for rejecting the double run was the additional cost of staff supervision for early 8:45 AM bus arrivals. However, the school confirmed that the Council has never paid for staff supervision for early arrivals; staff have been supervising the children purely out of goodwill for years, as their contractual hours do not start until 9:15 AM.

Using "supervision costs" as an excuse when they haven't even been funding the supervision already taking place is completely unacceptable and exposes this as a pure cost-cutting exercise.

I have already emailed Martin directly to update him on this development so he can factor it into his pushbacks with the Council.

Thank you again for looking into the legal position and exploring external advice—with school starting tomorrow, every bit of pressure counts.

Best regards,

Megan

On 11 Aug 2026, at 17:08, Jim Riach <jimriach@gmail.com> wrote:

Megan, Harriet,

This is a very disappointing response from the council officers, I wonder what their reaction would be if half of their family were excluded from a vital service. We are meeting with Martin next week and will definitely raise this issue with him, but realise that will not be in time for school starting.

I am not sure about the legal position on this but I will see if I can get any external and internal (council) advice on this, it also adds to the catalogue of poor communication and failures to the delivery of promised services in our community. I am sure that the media would be interested in the catalogue of failures that we have suffered over the last few months.

Martin, Would you be able to clarify what the legal position is regards the provision of school transport and can you outline if any other communities have been subjected to a similar situation and if the situation is more prevalent in rural communities or urban communities.

Jim Riach

On 10 Aug 2026, Megan wrote:

Evening Alistair, Jim and Becky,

I just thought I would make you aware of the response that Martin Earl, has received back from the council regarding the issue and forwarded on.

I have popped it below for you and my response. Many thanks Megan

Begin forwarded message:

From: Megan **Date:** 10 August 2026 at 23:43:22 BST
To: Earl Martin > **Cc:** pofmenps@stirling.gov.uk, Gene Maxwell , Elaine Watterson
Subject: Re: [External] Re: URGENT FOLLOW-UP : Rejection of Mileage Contract & Appeal for Bus Provision – Scarlett & Lexie Thornton

Hi Martin,

Thank you for sharing the Council's response. I find their position completely unacceptable, unworkable, and based on flawed assumptions regarding how the school day actually operates.

Please see the key points in response to their claims:

1. **Morning Supervision & School Arrival Routine:**

- Under the current setup during the last school year, children arriving on early runs were routinely dropped at the school around 8:45 AM. - They play safely in the playground with staff aware of their presence, and in poor weather, they are brought inside immediately.

- Furthermore, Port of Menteith Primary's 9:15 AM start time (compared to its paired school, Gartmore, which starts at 9:00 AM) was historically established specifically to accommodate the staggered double-bus run.

2. **Long-Term Capacity Reality:**

- The Council admits they have zero capacity for new pupils. The oldest pupils on this bus still have **two full school years** remaining before moving to high school.

- This means the capacity deficit is not a temporary glitch —there will be no space for these P1 pupils for at least the next two years.

3. **Inappropriate Reliance on Parental Contracts:**

- The Council is attempting to save £4,476 per year by shifting the operational burden and costs onto working parents two weeks before term begins.

- I cannot give up my older three children's bus places, nor can I accommodate separate commuting schedules that directly conflict with my employment.

4. **Future Growth & Equal Service:**

- Prior to us moving to the area, the Council routinely funded transport for as few as 3–4 children across these stops. Denying a full, proper service to 11 qualifying children now is completely contradictory to past precedent.

As you rightly noted, supervision was successfully managed when the double run previously operated. Claiming this is suddenly insurmountable over a £4,476 difference—while leaving 3 qualifying P1 pupils without bus transport alongside their siblings—is a failure of planning.

I strongly support you raising these further pushbacks with the Transport Unit. Please let me know if you need any additional details from me.

Best regards,

Megan

On 10 Aug 2026, at 17:34, Martin Earl <earlm@stirling.gov.uk> wrote:

Hi Megan,

I have received this response to my queries.

I would note that when there was a double run operating previously the supervision requirements must have been accommodated then and I propose to respond making that point.

Also having a double run in place puts capacity in place – what would happene if another pupil moved into the area mid way through the school year, would a decision then be taken it was viable to add in another run?

1. **If so why not introduce now as ine was in place previously and that was felt to be acceptable.**

Regards Martin

Dear Cllr Earl,

I have noted below the answers to your queries regarding the vehicle that provides transport for Port of Menteith PS

What is the route the bus takes that this relates to ?

The vehicle has a couple of pickups on the route, just outside of Port of Menteith towards Ruskie however the main pickup point is Dykehead where the majority of pupils reside.

2. What is the seating capacity of the vehicle currently being used ?

The vehicle is an 8 seater with 8 pupils allocated to the route.

3. Can not a larger seating capacity vehicle be utilised ?

The current operator does not have a larger vehicle.

4. If this seating capacity has been reached then can I have it confirmed that all pupils currently using the bus are those that are eligible to do so and that no seats are being retained for any possible ' new' pupils that may move into the area during the school year?

All pupils are using the vehicle, we have confirmed this with the operator and no seats are being retained – it is allocated to capacity and we have been unable to allocate new P1's as there has been no leavers on the run during the new start process this year.

5. How many pupils are impacted by this ?

There are 3 pupils in total impacted by this from 2 families.

6. What is the offer from the bus company referred to and what has that been costed at ?

The operator has proposed a double run at an additional £30 per day = £5,700 per school year.

7. I am advised that this route previously accommodated a double run so what has altered for that not to be the default solution when pupils numbers require it ?

The number of pupils reduced therefore there was no longer a demand for a double run. It is also worth pointing out that with a double run, there would be an extra charge for an SLA at the school to start earlier and finish later to supervise the pupils who have been dropped off first in the morning and collected second in the afternoon. For a double run this would result in 3 of the pupils being dropped off 25 minutes early in the mornings where they would be unsupervised – this would be the Donald children plus one other from another family who live nearest to the Donald's.

On a Monday and Tuesday afternoon there would be a 25 minute wait after school when the first set of pupils were dropped off at Dykehead then the vehicle returns to school to pick up the Donald's and the other pupil who lives near them , and on Wednesday to Friday afternoons this would result in the Dykehead pupils waiting for 10 minutes unsupervised (the Dykehead pupils would have to wait while the vehicle took the Donald's and other pupil home and then return back for those who stay in Dykehead) . The different order on different days is because of the inter workings with McLaren HS transport that the same operator provides

8. What is the net difference between the cost of all the mileage contracts that will be required and the cost for the bus company to carry out this extra journey as referred to ?

The parental mileages combined for both families comes to a total of £6.44 which is a difference of £23.56 per day, £4476.40 per school year.

9. Has there been discussions with the bus company to try seek a mutually agreeable figure to provide the extra capacity as required ?

We have discussed this with the operator, and they have reduced the cost. Although it is still slightly more expensive than the 2 parental contracts, this would result in all other pupils being unsupervised as stated above.

From: Megan <
Sent: 06 August 2026 15:22
To: transportcoordination <transportcoordination@stirling.gov.uk>
Cc: Port of Menteith Primary School <pofmenps@stirling.gov.uk>; Martin Earl <; Gene Maxwell; Elaine Watterson
Subject: [External] Re: URGENT FOLLOW-UP : Rejection of Mileage Contract & Appeal for Bus Provision – Scarlett & Lexie Thornton

Dear Jamie-Lee Gow / Transport Coordination Unit,

I am writing to follow up on my email sent on 31 July 2026 regarding transport provision for Scarlett and Lexie Thornton (attached below for reference).

As I have not yet received a response or acknowledgment and the new school term begins in less than a week on **Wednesday, 12 August 2026**, this matter is now extremely critical.

I require immediate clarity on transport arrangements prior to the start of term. As previously outlined, a parental mileage allowance of £3.46 per day is unworkable, conflicts directly with my established work schedule, and disregards the viable proposal already submitted to the Council by the transport operator to accommodate all qualifying pupils.

Please confirm as a matter of urgency that this decision is being reviewed and that appropriate bus provision will be in place for Scarlett and Lexie starting 12 August.

I look forward to your immediate response today.

Yours sincerely,

Megan

31 Jul 2026, at 15:26, Megan <meggreen1996@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Jamie-Lee Gow / Transport Coordination Unit,

I am writing to formally reject the proposed parental mileage contract of £3.46 per day detailed in your letter dated 30 July 2026 for Scarlett and Lexie Thornton.

While I note that both children qualify for official travel support under Stirling Council's policy, offering a nominal allowance for me to drive two Primary 1 pupils to and from school is completely unfeasible and unworkable for our family.

I require an immediate review of this decision based on the following:

1. - **Disruption to Employment & Bus Schedules**: My daily work commitments are strictly structured around the standard school bus timings, which my three older children already use. Expecting me to personally drive my P1 children back and forth directly conflicts with my working hours - hours arranged with the practical expectation that my younger children would join their siblings on the bus.
1. - **Sibling Precedent & Route-Wide Parity**: Having three older children already on the dedicated bus service means it makes zero operational or logical sense to split our household across two separate commuting arrangements. Furthermore, I am aware of another incoming P1 pupil on this exact route who also has an older sibling on the bus. We require urgent clarification on whether this family is being offered the exact same arrangement, as we will not accept individual households being singled out or left to shoulder the burden of a systemic council transport issue.
1. - **Operator Proposals & Council Precedent**: As Stirling Council is well aware, a two-run system previously operated on this exact route when capacity required it. The bus company has already presented the Council with a viable option to run an extra loop to accommodate all incoming P1 pupils starting on 12 August. In fact, the bus driver reached out to me directly, astonished that the Council turned down such a practical solution.
1. - **Environmental & Logistical Failure**: Offering £3.46 per day to cover multiple personal round trips is neither a realistic alternative nor consistent with the Council's stated commitments to safe, efficient, and sustainable school transport.

It is entirely unreasonable to separate 5-year-old children from their older siblings' established transport routine—forcing parents to compromise their employment—when a clear, operator-backed solution is already on the table.

I have copied Port of Menteith Primary School and our local Ward Councillors into this correspondence to ensure full visibility of the transport issues facing incoming P1 families ahead of term.

I expect this decision to be formally reviewed as a matter of urgency so that seats on the school bus (or the proposed additional run) are allocated for Scarlett and Lexie prior to 12 August 2026.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely,

Megan