

January KCC update on 2026 Argyll rally

Section 1 Introduction and next steps

This paper brings together the current position on: -

- Exchanges with the Council on the proposed routes for the 2026 Rally, **section 2**. The Council is starting the process to consider a road closure order for the 2026 rally. This requires them to consider, among other things, the impact of the event on the local community, potential local economic and other benefits and to be satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made to allow the views of the local community to be considered. We have set out for the Council how these requirements have not been met and asked for an officer meeting. **Is there anything else we should be doing, at this stage?**

- Exchanges with the Council on the issue of pedestrian access, **section 3** of this paper. Contained in that correspondence is the statement that:-
"I can say that the order, in itself, does not have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians."

This is a shift in position from the 2025 order by the Council which stated that:-

" when the Order comes into effect no person shall be able to drive or cause or permit to be driven any vehicle; or permit any vehicle to wait or to be parked; or ride, or cause or permit to be ridden any cycle, or ride, lead or drive any animal; or walk, along those lengths of road (including the footways and verges) as detailed in the Schedule."

We need to agree how we wish to follow up what seems to be clarity from the council that a 2026 order will not restrict pedestrians.

KCC also need to consider further engagement with the rally organisers, a zoom meeting is proposed for 2nd February 2026.

Section 2 Argyll rally 2026 proposed rally route correspondence with Council

Secretary Kilfinan Community Council <secretary.kilfinancc@gmail.com> 16 Jan, 17:50 (3 days ago)

to Hugh, Kirsty

Thanks for sharing the MCC comments on the points we raised about the proposed rally route through our area. Community Councillors have considered the MCC position and agreed this response

MCC were aware in April 2025 of our detailed concerns about the 2025 route but still went ahead to propose the same route for 2026.

It is simply not plausible that the June 2025 email from KCC was not received by Sam Spencer until it was resent in August.

In any event, when the draft 2026 route was published for consultation in August 2025, we again stated our concerns to MCC, within their timetable for the consultation. MCC ignored every element of those concerns and submitted an unchanged route proposal to Motorsport UK.

We do not accept the MCC statement that they have concluded that the majority of the KCC concerns raised did not warrant amendments to the proposed route, as the potential impacts were not considered significant and could be appropriately mitigated through other operational measures.

It is important to restate the point we have repeatedly made to MCC. Previous rallies have been unacceptably disruptive to our communities. The revised routes we have proposed somewhat reduce that disruption but are still a significant compromise which we offered on behalf of the communities we represent.

In conclusion, should Mull Car Club submit unchanged proposals to Argyll and Bute Council it will be clear that KCC area community views have been ignored. We would ask for an urgent meeting with council officers to discuss how the Council will respond. When does the Council expect to receive proposals?

Thanks again for your engagement with the KCC.

Catriona Renfrew
Secretary
On Behalf of Kilfinan Community Council

Covering the villages of Tighnabruaich, Kames, Millhouse, Ardlamont, Otter Ferry, Kilfinan and Portavadie.

Re: Argyll Rally 2026 proposals [OFFICIAL]



Secretary Kilfinan Community Council <secretary.kilfinance@gmail.com>

Mon
, 15
Dec
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5,
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to Hugh, Kirsty

Thanks, I am collating views from the full community council and we will then respond.

Catriona Renfrew
Secretary
Kilfinan Community Council

On Thu, 4 Dec 2025 at 17:18, O'Neill, Hugh <Hugh.O'neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk> wrote:

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classification: OFFICIAL

Good evening Catriona, I asked for the comments from the Rally Organisers in relation to the points raised via yourself as the Secretary of the Kilfinnan Community Council which I have listed in order with comments as below:

1. KCC requested a meeting with MCC immediately after the 2025 rally, but no response was received.

The Rally Organisers advise that they attended an in-person meeting hosted by ColGlen Community Council where you were present and advised that you had previously emailed Sam Spenser but received no response. The organisers state that Mr Spenser has checked his emails and can see no record of the email being referred to, however you did resend the email during the meeting and Mr Spenser has responded accordingly and a meeting has since been held with the Kilfinnan Community Council and the Rally Organisers as requested.

2. At the end of the meeting (Mid-August 2025) detailed route and road closure plans were tabled and community councils were told these were going out for public consultation. There was clearly no intention that community Councils could influence 2026 route proposals before detailed plans were developed and issued.

The Rally Organisers do not agree with your statement, they confirm that at the meeting on the 18th August, the proposed route for the 2026 event was presented to all attendees. As the proposed route was broadly similar to that planned for 2025, the organisers provided a detailed explanation of the minor adjustments and the rationale behind them. Following the meeting, the rally organisers state they circulated a consultation document to all relevant Community Councils, as well as to businesses located on sections of the proposed closed roads.

The organisers confirm that in total, responses were received from seven residents and three Community Councils. All feedback was carefully reviewed and considered, and amendments were made where these were deemed necessary and appropriate. The most significant of these changes was the removal of the B836 (Tarsan Dam) section on Saturday morning, following constructive feedback from both ColGlen and Dunoon Community Councils.

The Rally Organisers advise that the consultation process was transparent, proportionate, and conducted in good faith. Furthermore, three other Community Councils were in attendance at the same meeting, and none expressed any concern regarding the manner in which the route proposals were presented or the subsequent consultation process.

3. KCC arranged a meeting with MCC to discuss our response. This meeting took place on 24th September. Community Councillors had anticipated that MCC would come to the meeting with proposals to revise the KCC stages to address the issues we raised. MCC opened the meeting with the statement that they had already submitted their route proposals to UK Motorsport and that those proposals were unchanged from the ones to which KCC had made a detailed response

The organisers have responded stating that it was made clear to KCC on several occasions, both verbally and in writing, that the Motorsport Order application had to be submitted to Motorsport UK no later than 19th September 2025. All Community Councils were advised of the consultation timetable, and no other Council expressed any difficulty in providing a response by the requested deadline of 14th September.

The points raised by KCC prior to the submission deadline were carefully considered. However, it was concluded that the majority of the concerns raised did not warrant amendments to the proposed route, as the potential impacts were not considered significant and could be appropriately mitigated through other operational measures.

4. In our view if this does not result in positive progress then it will be clear that there have not been adequate arrangements to take account of community views and we would seek the intervention of the Council.

The Rally Organisers have responded stating that during the meeting with KCC, it was made clear that whilst changes to the proposed route could not be made at this stage, Mull Car Club are willing to work constructively with both KCC and local residents to minimise any potential disruption associated with the Argyll Rally. Several practical mitigation measures have already been proposed and discussed, and the organisers remain open to further engagement to ensure that community concerns are addressed wherever possible.

Finally, the organisers state that Mull Car Club remains fully committed to maintaining open communication with all stakeholders and to ensuring that the Argyll Rally continues to bring benefits to the local area while operating responsibly and with due consideration for the communities involved.

Kilfinnan Community Council will be aware that the role of the Local Authority is having received an application accompanied by a permit from the relevant motorsport governing

body, the Local Authority will determine whether or not to make a Motor Sport order by considering the likely impact of the event on the local community, the potential local economic and other benefits. The Local Authority will also need to be satisfied that the views of the local community have been taken into account and that adequate public safety and traffic management arrangements have been made.

As yet, Argyll and Bute Council have not received an application accompanied by a permit from the relevant Motorsport Governing Body and as such it would not be appropriate for the Local Authority to make comment at this time until the relevant application and permit have been received.

Regards Hugh

Section 3 Restrictions on pedestrian access

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **O'Neill, Hugh** <Hugh.O'Neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk>

Date: Mon, 15 Dec 2025 at 15:38

Subject: RE: Road closures? [OFFICIAL]

To: Secretary Kilfinan Community Council <secretary.kilfinancc@gmail.com>

Classification: OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Catriona, the Council cannot guarantee that a restriction may not be made on pedestrian access. The Council does not run the event. I can say that the order, in itself, does not have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians. It is for the Rally organisers to ensure that the Rally is operated in terms of the order but also having regard to the overriding health and safety considerations they must have regarding all relevant interests.

Thanks Hugh

Hugh O'Neill
Network and Standards Manager
Roads and Infrastructure Services
Development and Infrastructure
Argyll and Bute Council
(01546) 604084

Hugh.O'Neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

From: Secretary Kilfinan Community Council <secretary.kilfinancc@gmail.com>

Sent: 15 December 2025 14:34

To: O'Neill, Hugh <Hugh.O'Neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Road closures? [OFFICIAL]

Thanks Hugh, can I just check that you are confirming that the Council accepts that pedestrian access cannot be restricted, at any time, by a road closure order? Folk are looking for absolute clarity on their right to access their properties without restriction.

Catriona Renfrew
Secretary
Kilfinan Community Council

On Mon, 10 Nov 2025 at 07:56, O'Neill, Hugh <Hugh.O'Neill@argyll-bute.gov.uk> wrote:

Classification: OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE-COMMERCIAL

Classification: OFFICIAL

Good morning Catriona, thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the Kilfinnan Community Council.

The legislation does state “no such order shall be made with respect to any road which would have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians”

The order is made in order to ensure that pedestrians access is facilitated, and this may be by both Police Scotland and event organisers.

Therefore, the order, in itself, does not have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians. It is for the Rally organisers to ensure that the Rally is operated in terms of the order but also having regard to the overriding health and safety considerations they must have regarding all relevant interests.

Thanks Hugh

Hugh O'Neill
Network and Standards Manager
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