

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 10 August 2023, 7pm

Supper Room, Elgin Town Hall

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Steve Ferris	Forres
Jim Patterson	Burghead & Cummington	Graham Murdoch	Forres
Colin Burch	Cullen & Deskford	David Parker	Forres
Graham Jarvis	Elgin	Mary Evans	Heldon
Howard Davenport	Finderne	Marion Ross	Speyside
Anne Skene	Findhorn & Kinloss		

In attendance:

Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire
Inspector Andy Meikleham, Police Scotland
Debra Duke (Moray Council) Community Council Liaison Officer
Catherine Sinclair *Minute taker*

Moray Councillors: Juli Harris, Graham Leadbitter, Marc Macrae

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted from: Deputy Lord Lieutenant Joan Cowe, Chief Inspector Simon Reid, Andrea Woodhead (JCC Treasurer)

2. Approval of minutes – 11 May 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record. Proposed by Graham Jarvis, seconded by Jim Patterson

3. Matters Arising - None

4. Treasurers Report

Accounts information was circulated. There is a deficit in Just Transition. Sponsorship for the Energy Fair of £367 has not yet been received and may have to be written off.

RESOLVED

Debra will ask about the Just Transition deficit.

5. Police Update - Inspector Andy Meikleham

Police are facing budget constraints and an increased demand on services, including a huge increase in mental health calls. This is making it difficult to deliver policing to communities. Other emergency services are also struggling. There is a forecasted overspend of £19 million. Making these kinds of savings will require radical solutions.

Moray division has lost thirty-nine officers. A review of back-office services is taking place with non-critical posts expected to be cut. This should lead to an increase in front-line officers; however, they will have an increased workload due to the back-office cuts. Preventative work was being undertaken particularly with driver engagement. Police Scotland is legislated to attend Mental Health calls in Scotland so will not stop attending calls unless there is a change in legislation. On average, mental health cases take 10 hours to deal with i.e., a whole shift. If a person is assessed and discharged, this risk does not sit well with Police. Officers will take them home and try and ensure someone is with them. There is

a need for more support, and possibly a different emergency response organisation for people in crisis.

Qs Concerns about speeding were raised. Marion Ross has written to Moray's MP and MSP about the cuts in policing.

Q: Could Police Scotland use volunteers to work on speeding as English forces do?

A: English police use volunteers throughout the ranks. It may be that, in time volunteers may be taken on for this role in Scotland, but it needs to be done with care. Experience is an important part of the job.

Q: Can Special Constables progress through the ranks in Scotland as they can in England?

A: No, not at present. Andy will pass this question up the chain of command. There are fourteen volunteers in Moray, but they also have other commitments and therefore limited time.

In some areas, Police are no longer attending Community Council meetings or producing community reports. Moray will keep trying to attend but at this time of high demand and cuts, it can be difficult to spare officers.

Inspector Mike McKenzie has been appointed as Inspector for Keith & Buckie community policing teams.

6. Lord Lieutenancy update – Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire

Joan Cowe submitted a report.

Major Gibson said that Banffshire Lord Lieutenancy are open to working in partnership with Moray Community Councils and are happy to discuss and debate plans, collaborate, and write letters where appropriate. Please contact Banffshire Lord Lieutenancy if you feel they can be of any help.

Voting has now closed for the Banffshire and Morayshire flags competitions. Final designs will be announced in autumn, after approval from the Lord Lyon.

7. Resilience Plans update

Groups are still working on their plans and most of Moray is covered. The Keith and Strathisla Group is due to meet soon to re-establish work on their resilience plan.

There will be an event on 21st September for Community Resilience Groups – Debra will circulate details in due course.

SSEN's last resilience fund closed in July. The Joint Community Council has applied.

Rhona McNicol had circulated plan documents intended to help. There has been feedback that some groups do not wish to use them. Jim Patterson asked that groups reconsider this. The documents are not compulsory but are intended to assist with plan development. Police, Fire Services and Moray Council would like to know who is in the community building during an emergency so they can respond to queries from concerned friends or family who have not been able to contact a loved one. Debra suggested finding a local volunteer who enjoys admin who can do that work during an emergency and adding them to the plan.

8. CCLO update

- i. Scottish Government Committee meeting – Alastair Kennedy and Debra Duke attended. It was very useful having Debra attend as experience of both Community Councils and Parish Councils. The Committee is looking at strengthening Community Councils, something Professor Oliver Escobar is pushing for. Alastair will invite the MSP who chaired the meeting to attend the next Joint Community Council meeting.
- ii. Scottish Forum of Community Councils – West Lothian Joint Forum of Community Councils held the event on 10th June. Information has been circulated. They wish to

develop a national group for Community Councils. The last umbrella group was disbanded in 2011. There will be a meeting in November.

iii. Community Council Policies:

Expenses policy: Community Councillors can claim expenses and each Community Council can tailor expenses to their needs. However, there is no written policy. If desired, Debra can draft a template policy that can be adjusted to suit each Community Council.

Finances policy: There is no written policy. Debra asked if it would be useful to draft a finances policy. It would not be likely to changed working practices or aim to be prescriptive.

The financial year end is end of September and reporting is required. If anyone has any queries, please contact Debra.

Minutes training has been requested. tsimORAY ran training last year. If of interest, let Debra know and she will see if Community Councillors can attend. If someone is considering becoming a minute taker, it could be useful for them to attend to help them make the decision.

Elgin Community Council has requested Licensing training. Debra can arrange this for other Community Councils if interested.

Fiftieth Anniversary of Community Councils – Elgin Library Gallery is available for booking on a Saturday in October. Please let Debra know about any ideas you have of what we should do. Banners are expensive so Debra is looking into other options for promotion.

RESOLVED

Let Debra know if:

- you would like to attend the next Scottish Forum of Community Councils meeting.
- your Community Council would like Licensing training.
- a draft expenses and finances policies would be useful.
- you would like minutes training.
- you have any ideas about the celebratory event for 50 years of Community Councils

9. Electricity pylons and cables in Moray – issue raised by Innes Community Council

New pylons are being built in Moray. Some will replace existing pylons on existing routes, some are new. It was suggested it may be useful to ask Gary Templeton to talk about the National Planning Framework. The question was raised if there is any point objecting to pylons as objections to previous developments made no difference and the cost of undergrounding cables is prohibitive.

Another Community Council has been in touch regarding pylons around Beaulay. They have a community liaison group with SSEN. Debra asked if Moray wants to form such a group or groups. Should Innes Community Council take the lead on this and potentially look at setting up liaison groups etc.? The Joint Community Council could provide support.

Keith Green Energy & Infrastructure Planning will be going before Committee soon. If approved, it will go out for consultation, and we should all look at those documents.

SSEN consultation on pylon community benefit closes on 13 August. It was agreed the Joint Community Council should respond. We do want community benefit for pylons, not just wind

farms. Debra noted responses to the consultation questions. She will also let SSEN know that 6 weeks is a short time for a consultation, particularly during summer.

RESOLVED

Ask if Innes Community Council wish to take the lead on this subject, with support from the Joint Community Council.

Debra to submit consultation response.

10. Have your say on community engagement in local development – Scottish Government consultation running until 13 September 2023

11. Licensing consultation – Moray Council consultation running until 14 August 2023. It was agreed that a 6-week period was not long enough for consultations as some Community Councils only meet 6-weekly, and it does not allow time for collecting opinion. This is exacerbated in summer when some Community Councils do not meet.

12. How the Moray Growth deal is supporting the West – issue raised by Forres Community Council

Steve Ferris raised this question as he found it difficult to find information on what had been funded. He had been told Forres was being funded for housing and digital health only. £3 million is needed to renovate Forres Town Hall and it seemed Forres was missing out compared with Elgin Town Hall and Moray Leisure Centre. Since raising the question, the Press & Journal have published some information. If £100 million is to be spent over the next 10 years, would it not be better to have some flexibility to help reach the goals of the fund?

Cllr Marc McRae answered as Chair of Moray Council Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee. Moray Growth Deal was signed off about 18 months ago after being selected by both Scottish and Westminster governments. It had to pass a full business case to win and had to meet specific criteria. It was not possible to ask for flexibility or funds that could be shared in smaller amounts. There has not been a great deal of information published yet as some business cases within the plan have not yet been signed off by government. Details must remain confidential until the cases are approved.

Two of the eight business cases - Digital Health at Altyre and Bus Revolution - have been signed off. Digital Health is looking to develop smart devices to support independent living and use of technology to help people better manage conditions from their home. They are also looking at the long-term management of chronic health conditions, healthy living, weight management and mental wellbeing. They have already developed a camera that can be swallowed to image the gastrointestinal system and rapidly developed and delivered an NHS Covid app during lockdown. They would like to set up a citizen's panel. Information about this will be sent to Debra Duke for circulation.

Bus Revolution will cover new routes and should extend into evenings and weekends services. It is hoped a second phase will be launched in 2025 as more e-buses become available. Demand for e-vehicles is currently very high.

The remaining six cases must be submitted by the end of 2023. Moray Council are developing a benefit realisation and monitoring plan which will give more details.

- If approved, the Manufacturing & Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM) should start providing Moray-wide services, from a base in Forres Enterprise Park, in 2024.
- There is a business case for 360 affordable homes and for funding to unlock constrained sites to allow private developers to build houses.
- A business enterprise hub will provide support for 450 businesses - individuals and SMEs - across Moray. It is planned that premises will be in a derelict building in Elgin High Street. Fitting out of the facility is expected in 2025.

- Early Years STEM will have hubs, including one in Forres, plus outreach work.
- Moray Aerospace & Advanced Technology Innovation Centre (MAATIC) is under discussion with Boeing. If finalised, it will lead to an increased demand for aeronautical engineers and a new UHI campus delivering qualifications. It is expected new small businesses will develop around this industry.
- The cultural quarter is looking to radically redevelop buildings including Elgin Town Hall. The value of the work of those running the Town Hall has been noted, with many new and high-quality events being put on, bringing more people to Moray. This was a specific fund which did not allow for an option to allocate smaller amounts of funding to several venues. More funding is coming online, such as the Just Transition Fund which is open now.

RESOLVED

Cllr McRae to email Digital Health citizen's panel information to Debra for circulation.

13. Temporary accommodation charging policy – Moray Council consultation ended on 2 August 2023. CCLO will pass on any comments you wish to be submitted. This was again, a six-week consultation period over summer.

14. Feedback from Sub-groups

- Money for Moray – has been working with tsiMORAY on The Just Transitions Capital Fund, which is open for applications now.
- Safer Travel Moray – no update
- Community Energy Moray – the latest newsletter was circulated today.

Transport Forum – Marion Ross noted sincere thanks to Dawn Brodie for stepping in at the last minute. The next meeting agenda is to identify as many relevant groups in Moray as possible and invite wider membership.

Bus companies have been talking about reinstating paper timetables at bus stops. Stagecoach had said staff could print timetables on demand, but we find that offices are often not staffed.

The Forum is looking to appoint either 1 or 2 secretaries and has asked tsiMORAY for training.

Marion Ross is on the Bus Revolution panel. The formal launch event is 28 August.

15. Community Council update

Burghead & Cummingston Community Council

No meeting in August. Liz McKnockiter has stepped down and there is a new Chair. More members are being sought.

The main focus has continued to be the closure of GP surgeries in Burghead and Hopeman and the Community Council is supporting the Save Our Surgeries campaign.

Cullen and Deskford Community Council

There has been a small increase in anti-social behaviour and the situation is being monitored.

Logie playpark is nearing completion. There have been delays as there is only one installer Moray Council can use.

Jill Sowden is the new Community Centre Development Worker and collaboration is planned between the Community Council and Community Centre.

Aultmore Wind Farm exhibition is on 30 August – all are invited.

Cullen has been offered a Clan lighthouse sculpture. Cullen Community Council would like to thank Moray Council Planning and Building Control for their help with advice regarding permissions. It can be erected temporarily without planning permission.

Community Council funding – Cullen Community Council will have spent their annual grant of £660 this week. They pay £360 per year in rent because they cannot access any Moray Council premises. Could Community Council funding be reviewed? Could we find out how many Community Councils pay rent.

RESOLVED

Colin Burch and Debra to liaise on this and circulate an email.

Elgin Community Council

The Stagecoach manager attended and advised the driver shortage is improving by the month due to trainees and returners. Prior to his appointment, driver recruitment had been stopped. He plans to continue recruiting and have reserve drivers.

A delegation representing fifteen groups who use Elgin Community Centre attended regarding the planned closure in March 2024. They feel they are not getting any support from Moray Council regarding finding other premises. Some groups have used the centre since it opened 50 years ago. They find it hard to understand why the building is being closed, particularly when other buildings are receiving funding for improvements.

Finderne Community Council

Finderne is working with Moray Council Roads department on traffic safety in Rafford, including speed signs, pavement, and enhanced village signs. They are supporting a local group to get funding to repair an unadopted road.

They are continuing to work on their resilience plan.

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council

A Community Councillor is attending the quarterly meetings of the NHS local oversight group for healthcare provision.

Flyers have recently been delivered in Findhorn about getting involved in resilience planning. Findhorn Ecovillage planning is progressing well. The Findhorn Foundation, an educational charity, will cease operations this year with a SCIO expected to operate in its place. The Ecovillage is a separate organisation, however it leases land from the Foundation, so talks are ongoing on a way forward.

The Community Council has signed the Clash Gour Memorandum of Understanding and the Armed Forces Covenant.

The decommissioned Kinloss airfield is now being used for private sports car events that are very noisy.

Forres Community Council

The Community Council is having recruitment issues.

Resilience planning has been sidetracked by flooding on Orchard Road. The Community Council did ask Scottish Water to scope the drains and they have identified a blockage.

The Community Council is working on a new website with The Scottish Tech Army.

Outdoor gym equipment has been installed behind Forres Academy. This work was done in partnership with Forres Sports Hub and is insured under the Community Council.

FACT has a new worker who has met with Community Councillors and is engaging with other groups. The Town Hall is now the Resilience Plan safe place.

Forres in Bloom judging was carried out today.

Heldon Community Council

Bridges are an ongoing issue with the bridge from the A96 to Miltonduff closed, the Cloddach bridge closed to vehicles, and traffic lights on the Allarburn bridge due to damage.

There will be new pylons in the area, but they will follow the route of existing pylons.

The Community Council is keeping an eye on the distillery extension.
As the Community Council is made up of seven separate areas, it was not practical to produce a single resilience plan covering Heldon. Duffus is currently discussing their plan.

Speyside Community Council:

Meetings are being well attended. For promotion of 50 years of Community Councils, Speyside Community Council sponsored an issue of The Rothesian magazine.
Work is ongoing on the bridge repair or replacement over Rothes burn. There is some doubt as to ownership. Work is also ongoing on restoring the Rothes pavilion. Although it is listed, it will not have to be restored to its original 1930s state.

There has been some success with speed indicator devices. Simpsons Maltings have included speed indicators in their plans at the request of the Community Council.
Wholehearted thanks to Rhona McNicol for her help with the joint application from Speyside Community Council and Aberlour Community Association to SSEN for flood prevention measures for the Old Station Tearoom and a mobile pump. The Scottish Flood Forum was also very helpful with the application. Thanks also to the three local Moray Councillors for purchasing sandbags.

Speyside Area Forum met recently for the first time in 4 years. The meeting was not advertised and was by invitation only and the Forum appears to be duplicating the work of the Community Council.

RESOLVED

Alastair Kennedy will write to the Community Planning Partnership to ask them to remind their members of protocol about meetings and that the remit of Area Forums is clear.

16. Closing remark - Thanks to all those who attended.

17. AOCB - None

18. Date of next meeting – 9 November 2023