

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 9 November 2023, 7pm

Chestnut Room, Elgin Community Centre, IV30 1UE

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Mary Evans	Heldon
Bruce Edelsten	Cullen & Deskford	Steve Hickin	Keith
Graham Jarvis	Elgin	Gina McNicoll	Lossie
Steve Ferris	Forres	David Walker	Lossie
Graham Murdoch	Forres	Marion Ross	Speyside
David Parker	Forres	Donald McLean	Speyside

In attendance:

Joan Cowe, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Moray, Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire
Simon Bokor-Ingram, Chief Officer Health and Social Care Moray, Jane Gill, Programme Director Maternity Collaborate, NHS Grampian/NHS Highland, Jane Raitt, Clinical Midwifery Lead, NHS Grampian
Inspector Neil Morrison, Police Scotland
Chris Muir, Moray Council, Carol Anderson and Ian Thomas, Moray Council Consultants
Moray Councillors: John Cowe
Debra Duke (Moray Council) Community Council Liaison Officer
Catherine Sinclair, Minute taker

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies: Chief Inspector Simon Reid, Andrea Woodhead (JCC Treasurer), Jim Patterson (Burghead & Cummingston CC), Colin Burch (Cullen & Deskford CC)

2. Approval of minutes – 10 August 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2023 were confirmed as a correct record. Proposed by Graham Jarvis, seconded by David Walker.

3. Matters Arising - None

4. Treasurers Report

- I. Approve spending as required
- II. Annual accounts
 - I. Approve independent examiner of accounts – There were no objections to Shaun Murray independently examining the accounts
 - II. Approve annual accounts – the accounts were circulated. No questions were raised

RESOLVED: Shaun Murray to independently examine JCC annual accounts

5. Police Update - Inspector Neil Morrison

In the year to date, 19,100 calls have been made to Police in Moray. Fourteen percent of these calls resulted in a crime report being raised. Around 2,000 were concern calls (mental health issues, crises), and 2,000 were abandoned or dropped 999 calls. Both types of calls need a response. A further 2,000 were calls to assist members of the public e.g., where someone had fallen.

Community policing is still a priority for the force, but the huge demand and budgetary constraints mean that difficult choices must be made. Calls are graded according to seriousness, risk and urgency and higher tariff calls must be prioritised.

Some empty posts in Moray will not be filled this year.

The Proportionate Response to Crime pilot has been completed. Where a minor crime with no risk or threat with no leads to follow, it will be investigated and closed without Police attendance. If the victim has any vulnerability Police will attend. Around 400-500 calls treated this way will now be assessed. Northeast Scotland was chosen for the pilot is because it is a system that previously worked well for Grampian Police.

A joint table-top exercise on emergency responses was conducted with other emergency services. There are plans to invite Community Resilience groups to the next exercise. Local demonstrations about Israeli action in Palestine have also pulled on Police resources. National Police resources can be called upon if necessary, however demand is high.

6. Lord Lieutenancy update

Joan Cowe, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Moray

On 28th October, Moray's new flag was unveiled at 5 locations. The winning design, by Aila Gibson from Dallas Primary School was one of over 500 entries. Moray is only the 8th county in Scotland to have a flag and we are encouraged to use it. It can be flown by anyone, with any other flags. It can also be used to brand local produce.

The Duke & Duchess of Rothesay met charitable organisations in Moray, including Outfit Moray who were delivering cycling classes at Burghead Primary School. They met young farmers to discuss the "Are ewe okay" campaign to encourage farmers to seek mental health support and remove stigma around talking about mental health. They also met serving families in Kinloss and Lossiemouth.

It has been lovely to see Remembrance Day displays and such a show of civic pride. Thanks to all who work in communities, including Community Councillors and congratulations on 50 years of Community Councils.

Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire

The Banffshire flag was also raised on 28th October. The winning design was by Elly Stewart, a Portessie Primary school pupil. Philip Tibbets, Honorary Vexillologist of the Lyon's Court is very keen that we fly the flag. The design can be downloaded for free.

In January, the Lieutenancy will be drawing up a list of nominations of outstanding local people to be invited to Holyrood Palace gardens.

Successful King's Award for Voluntary Service 2023 nominees will be advised shortly.

Nominations for 2024 have been received and nominations for 2025 awards are opening in December. Please make the Lord Lieutenancy aware of any local groups that fit the criteria for this prestigious award.

The Lord Lieutenancy is always keen to hear good news stories and willing to attend and provide support wherever appropriate.

7. Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy- briefing note sent to all CCs

This strategy will feed into the local development plan and covers the forestry sector, community access, recreation, biodiversity, and climate change, including Scotland's Net Zero commitments. The draft strategy is due to go to Moray Council in 2024 and public consultation will follow. It will look at education, employment, improving skills and increased use of community forest and woodland. The working group consists of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Moray Council and Scottish Forestry. Wide-ranging stakeholder consultation has been conducted and is concluding. A few Community Councils submitted written responses to the briefing questions, and these were discussed. Further responses can be submitted in writing and Debra Duke will send a reminder to Community Councils.

Answers to further questions from the floor:

The strategy has limited enforcement powers so cannot require a landowner to reply to community groups who wish to take on or purchase woodland. The strategy aims to be enabling and encouraging.

The Planning process does not require a portion of woodland is available for community access. Recommendations can be made but it is up to the landowner to make this choice. Feedback has been received about landowner concerns about public liability. Scottish Forestry can insist on good public access and this is 'taken as a given' if public grant money has been awarded.

Comments from the floor:

Woodland with mixed species including deciduous trees must be better for biodiversity, amenity and boosting mental health, compared with monoculture plantations. The response was that any new forest scheme must have a percentage of mixed planting, and this is rigorously enforced. Plantations also have benefits such as more rapid carbon sequestration. Car parking fees are creating barriers to using Forestry Scotland sites and Pay by Phone is unavailable in some car parks due to poor mobile signal.

Cycle trails have been successful. They attract users from outwith the area. Use of bikes on walking trails can be dangerous. The children's play area and coffee hut at Roseisle seem to be a good way to encourage public use without spoiling the nature of the environment.

Speyside Community Council notes that further forestry development is putting some private water supplies at risk. There seems to be a lack of transparency about information available from Forestry Scotland. Redacted reports are acceptable but should be freely available.

There was concern that national targets become regional targets and are then applied locally without looking at what is appropriate.

Forres Community Council will share the Cluny Hill Management Plan.

RESOLVED: Debra Duke to remind Community Councils to submit responses to the questions. Graham Murdoch to share Cluny Hill Management Plan

8. Dr Gray's Maternity Update - Simon Bokor-Ingram, Jane Gill, Jane Raitt

Documents with the milestones and progress on reinstating a full obstetrics service at Dr Gray's were circulated. The team has co-designed a maternity charter with the involvement of end-users. Regular newsletters on progress are published on the NHS Grampian website. It was suggested that the link to newsletters could be shared online by JCC and others.

Posters with QR codes to the website could be put in public places. Work is underway to define the details of the key milestones. Moray woman can now transfer to Raigmore instead of Aberdeen in certain cases. In time, Moray women will be given the choice to go to Raigmore rather than Dr Gray's.

There are 80-90 roles to be filled including 57 midwifery and nursing posts, 18 medical posts and 14 programme/support posts. Two paediatric consultants have been recruited and obstetrics and gynae consultant interviews will take place next month. There has been a marketing campaign www.wishyouworkedhere.scot highlighting Moray. There is a degree of confidence over recruitment, although there are challenges including local housing and childcare provision. Richard Lochhead has agreed to facilitate meetings with organisations including childcare providers and housebuilders to look for innovative solutions. The team may need to be agile and responsive about how services are delivered if it cannot recruit the full complement of staff. Collaboration with NHS Highland could mean staff move between hospitals according to demand.

RESOLVED: Link to newsletters to be posted on JCC Facebook page

9. Resilience Plans update

i. Update from event on 21 September 2023

This event was about building connections between neighbouring groups and volunteer recruitment. The next step will be testing plans with tabletop exercises.

Rhona has worked hard to get the booklet within budget, and it will be delivered to households in December. It has been funded by a grant from SSEN.

Jim Patterson will be speaking to TV Scotland about the work of community resilience groups.

Lossiemouth Community Council had to enact their emergency plan when 5 households were evacuated during storm Babet. They are seeking a different storage space for equipment as it was subject to floodwaters.

10. CCLO update

i. Democracy Matters

The second phase of this national conversation about how local democracy can work for our communities has launched. Funding for events is available. Information is available on communitycouncils.scot website. As part of the local governance review, a set of guidance documents, including a new model scheme for Community Councils is available, including Gaelic, large print, and braille versions. The aim is to be less prescriptive. We aim to review the Moray scheme of establishment and handbook next autumn.

ii. Draft expenses policy

Debra circulated a draft policy that can be used as guidance and amended as needed to suit each Community Council. Debra welcomes any feedback on any points that should be included in this policy.

iii. Moray Council budget 2024/25 consultation

The consultation is available on Moray Council website until 22nd November. Feedback was given that budget items were grouped together which made it hard to comment on specific items, especially selecting items where cuts could be tolerated.

RESOLVED: Debra will email draft expenses policy to Community Councils

11. Scottish Joint Forum

A forum is being set up. Debra has yet to hear of meeting dates.

12. 50 Years of Community Councils

Event held on 28 October 2023

Eleven of 17 Community Councils attended, and a few Community Councils provided photos and updates on work they had done over the years. Roddy Burns handed out long service awards. Please let Debra know if there is anyone who has served more than 10 or 20 years as this is not available through election data. Debra thanked those who attended.

13. Current Funding Model of Community Councils in Moray (raised by C&DCC)

It was agreed a subgroup should be set up to review funding. Cullen, Elgin, Keith & Forres Community Councils would like to be involved so far. Debra noted it is difficult to identify the hidden costs of running a Community Council and it would be useful to have evidence of these costs i.e. what is not being claimed for. Community Councillors should not be out of pocket. Debra shared a document on how funding is allocated in other local authority areas and was thanked for her research.

RESOLVED: Expressions of interest in joining subgroup to Debra

14. Feedback from Sub-groups

i. Money for Moray

The participatory budgeting exercise is complete and successful applicants were notified

ii. Safer Travel Moray – in abeyance

iii. Community Energy Moray – no update

iv. **Transport Forum** – no update

15. Community Council update

Cullen and Deskford Community Council

Vattenfall held a useful community benefit workshop.

The Community Council continues to raise awareness of issues such as the participatory budgeting fund, local roadworks, and closures. Hard copies of Community Council minutes at the library have been fully updated. The librarian says that they are regularly asked for. Community lunches have increased to fortnightly in the colder weather. They are well attended and well supported by local businesses. Ideally weekly lunches would resume but volunteer numbers (particularly those qualified to prepare food) could be a barrier to that. A second 'Cullen Salutes' event - brunch for Veterans and serving military - was well attended. This will hopefully develop into a regular feature.

Deskford Community Hall management group have all resigned due to having 'done their bit.' It is hoped a new management group will be formed soon. CDCC are working with local Community Development worker (Jill Sowden) with that.

The Campervan site which is operated by the Three Kings Community Association and local volunteers is nearly fully functional.

The issue with local school bandwidth continues to be pursued by councillors and Moray Council IT personnel.

A highly successful scarecrow competition was held

The stone wall near the speed limit sign has been hit by vehicles five times this year, however Moray Council has no record of this as nobody was hurt.

Elgin Community Council

There has been good attendance at meetings. Around 100 people attended a public meeting about parking issues. Police receive a high volume of complaints about parking, but do not have the resources to deal with them.

Forres Community Council

Membership continues to be an issue and the Community Council is about to lose their secretary/minute secretary so are trying to recruit.

About £1.5million of funding is available for Forres Conservation and Heritage scheme.

The Community Council supported Councillors and Transition Town Forres members to meet to try and resolve issues about the allotments rent.

Community resilience plan equipment has been received.

Parking issues are ongoing.

Heldon Community Council

The closure of Cloddach bridge is an ongoing issue and the Community Council is looking at several planning applications including one for a new windfarm.

Speyside Community Council:

A new windfarm has been proposed in Teindland forest, in a similar area to where one was previously refused by Scottish Government.

The community council is responding to consultations on affordable housing in Aberlour and the maltings in Rothes.

SSEN has provided £10,000 for flood defences for the Old Station tearoom.

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

17. AOCB - None

18. Date of next meeting – 8 February 2024