

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 14 November 2024, 7pm Community Suite Elgin Academy

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Steve Ferris	Forres
Peter West	Buckie	Graham Murdoch	Forres
Jim Patterson	Burghead & Cummingston	David Parker	Forres
Graham Jarvis	Elgin	Gina McNicol	Lossie
Brian Irvine	Elgin	Carolle Ralph	Lossie
Anne Skene	Findhorn & Kinloss		

In attendance:

Moray Councillors: Juli Harris
Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire
Chief Inspector Mike McKenzie, Police Scotland
Debra Duke (Moray Council) Community Council Liaison Officer
Catherine Sinclair, Minute taker

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone.

Apologies: Mary Evans (Heldon Community Council), Christine Allan (Buckie Community Council), Cullen & Deskford Community Council, Marion Ross (Speyside Community Council), Steven Christie, Treasurer

2. Approval of minutes – 8 August 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 August were confirmed as a correct record. Proposed by Brian Irvine, seconded by Carolle Ralph.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Police Update – Chief Inspector Mike McKenzie

Divisional Commander for the Northeast division, Chief Superintendent Graham Mackie retired last week and the interview process for his replacement is underway. Buckie and Keith area has a new Inspector, David Robertson, an experienced officer who is familiar with the area from his early career. Inspector Neil Morrison covers West Moray and Inspector Andy Meikleham covers Elgin.

Officer recruitment has resumed after a pause due to budget constraint. A local recruitment day held for the first time in Buckie rather than Aberdeen was successful. Sixteen officers should be recruited between March 2024 and March 2025 with some new officers already in post. This will return the force closer to previous numbers and means the Schools officer post has been refilled. Early engagement with young people and support for teachers has proved to be positive and useful.

There is a Community Engagement Unit, based in Elgin, able to troubleshoot local issues throughout Moray. Local concerns can be raised via the relevant Inspector.

Thanks to all who gave feedback on Community Safety reports. Inspector McKenzie proposes a bi-monthly report of a standard format, which will have more local context, information about local priorities and updates in relation to them, and better show trends. He will ask if Scottish Fire and Rescue service and Community Safety partners wish to contribute. The report could also show Adult and Child Protection trends in each area. Inspector McKenzie will circulate an email for further feedback on this proposal.

Sporadic Police attendance at Community Council meetings is due to operational demands. Inspector McKenzie is considering other ways to engage, potentially quarterly face to face meetings with each local inspector. It was suggested several local Community Councils could attend together.

There was discussion on safe driving campaigns. The Roads Policing department deliver a lot of training including young drivers, rider safety and substance abuse. Specific support can be requested through local Inspectors. There was discussion on rural policing and drunk driving. Due to the large rural roads network, Police are reliant on information from the public. Cllr Harris noted it can be difficult to get a rapid response when concerns are raised e.g. drunk drivers leaving a pub. Inspector McKenzie will liaise with Inspector Morrison regarding focussing some festive events in Speyside.

There are 9 Special Constables in Moray who are very active. As well as e.g. patrolling streets at the weekend, there are opportunities to experience specialist roles. Some Special Constables progress to a full-time Police career.

5. Lord Lieutenancy updates

Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire

Major Gibson thanked Moray Council and Community Councils for their support of wreath laying ceremonies. It was good to see young children attending.

The Kings Award for Voluntary Services were announced today. Three Banffshire organisations received this award out of 281 in Scotland: Beulah Support and Outreach in Banff run a weekly meal and offer life-changing support to individuals; Buckie Roots has transformed public spaces in Buckie, supporting people to enjoy the outdoors; Footprints, Portessie provides a safe space for people with learning, physical and mental health challenges through weekly meetings with a wide range of activities.

6. Community Council update

Buckie Community Council

A new Chair is to be elected after the current Chair stepped down. It is difficult to recruit and retain members and find people who have time, particularly as a lot of people work away from the area. The Community Council is advertising on the town centre noticeboard. The website is almost finished, and there are plans to upload live information as well as having static content. Resilience planning has fallen behind, but the Community Council is now working actively on it and hopes this will be useful to make more links in the community. A subgroup was formed when community members asked for help fundraising for a local playpark. The group has raised £25,000 in the last 10 weeks. Subgroups can also be an effective route to Community Councillor recruitment.

Burghead and Cummingston Community Council

Several subgroups are working on different projects.

The Community Council is investigating purchasing pavement gritters. Burghead harbour may be able to provide grit however the feasibility of this requires further discussion.

The Bank of Scotland no longer offers Treasurer's accounts and has switched to a Community Account which has a £4.75/month fee and 75p per cheque. The Community Council is looking to move banking to Santander.

Elgin Community Council

Three new members were co-opted at the last meeting.

The manager of Dr Gray's Hospital has been unable to attend meetings and is now off sick. A request has been made that another member of staff attend. Maternity services are of concern, as is the cancellation of any capital spending.

A meeting with Richard Lochhead about gulls has been rescheduled till 2nd December. Moray Council has written to Scottish Government for permission to conduct a cull. Elgin Community Council would like NatureScot to update their gull data for Elgin which is from 2016 and 2019 and is significantly out of date. Steven Christie has collated results from a Facebook public survey about gulls and that information will be passed on.

In the six months of the scheme to pay additional Police hours re illegal parking, approximately 800 tickets were issued, compared with 113 in total last year. This seems to have made a noticeable difference to parking in the town centre.

The resilience group is a little behind but there are plans to get it up and running again. Elgin bus depot has been downgraded and now has only one mechanic to keep buses running. There have been driver redundancies, Macduff depot has closed with the loss of more mechanics. Inverness depot now covers breakdowns. This is of concern with a lot of older buses in the fleet and a response time of several hours. Antisocial behaviour is ongoing on buses and drivers are being threatened.

Graham Jarvis proposed that Dr Gray's and Stagecoach staff be invited to The Joint Community Council meeting as they affect all of Moray.

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council

The removal of the Stagecoach number 32 service has had a significant impact on the community and tourism. Talks are ongoing with both military bases, Moray Council, and private partners to try and find a solution.

The B9011 road into Findhorn is in danger of collapse due to coastal erosion. Tenders have gone out for what will be a large, expensive piece of work. Any floods tend to affect Kinloss but cut off the only road into Findhorn, as do road traffic incidents. Talks are ongoing with the MOD and emergency personnel to provide an alternative route to the village. A tabletop exercise is planned. Resilience plans are well on the way and local resilience groups are very active. Local Place Plans are also well developed. It has been a great deal of work to complete consultations and produce useful documents.

The Community Council arranged the Findhorn and Kinloss remembrance events, both of which were well attended.

Forres Community Council

It is hoped two new Community Councillors will be co-opted at the next meeting. One was previously a Community Councillor and the other has set up a neighbourhood association for Knockomie housing estate. Forres has 200 active groups, so it is challenging to find people with the time to also be a Community Councillor. It would be good to have more members to action the resilience plan.

There was a 'meet the funders' event for the Forres Culture and Heritage Scheme and the funders were impressed with the town's response. The outcome of the application for a grant for repairs to the built environment should be known soon. There are only 3 empty shops on the High Street, one of which is about to be filled. It is great to see a lot of successful, independent businesses.

The Local Place Plan is almost complete and will be submitted by the deadline. Forres in Bloom won Gold and Barry Ashby won the Britain in Bloom Community Champion Award for his volunteer work.

There was a good turnout for bonfire night. The remembrance parade was well attended and featured 3 squadrons from Engineer Regiment 39, the pipe band and youth organisations.

Ariane Burgess MSP has suggested Forres could be Scotland's forest town.

Lossiemouth Community Council

Volunteers continue to be busy with the toilets and gardening, as well as a Christmas craft fair and the Christmas lights. A successful beetle drive and afternoon tea for older people was held. Each year the Community Council aims to build on remembrance events. Signs were put up this year to encourage people of all generations to attend.

There have been several meetings regarding coastal erosion including with the golf club as there is concern that part of the course is eroding. It is hoped this contact might help with the active travel route that has been sought for some years.

Moray Council is supportive of the planned Christmas tree project where Moray's used Christmas trees will be collected and set in a willow framework on the east and west beaches to encourage dune formation.

An hourly M Connect service between Burghead, Cummington, Hopeman and Lossie will be available from April 2025.

The Post Office is closing and there are still no banks in Lossiemouth.

Proposed library closures are of great concern. Seven libraries could be closed to save £275,000: Burghead, Cullen, Dufftown, Keith, Lossiemouth, Fochabers and Tomintoul. Only two of the libraries are in standalone buildings which could be sold. The consultation period is only 18 days long and the survey is long and badly worded. The first action may be to ask for an extension to the consultation period to allow time for a proper response. It is felt that closures will affect more vulnerable people most, those potentially least likely to be able to give their views.

Questions that the community council wanted answered were:

- What are the criteria for selecting these libraries?
- Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been conducted?
- Are decision makers aware of the safe, warm space libraries provide and the lack of other facilities for young people in many areas?
- What alternative provision is being made for the Moray Hubs and Near Me facilities?

The mobile library service has been stopped. This suggests there would need to be an increase in home delivery service for housebound customers, with associated cost. The Carnegie Library in Lossiemouth currently houses Moray Council records and a request for a Community Asset Transfer has been declined as it would cost an estimated £2.5 million to deal with the documents.

Any communities under threat of losing libraries have the support of The Joint Community Council. Cllr Harris will report these views to Moray Council.

7. Moray Growth Deal

Apologies. Michael Kelly has the date of the next Joint Community Council meeting.

8. Treasurers Report

Apologies.

9. Resilience Plans update

The resilience planning meeting held on 7 November was very good, with community groups from Aberdeenshire providing helpful and practical advice. There is a plan to hold an evening meeting with refreshments to go over resilience roles and responsibilities.

The National Centre for Resilience has grants of up to £500 to develop resilience plans. SSER grant funding that Moray Council received could also be used for tabletop events.

10. CCLO update

Review of Community Council Scheme and Admin grants

The CCLO attended meetings of all but two Community Councils in person, attended the Cullen Community Council meeting online and was unable to attend Finnerne Community Council. The CCLO circulated comments made directly to her, or from minutes. Minor boundary changes were common in the scheme review. The review should go before the next full Council meeting and a second consultation period will follow. The next step will be planning for Community Council elections next October and arranging induction and refresher training. The CCLO welcomes any input on how to advertise elections, what training should be delivered and how. An advertisement may be placed in the Tenants' Voice magazine. The Royal Mail household drop will not be repeated as it was costly and Forres was missed out while leaflets were delivered in Banff.

There does not seem to be a consensus on how best to change the admin grant.

11. Feedback from Sub-groups

- i. **Money for Moray** – Voting is open until 27th November. Jim Patterson attended a meeting at Elgin Youth Café regarding the Youth PB exercise and was impressed. £33,000 will be available for projects involving 12 to 25-year-olds.

Feedback was given on some difficulties in using the voting platform, particularly on a smart phone. Some found the process laborious. The idea of allocating 10 votes is to give some smaller groups with fewer supporters a fair chance.

- ii. **Community Energy Moray** – ongoing. Much of the work of the organisation will occur when community investment opportunities are being developed.
- iii. **Transport Forum** – the last meeting was 2 weeks ago. One member of the public, from Roseisle, attended regarding the loss of the number 32 bus service. The new coastal M Connect service will not cover Roseisle. No bus service and no safe walking route to Burghead leaves residents very dependent on car travel. The Stagecoach manager attended and advised that driver staffing levels were improving, that the fleet is old, and that they are looking at ways of logging 'near misses' where drivers have managed to diffuse potentially dangerous situations. There was discussion on community minibuses which may be underused, or which people may not be aware of, and using community transport to fill gaps e.g. for pupils attending after school clubs and activities to get home. There is a new timetabled service in Finnerne, funded by a wind farm grant, which is working quite well. Discussion was also held on high taxi fares.
- iv. **Admin Grant Subgroup** – the group will meet to look at the feedback the CCLO has collated. It has proved challenging to find a solution that suits all Community Councils. Having to pay for meeting venues is a common concern.

12. Feedback from Groups Community Councillors appointed to:

i. Moray Community Safety Strategic Group

Carole Ralph has been available to attend one meeting so far and found it interesting. There are several Community Wardens available, based at Moray Council. The October statistics showed the highest number of criminal offences in Elgin, followed by Buckie. Stagecoach donated a bus to support work with young people in Elgin.

Carole said that people do not always report incidents to the Police due to the long wait times to have 111 calls answered. She was advised it is quicker to report online and likely to

lead to a quicker response. It was noted that any abandoned vehicles should be reported to Moray Council, not to the Police.

ii. Moray Nature Network Steering Group

Crinan Dunbar, Innes Community Council and Donald McLean, Speyside Community Council will continue to attend. Consultants are currently updating nature maps, and the updated information should be circulated soon.

iii. Road Safety Champions

Training was postponed to later this month or early December.

13. Closing remark

There was discussion on Joint Community Council meetings. Despite representation and turnout being low, it was felt the meetings were useful and the sense of connection with other Community Councils was important. Moving Community Council updates higher in the Agenda has been helpful.

14. AOCB

None

15. Date of next meeting – Thursday 13 February 2025 (venue to be confirmed)