



**Minutes of Cullen and Deskford Community Council
7 pm 18 February 2025**

Present

Colin Burch (Chair)

Bruce Edelsten (Secretary)

Stewart Wilson (Planning and Resilience)

Les Tarr

Colin Taylor, Chair, Deskford and District Community Association

Jill Sowden, Community Development Officer based at the Community Centre

Councillor Donald Gatt

Councillor Theresa Coull

Councillor Tracy Colyer

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Apologies

Lyra Wilson (Vice Chair)

Phil Lovegrove (treasurer)

John Jappy, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

3. Outside Agencies Reports

a. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

John Jappy reported in absentia, 'We have decided on which groups will receive the monies from the Christmas collection and are in the process of contacting them and, once all have been contacted, this will be publicised.

As is normal, seasonal safety topics will be on station social media pages. In general, it has been all quiet for us at Cullen.'

b. Police Scotland

Inspector David Robertson emailed Moray councillors and community councils, informing that the reporting cycle is moving to bi-monthly with a new reporting format.

4. Minutes of previous meeting held on 21 January 2025

a. Corrections: None

b. Approval: proposed by Les Tarr and seconded by Stewart Wilson

c. Matters arising not on agenda: None

5. Chair's report

Again, it has been a busy month, with the newsletter and lunches. Also attended the Buckie Area Forum and the Moray JCC during the last week. Will also attend the Community user groups meeting as a rep from the Community lunches and will attend the Deskford Halls meeting on 26 February.

6. Treasurer's Report

Phil Lovegrove reported in absentia that the Admin account has £431.64. Expenditure for the month was £0.99 iCloud DD and £30 for Community Centre room use last month. We received £0.02 cashback on a debit card purchase.

The Fundraising account has £16715.26

We received £1929.95 grant for Cullen Connected

Two payments of £250 from TKCA for their loan repayment. One was refunded to them at their request due to mix up in paying because of our change of banks.

So there is £13727.40 in allocated funds

Made up of £7926.61 SSE

£1923.25 Cullen Connected Two payments

£2298.93 community lunches

Town centre regeneration fund £1578.61

Leaving £2987.86 unallocated

7. Secretary's Report

Posted on Facebook during the past month:

- Taxi Fare Review
- m.connect drop in session dates
- Transport Scotland: National Speed Management Review

Other items included in the minutes below.

8. Planning Officer's report

Ref. No: 25/00064/APP

Proposed alterations and extensions at 5 Findlater Circle Cullen Buckie Moray AB56 4RY

Ref. No: 24/01899/APP

Replacement front door at 22 South Castle Street Cullen Buckie Moray AB56 4RT

Ref. No: 25/00094/LBC

Alter and extend dwelling at 234 Seatown Cullen Buckie Moray AB56 4SN

Nothing that concerns the Community Council

9. Councillor's reports

Donald Gatt reported that the main thing is the budget with a full council meeting on Wednesday 19 February. Lots of emails about library closures. For the budget, there has been a fair amount of agreement between the various parties.

Tracy Colyer reported: the full council meeting; code of conduct sessions, and correspondence re-libraries.

Theresa Coull reported: not much more to add; correspondence re libraries; attended Kronach/Banffshire twinning meeting; attended transport Scotland National Speed Management Review meeting in Keith and met with Amec re repairs to bridge over River Isla on A96 in Keith.

Jill Souden asked – A gentlemen from Clarkes Contract (a building company), one of the tenderers for Cullen Primary school refurbishment, visited the community centre.

Apparently, there will be a community benefit from the contract but not been able to find on-line information on the refurbishment. Donald Gatt: as it is an operational matter, councillors would not necessarily be informed. Theresa Coull – thought it was Moray Council who sorted out Community Benefits.

Donald Gatt forwarded a [link](#) to a Moray Council document, extract below:

“The Cullen Primary School B Condition/Enerphit upgrade design and subsequent tender process has taken longer than was planned. A significant project reprofiling has been undertaken and a request to Council to carry forward a budget of £546,000 into financial year 2025/26 as part project reprofiling. A significant element of this carried forward is a part of the SALIX grant award for this pilot project totalling £593,888.”

Note: “Enerphit”: ‘The creation of EnerPHit is an admission that a retrofitted house will never meet the same levels of energy efficiency as the Passivhaus standard. That’s because when you’re considering a retrofit, many of the elements like geometry, orientation and structural approach are already decided. The EnerPHit standard recognises this difficulty and sets the required performance at a lower level than Passivhaus to accommodate working with existing buildings.’

The Moray Councillors were asked by CDCC to make enquiries.

10. Community Development Officer’s report / Three Kings Cullen Association – minutes
Motor Home stop over sites

Jill Sowden reported on Moray Council discussions about the proposal (see below) which was also discussed at the recent Joint Community Council meeting.
Moray Councillors to investigate as to the current situation

The Pre-Loved sale went well and raised £1,300 plus £500 for refreshments

Refurbishments works at the community centre are on-going.

Jill is looking for funding for her post (Community Development Officer). Currently, the post may finish in April or, maybe, in July. (N.B. discrepancy is due to HIE at this stage being unsure of their finances from Scottish Government).

11. Deskford and District Community Association – minutes and feedback on current activities.

The draft Minutes from 15 January 2025 have received.

Colin Taylor talked the meeting through the Community Hall’s various activities.

CDCC Agreed to help fund their newsletter with this being acknowledged in the newsletter.

12. Current Business

a. ‘Save our Libraries – Moray’

Les Tarr reported: The report on libraries has gone to council and the matter will be discussed at a full council on Wednesday 19 February. The report has seven appendixes which suggests there is one for each library under threat. There will be a protest /demo in Elgin prior to the meeting.

The local community has been really involved in the campaign to save Cullen’s library.

Note: After the meeting in 19 February, Theresa Coull emailed out:

“Moray Council agreed on Wednesday 19 February 2025 not to progress with the proposed library closures, retaining all 11 branches and considering alternatives for future service transformation.

A new option, which was agreed by consensus across the chamber, will consider co-location opportunities within schools, ringfencing any capital receipts coming from the sale of library buildings for investment into the libraries network of buildings. There will be no reduction of opening hours and council staff will work with communities to review opening hours across all 11 branches, to ensure local need is met. They'll report back to Full Council in August on any proposed changes to ensure consistency and that hours are aligned to usage.

Feedback from the public to the consultation on the original proposals, which ran from 13 November until 3 December 2024, has now also been published online alongside current information about usage, costs and building conditions.

The survey attracted a total of 2,219 responses and asked for views on a proposal to redesign the current service including a network of four area libraries; a new rural community outreach service within the seven areas where branches were proposed to close; and continued development of a housebound service. This option is no longer being considered based on the feedback received.

Just over 82% of respondents to the 2024 survey were library users, with two thirds using library facilities once a month or more. Traditionally libraries were used to read and borrow books and 92.2% of respondents stated this was their reason for visiting, while almost 44% said it was to use a computer, printer or wifi. Events and activities attracted almost 40% of respondents."

b. Community Council(s) domains, web hosting and e-mail

Les Tarr met with Peter West (Buckie Community Council). The web site would be on the WordPress platform (which was originally developed as a blogging platform but is often also used for web sites). If we wanted one outwith the system created by Peter West, there would be costs for a domain registration (e.g. something.scot – circa £50 pa, or something.com – circa £15 pa) plus the management overhead estimated at £40 pa.

Agreed that Les Tarr will bring proposals to the next meeting.

c. Community Engagement

Agreed to have a table at the Cullen Skink competition on Sunday 9 March.

Agreed hold a 'What does a Cullen Skink look like' competition at the event with a prize of £10 local shop voucher. Perhaps involving Cullen Primary School. Or a 'name a skink' competition.

d. Resilience Planning

Stewart Wilson circulated an email to businesses in the area:

"The CDCC are currently developing a community resilience emergency plan in light of recent major incidents e.g. large scale power outages etc. We are contacting local businesses within the Cullen community to request if you would be willing to offer assistance in the event of a similar situation arising within the Cullen community. I would be grateful if we could arrange a face to face meeting at a time and place convenient with yourselves to discuss this further. I look forward to hearing from you in the not too distant future."

So far, Stewart has only had a response from the Royal Oak, where a meeting will go ahead, and from Seafeld Estates with a meeting booked for 2pm on 27 February. Stewart intends to follow-up on the non-responders with a personal visit.

- e. Local Place Plan
Now submitted – agreed to remove from agenda.
A hard copy is available in the Cullen library in the CDCC folder.
- f. Community Lunches
Continuing on the second and last Wednesday of the month. Colin Burch hasn't attended recently due to other commitments but hears that recent lunches continue to be well attended with an excess of 40 people attending.
- g. CullenConnected
February issue now out for distribution. Volunteers have again helped with distribution. A big thank you to everyone who submitted articles and those who helped with production and distribution.
- h. m.connect drop in sessions
Two dates for Cullen – Friday, 7 Feb, which was not well attended. Agreed to contact them to reconsider their next session, which is booked for Friday 28 March, perhaps moving it to coincide with a community lunch.
- i. Three Harbours Association AGM - 22 January 2025
The AGM was not quorate so did not proceed, though a public meeting did. Basically, they are revamping themselves and are looking for support from the community. The harbour toilets were a contentious issue, and it was suggested that they contact the Friends of Cullen group who manage the Square and Links toilets. Noted that the lease on the harbour toilets building has a break option on the fifth anniversary of the lease, i.e. in March 2025.
- j. Hole in Port Long Road beside harbour
Tracy Colyer reported that she emailed the officer involved who was not convinced the hole had anything to do with reported damp on the gable end of the adjacent building. She will email again for an update. Les Tarr says he approached staff from a contracting firm from Fochabers who were on site but did not get any useful information.

The holes at the Links and on Port Long road by Cullen Joiners have been filled in.
[UPDATE: Colin has spoken with Sarah Campbell. Sarah has no knowledge of the holes being filled in by Moray Council and confirmed that they are still on her list for filling. Colin thanked Sarah in advance for the holes being filled in, though if they could be better filled in the future, that would be appreciated]

- k. Speed management review
A member of the public forwarded information on a Transport Scotland consultation on a review of speed management. See:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-speed-management-review-2024/executive-summary/>
- l. Motor home Report
See <https://newsroom.moray.gov.uk/news/moray-council-to-consult-on-plans-for-overnight-campervan-and-motorhome-stays>
See above. Hopefully this will be addressed by Moray Council in the coming weeks.
- m. Litter / fly dumping
A member of the public contacted CDCC complaining about litter in South Castle Street. The meeting considered, and rejected, initiating a street litter picking exercise due to the lack of volunteers.

n. Community Council Elections 2025

JCC will provide information material that we can tap into to promote Community Councils in Moray. Debra Duke, Community Liaison Officer, is setting up a subgroup to promote community council.

o. Joint Community Council meeting 13 February 2025

A presentation on period product poverty was provided by Tracey Robbie (Period Plus Project Coordinator). Tracey is keen to help prevent period poverty by supplying products to local hubs. Also, Tracey is keen to come to local events such as gala days, etc to promote the service. If any organisation would like her to make a visit, then they should contact her. Contact details can be provided to any group as required.

There was also a presentation by Michael Kelly of the Moray Growth Deal. There is £100m coming into the area from 2021 for 10 years. There are 8 core projects: Moray Arts space project; South St Elgin revamp; Housing mix project; Elgin Town Hall revamp; Bringing Grant Lodge back into use; Moray Digital Health project; Early years (3-8 years) STEM programme; M-Connect Bus connection service. Lord Lieutenancy feedback included a reminder that this is the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Local areas are being encouraged to raise a flag between 0900 - 2100Hrs on 8 May (CDCC would approach the Volunteer group to see if there could be a flag raised on the Castlehill). There will be a commemoration on 8 May at St Giles Elgin (1400Hrs). They are also looking for personal memory stories from veterans who were there or remember the celebrations. Further information can be found at www.ve80.org.uk There is also a VJ day on 15 August.

a. Transport Forum

Basically, the transport forum are being frustrated at the lack of dialogue between the forum and Moray Council

b. Community Council funding – JCC Admin Grant subgroup

Nothing further to report at this stage

13. AOCB

a. Cullen Volunteer Group

CDCC understand the Cullen Volunteer Group are looking to disband later this year. Agreed to approach them arrange a meeting.

b. Jill Sowden raised the possibility of a 'Wild Animal' sign on the A98 between the minor road to Tochieneal and the Aberdeenshire boundary where there have been several road kills of deer and badgers. Colin Burch to investigate.

14. Dates for the calendar

Wednesday 26 - February Deskford Halls management group meeting

Thursday 6 March - Join the dots funding event in Elgin (need to register prior to attending)

Thursday 6 March - Harbour Advisory meeting

Sunday 9 March - Cullen Skink competition

15. Dates of next meetings

18 March 2025

15 April 2025 (Deskford)

Meeting closed 20.40