

**Cullen & Deskford Community Council  
Meeting on Thursday 21st March 2013  
Cullen Community and Residential Centre**

**M I N U T E S**

**Present:** Ashley Mowat (Chair)  
Zillah Jamieson (Secretary/Acting Treasurer)  
John Aitken

**In Attendance:**

**Apologies:** Malcolm Watt (Vice-Chair)  
John Robertson  
Cllr Gary Coull  
Cllr Stewart Cree  
Cllr Ron Shepherd  
Andrew Mackie

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to our 37th meeting of the new term.  
Apologies were noted as above.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (27th February 2013)**

The Minutes were approved as a true record.

**3. Reports**

**3.1 Police**

**Police:** The Local Policing Report is attached as Appendix 1.

The Chair confirmed that Cllr Cree had arranged a site visit to Cullen Harbour (to be attended by Cllr Cree, Keith Stratton and the Chair) to establish the options for improved lighting. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10th April (2 p.m.); developments will be reported at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Ashley Mowat**

**3.2 Community Warden**

The Secretary reported that Andrew Mackie had advised (via e-mail) that there were no further issues to report at present for the Cullen area. Full details on the dog fouling quiz (which is being finalised) will be presented at the next meeting.

In relation to the letter from the Bayview Court Warden regarding the dangers faced by residents in crossing the main road at the Court because of speeding traffic, Andrew Mackie advised that the Manager had indicated that the letter had been sent to the Secretary; however, nothing has been received as yet.

**3.3 Local Councillors**

Given the non-attendance of all councillors, no points were raised.

### 3.4 Treasurer

The Secretary confirmed that the last bank statement (08/02/13) indicated a balance of £3,500.60.

Taking into account expenditure items and income since the bank statement date, the balance stands at £3,374.37. This sum includes £250 ring-fenced for Neighbourhood Watch.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### 4. Moray Council Budget Proposals

**Meeting with Councillors:** The Chair confirmed having issued the open letter (10/03/13) to all 6 Councillors who cover the Cullen and Deskford, Portknockie and Findochty areas - attached as Appendix 2.

To date, only one response had been received - from Cllr Anne McKay as follows: "I will say one thing to you and that is that the public consultation threw up some good debate and interesting perceptions. The Chairs of Findochty and Buckie Community Councils took the time to participate, I am unsure about Portknockie. Residents of Moray could have had their say at the meetings or they could have gone on line."

No communications have been received regarding a potential date.

A response had been received from Stewart Stevenson MSP, together with a copy of his letter addressed to the Chief Executive of the Moray Council (15/03/13) - attached as Appendix 3. The Chief Executive had acknowledged receipt of Mr Stevenson's letter, indicating that it had been passed to Graham Jarvis, Head of Life Long Learning, Culture and Sport, and that a response would be issued on or before 15th April 2013. In addition, receipt of the open letter was acknowledged by both Richard Lochhead, Minister for Rural Affairs, and Fiona Hyslop, Minister for Culture.

The open letter was also issued to local and regional press, with articles appearing in the P & J (12/03/13), Banffshire Advertiser (12/03/13) and the Northern Scot (15/03/13).

It is interesting to note that Cllr Cree was quoted in the P & J article to the effect that no bias was involved in the decisions to close all the libraries east of Buckie; in addition, he indicated that he had said - at a recent meeting in Cullen - that the starting point was to keep the libraries in places which also had secondary schools.

Following discussion on the way forward, during which it was noted that the Cullen Library petition was receiving a significant number of signatures, and after considering a number of options, it was decided to call a public meeting - date subsequently confirmed as Monday 22nd April 2013 in Cullen Town Hall. It was agreed that all 3 locally elected councillors should be invited to this meeting, or alternatively to submit their comments in advance. The Chair undertook to advise the respective Chairs of both Findochty and Portknockie Community Councils.

**Libraries:** the above comments apply given that the open letter was primarily addressed to the closure of three local libraries.

In addition, an invitation had been received from the Save Burghead Library Group to join them in submitting the petition to Moray Council on Wednesday 27th March 2013 - along with colleagues from Dufftown and Rothes. In addition, a letter had been received from the Deskford and District Community Association - attached as Appendix 4. The Secretary confirmed that the Cullen Community Centre Development Group had written a letter to Fiona Hyslop (13/03/13) requesting clarification of the definition of minimum statutory standard of provision of library services to a community, together with confirmation that a Local Authority's delivery mechanism is externally scrutinised to ensure adherence to such minimum delivery standards; also to clarify the statutory legislation regarding community libraries in Scotland; also, to request clarification on the fund for innovation in delivery of the public library service, and whether the development of a community library in partnership with the local authority would be a project of high merit.

**Public Toilets:** on the day following the last Community Council meeting, it was announced that the toilets at Cullen Beach and Cullen Harbour would close unless a community group came forward to take over the running of the facilities. Local groups are being offered the chance to enter into the Community Asset Transfer process, but must register their interest by the end of March 2013 - by e-mailing CAT@moray.gov.uk or phoning 01343 567122.

The Chair requested relevant costs via Cllr Shepherd (05/03/13), who in response stated that " Council costs are always high." The costs (2011/12) provided by Steve Williamson indicate:-

Location	Depreciation	Electricity	Non domestic rates	Property Repairs	Property Admin charge	Water charges	Total
Cullen - Beach	1326			2006	564.47	530.66	4427.13
Cullen - Harbour	2921	-450.2		149.44	41.81	702.74	3364.79

The electricity was over estimated but a reasonable estimate would be around the same; depreciation can be ignored. Non domestic rates are still being investigated. Energy figures are seasonal not full year.

It is understood that the structural and health and safety issues should be taken as a 'given' as these buildings all have to meet current Moray Council standards which reflect national guidelines.

The main point is that every community will continue to have one public toilet facility run by the Council. Communities should consider which one this is to be and whether others might be 'adopted' by community groups who will maintain them for community benefit. Such proposals will be entirely for the community to consider and issues such as historical usage should be assessed on local knowledge as no accurate records exist for those toilets that operated free of charge.

A Cullen resident has been in dialogue with the Chair, having generated 114 signatures of petition and 7 volunteers to help.

The Secretary confirmed that the Cullen Voluntary Tourist Initiative would like to support the initiative to keep all 3 toilets open.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary issue an e-mail to all 3 locally elected councillors as follows:-

"The Community Council wish to work with other community groups and individuals (including the Community Council, the Cullen Voluntary Tourist Initiative, Buckie Rotary, Cullen Golf Club and all other groups in the community) to ensure that all 3 public toilets in Cullen remain open. Given Cullen's heavy reliance on tourism, the three toilets are absolutely critical in welcoming visitors to Cullen and ensuring that they choose to return.

To this effect, we are writing to you to gain your support for the following proposal which will not only ensure that all 3 public toilets remain open, but will also result in cost savings for Moray Council.

1. Cullen Beach Toilets (seasonal): We understand that the Cullen Golf Club has already registered an interest in the seasonal beach toilets.
2. Cullen Square Toilets (all-year): We propose that the Cullen Square Toilets are closed, but that, as an alternative, the downstairs toilets in the Cullen Town Hall are opened up to the public; these toilets are already maintained by Moray Council, and given the layout of the Town Hall, it will be possible to "isolate" these toilets such that public entry is possible, but not entry to other parts of the building. The closure of the Cullen Square toilets will offer an even greater long-term saving to the Moray Council given that they have historically been open all-year round, and will not incur any additional costs in relation to the Town Hall.
3. Cullen Harbour Toilets (seasonal): Assuming that the above is acceptable, we would therefore propose that the Moray Council retain responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Cullen Harbour Toilets.
4. Further point: should the above not prove possible through issues which are not yet apparent to us, the Cullen Harbour Association will register an interest in the Cullen Harbour toilets.

We believe that the above proposal achieves everyone's objectives, and we would seek your support of this proposal."

Depending on the response received, appropriate action would be taken before the Moray Council deadline of end March 2013.

**5. Cullen & Deskford 2014 Calendar: discussion on progress.**

The number of entries thus far is 39 photos from 14 individuals. The closing date for entrants is 14th April 2013. Further competition entry forms have been supplied to Cullen Paper Shop (16/03/13).

**6. Planning**

**6.1 Aultmore Wind Farm**

John Robertson had indicated (via e-mail dated 17/03/13) that he had had discussions with two Vattenfall representatives indicating that Vattenfall should obtain an answer from Moray Council following a June meeting. Should the planning application be successful, work should start a year later.

Vattenfall indicated that Moray Council is now discouraging windfall incentives to communities as this is making them pro windfarms; this will not affect the Aultmore development as it was started before this idea came to pass. The potential available funds are £2,000 per megawatt per year. The height of the turbines is measured as 110 metres from the ground to the tip of the blade at its highest position, and the lowest the blade will come to the ground will be 50 metres. This is the crux of the planning delay as anything over 90 metres requires a different class of approval. Vattenfall is requesting an Action Plan which should include current requirements, future requirements, special causes etc, including cost estimates. A comprehensive wish list is to be drawn up; capital cost items that exceed any quota may be granted if a good case is presented. Tangible items and self-sustaining projects after initial cash injection would be regarded favourably.

It was noted that Moray Council had recently agreed a new on-shore wind energy policy guidance for future windfarm developments (as reported in the Banffshire Advertiser 19/03/13).

**ACTION: John Robertson**

Cross-party Working Party: The Chair indicated that he had still not received a response from Cllr Coull to his e-mail dated 11/01/13 requesting details of the Chair of the relevant Moray Council committee and of what information was awaited.

**ACTION: Ashley Mowat/Gary Coull/Stewart Cree**

## **7. A.O.C.B.**

**7.1 New Members:** nothing further to report

**7.2 Certificates of Achievement:** this will be discussed at a future meeting.

**7.3 Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund:** The Chair indicated that he had written to Cllr Coull (21/03/13) outlining the current situation whereby, some 2 months ago, the Scottish Government had announced a new tranche of funding for restoring/cleaning war memorials in Scotland. An initial approach to Historic Scotland indicated that the application eligibility and forms were not yet available, but his contact details were taken and he was promised information within a 2/3 week period. A further approach to Historic Scotland (21/03/13) indicated that not only are the details still not sorted out, but that his contact details had been lost - now recorded again. The Chair requested Cllr Coull's help in establishing the position with this fund. In the meantime, he had discovered other possible routes for funding that seem to apply to Scotland, but are administered from England through the War Memorial Trust; he undertook to complete a pre-application form. The Chair also asked Cllr Coull to clarify who "owns" the Cullen War Memorial, whether Moray Council has a conservation officer whose help and advice we can seek, whether there is anyone else in Moray Council who can advise on acceptable forms of cleaning of historic/listed structures and whether the Memorial is listed. A response is awaited.

**ACTION: Ashley Mowat/Cllr Coull**

**7.4 Cullen Burn Bridge:** To date, no potential sources of funding have been found which would allow repairs/development to be undertaken - given that the bridge is owned by Moray Council.

**7.5 Community Council Insurance Cover:** The Secretary confirmed having received confirmation of the Community Council Insurance Cover for the coming financial year - acknowledged with thanks (15/03/13).

**7.6 Seafield Arms Hotel, Cullen:** Concern has been expressed by a local resident regarding the recent boarding-up of the Seafield Arms Hotel; he has indicated that Abbey Santander have possession of the property. He also spoke with Craig Wilson in Moray Council who has expressed his unhappiness that a listed building has been boarded up without permission.

**7.7 Community Council Elections:** The Secretary confirmed that September 2013 will be the last meeting of the current term. Nominations for the Community Council elections will open in August (TBC) and close on 26th September (TBC). The inaugural meeting of the new Community Council will take place in October if a poll is not required.

**7.8 Cullen Town Hall Clock Repairs:** a resident has requested that the Community Council makes application to the Cullen Common Good Fund for the £300 repair estimate for the Cullen Town Hall Clock. This was agreed. The Secretary had established that there is £582 left in the Fund for the current financial year, which, if unspent, will be carried forward into next year. There will be approx. £1,960 in the Fund for the next financial year. John Aitken expressed the Heritage Group's support for this initiative.

**ACTION: Zillah Jamieson**

**7.9 Policy Interpretation Guidance - Gypsy Traveller Sites:** The Secretary confirmed having received this documentation. Following discussion, it was decided not to submit comments.

## **8. ITEMS FOR NOTING/DISCUSSION BY EXCEPTION**

**8.1 Cullen Medical Centre:** Nothing to report at this time.

**ACTION: Ashley Mowat/Malcolm Watt**

**8.2 Cullen Community and Residential Centre - potential Asset Transfer:** Work is in hand to obtain funding for the feasibility study/community consultation/business plan. There has been a delay in the LEADER meeting which will cause a 2-month delay in the overall project; Moray Council is to be advised accordingly.

**ACTION: Zillah Jamieson**

**8.3 Cullen Harbour Association Report:** The Chair reported that the feasibility study and community consultation for the potential asset transfer to create a small boat sailing school had been commenced. John Aitken (on behalf of the Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group) confirmed the group's interest in sharing part of the premises for a heritage group display.

## **8.4 ITEMS AWAITING ACTION/CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN**

### **AWAITING ACTION:**

**8.4.1 Lawtie Trust:** The Chair confirmed having received a letter from Rhona Gunn, Head of Legal and Democratic Services (22/02/13) - attached as Appendix 5. The Chair had acknowledged receipt of the letter (15/03/13) and welcomed confirmation that the Lawtie Trust will be included in those trusts being re-assessed by Moray Council in 2014.

**8.4.2 Community Website:** Investigation on traffic statistics from Google Analytics remains an outstanding action.

There are currently 98 subscribers to the Newsletter; newsletters are sent out regularly, with the prime objective of driving traffic to the website.

**ACTION: Zillah Jamieson**

**8.4.3 Logie Head Path:** The Secretary confirmed having written to Eleanor Munro of Aberdeenshire Council (06/11/12) raising the points discussed at the October meeting, and, since then, phoned on several occasions - without successful contact. A further approach is to be made.

**ACTION: Zillah Jamieson**

**8.4.4 Cullen Town Hall Flag:** action is in hand for the repair of the old flag and the purchase of three new flags; the final product is awaited, after which arrangements will be made with the Cullen Fire Brigade to raise the flag.

**ACTION: Zillah Jamieson**

#### **CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN:**

**8.4.5 Meeting Dates and Venues - 2013:** The Secretary confirmed having advised all attendees of the new meeting dates; in addition, the appropriate documentation was placed in Cullen Library, and requests made for it to be displayed in the Deskford Halls and the Town Hall Noticeboard, as well as the Moray Council website.

**8.4.6 Glebe Park Crescent - pavement blocked:** The fencing has now been removed from the pavement - thanks to the actions of a concerned resident. However, it should be noted that the fencing is very flimsy and not well attached, and may cause further problems in the future.

**8.4.7 Moray Safer Strategy/Community Warden Questionnaire:** The Secretary confirmed having completed the questionnaire as discussed at the last meeting.

#### **8.5 Planning - Weekly List**

The following items appeared in the Weekly List dated 8th March 2013:-

- Erection of domestic garage at Carestown Steadings
- Erect house at Tochieneal House, Lintmill.

Neither of these were considered to be of community interest.

#### **9. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 18th April 2013 at 7 p.m. in the Cullen Community and Residential Centre (TV Lounge).

It was noted that the Secretary is not available for this meeting; she will issue all the usual paperwork in advance of the meeting, but would appreciate someone taking minutes at the meeting.

## CULLEN AND DESKFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING ON 21 MARCH 2013

### 1. LOCAL INTEREST INFORMATION

#### CULLEN and DESKFORD

There are no crimes or incidents of note to report.

### 2. FEEDBACK ON POLICE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING

### 3. DETAILS OF ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO LOCAL PRIORITIES

### 4. ONGOING LOCAL/ FORCEWIDE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

#### Opening of New Buckie Police Office

The new Buckie Police Office was opened by Chief Constable Colin McKerracher on 27 February 2013. The new office is located on East Cathcart Street next to the Fire Station and opposite Lidl's. It is hoped that the closer proximity of the new Office to Buckie town centre will make the Police more accessible to the Public and make it easier for them to report crimes and provide information.

#### New 101 Telephone Number for Non-Emergency Calls

A new 101 non-emergency number was launched across Scotland on Thursday 21 February 2013, and will replace the vast range of existing Police Force non-emergency numbers, including the Grampian Police 0845 600 5 700 number, which will be gradually phased out.

The introduction of the 101 non-emergency number will give the people of Scotland a new way to contact the Police, seek advice, speak to a Local Officer or to report a crime that does not need an emergency response, for example:

- car theft;
- damage to property;
- a minor traffic collision;
- suspected drug use or dealing;
- information about crime in their area.

The 101 non-emergency number is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It costs a flat rate of 15 pence per call and will connect the public to a Police Service Centre in their local area. The number has already been launched successfully in England and Wales and is widely used.



The key reasons for introducing the 101 non-emergency number in Scotland are to:

- help keep people safe by giving them one easy-to-remember number for contacting the Police, wherever they are in Scotland;
- make the Police more accessible, while reducing pressure on the 999 system;
- help the Police cut crime by making it easier for the public to pass on information;
- support the creation of a more efficient and effective Police Service for the people of Scotland;
- increase interoperability with England and Wales, with 101 becoming the nationally recognised non-emergency number for contacting the Police across the UK.

The public should continue to call 999 in an emergency - when a crime is in progress, when someone suspected of a crime is nearby, when a life is in danger or when violence is being used or threatened.

### Moray Council cutbacks

An open letter from Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen & Deskford Community Councils to Moray Councillors representing the three communities

### The recent Moray Council consultative process

We live in an age of austerity with an undeniable need for fiscal prudence and inevitable public service cut-backs. We also live in an age repeatedly portrayed as one of increasing transparency and fairness, with active community engagement a crucial part of the democratic process.

Sadly, these latter qualities are generally perceived in our three communities to have been lacking in Moray Council's recent cut-back consultative exercise. To achieve £30 million savings in 5 years is a daunting exercise and for this to be achieved without severe and damaging consequences to our communities is going to require careful strategic planning and astute leadership. Moray Council's Administration's attempt at a consultative exercise was seen as laudable, but poorly orchestrated and hopelessly superficial. The fact that an estimated 1% of the population engaged in the process sadly adds credibility to this perception.

It is however clear that, despite its inadequacies, the consultative exercise is being used to inform cut-back decisions, with all their far-reaching consequences. There is now an urgent need to abandon petty politics, and especially for those councillors elected on an "independent" ticket to set aside personal ambitions and make sure they do represent the reasonable views of their communities. There is also now a considerable public appetite for all elected Councillors to start working together for the public good, with meaningful public engagement, as further details and the full impact of the rest of the intended cut-backs unfold over the next few weeks.

### Local perceptions and anxieties

The decline of the fishing industry has, over the past 40 years, impacted severely on the three historic fishing communities of Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen. These picturesque villages set in a stunning coastline now rely heavily on poorly supported and largely undeveloped seasonal tourism; have an increasingly ageing population, but with a desperate need to maintain their educational services to retain younger families, as well as to minimise the impact on the infrastructure and services which attract more senior arrivals who add to the local economy and culture. The shop and hotel closures testify to our failing economy with boarded properties that detract seriously from our tourist attraction. The severity of the cut-backs will now add hugely to this problem and it is clear that a new philosophy and dynamism is urgently needed in Moray Council's Administration to avoid the worst effects. Despite the fact that we have a three communities' combined population of approximately 4,000, there is a local perception that in Moray Council's solution to the financial crisis this eastern enclave of Moray is relatively neglected, when compared with Elgin and other larger towns in Moray. There is sadly also a local perception that some of our elected councillors are either not aware of local views, or, without explanation, are simply neither responsive nor supportive.

### Library Closures

The loss of all three libraries suggests either a basic lack of awareness, or lack of concern, for the impact that loss of these constantly evolving centres of learning will have on our three rural communities. Modern libraries are not just about book lending, but have, with other agencies, a major role in lifelong learning; literacy (both adult and children); social inclusion as valuable community social hubs; employability, including computer access for jobseekers as these services move to on-line only availability; access to benefits system; health promotion; skills development and several other key policy agendas. We believe that the

consequences of closure of all three, and the added impact of potential lack of accessibility through public transport cut-backs, is not yet apparent; nor is the added impact of any population increase, however unlikely, which is allowed for in the five year building plan for our communities. The ramifications are not straightforward and no doubt will be exacerbated by heralded school closures, and other cut-backs which have yet to emerge. We suspect the library closures have been dictated by a simple structural decision to remove urgently a massive 50% to 60% from the library budget, with at this stage little evidence of strategic planning for smaller and more remote communities.

It is ironic that, at the same time as the cut-back announcement, Moray Council, on its website, declared March as "libraries month" in Moray. March the 7<sup>th</sup> was World Book Day but Moray Council's website announced "that a single day was not enough to spread the word of all that goes on in libraries, including the recently introduced e-book service and free downloadable audiobooks". At the same time, the success of Moray's Library service was publicly acknowledged by an independent and well-informed expert, Professor Peter Reid (Chair of Librarianship and Head of the Department of Information Management at Robert Gordon University and immediate past President of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals). Based on the results of recurring national audits, Professor Reid rated Moray's Libraries as amongst the top five in Scotland; and the LIBINDEX local history collection as amongst the best in the world, promoting the area to a global audience, and certainly something to be proud of rather than suffering draconian cuts.

Library usage data for 2011-2012 are readily available and confirm regular use of all three, but to varying extents. Cullen library, which is part-time, is heavily utilised (with 446 individual borrowers; 8,047 physical visits; and 625 using computers) and much more so than some larger communities when allowance is made for population size. The relevant figures for Portknockie are 249; 2,906; but proportionally much higher computer usage at 1,060. The relevant figures for Findochty are 220; 1,309; and 142 computer users. Contrary to the public claim by Councillor Wright, based on a selective interpretation of the consultative exercise, that young people did not value libraries, actual and verifiable usage figures for all 3 libraries indicate the opposite. Approximately half of all borrowers are in the 15 years and under age group, with very small numbers in the 16 to 18 age range, and the rest (approximately half) in older age groups. Storytimes numbers attending in Cullen were 550, with only Elgin (859) and Aberlour (622) of the eight retained libraries exceeding this high figure. It should also be remembered that approximately £500,000 of European money was recently spent in transferring the Libraries in Portknockie and Findochty to school premises, and we understand that £72,000 of this will have to be reimbursed by Moray Council, something that will enhance neither reputation nor credibility and certainly not evidence of sound strategic planning.

Moray Council has a statutory duty to provide adequate library services for all residents of the area. Adequacy of provision is embedded by standards defined through the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix for Scotland and can be summarised as follows:

- A strategic network of libraries easily accessed, within reasonable travelling distance for all in the community and open at times communities can easily access them.
- Provision of learning/reading material for all.
- Information services including information and heritage through physical collections and online services.

- Access to a range of learning opportunities, in particular those to get people online and using government services.
- Properly trained and supportive staff for all of these activities.

We understand that, because of the statutory nature of the service, libraries run by communities or volunteers cannot be part of the statutory provision even although volunteers can and do help under supervision. We also believe that once lost to our communities these important statutory obligations will be almost impossible to revive. We do not believe that the current list of library retentions will be accepted by our communities as complying with the definition of "adequate" and hope that there is still room for informed dialogue with review of the decision to close all three libraries and exploration of alternatives through constructive engagement with our communities.

#### Community engagement

Central government repeatedly extols the need for community involvement. Community Councils are statutory bodies comprised of elected unpaid volunteers whose roles are, amongst others, to reflect local views, aspirations and fears. To be effective, this requires two-way participation with local elected regional councillors. It is sad to reflect that one of our paid elected Moray Councillors has publicly derided the Community Council role, yet these same elected volunteers have to date been denied active involvement in Moray Council's consultative process. It is also a sad fact that Community Councils in some parts of Moray have only sporadic Moray Councillor attendance, support and participation. If community engagement is to be effective, this has to change.

At no stage to date has there been opportunity for communities to discuss alternatives to closure of libraries and any other facilities yet to be detailed, or ways of mitigating the impact of unavoidable closures.

In an attempt to improve community engagement we therefore have invited our six elected Councillors to meet with our three community councils at an early date for constructive discussion. We will make ourselves readily available to meet at a time convenient to Councillors.

We have also copied this open letter to Richard Lochhead, Minister for Rural Affairs, to Fiona Hyslop Minister for Culture and External Affairs and to Stewart Stevenson, local MSP, seeking their comments.



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Stewart Stevenson MSP

Banffshire & Buchan Coast

Stiùbhart MacSteafain BPA

Siorrachd Bhanbh agus Oirthir Bhùchainn

15 March/Am Màrt 2013

Prof Ashley Mowat, Chair  
Cullen and Deskford Community Council  
York House  
York Place  
CULLEN  
AB56 4UW

Dear Prof Mowat

Thank you for your email of 10 March 2013.

I have raised the matter on your behalf with the Chief Executive of Moray Council, and enclose a copy of my letter for your information. I will be in touch as soon as I receive a response.

I am disappointed that these closures are taking place. I would like to confirm that my SNP councillor colleagues on Moray Council opposed these measures during Moray Council's budget making process. I am aware that the SNP group on Moray Council also asked the administration to re-consider its decision to close the libraries. Meanwhile, I have asked what consideration has been given to measures to mitigate the effects of these closures on the communities affected.

With best wishes meantime.

Yours sincerely

STEWART STEVENSON MSP

Enc.

Please address all  
correspondence to:

Constituency Office  
Unit 8  
Burnside Business Centre  
Burnside Road  
Peterhead  
Aberdeenshire  
AB42 3AW

Tel. 01779 470444  
Fax. 01779 822025

Office Open  
Monday to Friday  
9.00am to 5.00pm

Also at:

The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

e-mail:  
msp@stewartstevenson.net



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Stewart Stevenson MSP

Banffshire & Buchan Coast

Stiùbhart MacSteafain BPA

Siorrachd Bhanbh agus Oirthir Bhùchann

15 March/Am Màrt 2013

Mr Roddy Burns  
Chief Executive  
Moray Council  
Council Office  
High Street  
ELGIN IV30 1BX

Dear Roddy

**Findochty, Portknockie, and Cullen and Deskford Community Councils.**  
**Library Closures.**

I am writing regarding the above-mentioned Community Councils, who have contacted my office regarding the library closures announced by Moray Council. I enclose a copy of a self-explanatory letter that was sent to me from the three Community Councils.

My constituents raise with me their concerns regarding the decision to close a number of libraries in Moray. The Community Councils also raise their concern over the lack of community engagement during the decision making process to close the libraries. I understand from my constituents that they believe that there has been no opportunity to discuss alternatives to the closure of the libraries.

The scale of the proposed closures in these overwhelmingly rural communities is a matter of concern. At a time when access to the internet is becoming increasingly important for people to conduct day-to-day business, the loss of this facility alone will lead to increased social exclusion.

I should be grateful if you would advise what work Moray Council is currently or has already undertaken to mitigate the consequences of the library closure programme.

I thank you for your assistance in this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

STEWART STEVENSON MSP

Enc.

Please address all  
correspondence to:

Constituency Office  
Unit 8  
Burnside Business Centre  
Burnside Road  
Peterhead  
Aberdeenshire  
AB42 3AW

Tel. 01779 470444  
Fax. 01779 822025

Office Open  
Monday to Friday  
9.00am to 5.00pm

Also at:

The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

e-mail:  
msp@stewartstevenson.net



## DESKFORD & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Hilary Morrison  
1 Muir of Squaredoch  
Deskford  
Buckie AB56 5YD

Email: [HAMM6951@aol.com](mailto:HAMM6951@aol.com)

18<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Dear Cllr Shepherd,

### **Cullen Library and Cullen Public Conveniences**

I am writing on behalf of the Deskford and District Community Association to raise with you our concerns about the proposed closure of not only Cullen Library but also both sets of toilets along the sea front.

Cullen Library is a community facility, well used not only by the residents (young and old) of Cullen but also those of the surrounding rural areas. To lose the library and all of the opportunities it offers for access to information and learning opportunities is short sighted to say the least. We fully support the Community Council in its protest against this cut to services.

Cullen plays host to many visitors each year and therefore requires an infra structure that can support tourism; restricting the number of public conveniences available will not be beneficial in maintaining Cullen's reputation as a "tourism destination". Many local people and visitors enjoy the beautiful beach and harbour areas of Cullen, a reduction in level of service offered could well deter people from stopping in Cullen which would inevitably have a detrimental impact on the local businesses. As you will be aware Cullen already has a number of vacant business properties and needs all the help it can get in order to maintain the vitality of the town and its community. A reduction in the number of public conveniences placed strategically around Cullen could also lead to an increase in 'anti-social' behaviour and public health issues as people may seek alternative facilities when 'caught short' or for the disposal of used nappies and other sanitary wear.

We urge Moray Council to listen to the concerns raised by members of its communities and to reconsider its decisions with regard to both the library and the toilets in Cullen.

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Morrison,  
Secretary  
Deskford and District Community Association

Cc: Cllr Stewart Cree, Cllr Gary Coull, Zillah Jamieson





## Legal and Democratic Services

The Moray Council  
Council Offices, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX  
Telephone: 01343 543451  
Fax: 01343 563221  
DX: 520666, ELGIN

Contact: Rhona Gunn  
Direct Dial: (01343) 563152  
rhona.gunn@moray.gov.uk  
www.moray.gov.uk

Professor Ashley Mowat  
York House  
York Place  
CULLEN  
AB56 4UW

Our Reference: RG/AMcE  
Your Reference:

22 February 2013

Dear Professor Mowat

**Cullen/Deskford Community Council meeting with Lawtie Trustees**  
**Wednesday 9 January 2013**

The Convenor has asked me to respond to your letter dated 10 January 2013 on his behalf. With regard to your concern that the Trust does not have local representation in the form of a Cullen and Lintmill resident, the Trust document specifies that one of the Trustees must be the elected Councillor of the Moray Council electoral ward of Cullen and so this was presumably recognised at that time as providing sufficient local representation. Any further change would require to be canvassed as part of a reorganisation and as you have noted, the reorganisation of the various trusts administered by the Council has already been the subject of a report to the Council in terms of which it was agreed that this process will be undertaken in order of priority by reference to agreed factors including the value of the trust fund. Whilst the trustees appreciate your desire to modernise the trust, this will be done by reference to the prioritisation previously agreed as this recognises the wider issues across Moray.

I confirm that the South Deskford properties no longer form part of the Lawtie Trust. In 1992 the Moray District Council compulsorily purchased numbers 16 to 22 South Deskford Street and the Lawtie Trust received compensation of £56,000. The properties are now held on the Council's housing revenue account.

Meantime I would ask you to note that the Lawtie Trust has had a lot of attention in the last couple of years, and it is estimated that the Legal section alone has spent over 150 hours on the Trust. As a result it has recently become active in terms of disbursement. The Trustees have agreed to allow the Trust to run as it has been this past year until 2014, and I can assure you that this does not mean that no action will be taken. The Trustees and Legal services will promote the Trust further in order to encourage applicants and since the last meeting have ordered more publicity material and have updated the Council's website to make the application forms more easily accessible.

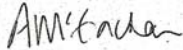
As I believe this draws a line under the issues which it was agreed the Legal section would progress at our recent meeting, I would ask that any further correspondence regarding the



trust is directed through the trustees rather than being sent directly to the Legal section. This will allow the trustees and the Legal section to determine an appropriate response which recognises that, as with all services across the Council, legal resources are finite and must be applied according to priority. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has advised that time dedicated to the Lawtie Trust will require to be strictly controlled moving forward as other trusts and indeed other areas of legal work must now be given precedence.

Thank you for your interest in the Lawtie Trust.

Yours sincerely



RR

**Rhona Gunn**  
**Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

cc: Cllr Cree, Convenor