

HELDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2024
at Mosstowie School at 7.30 pm

Chairman	Mr J Mountford – Dallas	
Treasurer		
Secretary		
	Mrs M Evans – Duffus	Mr C McCarthy – Birnie
	Mr A Wallis – Birnie	Mr W Duncan – Fogwatt & Birnie
	Mr A Lyons – Roseisle	Mrs D Kelly – Alves
	Ms H Stewart – Roseisle	Mr W Mustard – Fogwatt & Birnie
	Ms S Hodder – Pluscarden	Mr K Milne – Miltonduff
Attendees	Councillor Bridget Mustard	Ms D Duke – Moray Council CLO
	Councillor Neil Cameron	Mr A Fordyce – Loanhead resident
	Ms J Johnson – Birnie resident	Ms T Fordyce – Loanhead resident
	Ms H Ospazuk – Birnie resident	Mr D Barrett – Loanhead resident
	Ms L Strange – Spynie resident	Mr D Kelly – Loanhead resident
Apologies	Mr S Williams – Roseisle	Mrs L Smailes – Pluscarden

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr S Williams (Treasurer) and Mrs L Smailes

2. DEBRA DUKE – REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL SCHEME

The Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils has to be revised by August of next year in preparation for the new elections of Community Councillors. The first consultation is taking place between 28 August and 23 October this year with the Community Council Liaison Officer attending a meeting of each Community Council. Things to consider, for example, are the set-up, rules, and numbers. Are there parts that work really well and are there parts that are not working well? What about the boundaries? Heldon Community Council is a large rural area extending from Duffus in the north to Dallas and beyond in the south so does not have a central focus. The Local Development Plan is being revised and we might want to consider tweaks in the light of this when it has been completed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 06 August 2024 were approved.

Proposed: Mr W Duncan Seconded: Mr W Mustard

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Community Council Finance: three members of HCC had attended the meeting. The meeting was well-attended but it was felt that it was a little disappointing initially in that there was nothing on offer for discussion. However, members were finally asked for a submission of estimated expenses.

For some Community Councils the grant does not cover the costs but the total grant in itself will not be increased. HCC does not pay expenses for members who attend meetings, other than extra meetings involving travel, and we don't have to pay for the hire of a hall but we do provide an honorarium for the Treasurer and the Minutes Secretary. It was agreed that we see ourselves as volunteers on behalf of the community. However, it was pointed out that costs such as travel should not be a barrier to anyone wanting to become a Community Councillor.

It was felt that the grant should be based on the area of the Community Council, not on the population. If we charged mileage for meetings and had to pay hall charges plus a laptop for the Treasurer and Minutes Secretary in addition to insurance costs our bill would be around £9,000 per annum.

b) Loanhead Battery Storage: the Chairman had attended the meeting this afternoon but this was, in the end, abandoned due to organisational problems. The company has apologised for the problems with posters and other logistical difficulties with this and the previous meeting.

Several residents of the area attended the HCC meeting to express their considerable concerns over the proposed plan. They also felt that the serious concerns they had brought up at the previous meeting on 10 July had not been addressed either at the meeting or since, even though these concerns had been formalised in documentation. A material change has also now been made to the siting of the storage facility with no prior notice.

Concerns included the possible exposure to noxious fumes in the event of a fire and the danger from heavy traffic to nursery school children at Stramash and to school children transiting to the school bus pick-up on what is a single-track road.

At the moment, however, a planning application has not been submitted to the Council and the Community Council as a body can only raise objections once there is a planning application in place, though individuals can express concerns to the company in the meantime. The French company is clearly unfamiliar with the planning application requirements in this country. This process has been pointed out to them and they must now follow the correct steps.

Once the company has a plan for submission they should attend a Community Council meeting to explain their proposals and they should also hold two local public consultation meetings. The residents in attendance were very concerned that the two previous meetings should not be seen as the two required public consultations. Such consultations need to be properly prepared for and adequate notice given. The procedure needs to be open and transparent. The meetings that have been held have not been satisfactory and the company has not been to the Community Council so a plan cannot be submitted as yet.

Councillor Mustard will email the Planning Department.

c) Cloddach update: there is no update so far but Councillor Mustard is still following this up. Some infrastructure projects have been changed since the election and we are still awaiting information.

d) Roseisle transport: a brief report has been received but a full report is due by the end of the month. Because the bus route has been terminated people are beginning to make their own arrangements which then takes the pressure off. M-Connect is under-used in some areas and the booking method can clog it up. But the more we use it the better.

5. ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Most correspondence had been circulated to all members but some might need further action.

a)) Police report update: there is nothing to report for the Heldon area in the current report. We have been receiving monthly reports but these will now become quarterly.

Councillor Mustard has contacted the police re the car racing in the Cloddach Bridge area. Locals have also spoken to the police about problems in the area and there are now patrols.

b) Berry Burn update: two meetings are planned, the first in Edinkillie Hall on 24 November and the second in Dallas Hall on 30 November, both 15.00 to 19.00. The company is going through the consultation process.

c) Resilience meeting at Inchberry Hall: this will take place on Thursday 07 November at Inchberry Hall, 10.30 – 14.00.

d) HIE survey: the survey has to be downloaded as it cannot be completed online.

e) Consultation on major planning applications: this meeting will be attended by one of our members.

f) Roseisle Kitchen Project 10.30 on 25 September. This is an offer for people to drop in to see the new kitchen. Some indication of numbers is required.

g) Moray Learning Estate: there is an ongoing process on this subject. The quantity and quality of schools with a view to the long-term is being looked at. Are the schools viable? The onus is on individuals to respond before the plan is produced.

There is a meeting re the Mosstowie and Birnie area in Elgin High School on 02 October at 17.30.

The Alves Parent Council wants to speak to the Council re the state of the building and the fact that some pupils come from Kinloss.

h) Taking a Place-based Approach to Digital Inclusion: a meeting will be held on Friday 20 September – booking via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/991101048917?aff=oddtcreator> .

6. FINANCE REPORT

The Treasurer had sent his apologies for the meeting but his report had been circulated to all.

We need to appoint a new auditor – Mrs Moira Duncan has agreed to take this on.

7. PLANNING ISSUES

All planning details had been circulated. There are no problems of which we are aware, other than the Loadhead BESS discussed at Agenda Item 4b.

8. A.O.C.B. to include area reports

a) Complaints had been received about the gravel on the Viewhill bridge. This has now been resolved.

b) Birnie Openreach plan – there is no communication and it has been referred to the planning department.

Speeding is still an issue at the approach to the village. Can the signs be moved? Councillor Mustard will enquire.

c) It was confirmed that the Burghead to Forres bus route has been terminated.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Date, time and venue of the next meeting:

Finance meeting – Tuesday 08 October at 7.30 pm in Birnie Hall

HCC meeting – Tuesday 29 October 7.30 pm at Mosstowie School.