

**Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 13 February 2025, 7pm
Elgin Community Centre – home of Elgin Town Hall**

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Amy Shepherd	Findhorn & Kinloss
Peter West	Buckie	Steve Ferris	Forres
Jim Patterson	Burghead & Cummington	Graham Murdoch	Forres
Colin Burch	Cullen	Gina McNicol	Lossie
Les Tarr	Cullen	Carolle Ralph	Lossie
Steven Christie	Elgin	Marion Ross	Speyside
Brian Irvine	Elgin		

In attendance:

Moray Councillors: Sonya Warren, Neil Cameron
Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire,
Roddy Burns, Clerk to the Lieutenancy of Banffshire
Debra Duke (Moray Council) Community Council Liaison Officer
Catherine Sinclair, Minute taker
Michael Kelly, Moray Council, Project Manager, Moray Growth Deal
Tracy Robbie Moray Council, Period Plus Project Coordinator
Karen Delaney, Moray Council, Community Learning and Development Support Officer

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone.

Apologies: Mary Evans, Heldon Community Council, Anne Skene, Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council,

2. Approval of minutes – 14 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November were confirmed as a correct record. Proposed by Brian Irvine, seconded by Steve Ferris.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Police Update

Apologies

5. Lord Lieutenancy updates

Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire

VE day is on 8th May. Moray and Banffshire lieutenancies are participating in celebrations. Bruno Peek, Pageantmaster, is encouraging local celebrations and requesting the VE Day flag be raised at 9am, and beacons and lamp lights of peace be lit at 9.30pm. See veday80.org.uk for details and please complete the short online form if having local celebrations.

Roddy Burns, Clerk to the Lieutenancy of Banffshire

There will be a VE Day service at 2pm in St Giles Church on 8th May, open to all. Churchill's message will be read at 3pm. It would be helpful to contact Mandy Tough, Moray Council Chief Executive's office about any planned local events so PR can be co-ordinated with the Lord Lieutenancies.

6. Community Council update

Buckie Community Council

Ten of 12 Community Council seats have been filled. Two members have joined from the subgroup fundraising to improve the local park. Active recruitment is ongoing, including

promoting Community Councils to younger people. A second subgroup has been set up with the aim of encouraging more people to visit Buckie. An event is being organised to bring Buckie community groups together to share experiences and support collaboration.

Burghead and Cummington Community Council

Two members attended the last CC meeting, but subgroups have been very active. Pavement gritters have been purchased and gritting salt is required. Work is ongoing re the proposed library closure.

Cullen & Deskford Community Council

The Community Resilience Group rep has contacted local businesses re the resilience plan. Another newsletter is due for delivery, thanks to funding from Money for Moray. It is designed in Elgin and printed and delivered by volunteers. A third of the population in this area are over 60 so the newsletter is very helpful for those not on social media.

An M-Connect drop-in session held last Friday had poor attendance. The next is planned for Friday 28th March but it is hoped it can be rescheduled to a different day of the week.

Moray Council are consulting on provision of 3 designated overnight parking spaces for motorhomes in Cullen. This seems unfair to Three Kings Cullen Community Association who run the motorhome stopover and adhere to the rules, while the parking spaces will not be policed.

These proposals affect all of Moray, particularly coastal areas. Lossiemouth has similar issues with the proposals. Cllr Neil Cameron advised that the proposal went before ED&I Committee and was subject to amendments and a request to strengthen the consultation process. Moray Council needs to develop a campervan and motorhome policy that works for everyone.

Elgin Community Council

An informative guest speaker from the vermin control company that works with Moray Council attended. She advised that the gulls' diet can be a factor in causing increased aggression. The Community Council has spoken with NatureScot and their MSP and are making progress on the issue of nuisance gulls separately from Moray Council.

The first meeting of the resilience committee has been held, and a public meeting will be held later this month.

There was discussion on the proposed Interment Plans changes and 7-day consultation period for undertakers to respond. Changes to the plans do not seem popular with the public. Cllr Warren advised there is currently more than enough provision for Moray if 4 funerals per day are held and there are safety reasons around the timing of afternoon funerals however, officers have been asked to consult with undertakers again about the timings of morning funerals as this can cause difficulty for people from rural areas who wish to attend.

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council

Recruitment is proving challenging.

Resilience planning is advanced. A primary concern is Findhorn being cut off due to blocking of the B9011 road. A multi-agency test of the resilience plan using an alternative route through the Kinloss base was conducted. Fire engines and ambulances cannot get down this route. This is useful information for the emergency services and further work will need to be done.

The base is looking into alternative public transport provision due to the limited bus service and no M-Connect provision. Base families and dependents can be very reliant on public transport and a lack of service can cause vulnerabilities.

Forres Community Council

Two new Community Councillors have been co-opted, and another person has expressed interest. The next meeting will be in the Erskine Centre, but this will be a one-off.

Forres House Community Centre has been slated for closure in the Moray Council Sports & Leisure Review. This will go to public consultation. Buckie and Keith Community Councils are also advised to read the review if they have not already. The library (45,000 visits per annum) and community café (35,000 visits per annum) are also based at Forres House. A petition on Change.org has attracted 4,000 signatures so far.

With thanks to Rhona, a £297 application for resilience equipment has been submitted. It is hoped it will be ready in time for flash flooding which typically happens in July/August.

The Local Place Plan has been submitted, amended, and re-submitted.

Forres has still to hear the results of the £3.4 million Cultural and Heritage grant fund application.

Lossiemouth Community Council

The Christmas tree sand dune coastal erosion project took place and attracted a lot of media attention. Great support was received from the RAF, via their conservation officer. A local landscape designer donated staff time and GAP donated use of a micro digger. Moray Council gave advice. About a third of the West Beach car park has been lost due to coastal erosion and the breakwater is also under threat. Work is ongoing as to how to deal with this. Conversations with statutory bodies have been exhausted.

The Local Place Plan is being submitted in partnership with Lossiemouth Development Trust.

It will cost £6,000 to fix the soakaway for the Lossiemouth cemetery toilet, the only remaining cemetery toilet in Moray.

In partnership with Mikeysline, work to repaint the esplanade mural is ongoing. A design competition is planned with High School students.

The Community Council manned the Hub during recent severe weather to support local people. Contact with SEN about repeated power outages in Muirton led to advice to residents to complain to SEN. Once enough complaints are received, action must be taken. Moray Council was contacted for help with a bedbound patient who could not mobilise due to the power outage, but staff were on stand down. Eventually help was received.

There was discussion on relationships with, and the roles and responsibilities of Community Councils and other organisations, including Community Development Trusts. Moray is a large, complex area with many community organisations meeting the needs of many diverse communities. Work on a common understanding of roles and responsibilities would be helpful, but this is a complex issue. It was noted that more work and service provision is being left to community organisations, including Community Councils, with little support and a lack of funding. This was brought up during the online Democracy Matters session a few weeks ago. It was suggested a steering group could be set up to take away comments on funding, training, and support.

Speyside Community Council

In partnership with NHS Grampian, Ice Crews are being recruited to do preventative gritting of targeted areas e.g. around hospitals and GP surgeries, when the road temperature is due to fall below zero degrees centigrade. This is being piloted due to pressure on the NHS from fall related emergency department visits and follow-up care. Grit and equipment are provided, and volunteers will receive an alert when gritting is required.

Complaints were received about lack of gritting around schools and on enquiry it was found these are not priority areas, due to lack of resources and funding.

Marion attended a session about the Moray Community Identified Benefits Portal. Any business that secures a large contract from Moray Council will be listed. Communities can submit their wish lists for support for matchmaking. These are for longer term wishes as there is no guarantee they will be fulfilled. The portal should go live in April/May. This is separate to developer obligations.

Marion attended a Planning Conditions and Enforcement webinar. It was very good, covering enforcement, biodiversity & housing developments. She will share the link with anyone who is interested.

Community Councillors attended public meetings on the proposed Blackhills Wind Farm. Six 200m turbines and a battery park are proposed. The previous application was turned down by Scottish Government on grounds of landscape and visual impact.

There is a consultation on good practice guidelines for Community Benefit which is worth looking at.

A £300 resilience grant has been received. Work on grab bags is ongoing. The Community Council is supporting Rothes to develop a resilience plan.

The Moray Council Sustainable Schools workshop at Speyside High School went on for 3 hours. It seemed focused on school closures. One attendee left in tears.

7. Moray Growth Deal (Michael Kelly, Programme Manager)

Michael gave a status update and offered to circulate his slides. Of the 8 strategic projects, 6 are in delivery with a 7th due to come online soon.

Moray Aerospace and Advanced Technology Innovation Centre (MAATIC) is being redeveloped. UHI pulled out of this project due to financial concerns in the university sector. Michael has been working with other partners on a replacement project covering skills and innovation requirements across Moray, including energy and engineering, healthcare, and wellness sectors i.e. no longer to do with aerospace. A site location has not yet been fixed.

Business Support Hub - Clearing work has commenced in South Street, Elgin at the site of the Hub and 30 affordable homes. Building work should begin Autumn 2025. Over ten years, the hub will provide business support to 450 SME businesses to grow by 20%. Support will be available throughout Moray. Michael will find out if those groups now running community centres and other community services would be eligible for support through the Hub.

Constrained Development Sites - The next phase of unlocking constrained sites for housing in Forres, Elgin, Aberlour and Dallas Dhu aims to deliver 300 affordable homes and 900 private homes. It will take place in 2026/27 at 10 sites.

Cultural Quarter – Work is underway to improve the nighttime offering in Moray, including redeveloping Elgin Town Hall and Grant Lodge. The Town Hall tender is about to go out, with the Hall due to re-open in 2027. Work is ongoing to resolve a funding deficit for Grant Lodge, and work to enhance its design is including consultation with local stakeholders including the Cathedral and Cooper Park.

Digital Health Project - Working closely with NHS Grampian and Moray Health and Social Care, supported by the University of Strathclyde Centre for Rural Excellence. It will provide self-managed healthcare at home where appropriate e.g. diabetes, weight management. Apps should be available by Autumn. The weight management app is currently being trialled through Moray Leisure Centre.

Early Years STEM – This aims to capture the imagination and therefore increase attainment in STEM subjects. There will be physical hubs in Elgin, Buckie and Forres plus a mobile vehicle and outreach library that schools and groups can borrow from. This will start in the new school year. The project will also look at the skills and training needs through local training and further education.

Forres Enterprise Park Manufacturing and Innovation Centre – This will have a demonstration centre to showcase new technology and processes and a collaborative incubator space. It will also have a grow on space for businesses to try new projects without having to relocate to larger premises or take on costly leases. This is due to start in spring. One in 5 jobs in Moray is in manufacturing. The majority are in businesses of 9 or fewer staff, with limited time for research and development without such support. Collaboration with private companies is key to skill and innovation project success.

M-Connect Bus Service – Speyside route started some time ago and the coast route will go live this year. The service will continue to expand throughout Moray and its development should support the cultural quarter offering as well. There was discussion on the fact M-Connect is still working in zones e.g. no direct route from Cullen to Elgin. It is also not possible to go from home in Fochabers to Fochabers GP without going e.g. via Buckie. There is a need to understand connectivity and the service is not at that stage yet. The Speyside service is due to expand from 10am – 10pm and Buckie from 9am – 5pm. Deveron Coaches contract in Speyside has now ended. It is possible to take an M-Connect bus and then join the 36 Stagecoach service. Passenger numbers do not warrant a larger bus on the service.

Michael is happy to be contacted about areas Community Councils would like him to focus on. It was suggested the Moray Growth Deal could be a standing item on the agenda with any questions passed to Michael.

8. Period poverty (Tracie Robbie, Period Plus Project Coordinator)

Everyone has a right to free period products. Please contact Tracey and Karen to let them know where you think period products should be available – flyers were circulated. The “Pick Up My Period” app shows people where products are available. They are happy to come to events with a stall. They are looking to pilot projects in schools to make people aware of sustainable period products. The next project will cover sporting events.

9. Report from the Save Moray Libraries campaign (Les Tarr)

A report was circulated. From April 2023 – October 2024, footfall at the libraries proposed for closure has grown on average by 78% compared with retained libraries where footfall has grown at an average rate of 4.85%. Thirty per cent of visitors use computers. This can be due to lack of broadband and/or household poverty. This raises issues about digital inclusion, particularly as Moray Council aim to move more services online. Equalities issues will also be looked at. A request for the Equalities Impact Assessment was refused. A request has been made to stay any decisions until Scottish Government budget changes are known. It may be possible to look at co-location options to reduce future service and maintenance costs. It is hoped there will be some movement on the closure recommendations. There will be a protest at 8.45am on 19th February at Moray Council Headquarters.

10. Treasurers Report

i. Receive Quarterly Report

From 14/11/24 – 13/02/25 the opening balance was £9,328.33. £55 of expenses were paid out, there was no income, and the closing balance is £9,273.33

11. Resilience Plans update

Links were circulated in the meeting pack. Ready Scotland is a useful resource for resilience planning and updates. The CCLO brought printed copies of the Met Office Online Community Resilience Course prospectus. See also Speyside Community Council update re Ice Crews.

12. Training

i. Succession Planning (from Speyside Community Council)

Information was circulated in the meeting pack. This can be discussed further at the May Joint Community Council meeting

ii. Looking ahead to induction - see item 13 i.

13. CCLO update

Information on Resilience planning, events and training, consultations and other useful information was circulated

i. Preparation for election and induction – agree to form a subgroup to work with CCLO (draft terms of reference)

There is quite a lot to consider for election and induction, including updating the CC handbook and other documents. Peter, Les, and Marion volunteered to work on the subgroup and the CCLO will circulate the request for members more widely. The draft terms of reference were circulated and will be discussed at the May meeting of the Joint Community Council, along with funding for election promotion. A suggested inaugural meeting timetable was circulated.

ii. CC health check – discuss using this document, or amended version (original from Stirling Council)

The CCLO circulated this document and requested Community Councils look at it and feed back to her. This could be a job for the subgroup working to prepare for election.

iii. Discuss use of gov.uk website and email address for Community Councils

Community Councils can use gov.uk for website and email addresses, but not scot.gov. The CCLO attended a digital training session and circulated the information. Training sessions are available. It was also suggested the Joint Community Council could purchase one domain name and have a page for each Community Council. So far feedback has been against this and against the use of gov.uk email addresses.

Peter and Les discussed registering domain names at low cost which would allow Community Councils to have an email +/- website. This requires someone on the Community Council to maintain the domain, which is not difficult but takes a little bit of time. Peter and Les are happy to support other Community Councils with this.

14. Feedback from Sub-groups

i. Money for Moray – grants have been paid out. There were the same number of voters as last year. The Youth PB groups had a celebratory event for successful bids and conducted a participatory budgeting session to allocate the £5,000 underspend in the Youth PB budget. There was a presentation from the Youth Local Area Group (YLAG). There will be a European YLAG event in Inverurie next year. Money for Moray are going to visit the Cairngorms area this year.

ii. Community Energy Moray – there was a meeting with the Blackhills Wind Farm developer on 13/02/2025.

iii. Transport Forum

i. Approve amended terms of reference – discussed at MTF October meeting

The amended terms were circulated. Two thirds of members must approve a new member. New members must have a level of knowledge and skills to bring to the group.

The subgroup looking into community transport in Moray have found there are very few services. High insurance costs mean car share schemes are no longer viable.

iv. Admin Grant Subgroup – carried forward to next meeting

15. Feedback from Groups Community Councillors appointed to Moray Community Safety Strategic Group, Moray Nature Network Steering Group, Road Safety Champions - Carried forward to next meeting.

16. Closing remark

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

17. AOCB

As May 8th is VE Day it was suggested the date of the next Joint Community Council meeting should be changed.

18. Date of next meeting (May) and venue to be confirmed