



Findochty Community Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday 11th August 2025

Time: 6:00 PM

Venue: Findochty Town Hall

Attendance

Community Councillors:

Anne Braidwood (Chair), Jeffrey Masterson, Ron Dawson, Paul Steel

Associate members: None

Members of Public: 5

Moray Council: None

Apologies: Cllr Sonya Warren

1. Welcome

Chairperson Anne Bolton Braidwood opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. She advised that the meeting would be recorded as part of a trial using Plaud Note, with the aim of improving the accuracy of the minutes.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

7th July 2025: The minutes were reviewed and accepted as an accurate record. Proposed by Ron Dawson. Seconded Paul Steele

3. To Discuss Community Police Update (bi-monthly reporting)

Police Report Summary (June–July)

- **Violent Crime:**
 - 11 assaults in Buckie (7 detected), 1 in Portknockie (detected), 8 in Keith (4 detected), none elsewhere.
 - No serious violent crime or robberies reported.
- **Road Safety:**
 - Focus on the “Fatal Five” offences: drink/drug driving, careless driving, no seatbelt, speeding, and mobile phone use.
 - 4 arrests for drink/drug driving (3 Buckie, 1 Keith), down from previous period.
 - 11 uninsured driving offences detected.
 - A96 & A98 remain priority patrol routes; over 740 vehicles stopped in April–May.
 - Joint checks carried out on school transport vehicles with the council.
- **Serious & Organised Crime:**
 - New proactive detective team established.

- Recent Buckie stop-and-search recovered £1,700 worth of cocaine and cash; driver arrested and charged.
- **Acquisitive Crime:**
 - Increase in break-ins: 5 in Buckie, 1 in Findochty, 1 near Keith.
 - Findochty case involved a shed theft while property unattended.
 - Other incidents in Buckie: 2 house break-ins, 1 shop break-in, multiple shed thefts.
 - Shoplifting rising: 41 reports since April (38 Buckie, 3 Keith).
 - National Retail Crime Unit working locally; businesses visited for security and cybercrime advice.
- **Protecting Vulnerable People:**
 - Officers trained in “Safe and Together” model to improve domestic abuse response.
 - Reports of bogus workmen in Keith targeting vulnerable residents.
 - Crime prevention engagement with RBS mobile bank, giving fraud and online safety advice, particularly to older residents.

4. To receive report from Treasurer

Report presented by Chair.

The current balance stands at **£6,611.09**

Administration Grant: £1,789.03

Events Fund: £623.10

Maintenance Fund: £1,597.10

General Fund : £2,602.68

Income since last meeting:

Donation: £30

Crowdfunder: £38.61

Keystore Donation Bucket: £186.04

Income Total: **£254.65**

Outgoings since last meeting:

Admin	£30.00	Secretary Honorarium
Maint	£54.00	Crooked Hythe Board - Vinyl Vision
Maint	£390.00	Andrew Gardiner (White Mannie Base)
Maint	£390.00	Paul Sutherland (White Mannie Base)
Maint	£3.50	Flowers (Tesco)
Maint	£7.54	Petrol for strimmer (Tesco)
Maint	£22.53	Cork for noticeboard

Maint	£17.70	Keys for noticeboard
Maint	£12.75	Paint for compass rose
Maint	£5.99	Spray adhesive

Outgoings Total: **£934.01**

5. To consider Community Feedback received prior to the meeting

- a) **Traffic Speed Concerns** - A resident raised concerns (3rd August) about speeding in the village, particularly on Main Street and near the harbour, proposing a 20 mph speed limit and speed bumps as solutions.

The committee acknowledged the issue but noted that:

- Implementing a 20 mph zone would be a lengthy process.
- Speed bumps were deemed unfeasible due to cost, noise, and safety concerns.

Agreed Action: Explore alternative traffic-calming measures, such as painting a 20 mph limit on the road surface in the harbour area.

- b) **Path Condition – Seaview Road** - A resident raised concerns about subsidence and overgrown ivy on the path behind 15 Seaview Road, noting:

- The subsiding path presents a safety risk.
- Ivy has covered a wooden seat and damaged wild fruit bushes.
- The issue also affects Netherton Terrace.

Actions Taken:

- An email was sent to Seafeld Estate (landowners) on 4th August 2025, requesting:
 - Path stabilisation.
 - Potential development of a corner plot for picnic tables.

No response has been received to date.

Interim Measure: Strimming will be conducted to clear the overgrowth.

- c) **Installation of gates across public paths/rights of way** – A resident reported that a gate obstructs a historic right-of-way. The committee discussed the issue with the following key points:

- The matter has been referred to Moray Council and is currently under review by their Outdoor Access Officer.

- Challenges identified:
 - Many local paths, including this one, are not on the council's core path list.
 - Ownership typically rests with Seafeld Estate.
 - No official record of historic paths is maintained by Moray Council.
 - The gate was installed by a resident to contain their dog.

Conclusion & Next Steps: While the Community Council will continue to pursue the matter, it is unlikely that Moray Council will take action due to:

- The path's **infrequent use**.
- The existence of **alternative routes**.

- d) **Bin Maintenance and Overflow** - During the summer months, overflowing bins continue to be an issue in the village. While Moray Council has confirmed they will not increase collection frequency, they do respond promptly (typically within 24 hours) to reports of full bins. The Community Council agreed to actively monitor bin levels and report any overflow issues to ensure timely collections.

A specific concern was raised about a damaged bin near the pub. The council will investigate potential funding opportunities to replace it with a more robust model better suited to heavy seasonal use.

Regarding the suggestion of creating a "borrow box" for leftover beach toys, after discussion it was concluded this would not be practical. The low number of lost or abandoned toys reported each season means such an initiative would likely see little use. The Community Council will instead focus efforts on the more pressing matter of waste management during peak visitor periods.

- e) **Abandoned Vehicle – Morven Crescent Play Park** - A resident reported a vehicle that has been parked in the Morven Crescent Play Park car park for four years without valid tax or MOT. Following inquiries with Moray Council, it was confirmed that no action can be taken as the vehicle does not meet the legal criteria for abandonment. The owner, who is known to authorities, has indicated they have "plans for it."

The ownership of the car park land remains uncertain, though initial indications suggest it may belong to Seafeld Estate. While the Community Council will explore potential options to address this ongoing issue, there are currently no clear solutions available.

- f) **Visitor Incident – Motorhome Parking** - A long-term visitor reported two concerning incidents:

- **Parking Dispute:** The visitor reported feeling intimidated by a man in a burgundy vehicle who acted with hostility over their motorhome parking, prompting them to leave the village. The Treasurer later wrote to the visitor to apologise for this individual's actions.
- **Staring Incidents:** On two separate occasions (this year and last year), the visitor reported being stared at by another individual, which they found unsettling. The council identified this person as a local resident with health issues, concluding that no harm was intended. No further action was taken regarding these incidents.

Action Agreed: The council will consider using social media to promote a welcoming attitude toward all visitors.

g) **Old Chip Shop – Station Road** - Concerns were raised regarding the worsening state of the disused chip shop premises on Station Road, which has stood vacant and fenced off for at least a decade. The site has become increasingly unsightly, with accumulating litter and overgrown vegetation.

Key discussion points included:

- The fencing may no longer have valid planning permission and could potentially be encroaching on the public highway
- Previous contact with the owners confirmed they still hold an active building warrant for the property

Agreed Action: The Community Council will contact Moray Council's planning department to:

- Verify the current status of the planning permission for the fencing
- Clarify whether the structure encroaches on the highway
- Discuss potential enforcement options given the property's prolonged derelict state

Background Context: The owners have been approached about the matter in the past, but the situation remains unresolved despite their maintained building warrant. The Community Council will pursue formal clarification from authorities while recognising the legal complexities involved in such longstanding cases.

6. Harbour Public Toilets Update

It was reported that the lights appear to operate on a timer, switching on only at certain times for the overnight period. On overcast days, they remain off, resulting in poor visibility due to the lack of natural light in the facility. The community council will contact Moray Council to clarify the current lighting setup and explore options for improvement.

Action: Chair to contact Moray Council

7. Community Council Website

It was noted that some of the feedback discussed earlier in the meeting was submitted via the website's contact form. The website's search ranking is continuing to improve.

8. White Mannie

The Community Council has acquired a reference book outlining specialist cleaning procedures for the bronze plaque. Following its recommendations:

- Required materials: Vorpex soap and micro-crystalline wax (total cost: £35.57)
 - The purchase was approved during the meeting.
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9. Updated information board for Crooked Hythe

The refurbished board has now been installed. A bead of silicone sealant is required around the edges to prevent water ingress.

10. To discuss Community Resilience

A member of the public asked whether the resilience plan had been activated during Storm Floris. The Resilience Coordinator explained that the plan, in place for the past five months, is triggered based on a risk assessment considering the number of people affected and the length of any power outage. As Storm Floris did not cause any local power outages, the plan was not activated.

The community council discussed holding an additional Drop-In Resilience Event ahead of the winter season to:

- Promote preparedness within the community
- Communicate essential information about winter services and support

Decision: The event was approved and will be arranged for a suitable date prior to the winter period.

11. Reports

To note reports from Local Councillor

- a) No Local Councillors were present at the meeting

Maintenance/Gardening:

Storm Damage Assessment:

- Recent storms caused significant damage to floral displays
- Some plants will naturally recover, while others were destroyed by salt spray
- Replacement flowers have been purchased for the school area

Planter Replacement Discussion:

- Condition of Station Road planters reviewed
- Decision on whether to construct new planters or purchase replacements deferred until next growing season

Stroop Repairs:

- Damaged railings have been fully repaired by a Paul Steele
- Repainting work completed by Marshall

To note report from Town Hall – all well and nothing to report from Ron Dawson.

- **Defibrillator** - Ron Dawson reported the battery was still showing as operational with two bars.

To note reports from community council sub groups

Harbour Advisory Group

- a) No recent meetings have taken place

Christmas Lights Committee

- a) A tombola is being held at the Town Hall on Friday 5th September 6pm for 6.30 start; £5 for books. .

12. AOCB To Discuss any other matter not raised elsewhere on the agenda that can be added as future items for next committee meeting

- a) **Bus Shelter Refurbishment** - The bus stop is in need of 'serious repairs' beyond a coat of paint, with crumbling concrete and exposed steel. The community council is hesitant to undertake the work as the bus stop belongs to Moray Council, who would likely only perform minimal repairs if requested.
- b) **Beach Cleaning Equipment** - A discussion was held regarding the beach cleaning equipment at Mckenzie's beach. It was discovered that the picker in the beach cleaning box was broken. It was agreed to purchase a replacement picker
- c) **Purchase of Plaud Note Service** - The council has been trailing the Plaud Note voice recording service over a 30-day period to support accurate minute-taking and reduce disputes.

Proposal:

- Purchase the service at a cost of £147
- Funding to be allocated from the admin fund (current balance: ~£1,800)

Decision:

- The purchase was approved to ensure reliable meeting records.
- d) **Community Council Health Check** - The council acknowledged the requirement to complete a 'health check' assessment.

Decision:

- To defer the process until after the October elections
 - Rationale:
 - Allows new council members (if any) to participate
 - Ensures the assessment reflects the post-election composition
- e) **2026 Strategic Planning** - A proposal was made to shift from ad-hoc project work to a structured plan for 2026. This would involve identifying village projects, proper planning, securing funding in advance, and canvassing residents for their input on capital projects.
 - f) **Campervans and Caravans – Sannie Craig** - The community council discussed ongoing issues with campervans and caravans at Sunny Craig, located on land owned by Seafield Estate, who do not permit overnight stays. Signs have been installed on Seafield's advice, but the community council has no enforcement powers. Some members of the public remain unaware that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code do not grant access rights to motorised vehicles. A proposal to create a 'code of

conduct' for motorhomes and caravans in Findochty was considered, but concerns were raised that it could cause friction. The matter remains unresolved, with no authority to act and no consensus on the next steps.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 1st September 2025 at 6:00 PM

Venue: Findochty Town Hall

Meeting Closed at 7:45 PM