

**DRAFT Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 11 December 2025, 7pm
Lhanbryde Community Centre**

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Steve Worth	Findhorn & Kinloss
Jane Benson	Burghead & Cummingston	Gary Gunn	Forres
David Baxter	Cullen & Deskford	Steve Ferris	Forres
Elaine Baxter	Cullen & Deskford	Michael Walker	Forres
Stuart Donald	Cullen & Deskford	Kevin Skivington	Forres
Lynn Myles	Cullen & Deskford	Andy Wallis	Heldon
Les Tarr	Cullen & Deskford	Steve Valentine	Heldon
Anne Mitchell	Elgin	Willie Duncan	Heldon
Ron Cameron	Elgin	Alan Bodman	Innes
Samuel Zizighi	Elgin	Peter Fitch	Innes
Segun Adebayo	Elgin	James Mackie	Innes
Steven Christie	Elgin	Steve Hickin	Keith
Brian Irvine	Elgin	Marion Ross	Speyside
Alan Bell	Elgin	Karen Pryce	Strathisla
Anne Skene	Findhorn & Kinloss	John Taylor	Strathisla

In attendance:

Chief Inspector Mike McKenzie, Police Scotland
Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire
Moray Councillors: Donald Gatt, Juli Harris, Neil Cameron
Moray Council Chief Executive Karen Greaves
Debra Duke (Moray Council) Community Council Liaison Officer
Catherine Sinclair, Minute taker

1. Welcome and apologies

The CCLO welcomed everyone. Apologies were received from Lossiemouth Community Council, Portknockie Community Council and Dyke Community Council.
Jamie Campbell, Abbey Main (Burghead and Cummingston CC)
Diane Burgess (Elgin)
Chris Lawson (Cullen and Deskford)
Sarah Symonds, Wendy Ritchie (Findhorn and Kinloss)
Colin McCarthy (Heldon)
Chris Davies (Speyside)

Thirteen Community Councils have been re-established, and it is hoped both Findochty & District and Buckie & District Community Councils will re-establish in January 2026.

2. Joint Community Council Background – presentation by the CCLO

The Joint Community Council is a non-statutory body that was originally set up to allow Moray Community Councils to meet and exchange information. It was constituted in 2005. Members sit on several external groups, including groups established by the JCC. It makes representation on Moray-wide issues to local and Scottish government on behalf Community Councils. It also deals with any stage 2 Community Council complaints. Ideally, 1-2 members of every Community Council attend each quarterly Joint Community Council meeting.

3. Appointment of Office Bearers

Chair: Alastair Kennedy was nominated by Steven Christie, seconded by Jim Mackie. There were no objections. Alastair accepted the role of Chair on condition there is a commitment from Community Councils for good representation at the Joint Community Council.

Vice-Chair: Brian Irvine was nominated by Alan Bell, seconded by Karen Pryce and Segun Adebayo. There were no objections. Brian accepted the role.

Secretary: Steven Christie was nominated by Ron Cameron, seconded by Jim Mackie. There were no objections. Steven accepted the role.

Treasurer: Samuel Zizighi was nominated by Segun Adebayo, seconded by Ron Cameron. There were no objections. Samuel accepted the role.

4. Adoption of Joint Community Council Constitution

The CCLO advised amendments can be made during the term. The constitution compares well to the current Community Council template constitution, but it was proposed that it should be reviewed. The Chair suggested it could be reviewed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: Review of the Constitution to be brought to the next meeting.

5. Approval of minutes – 14 August 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 August were confirmed as a correct record. Proposed by Steven Christie, seconded by Marion Ross.

6. Police Update – Chief Inspector Mike McKenzie, Moray Local Area Commander

Mark Bayliss is the new Inspector for the Keith and Buckie area and has been in post since November. He is an experienced officer who has worked in the communities previously. Moray will have some newly promoted sergeants in the coming months. Both the Inspector and sergeants will be engaging with Community Councils. Operational demand on the force has necessitated a move away from attending Community Council meetings. Community Councils are asked to make contact where Police related issues are to be discussed at meetings and an officer will attend if possible. Please continue to engage with local Inspectors. Buckie and Keith have appointed a named sergeant as a Community Council contact, in addition to the local Inspector. This is a useful model that other areas may look to adopt.

Bimonthly police reports to Community Councils have been in place for a year now.

Feedback on the format is still welcome as Police are happy to shape the reports to be most useful to Community Councils.

Serious and organised crime and county lines are issues in Moray. Drug dealing brings with it violence and intimidation, exploiting vulnerable people. In recent months, drug dealers from London, Manchester and Northeast England have been arrested in Moray. Police are determined to make Moray a hostile environment to these criminals. Local groups are requested to pass any information or concerns to Police.

The festive period is expected to be busy as usual, with increased attendance at licensed premises and around road safety.

7. Lord Lieutenancy update

Maj Maurice Gibson, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Banffshire

Please pass details of any group or individual volunteers who might be recognised by the Banff or Moray Lieutenancies. This may be through honours or awards, as well as invitations to palace garden parties in Edinburgh or London. Nominations are currently open for the Banffshire and Moray Heroes awards run by Highland News & Media.

Many local war memorials had centenaries in the last few years and in some cases, Covid disrupted commemorations. If this is the case in your area, please advise the Lieutenancy so they can be marked. There are so many war memorials in Banffshire it is difficult to avoid clashes in remembrance events. The Lieutenancy is exploring ways to manage this. This may mean that although wreaths will be laid at every war memorial, people may not attend a ceremony every year. Thanks were expressed to Community Councils for their support at remembrance ceremonies this year.

Please let the Lieutenancy know if your local groups or organisations have a need for volunteers for projects and events and they will do their best to encourage people to assist.

8. Receive report from Joint Community Council Admin Grant subgroup (circulated) and update from Moray Council meeting on 3 December (link circulated)

The final report of the Admin Grant subgroup was circulated at the meeting. This report had been sent to Moray Council officers and a report was considered at the full Council meeting 3 December. There will be a one-time 7.75% increase of the admin grant in 2025-26, bringing the fixed amount to £537.98 plus 7.83p per head of population. The grant will be reviewed annually, in line with inflation. The CCLO thanked the subgroup and the Community Councils that responded to her requests for information.

Access to schools is to be explored for those Community Councils that do not have free of charge meeting venues. The possibility of provision of a laptop to each Community Council is to be explored. A dedicated laptop is best practice in terms of data protection compliance and makes it easy to pass information on to a new secretary.

Steve Ferris asked which population figures were used as they stated a population of 10,000 for Forres, which currently has a population of 15,000. The CCLO advised the GIS team provides Community Council area data from 2022 population statistics. She will follow up with them on data and calculations.

ACTION: The CCLO to contact the GIS team

9. Receive update regarding Libraries, Learning Centres and Heritage Service Transformation report to Moray Council 3 December

At the full Council meeting, option 2 of the 2 proposals presented was accepted. Although this means no reduction in service hours overall, it does mean that Elgin, Keith, Cullen, and Tomintoul libraries will have reduced hours. Save Keith Library Group had developed an alternative proposal. Cllr Gatt advised it was presented shortly before the meeting which had not left enough time for consideration. There was discussion on the social, health, welfare, warm space, and literacy contributions made by libraries. There was concern that decisions appeared based on library membership and borrowing, not wider benefits, and that footfall counters were not always accurate. There was also concern that user groups were by invitation and may not be representative. There was a request for the decision to be reconsidered. Cllr Gatt advised the decision will be reviewed in 12 months. Without a three-quarters majority, it is not possible for Councillors to review it in less than 6 months. The Chief Executive agrees with the value of libraries however they are not statutory and at times of budget constraint, statutory services must be prioritised. Footfall counters will be checked, engagement with user groups will continue, including looking at optimal opening times. Options such as use of volunteer time and offering other activities will be explored. She feels that no libraries being closed and no overall reduction in hours is cause for celebration. She asked that Community Councils engage with their communities about using and supporting library groups. There was further discussion on STEM centres, school use of libraries and Additional Support Needs.

ACTION: Les to gather names for a JCC Libraries subgroup

10. Tea and networking

11. Confirmation of appointments to subgroups

Members of the Joint Community Council sit on these groups, alongside other partners. Current Community Councillors sit on each group, so no new appointments are needed.

a. Money for Moray

The Joint Community Council helped establish Money for Moray, which manages grant awards through participatory budgeting. They are currently managing Just Transition funds. Alastair Kennedy sits on this group.

b. Community Energy Moray – link to website circulated

This organisation was set up as Ben Com in readiness to deal with community share offerings when Clash Gour windfarm goes ahead, or any other energy projects with a community share offering. Anne Skene and Alastair Kennedy are members of the Board of this organisation. Additional Board members are welcome.

c. Zero Carbon Moray – information circulated

Zero Carbon Moray formed to discuss next steps relating to community energy and fuel poverty in Moray. Alastair Kennedy is a member. The group is planning a seminar in 2026.

d. Transport Forum - terms of reference circulated

Marion Ross is the Chair. The forum has not met recently, in part due to lack of suitable public transport. They plan to meet again and are going to consider online meetings. Marion is also on the Board of M Connect which is useful for the forum.

ACTION: CCLO to get details about the Zero Carbon Moray seminar and see if there would be crossover with the proposed renewable energy/planning seminar in the style of Highland Council (See AOCB item B)

12. Confirmation of appointments of Community Councillors to Groups:

a. Moray Community Safety Strategic Group – information circulated

Carole Ralph (Lossiemouth Community Council) is currently a member but has struggled to attend meetings due to their timing so if you are interested in being the Joint Community Council representative, please let the CCLO know.

b. Moray Nature Network Steering Group - information circulated

Crinan Dunbar (Innes Community Council) and Donald McLean (Speyside Community Council) sit on this group. They both have relevant professional knowledge and are happy to remain as members of the group.

c. Road Safety Champions – information circulated

This group has not met for a while. If you wish to be a Joint Community Council representative for this group, please let the CCLO know.

13. Treasurers Report

a. Annual Report 2024/5 to be circulated

c/f as the Annual Report is still to be independently audited and there will need to be a handover to the new Treasurer.

14. AOCB

a. Plan next meetings

There was discussion on the structure of meetings. Presentations to the Joint Community Council are an effective way to disseminate information but it does not leave much time for Community Council networking. Suggestions included quarterly networking meetings and/or geographical networking meetings e.g. Buckie and Cullen coastal group. The CCLO has trialled Treasurer networking which led to some Treasurers becoming the independent examiner for other Community Councils.

b. Issues for the Joint Community Council to consider

Renewable Energy Project Planning Applications – greater numbers of large-scale planning applications, consisting of hundreds of pages of documents are being received, expecting community consultation and a response within 30 days. There is a need for Community Councils to have a greater understanding of the process. Planning Aid Scotland could provide support or information. There is no national Scottish Energy policy and there seems to be a lack of a planned approach or attention paid to local knowledge, including that of relevant professionals and organisations. The CCLO advised that Regional Energy Strategic Plans will be produced by National Energy System Operator, including one for Scotland.

The CCLO had informed the Energy Consents Unit that the latest Beaulieu to Peterhead powerline consultation period covered Moray Community Councils' election period, but dates could not be changed.

Highland Region has formed a group which has met with the aim of being able to better scrutinise and respond to applications. Around 50 Community Councils attended an event chaired by Highland Councillor Helen Crawford. Jim Mackie proposed a subgroup of Community Councillors with an interest in renewables applications be formed.

ACTIONS:

- **Innes Community Council to take the lead on setting up a subgroup**
- **CCLO to request Helen Crawford to attend Joint Community Council meeting**
- **CCLO to circulate link to latest information on Planning Aid Scotland website**
- **CCLO to find out if any support or advice on renewables is available from the National Energy Systems Operator**

- c. **Infrastructure project decision making** – The £1 million of funding for repair of the Cloddach Bridge was withdrawn by Westminster. This feels like a symptom of issues with other infrastructure projects. Can information on how priority is decided and what the criteria are be shared?

ACTION: CCLO to investigate infrastructure project decision making

- d. **Difficulties with elections and approving Scheme for Community Councils**
Discussion was held. Alastair had received complaints about delays and timing issues, had written to Moray Council and received a response from the Chief Governance Officer. There was only a 2-week window for applications which partly coincided with October school holidays. There was no concession to the timescale despite requests from Community Councillors who knew they would be away. Two weeks is the minimum allowed window. Nominees had to provide their elector number, this was required for the first time and there had been no consultation on this. Several Community Councillors have had to be co-opted, and re-establishment of two Community Councils has been delayed until January 2026. The whole election process was delayed compared to previous election periods. This was due to the Review of the Scheme of Establishment which was not completed until August 2025. The Chief Executive apologised and said although procedure had been followed, a longer timescale and different dates could have been used. Alastair will consult with other Community Councillors and reply to the solicitor's response.

ACTION: Alastair to respond to Moray Council Chief Governance Officer.

15. Closing remark

The Chair thanked the CCLO for chairing the meeting and Catherine for the minutes.

16. Date of next meeting Thursday 13 February 2026 (venue to be confirmed)