

Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 16th December 2021 via Zoom

Attendees: Fiona Bick, Ian Macmaster, George Glennie, Niall MacBeath, Klaus Wahle, Cllr Iris Walker, Cllr Ron McKail, Cllr Alistair McKelvie, 6 Echt residents

Apologies: Paula Houston, Nick Pilbeam

Minute of last meeting: Approved, subject to amendment of the bank balance to £2643.09.

Police Report: Police reports for October and November show one public nuisance incident, and 1 crime and 8 incidents relating to road traffic offences. Speed checks were carried out in Echt on one day in November when one driver was warned about this speed. No concerns were raised.

Storm Arwen: The whole of the ESCC area suffered power failures from Friday 26th November except for Kirkton of Skene. Power was restored to the main settlement area of Echt on Sunday 28th. Garlogie, Dunecht and Lyne of Skene power was restored on Tuesday 30th. But some more isolated properties south of Echt didn't get their power back until Friday 3rd - Monday 6th December. The ESCC opened the Echt Hall as a resilience centre from 9.30pm on Sunday 28th available for people to warm-up, cook, make hot drinks, charge phones, etc. It was advertised on local community Facebook pages, and later on the Council's website. George Glennie visited a number of vulnerable people in Echt and lent ESCC gas stoves and wind-up torches to those most in need. Two people stayed in the hall overnight on 28th and the hall then remained open from 8am to late evening each day until Friday 3rd December. Hot meals were available at the hall on Monday 29th lunchtime and evening. Dunecht Estates opened Dunecht Hall also during daytime on Monday 29th - Tuesday 30th once they got their generator up and running, and provided hot soup, etc.

Residents were critical of SSE, who were consistently over-optimistic about the expected duration of the outages, and of the Council, who they felt were slow to react and should have been better prepared given that a red weather warning was issued. Communication about the availability of welfare centres was also patchy with many people not knowing about Echt and Dunecht Halls being open. Landlines in Echt were switched to internet protocol a week before the storm and therefore no longer work without mains power.

Action: Fiona to feedback residents' criticisms to Council.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Council Housing Improvement Programme – central heating: The tenant at 16 Barmekin Park has decided to accept the proposed switch from oil to electric heating, even though they're unhappy about the change, as they're more worried about being left with no heating at all if the Council decided not to repair/replace their oil boiler. Cllr Walker explained that comparative running cost data was only available for council houses that have been converted from old style storage heaters to Quantum electric heating, not from oil to electric. An Echt resident asked if the switch from his existing storage heating system to the Quantum system was likely to be delayed as a result of oil CH being removed from other houses. Ward Councillors to follow up on this question with Housing Manager and revert directly to resident. **CLOSED**

Community Action Plans: ESCC has been informed the process will commence in New Year.

Echt Hall Public Convenience Demolition: The demolition contractor hasn't yet returned to rectify the path. **Action:** Cllr McKail to follow up with Council officials.

Echt B977 Street Names: The consultation period has closed and a report will go to the GAC for a decision in due course.

Echt speed activated sign on B977: The speed activated signs are missing from the north and west approach roads. Cllr McKelvie has been told by Roads “that the traffic behaviours do not merit the installation of a device, to replace the one removed at the crossing in Echt.” **Action:** Cllr McKelvie to ask Roads for a copy of the data which supports the statement they made.

Flooding on Kirkton of Skene to Westhill footpath: It was noted that no progress could be made on this until the Council Roads department prepares an engineering solution to tie-in to drains and/or ditches on Dunecht Estate land on the downhill/south side of the road. Roads response to Cllr McKail claimed Dunecht Estates would not agree to a solution along these lines but Fiona attended a meeting with Stuart Young of DE in August at which he said they would be happy to consider a proposal provided it didn't increase the flood risk for properties downstream. **Action:** Cllr McKail to press Roads for a plan of action.

Flooding at Greystones: Scottish Water advised the Council in November that their legal team is now reviewing whether they can/will do anything in relation to relocating the water supply pipes in the culvert. **Action:** Fiona to follow up with Roads regarding the clearing of the drains. Klaus to attempt to speak to property owners at Nether Terryvale.

Garlogie Speeding: Pop-Up Bob trials are to take place in Keig in January. Results should be available by end-January. Parts of Garlogie adjacent to the C136 junction are believed to satisfy the criteria for a 30mph limit under the Council's revised speed limit policy. **Action:** Ian MacMaster to seek the views of Garlogie residents on a potential reduction in the speed limit.

Lyne of Skene Speed Limit: The Westhill Men's Shed has repaired the speed check equipment for the Road Safety Partnership. **Action:** Cllr McKail will ask for speed surveys to be carried out on the B9126 (in the 60mph zone) in both directions beside the last house on the straight east of the Lyne of Skene crossroads to inform whether or not there is a speeding issue.

Dunecht and Echt Playpark Improvements: Paula has been successful in obtaining a grant of £5,000 from the Miss Caroline Jane Spence trust fund towards Echt playpark equipment installation. She has also made an application to the WECC for funding from the Westhill Bulletin profits. The application form states that funds are available for projects/groups in the Bulletin distribution area. WECC are to consider the application at their January meeting. All funds will be ringfenced as restricted funds in ESCC's account.

Litter Picking Equipment: £200 was received from the Garioch Area small grant scheme on 23rd November to cover the purchase costs. Niall has purchased 6 grabbers, 6 hoops (to hold the bin bags), 200 bin bags, Hi-Vis vests and rubber gloves. The equipment can be borrowed by any ESCC residents wishing to use it. **CLOSED**

Queen's Green Canopy Tree Project: The fruit trees supplied by the Council were planted by the community in Echt on 25th November with spring bulbs planted in between them the following day by pupils from Echt Primary school. The scheme has been accepted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. Ian is preparing a cost estimate for a plaque to be made by the Westhill Men's Shed. Members agreed that ESCC would fund the cost of the plaque up to £100 maximum.

Echt B977 South Road Safety: No progress. Fiona still to speak with Dunecht Estate regarding a new path. Residents asked if they could see the proposed route of the path. **Action:** Fiona

Queen's Platinum Jubilee: Niall reported that Alan Brownie is supportive of having a bonfire at the Breemie Circle to participate in the lighting of beacons organised either by BA Events or by ESCC. Niall to discuss further with Alan Brownie after Christmas.

New Planning Applications:

- APP/2021/2408 Erection of agricultural shed to replace existing buildings – Burnwood, Dunecht, Westhill AB32 7BS. No comment – it was noted that the old shed was used to overwinter young calves.

Treasurer's Report:

Cash in Bank: £7808.09 Cash in hand: £39.89

Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:

- The treasurer of Echt Neighbourhood Watch is moving away from the area and has asked if ESCC would take over the care of the remaining funds of £82.16. The group is dormant with the last expenditure being in 2016. Funding was originally provided to the group by ESCC. Members were agreeable to taking over the funds, preferably holding them in a linked but separate account with the same bank as the ESCC account.

AOCB:

- The 2022 AGM date needs to be changed as it currently falls on one of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee bank holidays. It was agreed to move it to Wednesday 8th June.
- Echt Glass Recycling – residents want a glass recycling point to be reinstated in the village. **Action:** Fiona to suggest to the Council Waste department locating it at Barmekin Park (next to the garages) or perhaps the old garage site at the crossroads which belongs to Dunecht Estates.

Future Meeting Dates

Although face to face CC meetings are now permitted under COVID regulations, face masks would have to be worn. It was agreed that meetings would continue online for the time being.

- 27 January 22
- 3 March 22
- 21 April 22
- 8 June 22 AGM