

Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 22nd February 2024 at Dunecht Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), Chris Minchin, George Glennie (Secretary), Niall McBeath, Ian MacMaster, Cllr Iris Walker, 2 Lyne of Skene residents, 2 Dunecht residents, 9 Echt residents, 1 Garlogie resident

Apologies: Nick Pilbeam, Paula Houston, Cllr Craig Miller

Minute of last meeting: Correction to item under AOCB:

- Garlogie Woods Dog Fouling – a Garlogie resident complained about the amount of dog fouling in Garlogie woods and asked if anything could be done to reduce this. It was suggested that dog poo bins might help.
Action: Discuss with Garioch Area Manager

Police Report: No police report received for January.

Democracy Matters Consultation: The Scottish Government is undertaking a second round of consultations on this topic. The consultation material promotes the idea of local residents' groups being provided with government funding so that they can decide how to prioritise the spend of government monies in their communities. Members felt there was already scope for local groups to operate for the benefit of their communities, and Community Action Plans already provided a way for communities to decide their priorities and communicate these to the Council. The consultation document itself provides the example of the Mull & Iona Community Trust which has been delivering community development projects and addressing problems of geographic isolation and economic and social exclusion for 22 years. Members were also doubtful that funding would be adequate given the budget constraints already being felt by Local Authorities and it would be better not to spread limited funds even more thinly replicating the work of the Council. An online meeting for Community Councils to discuss the consultation is scheduled for 24th February. Fiona will try to attend to see what other CC's are thinking.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Speeding Issues in Dunecht, Echt, Garlogie, Lyne of Skene and Mason Lodge: Speed surveys were last carried out in Garlogie (July 2019), Echt (March 2021), Dunecht (2022).

The Council Roads department has been asked to repeat the speed survey in Echt to test whether the police speed checks carried out in the village over the last 15 months have had any effect on driver behaviour. A response is awaited.

Request to Roads regarding a new Garlogie speed survey is still outstanding. Members asked for a speed survey in Lyne of Skene as well. **Action:** Fiona to ask Council Roads for speed surveys in Garlogie and Lyne of Skene, and also to clarify whether Roadside of Garlogie meets the Council's policy for a 30 mph limit.

Community Action Plans: The finalised Kirkton of Skene CAP has been issued by Jackie Niven (CAP officer). The Council provided 50 hard copies to the Steering Group but they would like to deliver hard copies to all the households that received CAP survey forms and need another 200 copies to do this. They requested £269 funding from ESCC for printing costs. Chris Minchin offered to print the document through his company at no charge. **Action:** Fiona to pass Chris's details to the KoS CAP Chair.

The recruitment of new Echt CAP Steering Group members has taken a step forward with one volunteer coming forward. The volunteer knows some others who might be willing to join and has said she will contact them to gauge interest.

Echt Playpark Improvements: All of the 3000 spring bulbs have been planted by volunteers. The Gruffalo sculpture is still outstanding. Paula had requested £120 from the Echt ringfenced funds be spent on an owl box in the SE corner copse. Members approved the funding request.

Hill of Fare Proposed Wind Farm: The ESCC objection was submitted to the ECU on 23rd January and copied to the Council but is yet to be published on the ECU website as they are short of staff to do it. The Council has until end-May to respond to the application as a consultee.

SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal: A public meeting was held on 18th January to allow residents to raise their concerns and objections with Andrew Bowie MP. He had a meeting with SSEN the following day and passed on the concerns expressed. SSEN has issued the timetable for the next round of consultation events in which the route corridor has been narrowed. There will be a public exhibition on 13th March 2-7pm in Echt Hall. STV are expected to run a feature on 21st March and will be filming around 3pm at Echt. The Deeside Against Pylons action group is preparing a flyer to assist people in taking action to halt the development. This will be distributed through letter boxes and on their Facebook page. ESCC will circulate a questionnaire seeking residents' views on the OHL so that it can properly represent their opinions.

Echt Glass Recycling point: Ann Overton has met with Norman Wright from Waste Services to discuss the results of the survey on locating recycling bins. Of the suggested options for locating the bins, only the roadside car park by the football club, and the former garage site at the crossroads (owned by Dunecht Estate) are considered possible suitable sites. (Echt Hall frontage, Echt School, the water treatment works, Forbes Park Phase 3, disused bus shelter, small bins in a variety of locations are all rejected by the Council as unsuitable.) The Council is assessing the two possible sites further, taking into account multiple issues raised by objectors including flooding, surface, compliance with council practice, impact on car park users, noise, entrance onto the road and other reasons. However, the Council does not agree that non-Echt residents travelling into Echt to use the bins is a valid reason for objection - many rural residents use facilities in villages that they don't actually live in, and the location, access and size of the bins will factor in people travelling to recycle.

B977 South of Echt Crossroads Roadsigns/Drains/Vegetation: Council has rejected the request for new "Concealed Entrance" road signs. They cite the "No footway" signs as providing adequate warning to vehicles to slow down already. Residents pointed out that one of the "No footway" signs has been knocked down. **Action:** Fiona to report damaged "No footway" sign.

Council has also rejected the request for trimming the vegetation alongside the road. The Council says the hedges don't infringe on the public highway.

Drains – the road drains were overflowing during heavy rain in December as there appears to be a blockage at the Old Manse corner. They also get covered by fallen leaves but residents make efforts to clear these away. **Action:** Fiona to report gullies/drains being blocked.

Garlogie Woods Dog Fouling: A Garlogie resident has been told by the police and Council dog warden that dog owners could be prosecuted under the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 if they don't pick up their dogs' poo in public open spaces, where public open spaces exclude agricultural land but include other open areas such as woodland, which the public has a right to access under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Ann Overton is going to discuss the possible provision of litter bins beside the wood with Norman Wright of Waste Services to encourage dog owners to pick-up.

Mason Lodge-Pitcairn Lodge Footpath: No progress. This project could perhaps be extended to include the provision of a diversion for the KoS to Westhill footpath route alongside Old Skene Road east of Kesson Gardens. The diversion could cross the road to go through the belt of trees on the south side of the road when the path gets flooded next to the dog poo bin. **Action:** Niall MacBeath to discuss with WECC Paths Group

New Planning Applications:

- No new planning applications validated since last meeting.

Prior Planning Applications:

- APP/2023/1918 Erection of 2 Dwellinghouses - Land To The North Of Little Acre Lyne Of Skene Westhill AB32 7EP. **PENDING**
- APP/2023/1958 Erection Of 3 Dwellinghouses - Land To North Of Lyne Of Skene Westhill. **WITHDRAWN**

Treasurer's Report:

Expenditure since last meeting: £30 Hall fees, £17.49 ink cartridge

Cash in Bank: £6,368.22 (£2860 ring-fenced for Echt play-park; £3,508.22 general ESCC funds)

Chris Minchin has successfully applied for funding up to £750 from Garioch Area to buy a snow blower to enable residents to clear the parents' car park at Dunecht School and the pavements in the village. ESCC will need to pay for the blower and reclaim the costs from the Council. Members approved the purchase of the snow blower (£540) and a storage shed for it (price to be no more than £230). Fuel for the blower will be supplied by local residents as and when required.

A renewal quotation for insurance has been received from Zurich (£97.20). Members approved acceptance of the quote.

Echt Hall Committee has asked for a contribution from ESCC for the installation of WiFi at the hall. Members recognised the benefit of the proposed work but decided not to contribute in light of the fact that they understand the committee has already decided to go ahead and already has sufficient funds itself to pay for the installation.

Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:

- The next Garioch Area Community Council Forum meeting is on Wednesday 6th March and will be an online meeting

AOCB:

- Garlogie – a near-miss between a van and a tractor/trailer combination was reported to have occurred at the B9119/B9125 junction.
- Iris Walker advised that the Council has decided to freeze Council Tax for next year and was implementing a number of service cuts as the money provided by the Scottish Government was insufficient to cover cost inflation pressures.
- Leylodge Industrialisation - Fiona attended a Teams meeting between Kintore & District CC and Scottish government planners to understand the planning processes applicable to the 5 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Hydrogen Generation plant, which are mooted developments in the Leylodge area. Any BESS >50MW is determined by Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit application process. Hydrogen Generation is a chemical industrial process and the application will be determined by Aberdeenshire Council.

Future Meeting Dates

- 4th April Echt Hall
- 16th May Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene
- 27th June AGM Lyne of Skene Hall