

Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 4th April 2024 at Echt Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), George Glennie (Secretary), Niall McBeath, Ian MacMaster, Nick Pilbeam, Paula Houston (Treasurer), Cllr Craig Miller, Cllr Ron McKail
3 Dunecht residents, 18 Echt residents, 2 Garlogie residents

Apologies: Chris Minchin, Cllr Iris Walker

Minute of last meeting: Approved

Police Report: No items of note.

Garioch Area Community Council Forum 6th March 2024 Feedback:

Natalie Wood, Head of Roads department, informed the forum about 3 roads items:

- 1) 20 mph speed Limits: In line with recent Scottish Government legislation, Roads are reviewing all 30mph and some 40mph zones to decide which should be changed to 20mph by the end of 2025. There will be an opportunity for the public to make representations about the proposals in due course.
- 2) Pavement Parking: On 11/12/2023 it became illegal to park on the pavement unless an exemption is signposted (e.g. because the road would otherwise be too narrow for emergency service vehicles). Council has less than 10 enforcement officers patrolling. They have been issuing warnings so far but will soon start issuing fines. 76 warnings have been issued in Garioch (none in ESCC area but 19 in Westhill).
- 3) Traffic Calming: Main roads generate the most complaints about speeding but the Council can't put speed humps on these. Speeds bumps cause noise and vibration for residents where traffic levels are high. Council can install "bump-outs" and narrow the road.

Community Council Elections 2024: Scottish Government has mandated a single annual election date for Community Councils. In Aberdeenshire this will be in September. Current community councillors are expected to serve until then. Any resident will be able to put themselves forward for election using the Council's nomination form. There are anticipated to be four vacancies on ESCC.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Speeding Issues in Dunecht, Echt, Garlogie, Lyne of Skene and Mason Lodge: Responses from Roads still awaited in respect of requests for speed surveys in Echt, Garlogie and Lyne of Skene, and also whether Roadside of Garlogie meets the Council's policy for a 30 mph limit.

Community Action Plans: Thanks are due to Winchesters for printing 250 copies of the Kirkton of Skene CAP which have now been delivered to residents. Steering Group met on 22nd March to start moving on to progressing the actions in the plan.

Echt CAP Steering Group – no further progress in recruiting new members.

Echt Playpark Improvements: The owl box is ready to be installed in the SE corner copse. Gruffalo sculpture still outstanding. Volunteers are waiting for drier weather before planting out the wild flower plug plants. Echt Football Club recently engaged a contractor to lay drains on the south edge of the park but the work was carried out during a very wet spell of weather and mud has been left on the all-weather path. **Action:** George to follow up with FC regarding remediation.

Hill of Fare Proposed Wind Farm: The ECU has extended the deadline for public comments to 30th June (post meeting update from 31st May) as a result of granting extensions to Aberdeenshire Council for them to submit their response. The council's response will go before the Garioch, Marr and Kincardine & Mearns area committees for

review before the Infrastructure Service Committee makes a final decision. It was agreed that ESCC would make a request to speak on the application at the GAC meeting. **Action:** Fiona

SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal: The questionnaire was distributed at the SSEN information event at Echt Hall on 13th March seeking residents' views on the OHL. 188 responses have been submitted so far, of which 93.6% object to the proposed OHL. 91% would support a subsea cable instead and 76% would support undergrounding instead. SSEN's deadline for consultation responses is 30th April.

Residents who had attended the SSEN event expressed frustration that the SSEN staff present were unable to answer many of their questions and different staff members actually gave conflicting responses to the same questions. SSEN told them that the event was not actually a consultation but was instead an "information event". SSEN asserted that the May 2023 event in Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene had been the consultation event for the F route options, but at that time the preferred F route didn't go near Echt or Dunecht and very few residents of these villages had been informed about the project at all. There was no door-to-door leaflet drop or publicity carried out in Echt or Dunecht by SSEN. SSEN have offered no explanation or rationale for pursuing a new OHL vs subsea cable. NG ESO also refuses to provide any information about their selection process and whether they considered alternatives. **Action:** Fiona to submit ESCC consultation response to SSEN

Echt Glass Recycling point: No update from the Council since January on progress with evaluation of the two potential siting options (old filling station and football club car park).

B977 South of Echt Crossroads Roadsigns/Drains/Vegetation: The "No footway" signs have been reinstated. The blocked drains have been reported via the Council's Road Faults page.

Garlogie Woods Dog Fouling: Council Waste Services has agreed to place waste bins at the easternmost access point to Loch of Skene and on the B9199 at the layby east of Garlogie but these are not yet in place.

Mason Lodge-Pitcairn Lodge Footpath: WECC paths group leader, Gordon Prentice, has been told there's no funding available at the moment to progress this.

In respect of the proposed diversion for the KoS to Westhill footpath route alongside Old Skene Road east of Kesson Gardens Gordon thought it would be better to resolve the flooding on the main path instead. However this has been thoroughly explored with Aberdeenshire Council before and they have no funding for drainage improvements. The KoS CAP Steering Group will continue to work this.

New Planning Applications:

- APP/2023/0383 Erection of General Purpose Agricultural Building- Sauchenbush, Echt, AB32 7AP – No comment

Prior Planning Applications:

- APP/2023/1918 Erection of 2 Dwellinghouses - Land To The North Of Little Acre Lyne Of Skene Westhill AB32 7EP. **REFUSED** – the Planning Service published Planning Guidance PA2023-09 in September 2023 for rural development. The LDP allows "organic growth" to increase the number of houses by a maximum of 20% or 10 houses max in identified settlements. PA2023-09 now contains a list of such identified settlements, and in Garioch Area only Leslie and Whiterashes qualify for organic growth opportunities. Hence this application was refused.

Treasurer's Report:

Income since last meeting: £685 small grant from Council for Dunecht snow blower

Expenditure since last meeting: £82.20 Hall fees, £97.20 Zurich Insurance, £685 snow blower and storage shed, £60 website hosting fee

Cash in Bank: £6,128.82 (£2860 ring-fenced for Echt play-park; £3,268.82 general ESCC funds)

Milne Hall Committee have kindly decided not to charge ESCC for use of their meeting room. Members agreed to make a donation of £20 to cover electricity costs.

Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:

- Aberdeenshire Council Community Resilience Framework Consultation – **Action:** Nick to review and respond

AOCB:

- Lyne of Skene – some issues with speeding on Letter Road.
- Community Learning & Development are holding a further event in Echt Hall on 16th April
- Litter Picking – a team of volunteers collected 9 bags of litter in Echt
- Prescription Home Delivery Service in Echt – Banchory chemist will no longer be delivering prescriptions to the Echt Shop for collection. **Action:** Paula to enquire about home delivery from Porters pharmacy in Westhill instead.

Future Meeting Dates

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