

Echt & Skene Community Council
Minutes of AGM held 27th June 2024 at 7.30 pm
at Lyne of Skene Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), Nick Pilbeam (vice-Chair), George Glennie (Secretary), Ian MacMaster, Niall McBeath, Chris Minchin, Paula Houston, 2 Dunecht residents, 2 Echt residents.

Apologies: Cllr Iris Walker, Cllr Fatima Joji, Cllr Craig Miller, Cllr Ron McKail.

Minute of last A.G.M. Minute approved - no matters arising.

Chairman's Report:

This past year has been dominated by community concerns about major planning proposals for a windfarm on Hill of Fare and the Kintore to Tealing overhead line.

The planning application for the windfarm was submitted in November 2023. The initial deadline of 11th January for representations has since been extended five times due to deficiencies in the information provided by the developer and is currently at 17th October 2024. At the present time Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot, the RSPB and Aberdeen Airport have unresolved objections, and more than 1500 members of the public have also submitted objections. Aberdeenshire Council is waiting for the developer to provide additional information requested by some of the other statutory consultees before making its own response.

With respect to SSEN's proposed new overhead line, SSEN announced a change in their route selection through the Echt & Skene area in December. The final route now tracks close west of Dunecht and close east of Echt. The proposal has met with fierce opposition from all of the North East communities along the route with a number of action groups being set up to fight it. In January we facilitated a public meeting with our MP, Andrew Bowie, to allow residents to articulate their anger and concerns about the overhead line proposals. At least 80 people turned out despite the snowy conditions. ESCC continues to work with other community councils along the route to best represent the views of our constituents. No planning applications have been submitted yet but ultimately, the decision on the overhead line will be made by Scottish Ministers.

The community council facilitated a Community Action Plan for Kirkton of Skene, which was finalised in January and has now moved into the implementation phase. The priorities in the plan are playpark improvements, road safety, paths, public spaces, and community connections and cohesion.

In Echt, following suggestions from residents, and with the much-appreciated efforts of our Treasurer, Paula Houston, further improvements have been made to the Pleasure Park with the installation of a woodland path, Gruffalo sculpture and owl box, as well as wild flower plug plants and bulbs. We are very grateful to Breedon Aggregates who donated the hardcore for the path. The community council also conducted a survey of residents' opinions about glass recycling in the village. The survey showed a clear desire to have this facility in the village and the results were passed to the Council. But we still await a positive outcome.

In Dunecht, the community council has purchased a snow blower to use in the school car park and pavements around the village. This is stored in the village and appropriate training can be given to volunteers on its operation.

We also have litter picking equipment available for residents to borrow and it's encouraging that an increasing number of groups and individuals have taken advantage of this during the past year to tidy up their local areas.

The elections timetable for community councils is changing this year with a single election date in September. Nominations will open on 19th August and close on 8th September. I believe Echt & Skene will have 5 vacancies to fill so I would encourage anyone interested and resident in the area to put themselves forward. Further information including a QR code for the nomination form is on our website.

Treasurer's Report:

Echt & Skene Community Council Accounts Year ending 31st March 2024

Reserves Statement	As at 31/3/2024			As at 31/3/2023
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
Cash in Bank	2860.00	3268.82	6128.82	8122.71
Cash in Hand		0.00	0.00	39.89
			6128.82	8162.60

Income & Expenditure	Year ending 31/3/2024	Year ending 31/3/2023
Income		
Aberdeenshire Council Grant	933.16	1311.74
Garioch Area Committee Grant	685.00	
Total Income	1618.16	1311.74
Expenditure		
Administration Costs	-340.15	-160.00
Annual Subscriptions	-55.00	-55.00
Community Projects (see Note 1)	-3256.79	-786.95
Total Expenditure	-3651.94	1001.95
Overall Surplus/Deficit	-2033.78	309.79
Note 1 Community Projects		
Echt Pleasure Park	2540.00	
Dunecht Snow Blower	685.00	
Echt Noticeboard	31.79	
Total Projects Spend	3256.79	

Paula Houston explained that the accounts had been independently examined by Alastair McKelvie again.

Approval of Accounts:

Proposed by Fiona Bick and seconded by Chris Minchin. The accounts were unanimously approved.

Amendments to Constitution:

Amendments to the constitution had been issued in advance of the meeting. The material changes proposed are:

- 1) Introduce a procedure for inaugural meetings to be held following the single election date for community councils which will take place in September. The inaugural meeting will be chaired by an Aberdeenshire Council officer and at that meeting the office bearers will be appointed. The existing office bearers will remain in post until September.
- 2) As elections will now only take place once every three years, it's proposed that co-opted members who join the Community Council between elections will become full voting members automatically after 6 months in post.
- 3) A new clause allows for meetings to be held face-to-face, online or as a combination of both.
- 4) There is a new obligation for the community council to register with the Information Commissioners Office in respect of data protection. ESCC is already registered.

Proposed by Ian McMaster and seconded by Niall McBeath. The amended constitution was approved unanimously.

A.O.C.B

No other business was raised and the meeting closed.