

Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 7th November 2024 at Echt Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), George Glennie, Ian MacMaster, Greig Russell, Paula Houston, Cllr Ron McKail
3 Echt residents, 2 Dunecht residents, 1 Lyne of Skene resident,

Apologies: Cllr Craig Miller, Cllr Iris Walker, Niall McBeath, Nick Pilbeam,

Minute of inaugural and last meeting: One minor change to the minute of the business meeting – Paula Houston was present at the meeting. Both approved subject to this change.

Police Report: A report was received for September. The only crimes recorded were associated with road traffic – 2 collisions and one speeding offence (63mph in Garlogie’s 40mph zone).

Community Log Bank: A Community Insight Report for Echt (dated September 2023) highlighted the deprivation indices for the Echt area, one being a reliance on log and coal fires in the older properties in the catchment area. In April 2024 the Council Community Learning and Development team suggested that access to a log bank might be helpful and advised of a scheme run by the Marr Area Partnership. **Action:** Paula to ask CLD if a meeting can be arranged with the MAP to discuss.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Community Resilience: A meeting was held in Garlogie Hall on 24th October with members and interested volunteers in the community to run through the ESCC resilience process and cabinet contents and to think about potential upgrades and improvements. Three changes are proposed:

- Refresh the large display map which was made in 2017 (**Action:** Grieg)
- Add a power bank with solar panel for each hall. It could provide light and charging for mobile phones etc. in a power cut (**Action:** Niall Macbeath)
- Replace the phones with battery radios. Analog phones are being phased out and internet phones won’t work in a power cut. We are removing the phones from the kit and the cable that was provided to connect them to a line.

All of the cabinets should be checked and any missing items reported to Nick so they can be replaced. **Action:** All

Speeding Issues in Dunecht, Echt, Garlogie, Lyne of Skene and Mason Lodge: Speeding issues will be dealt with under the Police Report in future meetings.

Fiona will follow up with Cllr Miller regarding his action from the last meeting on the issue of the timings of the flashing 20mph signs outside Skene School and Dunecht School being out of sync with the school day.

Hill of Fare Proposed Wind Farm: Aberdeenshire Council submitted an objection to this application on multiple grounds. The application may, or may not, go to public inquiry now depending on the outcome of the current consultation issued by the UK and Scottish governments to amend the Electricity Act (see item below in Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events). One of the proposals is to remove the automatic triggering of a public inquiry if a statutory consultee objects.

SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal: SSEN held another round of public exhibitions in early October with their alignment proposals i.e. the locations of the pylons. They now have three alternative routes past both Echt and Drumoak. There has been no change in the opposition of our constituents to any overhead line. Deeside Against Pylons are holding a public meeting in Echt on 12th November and they are arranging for an aerial photo of angry residents in the Echt Pleasure Park on 17th November. **Action:** Fiona to draft a response to SSEN on behalf of ESCC objecting once more.

B977 South of Echt Crossroads Drains: Roads raised a defect in April agreeing that the drains needed to be cleared but they have not yet carried out the work.

Echt Park Remediation: No progress with the mud on the path – George will try and contact Ian Mitchell again. Paula is still seeking a meeting with Sandy Scott of Landscape Services to discuss options for further improvements to the Park and other public spaces in Echt to use up the ringfenced funds, and also to discuss repainting the park gates.

Kirkton of Skene Footpaths: The Skene Paths Group met with Stuart Young of Dunecht Estates on 9th October to discuss the potential path projects. DE are to review the routes and revert with their views by mid-November.

An application for consultancy assistance was submitted to the Community Path Development team on behalf of the Skene Paths Group. An application for funding to NESTRANS is also planned for improvements to the path on the A944 between Mason Lodge and Pitcairn Lodge Nursing Home.

Echt Prescription Service: Porters have decided to carry on with the service from Banchory. They would still like greater take-up but the service is sustainable at present. **CLOSED**

New Planning Applications:

- APP/2024/1663 Part Change of Use, Alterations and Extension of Steading to Dwellinghouse - Little Acre Lyne Of Skene Westhill AB32 7EP. No comment
- APP/2024/1654 Erection of Replacement Dwellinghouse (Amended House Design to Planning Permission Reference APP/2023/2286) - Bogentory Cottage Dunecht Westhill AB32 7EN. No comment.

Treasurer's Report:

No income since last meeting.

Expenditure since last meeting: Hall rental £15

Cash in Bank: £6,745.92 (£2740 ring-fenced for Echt play-park; £4,005.92 general ESCC funds)

Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:

- UK & Scottish Govt Consultation regarding changes to the Electricity Act 1989– Fiona will review and propose a response in time for the deadline of 29th November
- The next meeting of the GACCF is on 4th December. The main topic will be Trading Standards presenting on scams.

AOCB:

- WECC Planning Group Meeting 24th October – Piers Blaxter was invited to speak about NPF4 and the next Aberdeenshire LDP. Fiona attended. Items of note:
 1. Aberdeenshire has enough allocated sites in the current LDP to satisfy the housing targets for the next 10 years but they are not necessarily in the places the policy team would prefer. Piers Blaxter believes the focus for the next LDP will be to avoid building houses in rural areas and small settlements, and focus development on the larger towns better served by public transport instead.
 2. Greenbelt – the policy team are considering designating the land north and west of Westhill as Greenbelt, whilst possibly building houses on the existing Greenbelt east and south of the settlement.
 3. Piers is very taken with the idea of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit System and seems to welcome the City Council's proposals to reduce the capacity of the A944 between Westhill and Aberdeen for other traffic in order to make way for these faster buses. His view seems to be that if people choose to live in country areas and drive, then they would just have to put up with more congestion to get into the city.
- Robbie Shepherd Memorial Cairn – Fiona spoke with Robert Lovie who is coordinating a fundraising concert in memory of Robbie Shepherd with some of the funds to be used to erect a granite memorial cairn in or

near Dunecht. The location agreed with Dunecht Estate is on the wide A944 verge east of the village but Roads department are apparently not supportive of this, citing concerns about the proximity to the 30mph limit zone. An Echt resident suggested that the junction of the Hill of Corskie road with the B977 might be a suitable alternative.

- Westhill Recycling Centre Bookings – Westhill and Inverurie are the only recycling sites still operating a booking system. A member complained that the system would apparently not allow him to book a same day appointment after 12 noon regardless of availability. **Action:** Cllr McKail offered to follow up with Waste Services
- Nethermains Court Waste Collections – residents are reporting issues with having their bins emptied. A number of them are physically unable to move their wheelie bins to the roadside and as a consequence the bins haven't been emptied for some time. The property manager used to move the bins for them, but has apparently been told not to do this any longer. **Action:** Cllr McKail offered to follow up with Waste Services

Future Meeting Dates:

- 19th December 2024 Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene
- 30th January 2025 Lyne of Skene Hall
- 20th March 2025 Dunecht Hall
- 1st May 2025 Garlogie Hall
- 12th June 2025 AGM Echt Hall
- 24th July 2025 Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene
- 4th September 2025 Lyne of Skene Hall

NB The locations for the 20th March and 1st May have been switched due to non-availability of Garlogie Hall on the former date