

## **Echt & Skene Community Council**

### **Minute of Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Echt Hall**

**Present:** Fiona Bick (chair), Greig Russell, Niall McBeath, , Ian MacMaster, George Glennie, Nick Pilbeam (Secretary), Paula Houston, 2 Dunecht residents, 1 Garlogie resident, 2 Echt residents

**Apologies:** Chris Minchin, Cllr Ron McKail, Cllr Craig Miller, Cllr Fatima Joji, Liz Macleod

**Minute of last meeting:** Approved

**Police Report:** Reports received for November & December. Road traffic were the only recorded crimes including one drunk driver, two dangerous driving, and one driver found to be without insurance. No issues were raised in relation to Policing.

Members discussed the alternative form of police report proposed by the new Inspector Heather MacEwen of the Garioch Community Policing Team. The report provided interesting context, but members didn't feel it should be a substitute for a report covering criminal activity in the specific Echt & Skene area. They felt it likely that a Garioch area report would inevitably end up focussing on incidents in the larger settlements such as Westhill, Inverurie and Kintore.

**Skene Paths Group:** Work party requests and risk assessments have been submitted to Dunecht Estates for drainage work on the path between Bothy 57 and the football field, and for litter picking on the football field.

**NE Scotland Convention of Community Councils:** A final version of the Unified Statement was circulated following discussions at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December, which was attended by 29 community councils. ESCC members voted in favour of being signatories to the statement. Those present at the convention agreed that Moray Community Councils should also be invited to participate, and that the convention could provide a forum to discuss other issues of mutual interest (such as the funding share received by our local authorities)

**WECC Joint Statement on Aberdeenshire Council Funding Share:** WECC held an online meeting of community councils in early December and drafted a statement. ESCC didn't receive notice of the meeting due to the fact that we didn't respond in time. Whilst ESCC would support the principles of the Joint Statement, the drafting needs to be simplified.

**Aberdeenshire LDP Call for Ideas:** The Council has published a list of bid sites on its website. These will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**Community Resilience:** A meeting took place at Echt Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> December to explain how to operate the new power banks and the resilience response centres. One power bank will be kept at Echt Hall and the other at Lyne of Skene Hall. They will be available for charging mobile phones in the event of a power cut.

The snow blower proved its worth during the heavy snow and ice conditions after New Year, being heavily used in Dunecht, Echt and areas in between. It was agreed we should apply for funding for a second snow blower to be stored in Echt. The grit spreader, which was bought from Westhill Men's Shed, wasn't successful though as it can only handle pure salt. Ian MacMaster indicated that the Men's Shed would be happy to take it back and refund the cost. Members agreed this course of action.

**Hill of Fare Proposed Wind Farm:** The reporter report and recommendation to Scottish Ministers is delayed and not now expected until end February 2026. A decision is therefore highly unlikely before the Scottish Parliament elections. Item will be closed until a decision is issued.

**SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal:** Angus Council has refused permission for the new 400kV sub-station at Tealing. Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee discussed the Fetteresso sub-station application at their meeting this week but didn't take a position for or against. The application will be decided by the Infrastructure Services Committee.

**Speed Limit Reductions:** Cllr Miller sent a query to Ann Overton about the consultation process for the proposed reductions to 30mph on the Old Skene Road between Kirkton of Skene and Westhill, and on the B9126 at Mason Lodge. Members haven't seen any response.

**Winter Grit Bins:** Chris Minchin acquired 4 grit bins for Dunecht during the recent heavy snow and was also able to collect a trailer load of grit from the Council Roads department, despite the Council having mislaid his application to be a snow warden. CLOSED

**Vegetation Obscuring Road Signs:** Roads Department appears to expect landowners adjacent to the roads to ensure that signs are not obscured by trees and other vegetation. They say they've contacted the landowner at Skene School about the branches obscuring the flashing 20 mph sign but no cutting back has taken place yet.

#### **New Planning Applications:**

- APP/2025/2109 Siting of storage unit – CNC Garlogie, Echt, AB32 6US No comment
- APP/2025/2018 Restoration of Beam Engine (retrospective) – Garlogie Beam Engine Trust, Garlogie Mill Power House, AB32 6RX No comment

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Income since last meeting: nil

Expenditure since last meeting:

- £76.76 for purchase of folding trolleys for power banks from resilience grant
- £15 hall fees
- £216 for purchase of wildflower plug plants for Barmekin Park Biodiversity scheme (from ring-fenced Echt Park grant monies)
- £32 for colour printer ink
- £100 for purchase of salt spreader from resilience grant

Cash in Bank: £6,262.45 (£25.24 ringfenced for resilience centres; £1846 ring-fenced for Echt Park; £382.52 ring-fenced for flower barrels; £4,008.69 general ESCC funds)

It was agreed in principle to fund the purchase of materials for the Skene Paths Group drainage works on the Bothy 57 path (expected to be around £300-400).

#### **Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:**

- Vattenfall Unlock Our Future Fund is open for grant applications up to £20k with closing date of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Energy efficiency measures for our local Halls would appear to be a good fit with the funding criteria.

**AOCB:**

- It was agreed to move the date of the May meeting from 14<sup>th</sup> May to 21<sup>st</sup> May. As a consequence, the venues for the April and May meetings will swap over

**Future Meeting Dates:**

- 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026 Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene
- 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 Garlogie Hall
- 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026 Lyne of Skene Hall
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026 Dunecht Hall