

Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 9th April 2026 at Garlogie Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), Nick Pilbeam (Secretary), Greig Russell, Chris Minchin, Ian MacMaster, 2 Dunecht residents, 2 Echt residents, 1 Garlogie resident

Apologies: Niall McBeath, Paula Houston, Cllr Ron McKail, Cllr Craig Miller

Minute of last meeting: Approved

Police Report: No report received. Ron McKail received a resident complaint about vehicle speeds in Echt. This was passed to the Police and Roads for a response. There have been a number of thefts recently in our area – 2 of heating oil on day of new delivery) and 1 of greenhouse glass from Echt Horticultural Society.

Skene Paths Group: Litter picking date still to be arranged.

Hill of Fare Wind Farm: New correspondence has been received from the DPEA in light of a recent successful judicial challenge into the consent for a wind farm in SW Scotland. The judgement ruled that the EIA for the wind farm was incomplete because it didn't include the impact of the grid connection, without which the wind farm cannot function. Members confirmed their approval of £100 contribution towards the legal costs of a joint response from the six CCs and HoFWIG. The other five CCs are each making the same contribution.

NE Scotland Convention of Community Councils: Representatives of the NESCCC are attended a Holyrood summit on 24th February on the call for a moratorium on renewable developments along with representatives from Borders and Highlands. There was a disappointingly short meeting with Gillian Martin (40 mins) considering the time and effort taken by Community Councillors to attend.

WECC Joint Statement on Aberdeenshire Council Funding Share: ESCC is now a signatory. A recent Audit Scotland report noted that Aberdeenshire has a forecast £81 million deficit over the next few years. There was criticism from members of the Council's approach to project cost management. For example, absurd sums appear to have been spent on minor school improvements.

GACCF 4th March Feedback: There was a presentation from Garioch Heat Networks who propose recovering waste heat from a new Energy-from-waste plant at Inverurie for use in homes and businesses. They are investigating the use of piped heat in towns but also heat batteries for rural premises. They are looking for a volunteer from a rural CC to help shape a consultation.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Community Resilience: Chris has found a snow blower for sale for £627. The total cost of purchase including a storage shed would be £875. **Actions:** Chris to apply for funding for new snow blower, and also to return the salt spreader to Westhill Men's Shed for a refund.

Aberdeenshire Council has offered ESCC a powerbank, which is surplus to their requirements. We will deploy it in Garlogie Hall.

SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal: Fiona is coordinating PLI participation with 8 other CCs along the route (Inveresk, Crathes Drumoak Durriss, Kintore, Mearns, Glamis, Tealing, Banchory and Kirriemuir Landward East). The hearing sessions will take place in the second half of June. There are a number of deadlines for written submissions ahead of these sessions. Fiona will be speaking on behalf of ESCC at the Community Hearing.

Speed Limit Reductions: Regarding Old Skene Road, WECC requested an extension of the 30mph limit from Broadshade to the Hill of Keir Road, and a reduction from 60mph for the remainder of the stretch to Kirkton of Skene. The Chair has apologised for interfering with roads matters in ESCC territory. Fiona has asked for a copy of the Council's Speed Limits Manual to understand why Roads is proposing 30mph for the whole distance between Westhill and Kirkton of Skene.

Vegetation Obscuring Road Signs: No progress with Skene School flashing signs.

218 Bus Service Diversion: Bus service 218 between Aberdeen and Alford, which normally serves Kirkton of Skene and Lyne of Skene, continues to be diverted onto the A944 because double decker buses were being damaged by overhanging branches. Chris reported that Dunecht Estate has a contractor ready to do the branch cutting and is waiting for Roads to schedule the road closure for the work to take place. In the meantime, the Council has said Lyne of Skene residents may use the Mon-Fri A2B service to Westhill or could call on the Westhill Community Minibus for help.

Flower Barrels: Echt Horticultural Society are still to find out likely costs for plants this year, before we put out a call for donations to fund them. It was agreed to extend the scheme to include 4/5 barrels at Garlogie Hall as well.

New Planning Applications:

- APP/2026/0410 & 0412 Alterations, Dormer Extension to Dwellinghouse and Erection of Garage - Kirkstane House, Glebe Land, Kirkton of Skene, Westhill, AB32 6XE No comment
- APP/2026/0560 Internal and External Alterations - Monecht House Echt Westhill AB32 6UN This property has been empty and deteriorating for some years. It was agreed to make comments in support of this application.

Treasurer's Report:

Paula has found an independent examiner for the 2025-26 accounts (Amanda Blackwood).

Income since last meeting: nil

Expenditure since last meeting:

- £97.20 Zurich Insurance
- £60 Website fees
- £60 Lyne of Skene planters
- £15 Echt hall fees

Cash in Bank: £6,015.25 (£25.24 ringfenced for resilience centres; £1846 ring-fenced for Echt Park; £382.52 ring-fenced for flower barrels; £3,761.49 general ESCC funds)

It was agreed to make a £20 contribution to Milne Hall electricity costs.

Correspondence/Consultations/Upcoming Events:

- The Council has notified us of online training modules available for Community Councillors

AOCB:

No further matters raised

Future Meeting Dates:

- 21st May 2026 Lyne of Skene Hall
- 25th June 2026 Dunecht Hall (AGM)