Echt & Skene Community Council

Minute of Meeting held 29th October 2026 at Garlogie Hall

Present: Fiona Bick (chair), Niall MacBeath, Nick Pilbeam, Chris Minchin, Greig Russell, Ian MacMaster, Paula Houston, Cllr Ron McKail, Cllr Craig Miller, 1 Echt resident, 1 Dunecht resident, 1 Garlogie resident, Rachel & Stef Gambro

Apologies:

Minute of last meeting: Approved

Proposal for Community Supported Agricultural Venture: Stef & Rachel Gambro informed members about an initiative they're seeking to get off the ground for a community-owned market garden close to Westhill. Their proposal is to employ one or more staff to grow fruit and vegetables for participating households. An article appeared in the Westhill Bulletin which elicited 150 responses, mostly positive. They are looking at a number of potential sites within walking distance of Westhill, including the Easter Skene walled garden, Kirkton House walled garden and Northside land SW of Elrick which has been put forward as Bid Site 0349/0350 by Aberdeen City Council.

Police Report: The Garioch Area 3Q Police Report was received. There was a minor issue with the web links in the document not being active, but active links were provided separately by email on request. Members agreed that the style and content of the report was much improved on the 1Q and 2Q reports with more detail provided about both reported and prosecuted incidents, and the numbers of incidents by location.

Niall expressed concern about the speed of vehicles on the B977 entering Lyne of Skene 20mph zone from the Dunecht direction. The problem seems to have got worse since the clearance of Blue Park in preparation for new houses. **Action**: Fiona to raise matter with Police and Roads

Skene Paths Group: The grass embankment at the entrance to Pitcairn Lodge from the A944 was graded and given a new hardcore/quarry dust surface this week, with a dropped kerb installed. This work was commissioned by the Council Active Travel Coordinator following discussion with Fiona in March.

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Hill of Fare Wind Farm: We are still waiting for a decision by Scottish Ministers.

Community Resilience:

1) Storm Boele brought power cuts to Dunecht and parts of Echt for 2-4 days in the past week. The last houses within Dunecht Estate policies were re-connected on the day of the meeting. The outages were due to trees bringing down power lines. Dunecht Hall's generator was fired up and the hall was opened for residents to use. Echt Hall was also opened up by its committee for residents without power. Aberdeenshire Council will not pay for the costs of opening Community Resilience centres, and ESCC resources are limited, so we have to rely on hall committees deciding whether and how to make their halls available in such circumstances. **Action**: Nick to contact hall committees to understand their policies and discuss how energy costs could be covered e.g. donations.

2) Nick has updated the text of main body of the Community Resilience folder contents. The Appendices are unchanged. **Action** Nick to print copies for each hall

3) Snow Blowers: 90% of the grant funding is expected to be remitted to ESCC's bank account by Aberdeenshire Council verysoon. ESCC will need to purchase the blowers and trailer then make a claim for reimbursement of the remaining 10% grant. Chris has identified the equipment suppliers and will arrange a training and risk assessment session for volunteers willing to operate the blowers once we have them. The blowers will be notified to the Register of Community Assets which are available to assist those in need during adverse weather, etc.

Action from previous meetings: Chris still to return the salt spreader to Westhill Men's Shed for a refund. It requires a trailer to transport it.

SSEN Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL Proposal: Final submissions have been made by the main protagonists following the hearing on Agricultural Operation and Health & Safety. A number of the many wayleave applications made by SSEN along the route have been postponed due to the overlapping issues with the OHL. The next stage in the process is for the Reporters to make their recommendation to Scottish Ministers. Given the delays in the submission of the Hill of Fare PLI report, the timeline for this one also seems uncertain.

Speed Limit Reductions: No update, although it was noted that the consultation promised for 4Q hasn't been published yet.

Vegetation Obscuring Road Signs: Following Ron McKail's prompting, Roads finally got round to actioning this, with the result that Dunecht Estate has cut back the beech hedge. **CLOSED**

Echt Pleasure Park Litter Bins: Fiona wrote to the Garioch contact for Landscape Services but has received no response to date. **Action**: Fiona to escalate to Ann Overton

New Planning Applications: None submitted since the last meeting.

Prior 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 was consented after Ward 13 members decided to delegate the decision to Planning Officers, rather than refer the application to the Garioch Area Committee.

Treasurer's Report:

No income or expenditure since last meeting.

Cash in Bank: £6,263.13 (£25.24 ringfenced for resilience centres; £1846 ring-fenced for Echt Park; £4,391.89 general ESCC funds)

Future Meeting Dates:

- 17th December 2026 Echt Hall
- 28th January 2027 Dunecht Hall
- 11th March 2027 Milne Hall
- 22nd April 2027 Lyne of Skene Hall
- 3rd June 2027 Garlogie Hall AGM

AOCB:

- Community Firework Display –Paula consulted with Echt residents with 85% of respondents being supportive. She passed this information back to Sam, who proposed the idea.