



Minutes of Meeting held on 27 March 2025

(at Aboyne Library)

Attending

Community Councillors

Martin Ogden (MO) (Chair), Steven Lindsay (SO) (Vice Chair), Grahame Wilson (GW) (Treasurer), Chris Grieve (CG), Alastair Brodie (AB)

Aberdeenshire Councillors

Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB)

Others

Sgt Masson, Ethyl May McCreadie

1. Welcome, apologies and conflicts

Apologies: Fiona Sawyer (FS), Alison Pollock (AP), Rose Bradford (RB), Mike Brown (MB), Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB), Cllr Anouk Kloppert (CAK)

Absent: None

Any conflicts of interest declared: None

2. Minutes of meetings – for approval

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 were approved as a true record.

3. Matters arising/actions status

#	Topic	Action Item	Status	Resp.	Opened	Status
1.	Fraud and scam visits – Request to present to local groups	Email local groups to gauge interest	MO to Close Out	MO	Feb 25	Open
2.	Aboyne Academy Anniversary	Post info on notice board	Remove outdated notices and put up new ones.	AB	Feb 25	Open

3.	Tenant Participation Advert	Post info on notice board	Remove outdated notices and put up new ones.	AB	Feb 25	Open
4.	Invitation to discuss community approaches to landscape regeneration	FS to get in touch Cambridge University to explore. May integrate with Aboyne Green Spaces, in which case CG to take to MDCT		FS	Feb 25	Open
5.	K'ON resident request for assistance	CG to take to K'ON Community Association to investigate further	E-mail sent awaiting reply	CG	Feb 25	Open
6.	Phone box removal ON A93	Response to Marr Area	Email sent objecting to the removal but no response	MO	Feb 25	Open

4. Correspondence and communications

a. Police Reports and Further Discussion

Sgt Masson advised that there had been a drop in crimes from 64 in Q3 2024 to 27 in Q4 2024. Inspector Grieg is trying to book a speed camera unit slot to monitor the A93.

There was a discussion on Aberdeenshire Council's proposal's for the implementation of 20 mph speed limits across Aberdeenshire. CSB showed the maps for Aboyne, Dinnet and Kincardine O'Neil, but advised that there would be a delay until mid April until these were published for public consultation.

On another subject the Council had not approved a temporary lower speed limit on the South Deeside road as requested at the previous meeting by the 2 Birse residents who attended then.

b. Glenskinnan Renewable Energy Park Proposal

Feughside Community Council reached out to neighbouring CCs regarding an energy park proposal (wind turbines, solar panels and battery storage) in the vicinity of Knockburn Loch leisure facility. It was unclear what the Feughside CC position was on the proposed development. Action CG to write and clarify for interest, but position of the MDCC was that this is out-of-area.

c. Closure of Aboyne Royal Mail Sorting Office

The Aboyne sorting office is to close. The mail will be now be collected from Ballater. Post-meeting it was discovered (CG) that the mail will be sorted in Altens (Aberdeen) and brought in pre-sorted carts to Ballater to be loaded into vans. The question arose as to where undelivered mail would be collected as this is currently from the Aboyne post office.

d. Request from other CCs on support for letter re' Council Funding

No action to be taken (SL recused).

e. Notice Board Maintenance

The noticeboard has a lot of out-of-date material. AB offered to remove this and post newer notices as per items 3.2 and 3.3.

5. Reports

a. Treasurer

Report noted with thanks. Council-provided funding of £497 for the LPP was received.

Insurance renewal due end March 2025 (last year the £177 was covered by core funding).

MO received a quote from insurers Zurich to cover all resilience hub equipment, not least the two generators owned by MDCC, which were confirmed not to have been insured. The quote was £646, which it was discussed could be funded from the Resilience fund. This insurance to be added to the policy.

b. Aberdeenshire Councillors

i. Councillor Sarah Brown

Report noted with thanks.

Aboyne Bridge. On the 11th March 2025, Marr Area Committee unanimously agreed to the option of limited strengthening of the bridge to enable it to reopen with an 18-tonne vehicle limit. The £1.5 - £3.0 million proposal will see vertical pins installed in the structure with the removal and replacement of the concrete deck. The target completion date is December 2026, as it was unanimously agreed it was imperative to get the bridge fixed and opened as soon as possible.

School Roll Forecast. The 2024 pupil census showed that there are 20,125 primary pupils and 15,892 secondary pupils in Aberdeenshire. This is a reduction of 400 primary and an increase of 40 secondary pupils from 2023. School rolls are forecast to drop over the next 5 years (a table was provided).

Aberdeenshire Council Budget 2025-2026. Councillors agreed to apply a 10% increase in Council Tax for the next year 2025 – 2026 with further 8% increases in 2026-2027 and 2027-2028. Savings of just under £14 million in 2025-2026 were detailed.

Aboyne Flood Study. Officers have confirmed that the flood study for Aboyne is due to start at the end of the year as laid out in the North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-2028 (Cycle 2).

c. Planning applications

Planning report noted without comment.

d. LPP Report

FS provided an LLP report (23rd March 2025). The LPP Group is progressing the Initial Actions in Section 5.1 of the LPP.

The immediate focus is obtaining funding and a location for a Community Hub (Initiative #22 – Improve communications). This will help progress a number of other initiatives including #17, #18 and #23. Steve Albon has applied to the National Lottery Fund for funding but we are also looking into other funding opportunities, including working with the Aboyne Games Committee. We are actively pursuing potential central village locations such as the Victory Hall. In addition, progress is being made with reinstating Aboyne Business Association (two active business community members organised an initial meeting on Tuesday 25 March) and progressing the public transport initiatives.

The above actions are being taken by the LPP team, but it is important to reach out to the community to involve others in taking forward these and other initiatives. We have written to Aboyne Primary and Aboyne Secondary with a view to working with pupils going forward, and we also consider it important to reach out to the community.

MDCC support is requested as follows:

1. The LPP team would like to attend Aboyne Farmers' Markets in April and May to raise general awareness and encourage ownership of the plan. Also to publicise the new MDCC FIG group and garner interest for joining a new group focusing on speeding, parking and roads issues in Aboyne. This would also be an opportunity to encourage community members to join MDCC as community councillors, associated members or volunteers. It was agreed to fund a stall (estimated cost £25 each time) and it was raised if any MDCC councillors could man the stalls.
2. The need to establish a new MDCC FIG group was discussed, with if there is enough community interest, new groups on speeding, parking and roads. Alastair White of the LPP Group has researched flooding and erosion and is preparing an overview. There were no immediate volunteers at the meeting. SL expressed concerns about setting up new sub-groups.
3. We would like to do a leaflet drop in Aboyne to raise awareness that the LPP has been registered and call for volunteers/interest in helping with the various initiatives (and this could also be a call for new community councillors). This would be a double-sided A4 page. We are looking into costs but on previous experience this should be approximately £150 – funding was agreed and volunteers sought for the door drop.
4. At the community group LPP engagement meeting last Spring, a lot of interest was expressed in holding similar meetings on a regular basis to help community groups share experience and expertise. The LPP group would like to organise the first of these on Thursday 1 May 2025 at the Learning Plaza with a view to MDCC eventually taking over running these meetings every 3 to 4 months. It was discussed whether hosting these meetings could be rotated through different groups/bodies to share the load. **The above items to be further discussed at next MDCC meeting in April when FS is present.**

6. Aboyne Bridge

CSB has reported the overgrown vegetation along the road to the council – awaiting response. The application (CSB) for a temporary speed limit was turned down as it doesn't meet the necessary criteria (MO to follow up with Birse ladies who attended previous meeting).

MO had a productive meeting with James Jones (JJ) of the timber business and was impressed about the clear instructions given to timber lorry drivers as to the correct routes to use. If lorries are seen on the minor roads than these vehicles should be reported to JJ with date, time and registration plate.

7. MDCC sub-groups

a. Resilience

No update.

b. Defibrillators

Discussion on the Loch Kinord Hotel defib. There is a general lack of signage to direct people to the nearest defibrillator with an example quoted where there was an incident at the bridge and people going to Strachans rather than the much nearer Boat Inn defib. Could defibs be marked on the new paths and track map, in addition to improved signage.

c. Communications

No update.

d. Local Energy

No update

e. Local Place Plan Group

See Item 5 d.

f. MDCT

CG to attend EGM of MDCT on 8th April 2025 where a name change to ACT (Aboyne Community Trust) is being proposed and report back.

g. Kincardine O'Neil CA

No report.

8. Any Other Competent Business

Ethyl May McCreadie attended the meeting to follow up on her concerns about the legal ownership and very poor condition of the road outside her house. This item was taken immediately after the police report. Her comments were noted. MO advised that the enquiry was with the Council Legal Dept. and still awaiting a reply.

9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

7 – 8.45pm, Thursday 24 April 2025, Aboyne Library (upstairs).

