**Minutes of Meeting 25 January 2024**

**(held at Aboyne Library)**

**Attending**

Community Councillors

Chris Grieve (CG) (Acting Chair), Grahame Wilson (GW/Treasurer), Fiona Sawyer (FS) (Acting Secretary), Mike Brown (MB), Alastair Brodie (AB), Volha (Olga) Druhakova (VD), Alison Pollock (AP)

Aberdeenshire Councillors

Cllr Anouk Kloppert (CAK)

Others

Sgt Allan Masson, PC Simon Anderson

1. **Welcome, apologies and conflicts**

**Apologies:** Martin Ogden (MO/Chair), Steven Lindsay (SL/Vice Chair), Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB), Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB)

Bernie Cassie (BC)

**Absent:**

**Any conflicts of interest declared:**

1. **Minutes of previous meeting - for approval**

The minutes of the MDCC meeting held in November 2023 approved as a true record. MB proposed, CG seconded.

1. **Upper Deeside Police Report**

Q4 Police report.

End Q3 – few online frauds remain undetected – cold calls/email/WhatsApp. Difficult to detect/prosecute therefore to be tackled through education. Therefore ongoing work with crime reduction team – any group requiring guest speaker to get in touch with Sgt Masson.

Three offences of carrying a knife – serious but isolated and more due to stupidity rather than malice or intent to do harm.

Crime numbers (51 in total) show that a number relate to one individual, and that no threat to the community.

To be aware - Theft of horsebox at Migvie – believed taken to Huntly where pickup truck and quad bokes stolen. Pickup was returned but not horsebox. Horsebox had no security and parked at side of road.

Mountain rescue incidents – most challenging was avalanche on side of Ben Macdui. Thankfully no fatality as feared.

MDCC could support with interactions with public on themes such as fraud – that default position should be to disbelieve cold calls/messages.

There is no information that Aboyne police station may relocate. Discussions are ongoing within Police Scotland about the police estate, but no news regarding Aboyne office save that it is a bigger building than is currently needed.

Parking on pavements – how are Aberdeenshire police dealing with this issue/enforcement? Not decriminalised in Aberdeenshire therefore still responsibility of the police. Will be policies coming out but nothing formalised yet. If there is an obstruction, members of the public can call the police who will deal with it. Noted that for enforcement, need more than the registration of the vehicle; also details of who parked the vehicle.

Confirmed that motorbikes cannot cross Aboyne Bridge – can be an ASBO, bike seized, fine and points on licence. Registrations to be reported to the police. If helmet can be identified and colour/type of bike, police can also use this information.

1. **Matters arising/actions status**

Actions status:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Topic** | **Action Item** | **Status** | **Resp.** | **Opened** | **Status** |
| 1. | Who’s Who for Aboyne | Create a list of representation of groups, organisations, clubs in Aboyne. | AP to contact Aboyne-Dinnet Church to request ilink to list on Aboyne-Dinnet Church website, or include list on MDCC website or to use information from list to include on website.  AP can regularly post on MDCC social media asking new groups and old groups with contact changes to let MDCC know for purposes of keeping list updated. | AP | Sept ‘22 | Closed |
| 2. | Darroch Wood – planning issues | FS to forward comments on TRE/2023/0049 to planning officer as noted in planning report and VD email of 25/5/23.  CSB to request all-parties meeting with Aberdeenshire Council to discuss both TRE/2023/0049 and enforcement request. | Resident has submitted a planning application to turn the open land into private garden. | CSB | May ‘23 | Closed |
| 3. | Defibs | MDCT taking over responsibility for defibs as new group within MDCT. | See Item 7(a) below. | GW | May ‘23 | Open |

1. **Correspondence and communications**
   1. **Hill of Fare Wind Farm Update** - planning application has been submitted to the Scottish Government for 16 x 200m wind turbines (very tall). Final date for comment is 2 February 2024. MDCC have been invited to “object”, however we have had very little feedback from the community to support any objection.

Two letters – from RES (developer) and Nae Fare (objectors). Andrew Bowie is objecting as is Alastair Burnett.

It was agreed that MDCC is not placed to decide how our community would like us to respond. Agreed to advertise on local community noticeboards and on MDCC social media to provide information to the community for them to decide whether to make a submission. CG to share information with AB and AP.

* 1. **Marr Area Partnership IGS Fund** - request to promote the scheme.

A4 flyer for noticeboards. Can apply for £750. Being advertised on MDCC socials.

* 1. **New Scotland-wide community project funding from the Royal Society of Edinburgh** - funding may be available for energy group.

£5000 of funding. Applications closed.

* 1. **Pavement parking enforcement** - information only

See Police Report at section 3 and Aberdeenshire Council newsletter (council website, 7 December 2024). Came into force on Monday 11 December 2023. Parking on pavements now illegal but not currently enforced.

* 1. **Digital Engagement Newsletter** - information only

<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/digital-engagement-newsletter>

Resilience – discussed BT transfer to Digital Voice and conversations after Storm Arwen and Storm Eustice regarding risks where mobile networks are down. BT are now continuing transfer of customers to Digital Voice. Government focus is on building resilience within the mobile phone network. Noted that modern mobile phones (eg latest iPhone) can automatically connect to low level satellite network when usual networks are down. For further discussion by resilience team.

* 1. **Dee Catchment Workshop** - information only

Number of local organisations are getting together to look at water quality management, flood control, etc. SEPA concerned about farm discharge into rivers, likely due to impact of nutrient pollution (nitrates).

River Dee is opening at Milton of Crathes beat on 1 February 2024.

* 1. **Greenspace Perennials for Pollinators 2024**

Applications due in by 1 February 2024. Range of plants. Aboyne Green Spaces are applying on behalf of Aboyne. CG applying on behalf of Kinker. CG to pass to MO for purposes of Dinnet.

* 1. **Top Up Taps in Braemar and Aboyne** - information only

Blue protective winter jackets are now on the Scottish Water taps in the centre of both villages.

* 1. **ATM Provision** - Process for requesting additional cash during peak times.

Suggested 12 week notice period before any event for ATMs to be loaded with extra money, eg prior to Highland Games and bonfire night. Information to be passed to Games Secretary and Bonfire Committee organisers.

* 1. **Aberdeenshire Council Online Bus Forum (December 2023)** - Information only. New timetables have been made available. LPP survey responses focused heavily on buses. Also noted the Aberdeenshire Council Transport survey – see MDCC social media. Closing date 11 February 2024.
  2. **Cairngorms Cultural Heritage Network Survey**

Information only. Survey closed.

1. **Reports**
   1. **Treasurer**

See report. One item of expenditure, for defib pads and batteries at Strachans. £428 was required and some taken from general funds

* + 1. **Insurance renewal**

Aberdeenshire Council are having to change the way that they deal with insurance for CCs. In the past it bought a group insurance that originally covered everybody, then for each CC, in each case with the council paying the insurance premium and deducted from council funding. Now, individual CCs have to purchase their own liability insurance. The existing provider is suggested to be the best. Insurance renewal is due in April. The council will still fund retrospectively after annual accounts have been approved at the AGM.

Query whether the existing type of policy provided by Zurich will still be available for community councils. To be investigated.

Reassess insurance policy regarding scope required for Switched On Aboyne once SOA arrangements are confirmed (see (ii) below).

* + 1. **Insurance of Switched On Aboyne equipment**

Some years ago there was as line in MDCC insurance specific to ‘Switched On Aboyne’ but this seems to have been dropped.

Mick Mallet has now sold his cherry picker. When it was being stored in the Games Shed, the Games committee were concerned regarding insurance because it was charging via a cable from the Community Shed. The lights continue to be stored in the Games Shed and will need summer maintenance - some are faulty and beyond repair. It was noted that the council are difficult to deal with to get the lights up.

There is money in the SOA account which was originally funded from MDCC. Mick Mallett is happy to pass to MDCC to ring-fence and pass on to the next operator.

It is proposed to warn there will be no lights in 2024 unless a project manager and electrician can take up the ownership. There is 1800 GBP in Switched on Aboyne Account

GW to bank SOA funds

Agreed that MDCC need to have very clear policies and link for insurance.

AP to advertise urgent need for new SOA co-ordinator for SOA – no Christmas lights in 2024 otherwise.

* 1. **Aberdeenshire Councillors** 
     1. CGB Report

None received.

* + 1. CSB Report

None received.

* + 1. CAK Report

Responding to queries regarding path clearance, windows at Bonty Court and bridge closure.

Council Budget will be issued in February with heavy cuts. There are no details available at present. Potential to close rural schools with no capacity for new schools. Also reduce winter maintenance and cuts in sports provision. There is a £67 deficit and also a freeze on Council Tax. Noted difficulties with recruiting staff.

Aboyne Bridge is second in line for repairs after Banff Bridge.

* 1. **Planning applications**

APP/2023/2308 – no comments.

APP/2023/1155 – Pass to MO for comments on behalf of the Dinnet community. Noted that MDCC would like to see additional planting along the northern boundary between the car park to screen the view.

1. **Aboyne Bridge**

Aboyne Bridge to be included as standing item on MDCC agenda from now on.

Bridge meeting due to be held on 23 January postponed due to adverse weather. Noted that Council team view the meeting as an MDCC meeting rather than a council meeting. Looking at 6 February for potential new date. Noted kind offer to host from Spider on a Bicycle. FS advised by council to contact LETS team to enquire about available of Academy venues during the day, particularly during school holidays. FS to action.

1. **MDCC sub-groups**
   1. **Defibrillators**

Incident outside Strachans in December which required replacement parts, batteries, pads etc – see Treasurer’s report.

GW has met with MDCT Chair, Vice-chair and administrators regarding MDCT taking over funding of defibs. MDCT to take over at the end of January 2024 – CG/CAK to confirm whether final approval given by MDCT at January meeting. GW to continue to work with MDCC volunteers doing the checks but under the umbrella of MDCT. Need to change the process for receiving alerts from BHF’s The Circuit. The Circuit entry also needs to be updated to reflect change from MDCC to MDCT - MDCT must take on this responsibility, GW to assist.

Unanimously agreed that MDCC will transfer responsibility for maintenance and checking the defibs to MDCT and close the ring-fenced account, such that MDCC will no longer have any responsibility or input into looking after the defibs.

It was noted for interest that The Circuit knows whether a defib has been used through the ambulance service, but there is no direct notification if a member of the public accesses it without going through the ambulance service. Could include contact details on the internal yellow defib case for members of the public to call, rather than on the wall-box.

* 1. **Resilience**

Bad flooding in Kincardine O’Neil from recent storms. Kincardine O’Neil Community Association is approaching KO’N councillors to take forward actions. MDCC should consider doing same for other areas under MDCC umbrella.

* 1. **Youth Engagement**

No update. Group now constituted under MDCT. Agreed to remove from future agendas as no longer an MDCC project.

* 1. **Communications**

AP has social media posts lined up and will include planning applications comms too. Will build comms strategy.

FS to forward to AP information included in previous Facebook posts on planning applications in the MDCC area.

* 1. **Local Energy**

Last meeting cancelled due to illness. Ballater interested to know what we are doing. Assessing options. No new meetings with Gliding Club regards solar.

* 1. **Local Place Plan Group**

Survey evaluation first stage complete; finalising detail of data analysis. First sweep made to identify key themes. Next step to prepare initiative sheets for each theme. Now meeting twice per month, once in person and once online.

Have welcomed two new members – Graham Colclough and Steve Albon. Graham has significant professional experience in planning for cities around the world and is applying his knowledge to our plan. We are hoping to create a plan which, in addition to being a Local Place Plan, will provide a vision for the future development of the village and our community. We are hoping to achieve this within the first two quarters of this year.

We hope to be in a position soon to report back more fully to this group, to Aberdeenshire Councillors and to the community generally.

We have been contacted by other groups keen to understand how we have undertaken this process. We have learned much from our survey – for example we are not sure that we would recommend using the Place Standard Tool for a written survey in the future, although a final assessment on this will be easier to make once we have finished working with the data.

Noted that there are delays in the Local Development Plan scheme, but the Aboyne LPP work is continuing to current timetable.

* 1. **Switched on Aboyne**

See Item 6(a)(ii).

1. **Other groups**
   1. **MDCT**

CG could not attend the most recent MDCT meeting. To report at next meeting.

1. **Any Other Competent Business**
   1. **New invoice from Parish Online #S34067-0002** – relates to MDCC licence for Community Map Scotland for use with LPP work. LPP looking into mapping options. Not likely to renew Parish Online licence. No need to pay invoice.
   2. **Google Workspace account** – Approved cost of £7.99 per month for this, which allows up to five linked users to, eg, conduct meetings using Google Meet for large number of users for over one hour. Aboyne LPP is now a “family member” of MDCC for purposes of organising Google meetings. Other groups such as a resilience group could do the same. Reimbursement of £7.99 per month to FS approved.
   3. **Credit Card for MDCC purchases** – no time for discussion. For discussion at future meeting.
   4. **Area of Land and Road west of Bellwood Road Aboyne re use, maintenance, rights of access, etc** (taken in private) – FS to action.
   5. **Aboyne Green tree planting consultation** ([https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/aboyne-green-improvements)](https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/aboyne-green-improvements)-) – details have been posted on MDCC social media.
   6. **MDCC recruitment** – discussed **urgent** need to recruit new members to fill spaces on MDCC to full complement of 13 community councillors, and urgent need for new Secretary, new Planning Lead and new co-ordinator for Switched On Aboyne. If no new members by June, MDCC may not be sustainable, but existence of community council is critical for the Mid Deeside Area and for registering the Aboyne LPP. Pleas for new volunteers have been added to the website. To be advertised further on social media. All to try to help recruit new members.
2. **Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

**Next general meeting** - 7-8.45 pm Thursday, 22 February 2024 at Aboyne Library (upstairs in the Library)