



Minutes of Meeting held on 27 February 2025 (at Aboyne Library)

Attending

Community Councillors

Martin Ogden (MO) (Chair), Steven Lindsay (SO) (Vice Chair), Grahame Wilson (GW) (Treasurer), Fiona Sawyer (FS) (Acting Secretary), Rose Bradford (RB), Mike Brown (MB), Chris Grieve (CG), Alison Pollock (AP), Alastair Brodie (AB)

Aberdeenshire Councillors

Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB)

Others

Two residents impacted by the closure of Aboyne bridge (live in the MDCC area south of the river).

1. Welcome, apologies and conflicts

Apologies: 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 23 January 2025 were approved as a true record.

3. Matters arising/actions status

#	Topic	Action Item	Status	Resp.	Opened	Status
1.	MDCC Resilience	Request made by Aboyne Scout Hut Trustees for written agreement for its use as the Aboyne Hub	Jan'25 – No further update from Scout Hut Trustees No update but there has been a change in trustees. Agreed to	SL	June '24	Closed

			close, to be reopened if trustees respond with further request.			
2.	Summer Bedding plants	MO to contact Marr Area to check whether there are conversations between community councils about this that could be shared.	Mail sent to Janelle Clark. Response - “was no indication from any of the community councils that they wanted to work in partnership to access and grow bedding plants.”	MO	Jan 24	Closed

4. Correspondence and communications

a. Community Council Elections Survey - request for feedback

Noted.

b. Community Council Training – Renewables and Energy Consents - Local Energy action

Noted. Also noted information shared by CSB regarding how to see planning consents for energy projects in the area.

AB to action.

c. APTG Grant Application for Strimmer training – Info only

MO to clarify with APTG the reason for the notification.

d. Fraud and scam visits – Request to present to local groups

Noted. Can be taken to other groups, eg residents’ groups.

Action – email local groups and ask if they are interested [to be allocated].

e. Aboyne Academy Anniversary – for publishing

Noted.

Noted that community noticeboard key holders include AB, Olga Druhakova and The Corner House.

AB to print and put on community noticeboard.

f. Tenant Participation Advert – request to display posters

AB to print and put on community noticeboard.

g. CNPA - Transforming Transport Grant

<https://cairngorms.co.uk/transforming-transport-grant-opens-for-applications/>
<https://cairngorms2030.commonplace.is/en-GB/news/transforming-transport-grant-opens-for-applications>

MO has passed to Graham Colclough of the LPP team who is actioning the relevant Initiative in the Aboyne LPP.

h. Invitation to discuss community approaches to landscape regeneration - LPP?

Discussed in autumn 2024.

FS to get in touch Cambridge University to explore. May integrate with Aboyne Green Spaces, in which case CG to take to MDCT.

i. Forest Management carried out by UK Forest Certification Ltd – request for info

Noted.

j. Aboyne Green – June 2025 Mountain Biking Event – request for endorsement

Query whether MDCC endorsement is sought, if so then would need to go to community to get views. However, MDCC have no objections.

MO to revert to AF to check whether endorsement sought or sufficient that MDCC have no objections.

k. K'ON resident request for assistance

Discussed that Mid Deeside Day Centre (operates at Victory Hall) or MDCT (for help with transport and trips to hospitals) may be able to offer assistance. Could also signpost to Deeside Befriending.

CG to take to K'ON Community Association to investigate further.

l. Phone box removal ON A93 O/S CO-OP SUPERMARKET (now the Corner House) - PCO1 BALLATER ROAD, ABOYNE

Comments to be submitted by 13 March 2025.

Discussed concern about losing the phone box for resilience purposes – want to keep a box with a copper wire in the event of storm and losing the mobile phone masts (as happened during Storm Arwen). CSB also noted that:

- The number of calls made from the box during the past year is only three phone calls shy of the threshold.
- Aboyne had three “3s” and one “4”.
- The box is on a main travel corridor through Deeside.
- If the box is to be disconnected, can purchase as a community for £1 for a community library, defibs etc (see K'ON for example).

MDCC to respond that the community does not want to lose the phone box for above reasons. Note that need to make a case/good reason for keeping it.

MO to action.

5. Reports

a. Treasurer

Report noted with thanks. Only change from last month are payments out against the LPP grant which Marr Area Committee have confirmed will be refunded to MDCC within a few weeks.

Insurance renewal due end March 2025.

MO to confirm with Zurich that all resilience hub equipment is covered by the insurance policy, particularly the two generators owned by MDCC.

SL to speak with Robert Dinnie, VC of Games Committee, regarding insurance for Switched On Aboyne.

b. Aberdeenshire Councillors

i. *Councillor Sarah Brown*

Report noted with thanks.

Victory Hall Trustees. Critical situation. Need new trustees – about to lose trustees. Risk of being under-quorate for meetings. Help needed. Very open to new ideas and trying new initiatives to bring in money, but need new trustees in order to survive. Want to employ someone. Only five trustees at the moment. A community co-ordinator would help.

AP to share CSB social media posts.

FS to raise with LPP team.

Health and Social Care partnership. Integrated Joint Board have met regarding budget. Aberdeenshire Council have agreed to underwrite significant costs next year. Care Homes, care at home, community hospitals, etc to be reviewed. Much concern about the impact.

Council tax bills. Increase will include increase in water rates (Scottish Water). Council has agreed £14 million of savings in budget.

ii. *Councillor Geva Blakett*

Circulated note on Link Ballater Access to Cash Appeal.

c. Planning applications

Planning report noted without comment.

6. Aboyne Bridge

Birse residents attending the meeting noted the serious impact the closure of Aboyne Bridge is having on them, and that they feel that the council has not been supportive, is not aware of how bad the impact has been on residents, and that they do not think that the council care.

Residents live at the cusp of the MDCC/B2C2 boundary, on the right side of the bridge when travelling away from Aboyne, towards Glen Tanar. It is dangerous to walk to the bridge because there is no path along the verge of the road so forced to walk on the road, with barbed wire on the return journey. There is no way to walk to the bridge from the resident's house without putting themselves in danger. There is a blind bend and overgrown vegetation over the carriageway beyond the Fungal which is obscuring vision – this was raised by the resident at the council meeting and noted by officer/Aberdeenshire Council representative.

Residents noted that the South Deeside Road effectively feels like an A classified road now because of the high number of users resulting from the bridge diversion – many leisure users, but also lorries (including logging and deliveries). Increased noise from speeding lorries and young drivers who have been known to say that they use the 60mph limit as a target speed.

The residents shared that they feel they have been “railroaded” into option 2. Later also noted the inconvenience of having to make round trips to go to Aboyne – a 10-mile round trip – with no compensation, no reduction in council tax, paying full road tax.

Discussed that sawmill trucks should not be using that stretch of road, but have encountered timber lorries regardless. Queried whether newer timber lorry drivers are aware of James Jones' agreement (query whether a “gentlemen's agreement”?) for sawmill trucks not to use Bridge of Ess. Also noted that Dinnet Bridge is the route identified as the Strategic Timber Transport Route (with signage directing). Discussed that satnav directs drivers coming north from Cairn O'Mount to use the Bridge of Ess route (ie not drivers leaving James Jones but driving to James Jones from the south). Reported that lorries have been found stuck on Bridge of Ess. Queried whether there should be a weight limit applied to the Bridge of Ess to prevent it being offered by satnav as a viable route.

Residents noted that a reduction of the speed limit would help – speed of vehicles is quite frightening. Understand cannot get speed limit reduction because of number of houses/businesses etc, but query whether this can be looked at under these circumstances. CSB noted that she has asked previously about a speed limit reduction and was told that regulations dictate speed limits on such roads (non-footpath, not-lit, rural, composition of houses fronting the road etc). Has also asked for reduction of speed around the sawmill but not granted. Discussed reduced speed limit at Camphill petrol station, but noted that this was reduced following a fatality. Queried whether temporary speed restriction should be imposed during bridge closure – discussed precedent at Banchory during Covid. Understand there is a rule to reduce rural roads to 50mph to come in across Scotland soon, but noted that there is little difference between 50mph and 60mph in this situation.

Would be useful for one council team member to have holistic oversight of these issues rather than individual residents/ companies each having to take individual actions with different council teams/Police Scotland.

Discussed Fix Aboyne Bridge Facebook group discussing options for making the bridge look more attractive during the tourist season.

Discussed Fix Aboyne Bridge Facebook group asking for barriers on bridge to be moved to allow parking on the spans over the floodplain pending the commencement of work on the bridge (the date for which is not known).

Actions:

- CSB to look into the overgrown vegetation.
- CSB to ask about weight limit on bridge and to check response from last request.
- CSB to check previous response to question about potential speed limit reduction.
- CSB to contact the sawmill to ask their policy about direction of travel for access etc.
- CSB to check who MDCC could to speak to regarding impact of visual appearance of bridge barriers on tourism (for tourism team of council to liaise with engineering team).
- MDCC to ask Sgt Masson about enforcement of speeding.
- MO to facilitate communications re the above back to the residents who attended the meeting.

Marr Area Committee – consideration of bridge options

Queried whether provision has been set aside in Council budget for Option 2. CSB noted that Council Leader mentioned Aboyne Bridge in speech and funds have been allocated – approximately £7million capital in bridges and structures, Aboyne to cost £3million.

Officers must consider financial viability, but indication is that the procurement process will start by summer.

Letter from Bill Logan to council shared with MDCC.

Questioning the approach the council are taking and the amount of time it is taking. Asking for a direct award. CSB noted that procedure has been followed.

CSB to check that officer has responded to Bill Logan.

Feedback from public engagement sessions – noted:

- [January 2025 Community Drop-In FAQ's | Aboyne Bridge | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)
- [Feedback Received January 2025 | Aboyne Bridge | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)
- [Feedback Received January 2025 | Aboyne Bridge | Engage Aberdeenshire](#)
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7. MDCC sub-groups

a. Resilience

No update.

b. Communications

No update.

c. Local Energy

AB attending Community Council Training – Renewables and Energy Consents.

d. Local Place Plan Group

Aberdeenshire Council has registered the LPP (27 February 2025).

Copies of the LPP have been printed for Aboyne Library and for use by community groups involved in implementing the plan.

Marr Area Committee LPP grant – invoices and receipts now submitted for reimbursement. Many thanks to GW for his help with this.

NESTRANS fund application was unsuccessful due to multi-year funding request – although the application invitation did not state this, the fund was aimed at small, localised one off payments. In all other respects, the Aboyne application ticked every box for what the council, NESTRANS and the Scottish Government are trying to achieve. Graham Colclough of the LPP team is in continued talks with NESTRANS and other stakeholders (eg Stagecoach) to take the project forward.

Conversations being taken forward with community groups such as MDCT regarding LPP implementation – focus is on community hub and improving communications which are regarded as the lynchpin.

Role of MDCC – groups such as transport (GC), road improvements, speeding.

e. MDCT

No report.

f. Kincardine O'Neil CA

No report.

8. Any Other Competent Business

Agreed to meet on a quarterly basis with Ballater and Crathie CC (BCCC) and Braemar CC to discuss areas of mutual interest, eg flooding, local transport and local banking facilities.

MO to confirm with BCCC.

Discussed Ballater model for joint working of BCCC and the Ballater Community Trust – overlap between community councillors and trustees, shared meetings, etc.

MO and CG to discuss closer working between MDCC and MDCT, eg quarterly meeting between MDCC and MDCT. MO to have initial conversation with BR.

9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

7 – 8.45pm, Thursday 27 March 2025, Aboyne Library (upstairs).

FS apologies given for March meeting. CG to act as Secretary.