

Meeting of Blackburn and Kinellar Community Council
Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 7.30 pm
Kinellar Community Hall

Present: Martin Hunter, Alec Lamb, Dorothy Lamb (Chair), Emma Morrison (Secretary), Jim Ogg, Isabel Townsend

Councillors: Cllrs Gifford, Lonchay, Mason and Reid

In attendance: Doug Grant, Jackie Smith and Karen Thomson

Apology: Peter Robinson (Treasurer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that the Treasurer was not in attendance.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the 13 November 2024 meeting

Correction - Note made to correct spellings of Isabel Townsend in the written minutes of the inaugural meeting held 13 November 2024. Minutes approved by Isabel Townsend/ Martin Hunter.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Treasurers report

No update received from the Treasurer in advance of the meeting. The Chair advised that Alison Cumming (Area Committee Officer (Garioch)) was waiting for the Community Council's bank account to be set up in order to transfer funds. The funds identified for the Community Council are £2,110.66 (previous CC funds) and £522.50 (admin grant for half year). This gives a total of £2633.16.

6. Insurance

The Community Council discussed the need to consider insurance cover for public liability, noting that Alison Cumming has previously shared an FAQ guide for Community Councils provided by Zurich.

ACTION: Liaise with Alison Cumming to explore further (Dorothy Lamb)

7. Post box move

Cllr Reid contacted Royal Mail in relation to the relocation of the village's main post box to the Main Road near Norman Gray Park, seeking an explanation as to why this has happened and why no consultation took place. Concerns were highlighted regarding the inconvenient location and potential impact to traffic flow. It was also noted in the meeting that collections

from the main post box have now been reduced to one per day. Royal Mail are exploring the issue and Cllr Reid is waiting to hear back.

8. Beautiful Scotland

Sandy Scott (Principal Landscape Officer, Aberdeenshire Council) contacted Dorothy Lamb to explore whether the Community Council would like to support the village to participate in the Beautiful Scotland initiative in 2025.

Members of the Community Council expressed enthusiasm to find out more about the initiative, noting the positive impact this could have for the community, and agreed that Sandy Scott should be invited to a future meeting.

Kinellar Primary School and local youth groups could be invited to get involved, and the community should be consulted on suitable areas for planting to ensure that the initiative encompasses the whole village.

Dorothy Lamb shared an update received from Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services (dated 09/12/2024) which advised that, due to budget pressures and an unexpected issue with their irrigation system, orders for free decorative bedding plants due to be delivered in 2025 will not be fulfilled.

It may be possible to apply for grant funding to support the cost of bedding plants, however it was noted that the Community Council will have access to a healthy bank balance which could support such an initiative, plus members of the community may like to support by bringing on bedding plants in their own gardens and allotments which could be donated for use across the village.

ACTION: Invite Sandy Scott to talk to the Community Council about the Beautiful Scotland Initiative (Dorothy Lamb)

9. Litter pick

An organised litter pick was proposed as a positive example of how the Community Council could support the village while offering the community an opportunity to actively participate.

Cllr Reid noted that to help those arranging litter picks, Aberdeenshire Council's Community Waste Officers can provide litter pickers, bags, and organise to have the litter collected for disposal.

It was agreed that this item would be explored further at the next meeting.

10. Lighting in the street islands

Concerns were raised regarding a number of unlit (presumed faulty) street islands in the village. Cllr Reid agreed to raise this matter with the relevant team at Aberdeenshire Council.

Isabel Townsend also asked whether lighting for the basketball court could be explored as this would allow young people to use the new facility in the evenings, especially in winter months. Cllr Reid agreed to raise this matter also.

11. Blackie Banter

Jackie Smith (present) and Jenny Chapman have been producing the Blackie Banter for the last 12 years, with volunteers supporting delivery to around 1,250 homes in Blackburn and

Kinellar. Both were keen to explore whether the newsletter could come under the remit of the Community Council (in a similar way to the Kintore Konnect and the Newmachar News newsletters and their respective Community Councils). Jackie Smith will continue to oversee the production and delivery of the newsletter as usual, currently three editions per year. However, she hopes to return to four editions annually if additional funding becomes available. Being part of a constituted group would also allow Blackie Banter to apply for grants, helping it achieve greater financial stability. The cost of printing (approx. £180 per edition) is currently covered by income generated from advertising.

The Community Council agreed unanimously that the newsletter was a good community service and a motion to support the creation of a Blackie Banter sub-committee of the Blackburn & Kinellar Community Council was carried.

It was noted that Emma Morrison could become a third signatory on the Blackie Banter's bank account as required.

12. Updates from Aberdeenshire Councillors

Cllr Reid gave the following updates:

- The basketball hoop installation is now complete.
- A walkaround with Sandy Scott (Principal Landscape Officer) took place 11/12/2024 to explore a possible expansion to the football pitch.
- Concerns regarding the relocation of the main post box have been raised with Royal Mail.
- Communities have been invited to share their views on future delivery of Aberdeenshire library services, with an event in Kintore scheduled for 1 pm on 12/12/2024. Isabel Townsend will attend and has reached out to Moira Moran (Chair, Kintore & District Community Council) to offer the Community Council's support.

Cllr Mason queried the absence of a Police report on the agenda. Emma Morrison advised that a Police Sergeant had been in touch to explore Police representation at future meetings and she would provide them with a note of 2025 meeting dates.

ACTION: Provide Police Scotland with a note of 2025 meeting dates (Emma Morrison)

Cllr Mason also commented that a number of lighting columns in Garioch needed to be replaced but Aberdeenshire Council's current budgetary constraints meant this was not possible at this time.

Cllr Lonchay advised that dog fouling was an ever-present problem, and instances should be reported to the Dog Warden as it may be possible to issue fines to perpetrators.

Cllr Gifford commended the Community Council on its successful reformation. Whilst noting the current critical financial position of Aberdeenshire Council he reminded members of the Community Council that alternative sources of funding (from e.g. the Scottish Government, Rotary, and other) may be available to support local environmental projects.

ACTION: Explore the funding landscape to identify future funding opportunities (Emma Morrison)

13. AOCB

a. Kinellar Gala – 21 June 2025 (date tbc)

Karen Thomson (present) asked whether the Community Council would like to consider having a stall at next year's gala to raise awareness of our activities and support fundraising efforts for the Kinellar Community Hall. All were in favour of this, and further details will be explored in due course.

b. Creation of a Blackburn & Kinellar Community Council webpage

It was agreed that Isabel Townsend would explore having a dedicated Community Council section on the Kinellar Community Hall's webpage where we could share our meetings' minutes and agendas with the community. Given the costs and development time associated with maintaining a website, sharing this platform could help to contribute to the website's sustainability.

ACTION: Explore adding a Community Council section to the Kinellar Community Hall website (Isabel Townsend)

c. Vandalism

A number of recent incidents of vandalism in the village were noted, including damage to the electric power supply box for the Christmas tree.

As a result of persistent antisocial behaviour and vandalism, the Kinellar Community Hall's Board has taken the decision that anyone under the age of 16 must be under the supervision of an adult, parent or guardian at all times when within the Centre.

Jim Ogg highlighted that the push button on the pelican crossing on the main road had been damaged. Cllr Reid agreed to report this to the Roads team for repair.

Cllr Gifford noted that all residents should be reminded to report acts of vandalism to Police Scotland.

14. Date of next monthly meeting **Wednesday 8 January 2025 at 7.30 pm**, Kinellar Community Hall.