

Meeting of Blackburn and Kinellar Community Council
Wednesday 9 April 2025 at 7.45 pm
Kinellar Community Centre

Present: Doug Grant, Martin Hunter (Chair), Alex Lamb, Emma Morrison (Secretary), Jim Ogg, and Peter Robinson (Treasurer).

Councillors: Cllr Mason

In attendance: Karen Thomson

Apologies: Isabel Townsend, Cllrs Gifford, Lonchay, & Reid

1. Welcome and Apologies

Martin Hunter welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Isabel Townsend and Cllr Gifford.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the 12 March 2025 meeting

Minutes were approved as an accurate record by Jim Ogg/ Martin Hunter.

4. Matters Arising

- Update on missing fencing at the Burn Park
No update available at present, this item will carry forward to the May meeting.
- The Aberdeenshire Council (Garioch) (Speed Limits Revocation) Order 2025 and The Aberdeenshire Council (Garioch) (Speed limits) Order 2025
Members of the community council discussed the proposals in relation to the B979 through Blackburn. It was agreed that Emma Morrison would feedback the following views to the Senior Roads Engineer (South Area) by the deadline of 21 April:
 - (i) Fintry Road (B979): There was unanimous support among members to extend the proposed 20 mph speed limit on Fintry Road from the Main Road all the way to the end of the village, near Badger Rise. This area is home to a high proportion of families, with many children using this route to access the primary school, local parks, and the community centre. For safety reasons, it was strongly felt that the lower speed limit should apply throughout this stretch.
 - (ii) Main Road (B979): The majority of the Community Council expressed a preference to maintain the speed limit at 30 mph on the Main Road. It was felt that existing traffic calming measures, including traffic islands and a set of traffic lights, already help to moderate vehicle speeds. As such, reducing the limit further was not deemed necessary.

ACTION: Return a response to the consultation on The Aberdeenshire Council (Garioch) (Speed Limits Revocation) Order 2025 and The Aberdeenshire Council (Garioch) (Speed Limits) Order 2025 (Emma Morrison)

5. Treasurers report

The Treasurer provided an update on the bank account application to Virgin Money. The application was submitted on 26 March. The bank called for further information on 2 April, and a subsequent email was received 8 April confirming that the account set up is in progress. Account details should be expected mid-April.

6. Insurance

The Community Council discussed the need to secure insurance cover for public liability. Emma Morrison will take this activity forward once a bank account has been established and funding from Aberdeenshire Council has been received.

ACTION: Explore insurance options (Emma Morrison)

7. Police Report

No report was received on this occasion.

ACTION: Liaise with the Policing team again to ensure a report is available for the May meeting (Emma Morrison)

8. Website and social media

No new updates regarding the website and social media platforms.

Martin Hunter advised that he has recently attended Kintore & District Community Council, Fintray Community Council and Westhill and Elrick Community Council meetings and noted the adoption of hybrid meeting formats. Those present discussed the potential benefits of enabling remote access to community council meetings, particularly in terms of improving accessibility and inclusion for residents who may be unable to attend in person. However, it was also acknowledged that delivering effective hybrid meetings presents challenges, particularly in the absence of appropriate audiovisual and IT equipment.

It was agreed that Blackburn and Kinellar Community Council currently lacks the necessary resources to facilitate hybrid meetings. In light of this, members agreed to consider holding meetings online-only during the winter months, when travel conditions may make in-person attendance more difficult.

9. Local Place Plan (LPP)

Emma Morrison shared examples of Local Place Plans (LPPs) so that everyone on the Community Council has a sense of the scale and scope of what is required. Further consideration is required to determine if the Community Council has the resource to deliver a LPP in 2025 – in terms of time, energy, people, skills, and (potentially) funds. A decision will be taken on whether to prepare a LPP at the May meeting.

Martin Hunter advised that he has extended an invitation to the Rotary Club of Kintore, Blackburn & Kemnay to attend future meetings and provide updates. Those present welcomed the idea of hearing from local groups, but noted that the structure of monthly meetings could not accommodate regular updates from multiple community organisations, nor could time be allocated exclusively to the Rotary Club. It was agreed that any community group wishing to provide an update should contact the Chair or Secretary at least seven days in advance of a scheduled meeting. Where such a request is received, a standing agenda item titled 'Update from Local Community Groups' will be included, with a maximum of 10 minutes allocated for this item.

10. Beautiful Scotland

Martin Hunter advised that he has been in touch with Gareth Lean and Peter Nicol regarding revisiting plans for a local gardening group.

11. Potential cycle service station and promotion of walking routes (submitted by community member)

Following on from March's meeting, the Community Council revisited the discussion about installing a bicycle service station in the village and promotion of local walking routes following suggestions received. Whilst all present agreed that a bicycle service station in the village was a good idea, there were concerns raised about costs (purchase, installation, and maintenance) and the risk of vandalism. All were in agreement that the promotion of walking routes was an excellent idea and this will be explored to incorporate these on our webpage.

12. Aberdeenshire Councillors' Update

Cllr Mason advised that the Garioch area committee said planning permission for the Kintore Hydrogen plan should be refused for a number of reasons, including the impact on the historic landscape, the loss of woodland as well as the visual impact on the local area. However, he noted that it would come to a full council meeting for discussion later in April.

Cllr Mason also advised that Aberdeenshire Council is considering the closure of some sheltered housing complexes as part of a region-wide review into the long-term financial viability of its housing and assisted living provision. Further details will be known in due course.

13. Correspondence

- Engage Aberdeenshire Consultation on Proposed Removal of Public Call Boxes

Emma Morrison noted that a 4-week consultation has launched on Engage Aberdeenshire regarding the proposed removal by BT of 19 public call boxes in Aberdeenshire. None are situated in Blackburn, so no further action is required.

14. AOCB

- Road Markings

Jim Ogg raised a concern that the white lines at the bottom of Fintray Road have worn away. Cllr Mason kindly agreed to report this to the Roads Department and will raise this at the ward meeting.

- Kingshill Parish Church

Stuart Harbinson (Parish Assistant) contacted Martin Hunter to explore opportunities to attend a Community Council meeting to raise awareness of the Kingshill Parish Church's programme of activities and services. It was agreed that the Community Council was not the best forum for this but suggestions to explore via the Kinellar Community Centre Committee or the Blackie Banter were made.

ACTION: Redirect Kingshill Parish Church to the Kinellar Community Centre Committee and/ or the Blackie Banter (Martin Hunter)

15. Date of next monthly meeting **Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 7.45 pm, Kinellar Community Centre.**