

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

Present: Doug Grant, Martin Hunter (Chair), Alex Lamb, Emma Morrison (Secretary) & Jim Ogg

Councillors: Cllr Reid

In attendance: Steve Wright

Apologies: Peter Robinson (Treasurer), Isabel Townsend, Cllrs Gifford, Lonchay & Mason

1. Welcome and Apologies

Martin Hunter (Chair) welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting. Apologies were received from Peter Robinson and Isabel Townsend, and Cllrs Gifford, Lonchay and Mason.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the 11 June 2025 meeting

- a. Corrections – Attendee's name corrected to James Douglas.
- b. Approval – Approved as an accurate record by Alex Lamb and Doug Grant.

4. Police Scotland Report

Emma Morrison advised that Police Sergeant Iain Fraser from Inverurie Community Policing Team had indicated that he hoped to be able to join this meeting if capacity allowed. No monthly report has been received.

5. Matters arising

a. Update regarding Public Liability Insurance

Emma Morrison noted that at the last meeting, the Community Council approved, in principle, a spend of up to £100 to enhance our public liability insurance from £2 million to £10 million. She contacted the insurance provider and was advised that a £5 million policy is available for £99, while a £10 million policy would require a bespoke quote via a different business team.

Emma Morrison also advised that neither the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils nor the Community Council Handbook mandates a specific figure for public liability cover, but both confirm that it is the responsibility of each Community Council to determine the level of cover appropriate to its needs. She further reported that she reached out to the Secretary of Kintore and District Community Council to explore what level of cover they had and was advised that their policy is for £10 million.

Members discussed what level of public liability insurance would be appropriate, noting that the Council is newly reformed and has no plans to organise major public events within the next 12 months. It was agreed that £5 million of cover would be sufficient for

our current needs, with the level to be reviewed on an annual basis. Emma Morrison will contact the insurance provider to explore a bespoke quote for £10 million cover. If a policy at that level can be secured for under £100, it will be taken forward; otherwise, the Council will proceed with the £5 million policy.

ACTION: Increase the Community Council's Public Liability Insurance to either £5 million or £10 million depending on quotes received (Emma Morrison)

b. Update regarding registration with the Information Commissioner

Emma Morrison reported that she has registered the Community Council with the Information Commissioner. Registration will need to be renewed annually. She will explore training available via ALDO (Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online) and will circulate further details – all members of the Community Council are encouraged to undertake the relevant data protection training.

ACTION: Circulate data protection training resources (Emma Morrison)

ACTION: Complete online data protection training (ALL)

6. Treasurers' report

In Peter Robinson's absence, Emma Morrison reported that to date she is the only person with access to the Community Council's bank account, which was opened mid-April. Peter Robinson has advised that he is trying to resolve his access issues with Virgin Money. Martin Hunter said that he has not received any correspondence from Virgin Money regarding his status as a Corporate Administrator of the account, and Emma Morrison asked that he liaise directly with Peter Robinson and Virgin Money to address this.

Alex Lamb asked whether Emma Morrison had received reimbursement for the expenses she has incurred to date (previously ratified at the June 2025 Business Meeting). Emma Morrison confirmed that she had not, explaining that as she is currently the sole account holder, she was unsure whether it would be appropriate to make a payment to herself.

Jim Ogg proposed that, since the spend had already been approved by the Community Council, the delay was due to circumstances beyond Emma Morrison's control, and the timeline for Peter Robinson and Martin Hunter to resolve their access issues was uncertain, it was reasonable for the Community Council to authorise her to process the reimbursement. This proposal was seconded by Alex Lamb and approved by the Community Council.

For the minute:

(i) Expenses incurred by Emma Morrison and previously approved by the Community Council are as follows:

- £210.00 for room bookings for the Community Council's monthly business meetings (covering December 2024, and February, March, April, May and June 2025)
- £56.00 for the Community Council's Public Liability Insurance Policy

Total = £266.00

(ii) Emma Morrison sought approval for reimbursement of the following two expenses which had been identified and approved by the Community Council, in principle, at the June 2025 meeting:

- £38.89 for materials required for the Community Council's stall at the Gala on 14 June 2025 (the Community Council approved spend of up to £70.00 in principle at the June 2025 meeting)
- £52.00 for the Information Commissioner registration fee

Total = £90.89

These expenses were approved by the Community Council.

(iii) Emma Morrison sought approval for reimbursement of the room booking fee for July's meeting:

- £25.00 room booking fee July 2025

Total = £25.00

This expense was approved by the Community Council.

In summary all expenditure is supported by receipts and approved by the Community Council and Emma Morrison will now process the reimbursement due to her which totals **£381.89** (£266 + £90.89 + £25.00).

(iv) As discussed under Item 5, Emma Morrison will amend the Public Liability Insurance Policy and will incur additional expenses. She will report additional costs at the September 2025 meeting and seek approval from the Community Council for reimbursement.

Martin Hunter presented a reissued cheque from Fintray Kinellar Keithhall Parish Church (£50.00). The cheque provided originally failed to clear as it was incorrectly addressed. Martin Hunter will pass the reissued cheque to Peter Robinson to pay in to the Community Council's bank account.

Emma Morrison advised that the Community Council Admin Grant from Aberdeenshire Council for 2025-26 has now been confirmed. Blackburn and Kinellar Community Council will receive £1,046 (made up of £900 admin grant + £146 variable grant). She will liaise with Peter Robinson on this as he will need to submit proof of insurance cover, and proof of registration with the ICO for data protection (an extra £52 will be added to the above amount to cover this cost) in order for the Admin Grant to be released.

ACTION: Resolve issues accessing the bank account (Peter Robinson + Martin Hunter)

ACTION: Pay cheque from Fintray Kinellar Keithhall Parish Church into the Community Council's bank account (Peter Robinson + Martin Hunter)

ACTION: Submit the necessary evidential information to Aberdeenshire Council to enable the release of the 2025-26 Admin Grant (Emma Morrison + Peter Robinson)

7. Removal of grit bins across Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire Council announced on 4 July 2025 that a decision had been made to remove a significant number of grit bins from communities across the Shire as part of agreed budget savings.

Members of the Community Council shared a deep concern that the removal of grit bins poses a significant risk to public safety, as they are essential not only for road safety but also for enabling residents - especially the elderly and those with mobility challenges - to move safely around their neighbourhoods during icy conditions. Concerns were raised that this action could also impact negatively on household waste and recycling collections.

It was agreed that Emma Morrison would write to Alan Wood, Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services at Aberdeenshire Council, on behalf of the Community Council to convey our concerns and ask that they reconsider the plans. Cllr Reid kindly offered to provide the relevant contact details.

Cllr Reid also offered to make enquiries on behalf of the Community Council about the potential costs of grit, and advice on where we could procure it in suitable quantities, should we need to explore sponsorship from local businesses or directly funding a limited number of grit bins with Community Council funds this winter.

It was also suggested that the Community Council should, via its Facebook page, inform the community that we will be raising our concerns with Aberdeenshire Council and encourage local residents and businesses to do the same. A link to the petition will also be shared via the Facebook page.

ACTION: Submit a letter of concern to the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services at Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of the Community Council (Emma Morrison)

ACTION: Post an update on behalf of the Community Council on the Facebook page (Isabel Townsend)

8. Reflection on Community Engagement at Kinellar Community Centre Annual Gala

Members of the Community Council agreed that the Gala on 14 June 2025 was an excellent experience and a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of the Community Council and its activities. The Community Council's stall provided a number of information sharing and engagement activities for all ages, and Emma Morrison shared a summary of the results to date from the Blackburn & Kinellar Community Aspirations Survey and the voting jars activity.

These exercises highlighted a strong interest in enhancing shared spaces, fostering community connection, and supporting family life. While other areas like local services, environmental action, and transport received fewer votes or mentions, they remain important concerns for the community. These exercises have provided a helpful foundation for future planning and discussions and will inform the Community Council's ongoing work to reflect and respond to community needs, in particular the development of a Local Place Plan (LPP).

Cllr Reid kindly agreed to share the Blackburn & Kinellar Community Aspirations Survey to encourage more responses, and Emma Morrison will provide him with the necessary information.

Martin Hunter reported that his sponsored beard shave at the Gala raised £650.06, and members congratulated him on his efforts. Funds raised will be split evenly between two local groups - the Kinellar Star and Kinellar Kuppa.

Martin Hunter raised a concern that although he had issued three sponsorship sheets to each group, one group returned only two. He has contacted his liaison within the group to request the return of the third sheet, but it has not yet been received. It was agreed that he would follow up with a formal email to the group, copying in blackburnkinellarcc@gmail.com, requesting that the third sheet be returned or that they confirm it was not used, lost, or disposed of. In the meantime, the available funds will be distributed equally between both groups. Should the missing sheet be returned with additional sponsorship, those funds will be distributed accordingly.

ACTION: Promotion of the Blackburn & Kinellar Community Aspirations Survey (ALL)

ACTION: Email the group (cc'ing blackburnkinellarcc@gmail.com) to request the return of the third sponsorship sheet or confirmation that it was not used, lost, or disposed of (Martin Hunter)

ACTION: Distribute funds raised to both groups (Martin Hunter + Peter Robinson)

9. Aberdeenshire Councillors' Update

Updates from Cllr Reid:

- The new Men's Shed in Blackburn is proving popular, with weekly meetings planned.
- Aberdeenshire Council's Area Officer will meet shortly with Kenny Findlay to discuss plans to refurbish the Pavillion.
- As part of larger project to improve active travel connections within the area, an active travel route between Blackburn and Kintore is being developed. Cllr Reid is exploring whether current plans could be extended to improve access from Blackburn to Forrest Farm for walkers and cyclists following the suggestion from a local resident.
- Cllr Reid noted positive youth work in surrounding areas was showing early signs of helping to reduce antisocial behaviour.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The next monthly meeting of Blackburn & Kinellar Community Council will take place on **Wednesday 10 September 2025** at 7.45 pm, Kinellar Community Centre.