

MEARNS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

26th January 2026

Location: Mearns Community Campus

Present: Andrew Macdonald (AM), Alasdair Shiach (AS), Janette Anderson (JA), Carol Medlock (CM), Gordon Reid (GR), Chris Rushbridge (CR), Ken Williams (KW), Dave Stewart (DS), John Lovell (JL), Paul Green (PG), Kevin Todd (KT).

EX Officio: Cllr Carr

Apologies: Cllr Carnie, Cllr Evison, Cllr Smith

Minutes: Rona MacAulay-Dicks (RM)

Date: 26th January 2026

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

Circulated and reviewed with no further comment.

Proposed AS, seconded GR.

3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Status of the occupation and use of a caravan at Luthermuir. **Cllr Carr** advised that this had been raised twice at recent Ward meetings, and that no answer had been provided yet. AM made the point that Planning Enforcement had moved quickly on a different issue and asked why this is taking so long in comparison, with CM agreeing that it seemed that MCC were being made a fool of. Cllr Carr agreed that there could not be one rule for one, and one for another and suggested reiterating the matter to Tim Stephen **Ongoing**.

There is a significant stretch of the High St, Laurencekirk still not covered by street lighting. **Cllr Carr** has raised this and stated that it is an ongoing problem throughout the area. MCC will be kept up to date on any further information surrounding this issue. **Ongoing**.

There was confusion about whether repairs to the roundabout in Fettercairn had taken place, or not. **Ongoing**.

Access to Luthermuir village hall – **Cllr Carr** advised that this was raised at the last Ward Meeting and that Tim Stephen should be keeping MCC informed. JA noted that this has been a lengthy issue that featured in notes kept from 2017.

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Concerns continue about the Fasque House & Land sale. **Cllr Carr** is not happy about the fact that significant enabling works were due to have taken place, particularly surrounding the roof, and it is unclear how much of this has been done. **Cllr Carr** also noted that he had done an extensive walkaround with Paul Fretwell and feels there are still more questions, than answers surrounding the project. **Action: Cllr Carr to continue email communication and keep MCC informed.**

AM applied for a £2,000 Nestrans grant, on behalf of MCC, regarding the Shakin Brig. There was a good call about this in December 2025 but no further word since then. Aberdeenshire Council are currently being consulted. **Action: Cllr Carr to check in with Alan Turner.**

Access/visibility at Crosspoles still an ongoing problem – and seems to have been an issue since 2004. **Cllr Carr** stated that adding visible signage is within MCC's remit. **Action: AM to write to Malcolm White from the Outdoor Access Team.**

CR provided an update on the ownership of the problematic lade in Marykirk. A map has been provided that shows that the area in question is owned by the Fisheries company. DS noted that it is causing problems for the farmer who has land nearby. **Cllr Carr** stated that the recent site visit was really helpful, however, there is still a section where there is unclear ownership. **Action: Cllr Carr to see what the Council can do regarding pulling the various landowners together at the next Ward Meeting.**

AM updated MCC to say that he had been in touch to ask about the opening and shutting of the gates on the Cairn O'Mount. David Charnley replied to say that there are a very large number of groups involved in the decision making – it is very complicated all round.

4. Police Report

Circulated as received.

5. Correspondence from Aberdeenshire Council

Circulated as received.

6. Settlements

Auchenblae

AM stated that no specific issues had been brought to him, but he did make a wider point about the roads being in general disrepair following the recent snow.

Fettercairn

AM reiterated the issue of the multiple agencies involved in determining when the Cairn O'Mount signs went up or came down as KT brought up that these were not changed, despite a variety of recent weather conditions. **Cllr Carr** added that he has an email thread

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with local businesses and tries to give them as much advanced warning as possible about road closures. DS asked why new guide posts were put in place, seemingly to assist snowploughs, when no snowploughs are ever sent up the roads in question.

KT noted that there is an ongoing issue with a snapped Openreach telegraph pole that has previously been reported. **Action: Cllr Carr advised KT to write to Andrew Bowie.**

Fordoun

PG inquired about the status of the lights on the Fordoun bridge. **Cllr Carr** advised that it is a Network Rail issue, and is further down their list of priorities. It was also discussed that changing to permanent lights would be a significant utilities cost.

PG asked if it was possible to move the War Memorial from within the hall to a more visible outdoor space. AM reminded PG that Aberdeenshire Council are taking a hands off approach to War Memorials, however, edits to location and information about how it will be cleaned will need to be run by them. Cllr Carr advised that this would need to be a community project. There would likely need to be a planning application submitted for council land. There are pots of money available to help with such a project, eg windfarm grants. AM and AS advised contacting the Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP) as they are very responsive. **Action: PG to contact Margo Titmuss at KDP.**

Edzell Woods

KW informed MCC that there was no local bus service available for 11 days during the recent snowy weather due to the Lang Stracht not being gritted. **Cllr Carr** advised that it is up to individual bus operators to determine whether it is safe to run services, and that some assumptions may have been made about South Aberdeenshire weather conditions.

KW congratulated household bin collections for managing to catch up on missed services in a much speedier timeframe than previously thought.

There will be a meeting with Inveresk Community Council on the 17th of February at The Panmure Arms to discuss the Shakin Brig. We will need to see how next steps look post-survey. CR asked whether Angus or Aberdeenshire Council would be taking the lead at all and it was felt that both council areas have similar levels of expertise and jurisdiction. It is also important that Nestrans are kept in the loop. AM stated that there was a positive spirit about the project.

Glenbervie & Drumlithie

JL stated that the Ember bus ideally needs light and shelter to allow passengers to cross safely. **Cllr Carr** raised this at the recent Bus Forum and felt it was a well mentioned and popular stop. He advised JL to keep shouting about it, as there is a rolling budget for such improvements, and named Susan Watt as the convener of the Bus Forum.

It has previously been noted that drivers cannot see round the bend of the Northbound A90. **Cllr Carr** stated that there has been kickback from Transport Scotland regarding coming out

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and attending the site. The Scottish Government are also involved in decision making around issues like this. CR mentioned that it had previously been admitted that certain junctions were not fit for purpose. **Cllr Carr** reminded MCC of his previous advice about asking election candidates what they plan to do about this issue.

Laurencekirk

CM stated that 1.25 million was spent on clearing roads, and championed that half a million was shared with local farmers who helped hugely during the recent snow.

CM brought it to MCC's attention that ChargePlace Scotland are changing, and prices will be doubled. Will users be offered any refunds surrounding this?

There was a discussion surrounding where waste collection staff were re-deployed to during the recent poor weather. GR stated that the High Street was gritted and ploughed by 7am each day. PG noted that it is very easy to get a bin lorry stuck in the snow, so teams often go to a nearby depot to help out, or get out in local areas with shovels. DS pointed out that the Council should not have done away with grit bins. **Cllr Carr** noted that there were some behind the scene waste issues going on alongside the weather conditions that have contributed to some delays in collections, however, Stoneyhill landfill should be re-opening any day now which will hopefully resolve the difficulties.

GR noted that there had been an issue with lunchtime access to the Laurencekirk recycling centre, while a private contractor was being allowed entry behind the closed barriers. It is believed that there is now a new team in place so hopefully things will operate more fairly and smoothly going forwards.

JA reiterated her previous concerns around dangerous parking on the railway bridge and poor road markings at junctions. AM reminded MCC that he has written to Roads about these issues.

Luthermuir

Luthermuir Hall - the matter of access at the Hall is the subject of legal action and so discussion was restricted on this topic.

DS noted that there are two manhole covers on the Main street which could cause an accident, for example if a child was to go over them on a bike, due to their being a combination of metal and a pothole like gap. Likely Scottish Water sewer covers. **Action: DS to contact Scottish Water.**

DS mentioned that over the next three weeks residents of Luthermuir, Edzell Woods, Fettercairn and others in the area will really struggle to get to Montrose in two separate directions due to road closures, and queried why the left turn has been blocked off.

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Marykirk

There have been complaints about dog fouling in the area. **Action: AM to find out who dog wardens are.**

CR noted that last Thursday the river overflowed and the road was shut. SEPA advised some homeowners in the village to leave their houses and gain warmth and shelter in the local hall instead. The Resilience Plan had just been updated and residents were able to be comfortable and warm throughout – the community really came together. The Resilience Team in Stonehaven have asked for advice about how Marykirk managed so well.

CR noted that once snow melted, certain cul de sacs were like ice rinks. It was clear that access to local grit bins were a necessity throughout.

West Cairnbeg

AS noted that the community pulled together to keep local roads as safe as possible during the recent snow. This allowed a gritting lorry to safely get round the local area.

7. Roads, Planning & Landscape Services

CM made the point that we will have ongoing problems with ditches as a result of recent weather and Fibre broadband based activities.

8. Communications, social media etc

MCC agreed to employ a local social media manager to trial a social media plan for the next four months in the hope that it helps us to reach a wider audience.

9. Fordoun Pavilion, Fordoun and Borough Buildings, Laurencekirk

A deadline of the 9th of February 2026 has been provided for any feedback surrounding the Fordoun Pavilion and the Burgh Buildings as both buildings are currently being considered surplus to requirements. There was a discussion about who has keys for the Pavilion as it does appear to be in use at present. MCC asked what the purpose of reviving the Burgh Buildings would be when there are other halls, such as the Dickson Hall, in Laurencekirk that are struggling to gain event income. The poor state of the buildings was noted and **Cllr Carr** responded by saying that the Community Asset Transfer process often takes a few years and nothing can really happen while any of these are live. **Cllr Carr** also advised that access rights to the former Roads building ought to be written down in a clause. **Actions: AM to ask for an extension until the end of March to come up with any ideas about the Burgh Buildings, and PG to find out who is using the Fordoun Pavilion.**

10. Laurencekirk flyover

MCC requested an update about the status of the Laurencekirk flyover. **Cllr Carr** raised the Aberdeen-Laurencekirk corridor at a recent event where Paul Finch, Head of Nestrans, was a speaker. This is no longer considered a new project so it might not make it in to current

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announcements, however it has already been funded 50% by the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Regional Deal so should still be going ahead as planned, without any barriers. The Scottish Government need to provide the other 50% of funding. This project will then unlock development at the South end. Although there are a number of issues with nearby bridges, especially Aboyne, this should not impact Oatyhill as it is in a different category. Abbeyton Bridge is still on the bridges list, and will likely end up being similar to the bridge at Craigo when it is completed.

11. SSEN Hurlie substation planning application and ISC

The ISC will take place on Friday the 30th of January 2026. Councillors will have full powers, however, the Scottish Government can still pull it in. A representative for SSEN has stated that they can't have the pylon without the substation. Angus Council's leader previously objected to the plan, however, Aberdeenshire Council's Paul Macari used use Delegated Authority to raise no objection to the SSEN power line project, despite there being close to 16,000 objections generated by local people. Gillian Martin (GM) has abdicated her role, with AM noting that it is clear that GM does not have a balanced view on the topic. GL asked whether the public should get to know who voted in favour? JA added does an objection mean anything? AS stated that the buck stops with the leadership of Aberdeenshire Council, they could have stopped it and therefore hold 100% of the blame. Kate Matthews will be representing MCC at the ISC, alongside other community councils.

12. Treasurers Report

AS provided a copy of the report to AM and RM for retention. £8246.62 in RBS. AM clarified that expenses would be provided to member of MCC when travelling to venues outside of the usual routine.

13. Update from Councillors

Cllr Carr highlighted recent budget decisions. An increase in council tax will be used towards helping balance the books. The capital budget has been cut too.

Cllr Carr also reminded MCC of the upcoming deadline for Local Development Plan bids, the deadline has already been extended twice. AM stated that he has seen a draft document.

14. AOCB

CM told MCC that she was impressed by the people at a recent Gairloch meeting, and that she was disappointed that there were not more community councils in attendance.

No other business, the meeting was closed.

Date of next meeting: Monday 23rd February 2026