

MEARNS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

27th October 2025

Location: Mearns Community Campus

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

EX Officio: Cllr Carnie, Cllr Carr, Cllr Evison, Cllr Smith

Apologies: John Lovell (JL), Paul Green (PG)

Minutes: Rona MacAulay-Dicks (RM)

Date: 27th October 2025

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

Circulated and reviewed with no further comment.

Proposed KW, seconded AS

3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

GR investigated the Planning status of the work being done to a house in Conveth Place to determine whether there is a completion certificate. JA advised that the work was done under a Building Warrant.

Status of the occupation and use of a caravan at Luthermuir. **Cllr Carr** has contacted planning enforcement. **Ongoing**

There is a significant stretch of the High St, Laurencekirk still not covered by street lighting. **Cllr Carr** discussed a policy review which ties in to wider factors such as the Christmas lights. There appears to be no rhyme or reason for which lights are out. CR also noted a similar problem in Marykirk where there are four lights currently out, but it was clear that the base of the posts were badly corroded. Cllr Carr stated potential budgetary restrictions with each light replacement costing around £2,000. JA voiced concern around potential falls. **Action: Cllr Carr to discuss with Alan Turner. Ongoing.**

A timescale was requested, once more, for repairs to the roundabout in Fettercairn. **Action: Cllr Carr to take up with Roads dept.**

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Cllr Carr is awaiting further information from Housing regarding the hedges that continue to encroach upon the footpath at Cairnview. There should no longer be concerns around birds nesting. **Ongoing**

Still no progress with the corroded and damaged ironworks in the pavement on Blackiemuir Avenue. AM has still had no response from Aberdeenshire Council's Roads dept, when writing now, two months ago. AM would like a response about whose responsibility this is.

Action: Cllr Carr to take this forward to ward meeting on 28th October.

CM mentioned an ongoing issue with tyres. Cllr Carr advised contacting waste management and named Andy Sheridan, Andrew Tatton and Jonathan Adam as potential avenues of help. Copying in the councillors to the email may fast-track the support provided.

Access at Crosspoles queried by JA – told that the Outdoor Access Team are busy covering other parts of the area, with two part time members of staff who need trained. **Ongoing**

Access to the village hall update - **Cllr Evison** and **Cllr Smith** received correspondence stating that Aberdeenshire Council are progressing with action, however, given part of the access way is owned by a non-cooperative local resident, who has a very long history of being obstructive. DS noted that the house is jointly owned by the husband and wife. **Action: Cllr Smith to bring up again at the ward meeting on 28th October.**

4. **Police Report - Noted**
5. **Correspondence from Aberdeenshire Council**

Circulated as received.

DS and KW were especially interested in the care sector draft when it is such a struggle to get a carer if you need one.

6. **Settlements**

Auchenblae

Auchenblae Community Association has talked to AM. There is 'no clear path to ownership' of the phone box. AM stated that it has been minuted by Mearns Community Council that it was passed to the Auchenblae Community Association, but then the line goes dead. AM contacted Susie Brown previous Member and Secretary who said she had no MCC records and did not hand any over when she left MCC.

ACA proposed that Shirley Castles is written to in order to clarify ownership. CR asked about insurance documents and AM responded that there is no clear track of bills. JA queried how the confusion had come about with AM confirming that there was a lack any agreement in what MCC records there were. **Action: AM to write to Shirley Castles.**

AM noted a FixMyStreet report for Hillside Road and Glenfarquhar Road. Sand bags have

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been left in place following repairs to the subsidence at the road caused by the burn eroding the bank. AM queried when these are going to be removed, lest the bags degrade to the point that he must ask Aberdeenshire Council about fly-tipping once more!

Cllr Carr asked whether there had been any reports about the works at the bottom of Kintore Street, Auchenblae where water had been seen gushing previously. AM confirmed that there had been no problems reported, although a section of the pavement was in poor condition and barriered off around the BT box. **Action: Cllr Carr to raise with at ward meeting on 28th October.**

Fettercairn

KT queried the status of the 20 mph speed signs.

There was ongoing concern about Fasque House & land sale. There is concern and confusion over the house being sold, while the land remains up for sale, thus disconnecting the two in terms of planning permission previously granted. What is happening to the enabling/justification for work in the first place? Most locals appeared to be against the 'Aviemore chalets' development. **Action: Cllr Carr to raise with Enforcement at ward meeting on 28th October.**

KT reported that a tree has fallen across and above the road as you go between Fettercairn and Fasque which could prove hazardous to larger vehicles. Cllr Carr advised that it could be reported to the council to make it safe and they would get the landowner correct it or the Council may dissort it out and seek redress from the landowner. **Action: Cllr Smith to check that it has been reported at ward meeting on 28th October.**

Fordoun

Nothing reported.

Edzell Woods

The conditions of walkways and adjacent vegetation along the Lang Stracht are forcing pedestrians, including mums pushing prams, on to busy road ways. **Action: Cllr Carr to ask for timescale on this at ward meeting on 28th October.**

A meeting with Inveresk Community Council (ICC), about the Shakin Brig, was attended by AM, KW and Cllr Smith. Large grey area surrounding ownership with no confirmation from Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, Dalhousie Estate and Mark Ogg, Arnhall Farms.

Inveresk and Mearns Community Councils embarking on a semi-formal partnership to investigate the engineering status of the bridge. Mearns Community Council (MCC) could apply to NESTRANS to help foot 50% of a £4,000 bill, with the understanding that ICC and MCC pay the other £2,000 however there is no guarantee that ICC have the funds to pay MCC back. AM queried whether we would be better putting money towards something like Crosspoles instead? A feasibility study would be required, alongside a compelling argument for the use of the bridge. KW to circulate a questionnaire in the local community to gauge

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community interest. There are currently more questions than answers. Although there is an Aberdeenshire and Angus Council sign stating that the bridge is closed, AM raised an additional point around the safety of the bridge. Who would be responsible if someone fell from it? Cllr Carr noted that it was constructed in the early 1900s by the RAF, and that councils have responsibility for the safety of bridges, even if ownership is unclear. DS questioned whether funding might be possible due to historical significance. Regarding AM's question about formalising with ICC, AS reminded MCC that there has been new guidance issued around funding for next year, and asked whether it would be wise to move forward with this plan, put pressure on ICC to get suitable funds and show what we are doing. JA suggested getting an agreement from ICC that they would refund us. **Action: AM**

Several members noted concern about children wading through the river from Edzell Woods to attend Edzell school. JA, KW and AS also mentioned the danger of the Lang Stracht, and lack of buses as a potential issue for Aberdeenshire children attending an Angus school. Cllr Smith responded that safe transportation would be provided to children attending schools within their catchment area, therefore this was more of a parental responsibility, safeguarding and child protection issue due to the children being sent out of zone. **Action: AM**

Glenbervie & Drumlithie

Nothing reported.

Laurencekirk

Aberdeenshire Council were proposing a 7 day wait to fix a large water leak on the High Street, Scottish Water dealt with it immediately.

CM was delighted to see that a Goods Vehicle Operation Licence has been applied for, by Ewan Leslie, for within the Business Park. **Action: CM to inform the nearby gym.**

CM brought a concern about a bullying incident at Mearns Academy resulting in damaged property, and no clear action or apology from the school. **Action: CM to write to councillors who can progress issue with the Quality Improvement Officer. Cllr Evison also suggested that CM advise the family to contact the parent council at the school, and review their bullying policy.**

GR noted that the developer of the previously referred to house in Conveth Place has previously put in applications to turn St Laurence Hall in to two houses, and has had no response. If there is no live Community Asset Transfer, what is the plan? **Action: Cllr Carr to ask about the status of St Laurence Hall at the ward meeting on the 28th October.**

JA brought up the dangerous road conditions by the railway bridge at Blackiemuir Avenue due to parked cars causing near misses. Market Street and the two T junctions were also mentioned as problem areas. **Action: AM to write to Roads to request yellow lines.**

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Luthermuir

Hedge cutting has commenced, we see how long it takes to complete!

The Adopt a Grit Bin Scheme did not appear popular.

Marykirk

Private sewage plant issues, and smell, linked with the Fotheringham Homes. Water was assured as being of drinking quality but clearly cloudy when discharging in to the Esk. **Action: CR to contact SEPA who AS noted will likely be very understanding about issues with such private plants, and how they impact local communities.**

The first flood water crossed the A397 on 20th October. Three gullies were clearly blocked by grass and reported on FixMyStreet by CR with an ask for a more permanent fix going forwards. **Action: Cllr Carr to write to Lee Watson of Flood Prevention to do a site visit.**

A question was raised about the legality of the 20 mph limits due to confusing stretches still showing 30. The flashing speed sign has also been removed, possibly for repair or to change it to 20. AM added an observation that 30 signs were illuminated, and the new ones no longer are. Signs also appear smaller at the village gateway. There was confusion about why some signs were on wooden poles and others on metal with Cllr Evison explaining that the temporary wooden ones are all gradually being replaced with the metal ones, and that we may be at the end of the row for these – hence the delay.

West Cairnbeg

Nothing reported.

7. Roads, Planning & Landscape Services

Neighbours have complained that the goods entrance to the Fasque Estate is getting damaged by large vehicles creating potholes with the liability for repair falling on the residents. KT asked if there are criteria about whether a private road is fit for purpose. Cllr Carr suggested that KT look at the fine print of the planning application under conditions.

CM flagged that hundreds of yards of thick gorse was making driving up and down the Cairn, near The Clatterin Brig, hazardous as it needs to be cut back. Cllr Carr confirmed that this is a council responsibility. **Action: AM to write to Roads.**

8. SSEN/Save our Mearns

AM & CM attended the Community Council Convention, and encouraged other members of MCC to attend any future sessions. Cllr Smith described the unified statement being created by around 38 community councils, with over 100 people in attendance. Cllr Smith also stated that over 9250 objections had been lodged through the AI supported objection

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generator, which combined with emails should amount to over 10,000 responses. This, in itself, should trigger a public local enquiry. Cllr Smith thanked everybody for their ongoing support since May 2023.

There were no objections to AM suggesting that Kate Matthews represent MCC at an upcoming workshop to develop a joint community council statement on the 1st November & 13th December. CM shared the Highland Community Councils statement. This will be revised from a Mearns, encompassing Fetteresso to Tealing, perspective.

AM noted that SEN use 'some things never change' wording in their advert and hopes Kate can use their own words back at them.

CR has previously written an objection about the building of the Hurlie substation and asked if this was going to be separately considered.? Cllr Smith responded that there are 30 requests to speak at a meeting about the Hurlie substation in late January 2026, adding that battery storage at Arbuthnot was recently approved by councillors.

Aa mentioned, a potential off shore windfarm, North of Stonehaven. AM advised that Thistle Wind Partners are planning to use the already unsafe Candy Junction, not the Southern junction at Broombank off the A90 due to safety concerns, and an adjacent field is used as a marshalling station. This needs to be watched very carefully.

9. Treasurers Report

AS provided a copy of the report to AM for retention. £6959.52 in RBS. AS also reminded MCC of the changes in funding as of next year, with community councils only being given what they have spent the year before so he felt this may justify investing in something like the Shakin Brig and using the funds that we have. A list of guidance on acceptable use of funds was read out and CR queried why mileage did not appear. DS suggested that some funds could be use to hire local halls around the area, rather than holding all meetings in Mearns Community Campus, this was broadly supported as a means of making MCC more accessible.

10. Update from Councillors

The councillors will be taking the list of actions from this meeting to their ward meeting after a recess of two weeks.

Cllr Evison advised MCC that pavement parking legislation was changing and as of 4th November 2025, this will involve a council enforced fine, as opposed to a warning. Cllr Carr added that there were some exemptions, for example coastal villages. CR advised that

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Marykirk has particular problems with this. **Action: CR to write to Roads to access them to focus attention in this area.**

11. AOCB

AM asked if any member of MCC was available to attend an online Learning Estate Strategy session at 6.30pm on 13th November. Ideally there needs to be one representative from each community council. **Action: All to decide who is available.**

AM stated that the Place and Delivery teams were looking for calls for Development, and asked for ideas to be submitted. CM produced a document from 9 years ago which detailed what Laurencekirk wanted. Queried the reasoning behind asking for new ideas when the previous document, which took a lot of work, has not been looked at. Cllr Carr advised CM to incorporate the document, and build on it, as opposed to starting from scratch. It was noted that all this exercise achieved was to raise false expectations. **Action: All to provide ideas, incorporating previously collated document.**

No other business, the meeting was closed.

Date of next meeting: Monday 24th November 2025