



STONEHAVEN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

19:00– 21:50 Tuesday 11 March 2025

Meeting held in the Sheriff Court Buildings, Stonehaven

Present

Community Council Members:

Alistair Lawrie, (AL), Andy McArdle (AMcA), Audrey Malcolm (AM), Brian Menzies (BM), Caroline Duguid (CD), Daniel Veltman (DV), David Lawman, *Chairman* (DL), Ian Hunter (IH), James Morrison (JM), James Stephen (JS), Julie Lindeman, *Secretary*, (JL), Norman McKay, *Treasurer* (NMCK), Phil Mills Bishop (PMB), Rachel Frame (RF), Raymond Christie (RC)

Aberdeenshire Council Elected Members:

Cllr Alan Turner (Cllr T), Cllr Dawn Black (Cllr B) **via Zoom**, Cllr Sarah Dickinson, (Cllr D), Cllr Wendy Agnew (Cllr A)

In Attendance -

Fiona Malcolm, *Minutes Secretary*, Jane Cruickshank (Jane C) *The Bellman*, John Cruickshank (John C), Jonathon Milne (JM) *Ury Estate and FM Group*, Helga Macfarlane (HM) *Stonehaven Patient Participation Group*, **via Zoom**, Tim Stephen (TS), *Aberdeenshire Council Area Manager*, John A A Agnew (JA) *Town and County Planning Agent*,
G Veitch, Angela Arthur, Amy McMenemy, Mike Skidmore **all via Zoom**

1 & 2	Chairperson's Welcome and Rollcall	Action
	DL welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those joining via Zoom.	
3	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies were received from Fiona Tavindale, James Morrison and Steve McQueen.	
4	Approval of Previous Minutes	
	The Minutes of 11 February 2025 were approved by AM and seconded by DV.	

5	Masterplan Framework Ury Estate	
	<p>DL invited Jonathon Milne (JM) to address the meeting. A copy of the Ury Estate Masterplan Framework was circulated prior to the meeting. JM said the Masterplan pulls the multiple planning consents together in one place, and highlighted the planning approvals for retail and affordable housing, the land for the latter has been sold to Hillcrest Housing Association. Work on the Jack Nicklaus golf course should start in May. Planning for additional affordable housing and neighbourhood retail is not approved yet.</p> <p>DL asked for an update on the link road.</p> <p>JM said construction of the road is costly, the section passing through the Kirkwood Housing development is partially built. The East Lodge site had been acquired, the building will be demolished and a road junction put in place. The affordable housing will go ahead, but the retail cannot go ahead until the link road is in place, infrastructure for both is the same.</p> <p>JS asked how many affordable homes were planned, JM confirmed there is consent for 91, and plans for a further 42.</p> <p>BM asked about the total number of houses planned for the estate, JM said there will be a total of 577, 532 of which have planning approval.</p> <p>PMB asked about the planned condominiums, JM explained the plan to develop 24 rooms in the Walled Garden area, these will be serviced by the main hotel. Each house sale raises funds towards the castle development. There are plans in future to build Ury Distillery and an Equine Centre.</p> <p>NMcK asked for an update on the rugby pitches, JM said land is being made available to Stonehaven Rugby Club, which is being finalised by solicitors</p> <p>BM asked which rivers were impacted by the development, JM confirmed it is only the Cowie.</p> <p>Martin Austin (local resident) asked about the rationale for the link road.</p> <p>JM explained it is a requirement of Aberdeenshire Council's Roads Department to connect the AWPR to Slug Road across Ury Estate, DL added it was (also) a Planning Department requirement.</p>	

	<p>Stuart Bain (local resident) was concerned about subsidence on East Lodge Drive. Cllr B said this was the responsibility of Kirkwood Homes (the developer), she offered to raise this with them if Mr Bain contacts her directly.</p> <p>Alan Ross (local resident) clarified the subsidence was not on the road but a pedestrian pathway to the houses.</p> <p>Cllr T reflected that the plans to develop Ury Estate had been ongoing for a long time, and asked about the timeline for future developments.</p> <p>JM agreed, however Jack Nicklaus had visited the site in August 2024, he added that houses have been slow to sell.</p> <p>Cllr D queried the timeframe for constructing a bridge on the link road, providing a safe route to school.</p> <p>JM said this is dependent on further house sales, a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists may be possible in the shorter term.</p> <p>Ben ? (resident on Ury Estate) asked about marketing and promotion. He felt that information is not easy to find on the current website, which could be better!</p> <p>JM said there is a lot of material to upload when the time is right, and welcomed this constructive feedback!</p> <p>JS reflected that larger houses elsewhere in Stonehaven are not selling, he welcomed the news about the affordable housing as it is needed.</p> <p>RF added a demand for low cost homes was evident from the consultation for the Local Place Plan, and asked about the planned North Lodge homes. JM said these were large, 6000 sq. ft with 5-6 bedrooms, some will be 'second' homes.</p> <p>DL commented that local people are looking for improved infrastructure (and facilities) before new houses. RF added that affordable homes, particularly for those wishing to downsize, were highlighted in the Local Place Plan.</p> <p>Cllr A pointed out the Ury House is not a castle, and asked when and if the back road would be completed.</p> <p>JM said the planned link road will address this.</p>	<p>Cllr B</p>
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	<p>PMB asked for an update on the planned retail/supermarket development.</p> <p>JM said planning consent is in place for a supermarket, agents are actively looking to identify an operator, Morrisons has withdrawn interest.</p> <p>AMcA asked when the golf course will open? JM hoped it will be operational in 2026-27, he is not keen on pursuing loan funding. Sale of the larger houses is dependent on the course being complete, he is hopeful the housing market improves.</p> <p>DL thanked JM for his update.</p>	
6	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	
	<p>a) Stonehaven Recreation Grounds (SRG)</p> <p>DL gave an update on the tennis court dome project. Due to bad weather the work is behind schedule, so the dome will not be in place until later in the year, after the outdoor bowling season is complete.</p> <p>A briefing paper/e-mail from TS, outlining the relationship between SRG and Aberdeenshire Council, had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>DL understood Stonehaven Recreation Grounds (SRG) had been donated to the residents of Stonehaven, SRG is now managed by a Board of Trustees, who are members of the participating clubs. He noted that, in the past, Local Councillors had attended Board meetings as observers, rather than active Trustees, but felt the local community is no longer represented (on the Board).</p> <p>PMB asked who was liable for the damage to the bowling greens caused by contractors, DL advised this was not the concern of SDCC, but an internal SRG matter.</p> <p>JL asked if SRG was a private enterprise, and queried who was responsible for managing the monies received from the Participatory Budgeting process. She also asked when the putting green would be reopened.</p> <p>BM asked on what basis had the land been lease, on a 999 year lease, in 1926.</p> <p>TS clarified the land can only be used for recreational purposes, SRG took on the lease of the current grounds in 1902.</p>	

	<p>BM added there is now no Provost on the Board, so is the Board still valid? He asked if SRG is applying for community funding, noted the land had been transferred to SRG in 2015, and the lack of transparency raised many questions.</p> <p>IH suggested the SRG constitution was out of date and heavily favours one or two organisations, namely the tennis and bowling clubs. He suggested SRG should broaden its constitution.</p> <p>AMcA said clarity about governance was needed.</p> <p>PMB added that he understood the Bowling Club disputes that the Tennis Club owns the land for the proposed development.</p> <p>JS asked Aberdeenshire Council to provide details about governance for Participatory Budgeting (PB).</p> <p>DL added that the public did not vote for PB monies to be given to a private club.</p> <p>TS suggested there were 2 issues – Aberdeenshire Council’s relationship to SRG, which his paper had outlined, and the governance arrangements for PB grants for the duration of successful projects.</p> <p>JL asked if Stonehaven Town Hall is covered by the 1902 Town Halls Act. A lot of money goes to SRG, she wondered when the public will benefit.</p> <p>Cllr T said that all SRG members are part of the wider community, the public can access clubs’ facilities. Concerning funding awards, all are managed differently, for example UK Government Shared Prosperity grant funding has been awarded to Stonehaven Golf Club. Aberdeenshire Council reviews all projects who have received (Council?) funding.</p> <p>DL invited JA to address the meeting. JA gave an overview of the SRG history dating back to 1856, before the existence of the Town Council. When the new town area of Stonehaven was developed, common land was made available for the wider benefit of residents. The Town Hall Confirmation Act, 1902, transferred valuable property to ensure the provision of SRG in perpetuity. SRG Trustees have full ownership, liability and duty of care. Outright ownership was transferred to the Trustees in 2015 through the Long Lease (Scotland) Act 2012. Aberdeenshire Council no longer has any locus</p>	
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	<p>in running SRG, Trustees are bound by legislation, however may not always be fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. Aberdeenshire Council has had no status within SRG since 2015, previously they had representatives on the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>DL thanked JA and asked if he would write up the history and share with SDCC. He reflected that questions have been asked for many years, people want to ensure SRG is run efficiently and properly.</p> <p>PMB asked if copies of SRG's constitution and accounts were available.</p> <p>AL said that as it began with the grounds being given in trust why can't the community demand Trustees to act in their interest.</p> <p>JS (suggested SDCC and SRG form a small group to look at this and explore how to work together in a constructive way.</p> <p>BM proposed and PMB seconded having a direct conversation with SRG Trustees, this was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>b) SDCC Communications AMcA confirmed in 1926 he now has access to The Bellman's website. He intends developing a high level communications strategy and will share this with members via e-mail.</p> <p>c) Access to Viewmount for K&M Area Committee Meetings (briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting)</p> <p>d) Stonehaven Conservation Area Review by Planning Aid Scotland (briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting) A consultation event is to be held from 2pm to 7pm, Thursday 20 March in Stonehaven Town Hall concerning the existing Stonehaven Conservation Area.</p> <p>e) Roads and Lighting Update DL referenced 2 briefing papers from Aberdeenshire Roads Department which he circulated prior to the meeting. In summary, many street lights are faulty, repairs to these are impacted by lack of budget and unavailability of qualified electricians. He asked the Local Councillors if there was any update on this situation.</p> <p>Cllr T has asked the Roads Department to prioritise those areas where several lights are out. He said external support is being sought to help with repairs, and there is more money for lighting in the 2025-26 budget.</p>	<p>PMB, BM, JL</p>
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	<p>AM asked if the work will be undertaken progressively, Cllr T confirmed it will, and relevant service plans will be updated.</p> <p>DL asked Cllr T to provide a further update at the June Business Meeting.</p> <p>AM asked about plans to switch street light off at night.</p> <p>Cllr T explained that the current system uses 'dawn to dusk' timers to activate street lights, there will be a move to switch off lights in some areas between 12.30am and 5.30 am. He added that all street lights are unmetered.</p> <p>AM was concerned about safety issues in areas where lights are switched off, PMB agreed and added his concern about a potential increase in anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>BM asked what the community had said in the Budget Engagement Survey (about street lighting?) Cllr D will check.</p> <p>CD asked if a review of impact was planned, Cllr T confirmed this, Cllr D added that there was also learning from other pilots.</p>	<p>Cllr T</p> <p>Cllr D</p>
7	Safety Concern at B979 / A90 (South) Traffic Light Controlled Junction – Now several occasions where lorries have tipped over at this junction, which is used by pedestrians	
	<p>DL said there should be an investigation before there is an accident at the junction.</p> <p>Cllr D explained that Aberdeen Roads Ltd is responsible for that section of road, Aberdeenshire Council had asked for a full investigation, but in the absence of anyone being injured, (three or more injury incidents over 3 years) it was not considered (by Aberdeen Roads Ltd) to be a serious risk. She suggested SDCC should write to Aberdeen Roads Ltd about this.</p> <p>?? suggested SDCC should also write to the Road Safety Auditor at Transport Scotland, he will e-mail JL with contact details.</p>	DL/JL
8	Concerns on Aberdeenshire Council Budget 2025-26 outcomes	
	<p>DL invited PMB to introduce this item.</p> <p>PMB said the 2025-26 budget is disastrous for families and communities, highlighting the 10% increase in Council Tax bills, 5%</p>	

	<p>in rents for over 13,000 tenants, 25% increase in Leisure Centre, Membership, 15% increase in Primary School lunches, switching off estate lighting at 1am and, removal of free sandbag provision etc etc over 100 amendments. DL agreed people will feel the budget cuts significantly. PMB pointed out the substantial salaries paid to Aberdeenshire Council Senior Management, CEO/Directors, also remuneration of elected members...with no performance related indicators. These salaries and emoluments are likely to see a rise in May with awards from 8% to 15%</p> <p>Cllr D clarified that Aberdeenshire Council has no control over salaries, as these are included in the overall budget awarded by the Scottish Government (SG). She said that the Council does not have enough money to deliver what everyone wants. Council Tax contributes 22% to the total budget. Each Local Authority's share of the SG grant is determined by CoSLA and takes account deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, SIMD). Aberdeenshire has an aging population and many rural communities. The Council cannot operate a deficit. PMB pointed out that £13M paid to alleviate AHSCP budget deficit. The Council also has to support Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.</p> <p>CD commented there had been austerity since 2010 and more money is required from the UK Government.</p> <p>DL thought the Council appears to be moving away from what the community wants. He recognised the hours of work put in by Elected Members in comparison to how much they are paid.</p> <p>BM asked if there had been any discussions about salary cuts, and was information about salaries available? Could (salary costs of) roles across different Local Authorities be compared?</p> <p>PMB confirmed information that CEO & Directors salaries is available on Aberdeenshire website but variances are shown on Scot Gov site; and independent appraisal websites.</p> <p>PM also suggested that significant saving could be made by the Council reviewing the current 6 area structure.</p> <p>DL said that Councillors and the Area Manager (present at the meeting) had been made aware of SDCC concerns.</p> <p>Cllr A said that Local Authority CEO salaries are agreed nationally.</p>	
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	<p>BM thought 12.5% increase in Aberdeenshire Council's salary was unacceptable.</p> <p>JS said that assets are being stripped from the town, but felt that the community working with the Council to identify assets is very positive, as is the support the Council provides to community groups to access other funding opportunities.</p> <p>DL added that Stonehaven is fortunate to have Local Councillors who commit so much time and work to representing and supporting the community.</p>	
9	<p>Lack of maintenance (Beach Toilets and Dunnottar Primary School Railings) potentially leading to significant repair bills. Plus poor signage at Closed Beach Toilets highlighting that the Toilets at the Leisure Centre are available.</p>	
	<p>DL said the Beach Toilets building is in need of repair.</p> <p>IH suggested taking photographs and sending them to the local press.</p> <p>JL asked if there could be bigger and clearer signage redirecting people to the toilets at the Leisure Centre.</p> <p>TS agreed to look into this.</p>	TS
10	Police Scotland (PS) Report	
	This was circulated prior to the meeting.	
11	Planning	
	<p>APP/2025/0185 – Erection of 30 Dwellinghouses (Amendment to Planning Permission Reference Number APP/2014/2178) – Land At Site Adjacent To Fetteresso Cemetery Kirktown Of Fetteresso Stonehaven AB39 3UP</p> <p>PMB had circulated his concerns about this application prior to the meeting, however there were no further concerns raised.</p> <p>APP/2025/0214 – Alterations/Upgrades to Existing Building Including Installation of Solar Panels – K & M Youth Club 27 High Street Stonehaven</p> <p>Supported unanimously.</p>	

	<p>APP/2025/0215 – Alterations/Upgrades to Existing Building Including Installation of Solar Panels, Installation and Repairs to Windows and Internal Alterations – K & M Youth Club 27 High Street, Stonehaven</p> <p>Supported unanimously</p> <p>APP/2025/0058 – Part Change of Use of Agricultural Building to Class 11 (Assembly and Leisure) Indoor Play Area, Installation Cabin (Reception/Handwash Area) and Formation of Car Park – Grains Of Fetteresso, Fetteresso, Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire AB39 3UT</p> <p>Supported unanimously</p> <p>APP/2025/0202 – External Alterations Including Installation of Floral Arch and Painting of Exterior Walls – Orchid, 62 Allardice Street, Stonehaven, AB39 2AA</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>APP/2024/0962 – Erection of Retail Store, Electric Vehicle Charging Hub and Class 3 Café/Restaurant with Associated Car Parking, Servicing, Landscaping and Access</p> <p>DL advised this may come before the Area Committee. He asked that, should there not be another SDCC Business Meeting before this happens, would members be happy for him to speak on behalf of SDCC at the Area Committee in support of the application? This would provide an opportunity for SDCC to demonstrate its support of something the community wants to see happen. This proposal was fully supported.</p>	
12	SDCC Committees / Sub-Groups/Projects	
	<p>a) SSEN Kintore -Tealing 400kV Connection and Hurlie No update</p> <p>b) Community Resilience Group DL taking forward with JS. Fetteresso Church has confirmed they can now use the smaller model of generator.</p> <p>c) Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership IH and RC congratulated Cllr A on her letter to AHSCP, but were not impressed with the reply she had received. The offered to support Cllr A with any input she requires for the FOI request.</p> <p>d) Stonehaven 24 Hour Public Access Defibrillator Network DL confirmed a defibrillator has been ordered for the Wildcat Responders.</p>	<p>DL, JS</p> <p>Cllr A, IH, RC</p>

13	Outside Bodies / Committees	
	<p>a) Transport Action Kincardine-shire (TRAK) No update</p> <p>b) Town Centre Improvement Group No update.</p> <p>c) Stonehaven Patient Participation Group RF gave an update. The Group met the previous week, an information event about Prostate Cancer will be hosted by Stonehaven Medical Practice on 28 April. The event about Advanced Nurse Practitioners had been excellent and well attended, DL agreed they are a very experienced team. Karen Hiller, SAPPG, is keen to increase the number of public information events, and would welcome any suggestions for topics of interest.</p> <p>d) Kincardine and Mearns Community Council Forum IH said TS had given a presentation, and noted the minutes had been (partially) recorded by Artificial Intelligence (AI).</p> <p>TS highlighted the governance around the place planning process, which allows local groups the opportunity to contribute. They will be looking at the Stonehaven Place Plan, further details to follow.</p>	TS
14	Treasurer's Report	
	Circulated to all members prior to the meeting	
15	Correspondence	
	<p>a) JL had drafted and sent a letter of support for the Tolbooth's application to the K&M Coastal Community Fund.</p> <p>b) JL had received a response from Mackie Academy to an email sent by PMB. The school has requested a meeting to discuss the issues raised in PMB's letter, and involvement in a community litter pick. JL said that SDCC had not been aware of PMB's letter before it was sent, and said SDCC needs to work as a team. PMB said he had been approached by a local resident about the behaviour of some Mackie Academy pupils. AM felt that everyone should be consulted and involved. PMB had been researching to find out if any other Community Councils have young people involved. AL said it was normal practice, if approached by an outside body, to take an issue to a wider group of Community Councillors before proceeding. DL suggested this issue be discussed further 'in camera'.</p>	

	<p>c) AL had circulated a paper he had written to Aberdeenshire Council before the Covid Pandemic about safeguarding arrangements for involvement of young people in SDCC and asked if it needed to be updated? Examples of good practice are also awaiting updates. He will follow this up. PMB highlighted youth representation on SDCC as of right had been added to the Constitution some 7 years ago.</p>	AL
16	AOCB	
	<p>AL confirmed nominations for the Hannah Dyson and Community Awards have now closed, SMcQ, JL and he will meet next week to assess these. He expects the awards ceremony will be held late April/early May.</p>	
18	Dates of Next Meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda Discussion Meeting: Tuesday 2025 @ 7pm • Business Meeting: Tuesday 2025 @ 7pm 	