



Date: 12 May 2026
Time: 6.30pm
Venue: Ace Winches Suite, Buckie Thistle FC, Buckie
Attendees: Ann Mitchell (AM), Alison Durno (AD), Christine Allan (CA), Treasurer - Daska Murray (DM), Co-chairs Neilian Toms (NT) and Richard Simpson (RS), Secretary - Sharon Innes (SI),, Cllr. Sonya Warren (SW) Debra Duke (DD)
Apologies: George Dawson (GD)
Pubic present: Abigail Campbell (ACB) and Alexa Calder (AC) – school representatives

Minutes of Meeting

Agenda Item	Discussed	Follow up / Action by
1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions	Everyone welcomed NT and RS chaired the meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One formal apology: George Dawson (GD) Ongoing issue: Ross Ingram (RI) has not made contact with the group or returned group laptops despite repeated requests.	
2.Meeting protocol	Visitors are made aware via agenda that meetings are recorded electronically for the purpose of supporting minute-taking, with recordings erased thereafter.	
3. Approval of previous meetings minutes	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment by DM and AM	
4. Open Business from the last meeting	<p>Portgordon School Bus Petition</p> <p>Members discussed the recent submission of the Port Gordon school bus petition to the council offices.</p> <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives attended council offices to submit the petition. • Significant delays and confusion were experienced during the submission process. • Reception staff appeared unclear about procedures and appropriate contacts. • The group waited approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes before the petition was accepted. • Concerns were raised that there was no clear receipt or acknowledgement process initially. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was later confirmed that a signed receipt for the petition had been obtained. <p>Discussion Members described the process as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disorganised, • poorly communicated, • and unnecessarily difficult. <p>The petition focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerns regarding the safety of the road for school pupils, • particularly during winter conditions, • and opposition to the current transport arrangements. <p>Youth representatives expressed concerns about the dangers of walking on the road and supported the petition's aims.</p> <p>Petition Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members were advised it may take up to two weeks for the council to validate the petition and verify signatures. • No updates have yet been received. <p>Agreed Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future petition submissions should be arranged in advance with council staff to ensure a named officer is available. • Members requested clearer council procedures for public petition submissions. • Consideration to be given to requesting improvements to reception guidance and signage at council offices. <p>High Street Crossing An update was provided regarding the ongoing road crossing safety issue at Gordon Park.</p> <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continues with SW and Neil McLennan (NM) regarding a Notice of Motion. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal may need to proceed through the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee before full council consideration. • Historic correspondence from 2014 indicating a crossing would be installed was referenced. • Copies of previous emails and supporting documentation were sent to the Chief Executive requesting scrutiny of the process. <p>Further Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members remain unclear on what improvements are currently planned. • Possibilities mentioned included pavement build-outs and traffic calming. • The ongoing 20mph consultation was highlighted as an opportunity for residents to submit comments supporting reduced speeds. <p>Agreed Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage residents to participate in the 20mph consultation. • Continue progressing the Notice of Motion. • Monitor any council proposals relating to crossing improvements. 	
<p>5. New Business</p>	<p>Members discussed several long-running community matters that have been raised repeatedly over recent years but have struggled to progress to completion. It was acknowledged that many issues continue to return to meetings without clear resolution.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding matters should continue to be monitored. • Reports should be requested where appropriate before future meetings. • Existing allocated funds should remain ringfenced until clear proposals are brought forward. <p>Discussion also took place regarding signage projects and previously allocated funding which remains unused. Members</p>	

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	<p>agreed that follow-up contact should be made with relevant groups to determine whether plans are progressing.</p> <p>SW to try and update with Little Norway Projects</p> <p>RS to make contact regarding Resilience Group</p> <p>Community Group Communication and Coordination The meeting discussed communication between community organisations and the role of the community council.</p> <p>Main Discussion Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members expressed concern about a lack of coordination between local groups. • It was agreed that improved communication would benefit the wider community. • The community council does not seek to interfere with other groups' work but wishes to remain informed in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct residents appropriately, • avoid duplication, • and improve collaboration. <p>Existing Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from the Buckie Area Forum had recently been shared for the first time in some time. • This was welcomed as a positive step toward better communication. <p>Historical Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous arrangements had included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circulation of agendas and minutes between groups, • attendance by representatives at wider area forums, • and stronger links between organisations. Members felt communication structures had weakened over time due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in communication methods, • fragmented online groups, • and lack of clear coordination. <p>Suggestions Raised</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>RS</p> <p>RS</p> <p>SI</p> <p>SI</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clearer structure or “flow chart” showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community groups, • responsibilities, • and communication pathways. • Share agendas and minutes more consistently between organisations. • Invite wider participation at meetings where appropriate. <p>Agreed Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Gordon McDonald regarding sharing Buckie Area Forum minutes with the Community Council. • Continue sharing community council agendas and minutes with relevant groups. • Explore opportunities for joint meetings and improved collaboration. <p>Online Training Workshops</p> <p>Members discussed various online workshops and training opportunities.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the cost of some paid training sessions.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communitycouncils.scot offers free online learning courses via Open University www.open.edu/openlearn/skills-supportOU-CC • Third Sector Interface (TSI) training opportunities are often free and useful for Community Councils <p>Members agreed to continue monitoring available free training opportunities.</p>	

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Stagecoach Route 35 and Public Transport Issues</p> <p>A substantial discussion took place regarding ongoing concerns with the Stagecoach 35 service.</p> <p>Issues raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses running late or not arriving. • Drivers missing stops or routes. • Young people being stranded late at night. • Passengers unable to attend placements or activities due to delays. • Buses failing to stop for waiting passengers. • Overcrowding and lack of seating. • Concerns regarding older buses and lack of seatbelts. • Inconsistent ticket charging for young passengers. • Safety concerns on the A98. <p>Members also discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus tracking functionality. • Driver training concerns. • Reliability issues. • Impact on school pupils and young people. <p>It was agreed that the Community Council would support a coordinated response with Connected Communities and neighbouring Community Councils.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather further evidence and reports from residents. • Seek feedback through social media and local noticeboards. • Contact schools and young people for additional experiences and concerns. • Respond to Findochty Community Council confirming support for a joint complaint/response. 	SI
<p>6. Sub-Committee reports and plans</p>	<p>An update was provided regarding ongoing works at Linzee Gordon Park.</p>	

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	<p>Members heard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fence installation works had experienced delays. • Additional costs had arisen unexpectedly. • Vandalism and damage to equipment had occurred. <p>It was decided that updates will only be discussed at future meetings if there are changes to report.</p> <p>DS updated that Bairns Bank are still looking for a new venue. There is nothing concrete at the moment but there may be a lead which will be confirmed as information received. Bairns bank request for Petty Cash been approved, terms signed by RS and NT alongside DS.</p>	
<p>7. Members Community Engagement and Feedback</p>	<p>We have received copies of FAB DT Minutes of Meeting from 6th May 2026. This has opened a channel of communication between the two groups which we will continue and build on.</p> <p>CA reported updates from FAB DT and BAF regarding the future of the Hub. FAB DT are struggling for members and are looking to recruit new volunteers. To do this Buckie Locality Plan are hosting and inviting all groups to an event on 20th June 2026, 10-2pm in North Church Hall, Buckie.</p> <p>This celebration day will showcase each group, allowing visitors to get to know what they do and hopefully join in.</p> <p>BDCC members to confirm if they can attend and suggest what we can showcase and in what way</p> <p>For information - Buckie Locality Plan Group (CMG) host their meetings 10-12pm the 1st Tuesday of the month in Buckie Library.</p> <p>Money For Moray have launched a new and final round of funding from Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund. Applicants can apply now until 12pm on 31st August 2026. Awards can be up to £50,000. An information roadshow to share information about the fund will be held Tuesday 9th June 2026, 3-6pm in Fishermen’s Hall, Buckie.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>

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	<p>Website Moving Forward</p> <p>Members held a detailed discussion regarding the future of the Community Council website and wider communication strategy.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous discussions had stalled primarily due to manpower and maintenance concerns. • There would be financial investment required to properly develop and maintain the website. • The Community Council does not wish to proceed unless a sustainable long-term plan is in place. <p>Chris Thornton had offered to assist with website maintenance on an interim basis, however members recognised the need for a broader support structure rather than relying on a single volunteer.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the possibility of using existing unused allowance funding to support website administration and maintenance.</p> <p>Members strongly supported the idea of developing the website into a central community information hub for Buckie, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community event listings • A public calendar of local activities • Information from local clubs and organisations • Coffee mornings and fundraising events • Links to Facebook and social media updates • Tourism and visitor information <p>It was noted that many residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use Facebook regularly • Miss events due to social media algorithms • Would benefit from a central searchable website • Often struggle to find information about local activities <p>Examples were discussed where community events had suffered from poor attendance simply because information had not reached enough people.</p>	

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	<p>Members discussed the importance of creating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reliable “one stop” source of community information • Better visibility for local organisations • Improved communication for returning residents and newcomers <p>Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating website posts with Facebook and Instagram automatically • Developing a shared events calendar • Encouraging community groups to submit their own events • Creating designated volunteer roles for different website functions <p>Potential collaboration opportunities with Buckie High School and youth groups were also discussed.</p> <p>Members explored the possibility of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving senior pupils interested in media, IT or communications • Working with teachers or youth workers • Providing young people with practical experience and CV-building opportunities • Creating continuity by involving pupils in senior year groups <p>It was also noted that anyone directly managing the website may need to become an associate member for liability and governance purposes.</p> <p>Members agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website project remains highly worthwhile. • More volunteers and defined roles are required before proceeding. • A clearer operational structure should be prepared before any formal vote on expenditure. <p>Discussion also covered current email hosting arrangements and the need to review digital administration processes.</p> <p>Actions:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore potential collaboration with Buckie High School and youth workers. • Contact interested volunteers and define possible website roles. • Investigate communication with administrators of existing local information pages. • Arrange an informal working meeting to progress website planning. • Prepare a proposed structure and staffing plan before the next formal meeting on 9th June. <p>Developing/Improving Community awareness & Public Engagement</p> <p>Members discussed the importance of improving communication with residents and community organisations.</p> <p>Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better use of Facebook and websites • Sharing achievements and completed projects publicly • Improving awareness of community activities • Avoiding duplication of information • CA to draft summary of work we have done to approach Alan Beresford for publicity. • Possibility of advertising in Spotlight or Lifestyle Magazine to be explored. <p>Local Development Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS attended a recent planning meeting regarding the long-term Local Development Plan (LDP), which will guide development over the next 10 years and significantly influence the future of the Buckie area. • Discussion highlighted that many current developments, including infrastructure and road changes, stem from decisions made years earlier through the planning process. • It was noted that once projects reach the implementation stage, opportunities to influence them are limited. Greater involvement is needed during the early planning stages. 	<p>RS</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>CA</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning officer Darren Westmacott (DW) confirmed that community feedback is still being sought and encouraged Buckie groups to contribute as soon as possible while the plan is still progressing. • Members discussed the importance of Local Place Plans, which allow communities to identify priorities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ protecting green belt land, ○ preserving trees and green spaces, ○ identifying suitable areas for development, ○ improving transport and active travel routes, ○ supporting tourism infrastructure, ○ shaping the future appearance and function of the town. • It was noted that Buckie has not yet developed a Local Place Plan, unlike some neighbouring communities. • Members agreed that the Community Council is well placed to lead or support this type of work, as it directly relates to representing community interests. • DD explained that Local Place Plans are relatively new under Scottish planning legislation and are intended to influence Local Development Plans if completed early enough in the process. • Previous planning consultations in Buckie were not well attended, and members agreed there is a need for greater community engagement moving forward. • Discussion took place around creating possible subgroups within the Community Council, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a Tourism subgroup, ○ a Local Place Plan / Planning subgroup. • Members felt these are important areas not currently being fully addressed by other groups in the town. • Concerns were raised about the scale of work involved, particularly given the size and complexity of planning documents. • DD offered to share links to online training sessions and examples of Local Place Plans from other communities. • Members discussed inviting Darren Westmacott to attend a future meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ explain the Local Development Plan process, ○ clarify what can and cannot be influenced, ○ provide guidance on Local Place Plans, ○ answer questions from members. • It was suggested that DW could attend before the formal meeting start time to allow sufficient discussion time. 	<p>DD & SI</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative options such as a Zoom session were also mentioned if an in-person meeting was not possible. • Members agreed the issue is important for the long-term future of Buckie, particularly regarding tourism, housing, infrastructure, and environmental protection. • DM to contact Darren West regarding attendance at a future meeting. 	DM & SI
8. Reports from local group activity and initiatives	<p>Cemetery Maintenance Concerns</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the condition of local cemeteries, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrown grass • Untidy maintenance following grass cutting • Grass cuttings being left on graves and headstones • Weed growth and general presentation <p>Members shared examples from residents who had personally undertaken maintenance around family plots due to dissatisfaction with the condition of the grounds.</p> <p>Discussion highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery maintenance is carried out on a scheduled programme. • Grass cutting is reportedly scheduled approximately every two weeks between April and October. • Edging work is completed approximately every second cut. • Weed treatment is carried out twice yearly. • No additional maintenance budget is currently available. <p>Members acknowledged residents' frustrations while also recognising the pressures on council grounds maintenance teams, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited staffing and seasonal workers • Increased workload during peak growing periods • Wider pressures affecting roadsides, parks and public spaces 	

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	<p>It was suggested that a public statement may help explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current maintenance schedules • Resource limitations • Environmental considerations regarding reduced cutting and biodiversity <p>However, members noted the sensitivity of the issue for grieving families.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider issuing an explanatory public statement regarding cemetery maintenance schedules and council responses. • Continue raising concerns with Moray Council where appropriate. 	SI
9. Community Councillors feedback	Nothing discussed	
10. A.O.B.	<p>Cruise Ship Arrivals – Buckie Harbour</p> <p>A significant portion of the meeting focused on upcoming cruise ship visits to Buckie.</p> <p>Members discussed recent correspondence regarding requests for the Community Council and local volunteers to help provide a welcome for arriving passengers and crew.</p> <p>It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first cruise ship visit is scheduled for Sunday 24 May. • Passengers will arrive ashore via tender boats rather than docking directly. • Arrival times are expected to begin around 8:00am. • Most passengers will leave immediately on organised bus excursions. • Some crew members may remain in Buckie during the visit. <p>Members expressed concern regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited preparation time • Lack of confirmed passenger numbers 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty regarding timings and logistics • Limited businesses open on Sunday mornings • No dedicated budget currently available <p>A phone discussion took place during the meeting with Tracy Rae regarding planning arrangements.</p> <p>Key points from the discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moray Council officers are assisting with coordination. • A marquee is being arranged at the harbour. • Information leaflets/maps are being prepared. • Discussions are ongoing regarding local businesses, cafés and attractions. • Cruise visits this year are being treated as a “trial/taster” for future opportunities. <p>Members discussed several possible welcome arrangements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagpipers • Highland dancers • Heritage and cultural displays • Information boards showcasing Buckie’s fishing heritage • RNLI information displays • Local maps and business guides <p>Discussion took place regarding practical considerations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable performance space and flooring for dancers • Weather protection • Timing between passenger transfers ashore • Availability of volunteers <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further logistical information is required from harbour representatives. • Coordination between volunteer groups will be essential. • A WhatsApp group may be created to improve communication. <p>Potential involvement from:</p>	<p>SI</p> <p>NT</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local pipe bands • Highland dancers • Buckie heritage groups • RNLI volunteers • Local cafés and businesses was discussed. <p>Members also discussed the importance of ensuring visitors receive a positive welcome to encourage future tourism opportunities.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Await updated logistical information from harbour representatives. • Gather details of Sunday-opening businesses. • Explore availability of pipers and dancers. • Coordinate volunteers through a shared communication group. • Continue liaising with Moray Council officers and harbour representatives. 	<p>ALL ACB</p> <p>NT & SI</p>
11. Correspondence to note	Nothing discussed	
12. Date / Venue of next meeting	9 th June 2026 at Ace Winches Suite, Buckie Thistle FC, Buckie. Time to be confirmed depending on DW attendance	SI

Community Council meeting closed at 21.00 hrs.