



**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
**Time:** 6pm  
**Venue:** Ace Winches Suite, Buckie Thistle FC, Buckie  
**Attendees:** Ann Mitchell (AM), Alison Durno (AD), Christine Allan (CA), Treasurer - Daska Murray (DM), Co-chair Neilian Toms (NT), Secretary - Sharon Innes (SI), Richard Simpson (RS), Cllr. Sonya Warren (SW), Iona Shewan (IS), Susan McLennan (SM), Darren Westmacott (DMT) from Moray Council  
**Apologies:** Pringle George (PG)  
**Pubic present:** Neil Simpson (NS) from Buckie Fishing Heritage

### Minutes of Meeting

Agenda Item	Discussed	Follow up / Action by
<b>Welcome, Apologies and Introductions</b>	Everyone welcomed NT chaired the meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One formal apology: Pringle George (PG)</li> </ul> Ongoing issue: Ross Ingram (RI) has not made contact with the group or returned group laptops despite repeated requests.	SI to message and email again including DD
<b>Meeting protocol</b>	Visitors are made aware via agenda that meetings are recorded electronically for the purpose of supporting minute-taking, with recordings erased thereafter.	
<b>Approval of previous meetings minutes</b>	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment by DM and AM. All attendees in agreement.	
<b>Local Development Plan</b>	A council planning officer (Darren) attended to explain the new Local Development Plan (LDP). Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LDP guides development, housing, employment land, and infrastructure over the next 10–15 years.</li> <li>• The new plan is being prepared under Scotland's current planning framework.</li> <li>• A Proposed Plan is expected to be published after summer, followed by a public consultation period of approximately 14 weeks.</li> <li>• Public events will be held, including one in Buckie.</li> </ul> <b>Community Involvement</b> Members asked how the community could contribute. Darren explained:	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People can submit comments online during consultation.</li> <li>• Feedback can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support or objections to development sites.</li> <li>• Suggestions for alternative uses of land.</li> <li>• Comments on planning policies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Community groups can also meet directly with planning officers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns About Engagement</b> Several members expressed concern that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation events are often difficult for working-age residents to attend.</li> <li>• The same small group of people tends to participate.</li> <li>• More effort is needed to engage younger residents.</li> </ul> <p>The planning officer acknowledged this challenge and said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council is looking at different ways to engage people.</li> <li>• Schools and youth groups have been involved in previous planning exercises.</li> <li>• Short explanatory videos are planned to help people understand why the development plan matters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Buckie-Specific Issues</b> Discussion focused on Buckie and surrounding communities. Main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no major new housing or industrial land allocations proposed for Buckie.</li> <li>• The emphasis is likely to be on strategic improvements rather than large new development sites.</li> <li>• The Buckie Harbour Masterplan was discussed.</li> <li>• Members raised concerns about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derelict buildings around the harbour.</li> <li>• Road infrastructure.</li> <li>• Future construction traffic.</li> <li>• Wider economic benefits for the town.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p><b>Transport and Road Safety</b> Members raised longstanding concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed limits on the A98.</li> <li>• Requests for reduced speed limits.</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossing provision near schools.</li> <li>• Delays in delivering promised road safety improvements.</li> </ul> <p>The planning officer noted that transportation decisions are handled by another department but offered to pass concerns on.</p> <p><b>Local Place Plans</b> Discussion turned to Local Place Plans. Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portgordon already has a Local Place Plan.</li> <li>• Buckie does not currently have one.</li> <li>• Members asked whether Buckie should prepare one.</li> <li>• Darren suggested waiting to review the Proposed Development Plan first before deciding.</li> <li>• Even if prepared later, a Local Place Plan can still influence planning decisions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Timetable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Plan expected to be published around November.</li> <li>• Consultation follows publication.</li> <li>• Adoption of the new Local Development Plan is targeted for around 2028.</li> <li>• The plan would then guide development for approximately 10 years.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Open Business from the last meeting</b></p>	<p><b>A. Portgordon School Bus Petition</b> <b>Current Position</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Stage 2 complaint has been submitted regarding school transport arrangements.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A response is expected by <b>16 June</b>.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised that the complaint appears to have been referred back to the same department that is the subject of the complaint.</li> </ul> <p><b>Petition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The petition has been acknowledged and appears to have met the required criteria.</li> <li>• A representative will be allowed to address the council on <b>30 June</b>.</li> <li>• Speakers will have approximately <b>5 minutes</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Planned Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IS will speak at the meeting.</li> <li>• The possibility of representation from the local high school was discussed.</li> <li>• The aim is to present views from affected pupils and families.</li> </ul> <p><b>Council Process</b> After hearing the petition, councillors will decide what action to take. Possible outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full hearing/investigation.</li> <li>• Delegation to committee leadership.</li> <li>• Taking no further action.</li> <li>• Other procedural options available to the council</li> </ul> <p><b>Railway Bridge Freedom of Information Request</b> A Freedom of Information response was received regarding the railway bridge.</p> <p><b>Key Findings</b> The report appears to show more serious issues than previously indicated, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive corrosion.</li> <li>• Replacement of bolts and fixings.</li> <li>• Slippery and potentially hazardous steps.</li> <li>• Need for repainting and structural maintenance.</li> </ul> <p>Members noted that previous council statements had suggested only minor maintenance was required.</p>	<p>IS</p>

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	<p><b>Connection to School Transport</b> There was discussion about whether the bridge could realistically form part of a safe walking route for schoolchildren.</p> <p><b>B. Lindsay Gordon Park Crossing Petition Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adult petition seeking a crossing was rejected.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised that some signatures may not have met electoral register requirements.</li> <li>• It was suggested that a revised petition with additional verified signatures could be submitted.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ongoing Concern</b> Members remain frustrated that requests for a crossing date back many years without resolution.</p> <p><b>C. Cruise Ship Visit Review</b> The group reviewed the recent cruise ship visit.</p> <p><b>Positive Feedback</b> Piper and Highland dancer received excellent responses from visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passengers enjoyed being welcomed into the harbour.</li> <li>• Visitors took photographs with performers.</li> <li>• Feedback from tourists was very positive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues Identified</b> Some performers reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No seating available.</li> <li>• No refreshments provided.</li> <li>• Better organisation would help in future.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Numbers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large numbers of crew came ashore as well as passengers.</li> <li>• Although it was a Sunday and many businesses were closed, visitors still spent time in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cafés</li> <li>• Tesco</li> <li>• Local shops</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>SI</p>

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	<p><b>Future Visits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another cruise ship visit is expected on <b>19 June</b>.</li> <li>• Border Force procedures may apply because it will be the vessel's first Scottish port of call.</li> <li>• Further cruise visits next year are considered possible if the experience remains positive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposal for a Tourism Group</b> Members discussed creating a dedicated tourism subgroup.</p> <p><b>Purpose</b> To coordinate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cruise ship visits.</li> <li>• Coach tours.</li> <li>• Visitor information.</li> <li>• Welcome events.</li> <li>• Town maps and leaflets.</li> <li>• Contacts with businesses and attractions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain lists of contacts.</li> <li>• Prepare welcome plans in advance.</li> <li>• Coordinate performers and volunteers.</li> <li>• Improve communication with harbour and tourism organisers.</li> </ul> <p>AM was formally appointed as running this subgroup going forward.</p> <p><b>D. . Stagecoach Route 35 Bus Service</b></p> <p><b>Concerns Raised</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability problems continue.</li> <li>• Buses arriving early, late, or not at all.</li> <li>• Timetable changes without sufficient notice.</li> <li>• Difficult access from newer housing areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue recording incidents.</li> <li>• Encourage residents to report problems.</li> </ul>	<p>AM</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite representatives from the Public Transport Unit to a future meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>E. Community Resilience Group</b> Discussion focused on whether a resilience group is still needed.</p> <p><b>Suggestions Included</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency contact fridge magnets.</li> <li>• Public information leaflets.</li> <li>• Community noticeboards.</li> <li>• Simple guidance on what residents should do during emergencies.</li> </ul> <p>There was support for keeping the approach practical and straightforward rather than creating a large formal structure.</p> <p><b>F. Little Norway Project Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original Aberdeen-based design support is no longer available.</li> <li>• Alternative printing and design options are being explored.</li> <li>• Questions remain about ownership of existing artwork and design files.</li> <li>• Members are keen to see the project completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>G. Community Noticeboard</b></p> <p>Members were reminded that a community council noticeboard still exists near the harbour office. Suggestions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinstating it in a prominent location.</li> <li>• Using it for visitor information.</li> <li>• Including resilience information.</li> <li>• Displaying maps and local event information.</li> </ul> <p><b>H. Upcoming Community Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Celebrating Buckie" event scheduled for 20 June.</li> <li>• Volunteers were sought to staff a community council table.</li> </ul>	<p>SI</p> <p>RS</p> <p>SW</p> <p>SI</p> <p>SI, CA &amp; AM</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about using the event to:</li> <li>• Recruit volunteers.</li> <li>• Promote council activities.</li> <li>• Gather community feedback.</li> </ul> <p><b>I. Website</b> The group voted in favour of proceeding with the community website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris Thornton will maintain the site initially until volunteers or students can take over.</li> <li>• Chris's role will include identifying and fixing usability issues during the early stages.</li> <li>• There was discussion about paying Chris a maintenance fee while he performs this additional work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Website Benefits Discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information remains permanently available, unlike Facebook posts that get pushed down by algorithms.</li> <li>• Easier to update than physical noticeboards.</li> <li>• Potential integration with:</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Local clubs</li> <li>• Resilience/emergency information</li> <li>• QR codes linking visitors directly to local information</li> </ul> <p><b>Future School Involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term goal is to involve local students in maintaining the website.</li> <li>• Current school calendar timing makes immediate recruitment difficult.</li> <li>• The website should be established and tested before students become involved.</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Email System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns were raised about the current email hosting arrangement.</li> </ul>	





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	<p><b>Promotional Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tablecloth with community council branding has been ordered for events.</li> <li>• Future consideration of banners and display materials.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accounts Examination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deborah advised the council to begin preparations for year-end accounts.</li> <li>• Proposal to ask Paul from Findochty Community Council to carry out the examination again.</li> </ul>	SI & DM
<b>Treasurer Report</b>	Report was issued with balance of account £23,404.15	
<b>Next Meeting</b>	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2026 at Ace Winches Suite 6.30pm	AD

Community Council meeting closed at 20:30 hrs.