



Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Tarland School - 17th June 2026

Present : David Ellis, John Rogie, Pamela Clark, Paul Anderson, Nigel Healey, Anthony McKillop, Cllr Sarah Brown

Guests : Simon Langan

Apologies : Alastair Scott

Chair's Report:

This past year has been one of significant activity and evolving challenges for the Cromar Community Council, as it continues to represent the residents of Tarland, Logie Coldstone, Coull, and the wider Cromar area.

Change in Membership of the Council

The Community Council has seen several changes to its membership this year. In December, Sandra van Heusden, the Community Council Secretary, stood down. We wish to thank her for her valuable contributions, hard work, and dedication during her time in the role. In April, Stuart Urquhart and Janet Urquhart stood down having been Councillors since the last election. We thank them for their commitment and contribution in the last three years. We were pleased to co-opt Anthony McKillop and Paul Anderson as Community Councillors. Anthony McKillop was elected as Secretary and was assisted by Alastair Scott in minute taking. Experiments in AI minute taking are continuing.

Community Safety & Local Services

Policing and crime reports from Police Scotland continue to show historically low numbers of non-road traffic offenses in Upper Deeside. However, there has been a noticeable increase in road traffic offenses, which the police attribute to higher visibility and stricter enforcement regarding speeding and vehicle safety, particularly around Dinnet. We note the closure of the Aboyne police station. Sergeant Allan Masson regular in-person attendance at our meeting is greatly appreciated. The ongoing closure of Aboyne Bridge is causing issues for the local communities in the Howe of Cromar.

Roads, infrastructure, and transport remain major focal points:

- Stagecoach successfully rerouted the bus service removing the need for drivers to undertake turning manoeuvres within Tarland Square.
- Aberdeenshire Council rolled out new 20mph speed limits across built-up areas. Recent speed monitoring data has demonstrated a tangible reduction in average traffic speeds through these zones, which the Community Council greatly welcomes.
- Road maintenance remains a severe point of frustration. We are extremely disappointed with the resurfacing of Tarland Square and the road from Tarland to

Coull. The Square appears excluded from Aberdeenshire Council's dynamic priority lists, meaning nothing is done year after year. We have reiterated our intense frustration that superficial patching of deep potholes is proving entirely ineffective, and full resurfacing is desperately required. On a positive note, the small bridge in Coull is now scheduled to undergo repair within the next six months.

- We experienced severe local postal delivery delays during the winter months, a matter that was escalated to Andrew Bowie MP and Ofcom.

Community Resilience

Following the significant hailstorm and flooding event on the 14th of August, flood and emergency preparedness became a top priority for the area. This event encouraged the formation and rapid progress of the Cromar Area Resilience group, which recently held its inaugural meeting and now has a core group of dedicated volunteers. This team has achieved the following:

- Secured a £1,922 grant from Aberdeenshire Council for emergency equipment.
- Successfully established emergency resilience hubs in both the Tarland and Logie Coldstone halls.
- Hosted a highly successful Flood Resilience Workshop in Tarland Square featuring the "Flood Bus" to help residents prepare for future emergencies.
- Thanks to the efforts of Simon Langan an automated flood monitor at the Viewfield Wetland site is planned.

Education & Community Vitality

The status of our local schools remains a critical concern for the long-term vitality of our villages. Logie Coldstone Primary School remains "mothballed" for the next academic year. Furthermore, Aberdeenshire-wide forecasts indicate a severe drop in pupil numbers by 2030, with Tarland School projected to fall from 78 to 60 pupils.

A lack of affordable housing continues to create challenges for retaining young families and staffing local businesses. However, we warmly welcome the progress of Logie Coldstone's housing development, where plans for three new "passive house" standard homes at Sunnybrae have finally overcome drainage challenges. It is hoped that the MacRobert Trust ten year plan will deliver more affordable housing in Tarland and The Howe. Community spirit remains incredibly strong. The Logie Coldstone Community Café continues to be an extremely popular, multi-generational asset.

Environmental & Infrastructure Projects

Work has continued on the R100 full-fibre broadband rollout. The first properties in the Howe are now able to order full fibre connections. The major issue regarding land ownership and way leaves that has been impacting many properties has just been resolved. However there needs now to be detailed plans as to how the infrastructure will be installed.

Our communal spaces continue to thrive thanks to the hard work of local volunteers:

- The community stepped up to plant and maintain the hanging baskets and borders in Tarland Square
- The MacRobert Trust Gardening Team generously provided and planted perennial

bedding plants to ensure sustainable, long-term floral displays.

- In Coull, the community successfully formed a Trust and purchased Coull Kirk from the Church of Scotland, aided by a highly generous £30,000 donation from the MacRobert Trust.
- Our Christmas lights display was enhanced by new lights funded by a generous £3,000 donation from Heather Chapman. The installation of the lights was carried out by Gordon and Graham Ross.
- Councillor Paul Anderson has volunteered his time to clean the historic Peter Milne memorial in The Square and repaint various public benches.

Partnerships & Collaboration

The Community Council has actively worked to strengthen its partnerships this year. In late 2025 the report questioning TDG Governance proved challenging for the Community Council in deciding appropriate actions. We welcome Simon Langan as the new Chair of the Tarland Development Group (TDG) and appreciate his commitment to fostering a positive, constructive, and forward-looking working environment. TDG has successfully secured two-year funding from the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) and has appointed two part-time Development Officers as a job share. These officers will help continue work on governance, transparency, and community engagement. We continue to work closely with the Logie Coldstone Trust and are grateful for the ongoing support of the MacRobert Trust and Estate.

Challenges & Looking Ahead

While much has been achieved, significant challenges persist. Aberdeenshire Council is facing severe financial pressures This continues to impact local services, from delayed flood risk studies to the ongoing management of road infrastructure. In response, the Cromar Community Council supported a Joint Statement alongside 21 other Aberdeenshire Community Councils, calling on the Scottish Government to provide a more equitable funding settlement for the North East. The continuing closure of Aboyne

Looking ahead, the Community Council will continue to prioritise:

- Advocating for policies and initiatives that attract and retain young families.
- Encouraging Government initiatives to improve broadband and mobile communications
- Seeking to maintain and support local businesses.
- Working collaboratively with local groups to maximise community benefit.
- Monitoring and influencing council decisions impacting local services and infrastructure.
- Fostering community resilience and self-sufficiency in the face of evolving challenges.
- Participation in the Aberdeenshire Community Benefit working group.

Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude is extended to the Community Councillors for their unwavering dedication, lively contributions, and hard work throughout the year. Their commitment is the bedrock of the Community Council's effectiveness.

Thanks are also extended to:

- Ward Councillors Sarah Brown, Anouk Kloppert, and Geva Blackett for their valuable

support, guidance, and advocacy on behalf of Cromar.

- Sergeant Allan Masson and Police Scotland for their consistent efforts in maintaining community safety.
- Tim Stephen, the Area Manager, for his advice and his team for their ongoing collaboration and support.
- The Cromar Area Resilience team—Pamela Clark, Anthony McKillop and their group of volunteers for their work in preparing our community for future emergencies.
- The MacRobert Trust for their continued generosity, funding, and operational support.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you is offered to the countless volunteers from many local groups. Your collective spirit is the true strength of Cromar.

Presentation of Draft 2024/2025 Accounts

Nigel Healey presented the draft accounts for the year 2025/2026, These will be duly examined by Donald Gordon before submission to the area office.

The accounts showed an opening balance of £3,110 on 1st April 2025. Income for the year was £3,218 (including Grants from Aberdeenshire Council and a restricted grant of £1,922 for improving the resilience of the community). During the year, £1,348 was spent on a portable battery system usable with the Starlink satellite terminal.

Total expenditure was £2,555. The closing balance £ on 31st March 2026 was £3,773

Close of meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 19.47.