



Minutes of the meeting held on
12th February 2025

I. Present/apologies for absence:

- **Present:** Michele Bennett (Chair), Ian Rodger (Vice Chair), Moira Mackay (Treasurer), Hendy Spence (Secretary)
- Rosemary Fraser (Stirling Councillor), Gerry McGarvey (Stirling Councillor), Morven Graham (Service Manager in Education), Caroline Forsyth (Collaborative Improvement Officer in Education)
- 12 members of the public
- **Apologies:** Jackie Garvie, Ronnie Garvie

II. Declaration of interest in any items of business

There were no declarations of interest.

III. Approval of Minutes of last meeting

The previous minutes were approved.

IV. Fintry Nursery (FN) proposed cuts

- Cllr McGarvey had invited MG and CF to explain why FN is back on the list for cuts and what can be done to keep it off the list. He emphasised that no decisions have been made yet and he pledged to do all he can to prevent FN from being closed.
- MB highlighted the need to encourage younger families to move to the village and this cannot be done if there is no provision for the children for example, nursery, breakfast club, after school club etc.
- MG explained that Stirling Council (SC) is required to set a sustainable financial budget. There is a large budget gap and every service has been asked to provide 5% of their budget to help to reduce the gap. Education takes up a large part of SC's budget (almost half) and a big part of that is staffing. It is essential to retain teacher numbers. The Education Service has been asked to identify anything that is non-statutory that could be cut to save money. They need to support SC to make a sustainable budget but it is not a situation that anyone wants to be in. They have been looking at areas such as support services and early years and have written impact statements regarding the risks around each budget proposal. The budget setting meeting is scheduled for 27th February.
- CF noted that every child is entitled to 1140 hours of funding every year and SC has been providing more hours than this by offering non-funded hours. Funded entitlement is 30 hours per week. The provision in Fintry is only term-time. In some places, numbers have been capped from 32 to 24 places. These numbers relate to the 1:8 adult to child ratio.
- The meeting attendees were then asked for their views and questions. Several good points were raised regarding the proposed cuts to FN and are outlined here along with responses from MG and CF:
 - What is the plan if FN closes? The funding follows the child so parents would be able to use the 1140 hours of funding at other nurseries including nurseries which are outwith SC.
 - Many nurseries are only open from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. which makes it very difficult for working parents (over 90% of families in Fintry have 2 working parents). Balfron Nursery is open from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

- It is difficult to get children to nurseries outwith Fintry as Fintry has no public transport. There is a small transport budget available for families who are eligible. Even if transport is available, many parents have to leave the village well before 8 a.m. to get to work on time therefore, before and after care provision is essential.
- Are the officers clear on what the impact would be if FN closes? Not only would nursery age children be affected, it would have an impact on the primary school, families would move away and the vibrant Fintry community would no longer exist.
- Reference was made to occupancy figures and that other nurseries with occupancy figures lower than Fintry have not been threatened with cuts or closure. Is FN being targeted? There is a discrepancy with the occupancy figures as they are taken in May when the nurseries are busiest and do not always reflect the figures throughout the year.
- Why can't FN be open in the summer? It would be too expensive. Councillor Fraser noted that extending the hours does not seem to have been considered. There is difficulty recruiting staff during the summer as many nursery employees have term-time only contracts.
- There are environmental implications if parents have to drive to other villages to take their children to nursery as opposed to walking to nursery or dropping children off en route to work. Many of the roads out of Fintry are not well gritted during the winter months and are dangerous. Moving small children around on these roads on a daily basis would mean an increase in traffic and an increase in the risk of accidents.
- CF noted that birth rates in Fintry have been looked at to project numbers for future years. She also confirmed that provision for 2-year-olds at FN is not an option as the cost implications are too high – nappy changing facilities would need to be provided and the staff to child ratio is higher (1:5).
- Although cross-boundary funding is available this is unfair to the children of Fintry who would most likely not be attending nursery with their peers who they would attend school with.
- Councillor McGarvey noted that most of the parents present (and others) had emailed him about their concerns and that he had encouraged them to participate in the Big Conversation as this will play a big part in the decision making.
- Reference was made to the fact that FN was threatened with closure 2 years ago and that parents are nervous that this will happen again. Some parents already use nurseries in other villages so that they have places there in the event of FN closing. This has a negative effect on the occupancy numbers which would change if there was some guarantee that FN was safe.
- It was emphasised that Fintry has a unique set of circumstances which needs to be considered and it is unfair to apply the same criteria to FN as is applied to nurseries in cities and other areas of larger populations. There is no other child care provision in the village. There are no child-minders any more. There is a drive to recruit more child-minders, particularly in rural areas.
- The fact that Fintry has no public transport is a key factor. Even though transport may be provided for some families, many families only have one car. If the car is in use, what happens if a child is ill or has an accident and needs to be collected early from nursery? Rural areas with no transport need to be given different consideration than other villages.
- Road closures in and around Fintry are a frequent occurrence. Detours are often very long (in time and mileage). This would also add to parents' difficulties if their children had to attend nurseries in other villages.
- There was a proposal to look at how changes in Fintry would impact nurseries in other areas and it was noted that FN is not being given chance to expand and flourish because it always under threat.
- Could FN be open for one day a week over the summer? It is impossible for parents to take 7 weeks off work as the loss of income would be unsustainable. The cost of living has changed drastically over the last few

years and house prices in Fintry are very high so most families have high mortgage payments. It is very difficult for working parents when the nursery is closed during the holidays.

- The officers confirmed that all views would be taken into account as part of the wider consultation.
- Councillor McGarvey felt it was important to find a way to break the cycle of FN being under threat, then safe for a while and then under threat again. He felt that SC is very city-centric and felt that rural places should be the exception to the rule. He agreed that the transport issue has a domino effect and thought that SC needs to think about different criteria for setting their budgets. He also agreed that Fintry has a particular set of circumstances and that numbers do not tell the whole story. He confirmed that the councillors would look at all the evidence but felt that alarm bells should ring if the same issues come up year after year.
- Questions were raised about the impact statements mentioned by MG and how FN can possibly be on the list for cutbacks when the impact on the children and the village as a whole is so huge. The officers explained that they will present the impact statements to the councillors but it is the councillors who make the final decisions.
- Closing FN would not meet the national standards set by the Scottish Government for the children of Fintry.
- Would it be possible for FN to be run privately at the times that it is not open?

V. Stirling Councillor's Report

- Councillor McGarvey did not provide a report but invited questions.
- MB mentioned that SC are committed to providing affordable housing and that it would be good to have more affordable housing in Fintry. She asked how to get in touch with the housing officer to discuss this further. **ACTION: MB to email Councillor McGarvey and he will look into it.**
- A member of the public had approached MB to complain about a recent interaction with SC. They had telephoned to ask to speak to the anti-social behaviour team but was told that the team would not be able to deal with the issue that had been outlined. The resident has been struggling with the behaviour of another resident for some considerable time and was very upset to be told that they could not have any assistance from the anti-social behaviour team by someone who did not know the background to their situation. **ACTION: MB to email Councillor McGarvey and he will look into it.**
- There was a question about funding for allowing members of the public to use the toilets in the sports centre. Funding has been available in the past since the demise of public toilets through a scheme called 'Comfort Partners'. **ACTION: MB to email Councillor McGarvey and he will look into it.**
- A speeding survey was done at the Clachan end of the village several months ago and a resident asked if a report had been produced yet. They raised concerns about the 60 m.p.h. speed limit between the village and the Clachan. Another resident was able to answer this query as they had been in touch with SC about it recently. The report has been completed and the speed limit between the village and the Clachan will be reduced to 40 m.p.h.
- The issue of the lack of public transport in Fintry was raised. Fintry has a lot of older residents who would like to be able to get out of the village without having to drive or rely on lifts. The Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) system is not reliable. Important journeys which have been booked weeks in advance are being cancelled the night before they are scheduled.

VI. Police Report

Reporting Period: January 2025 – Compiled by PC Laura Newlands

Community Engagement and Reassurance:

It is important to you to have community officers who you know, who are accessible and who address local problems.

PC Matt McCammon PC Laura Newlands are the Ward Officers for the Forth and Endrick area. They are based at Balfron Police Office and can be contacted at the office, on 101, or at ForthEndrickCPT@scotland.police.uk. It is recommended that this email address is used by the local community for email contact however this should not be used to report crimes.

Please remember that we regularly publish useful information and updates on social media, including appeals for information, updates about road closures and crime prevention advice. Our Facebook and Twitter pages can be found at;

www.facebook.com/forthvalleypolicedivision

www.facebook.com/policescotland

www.twitter.com/stirlingpol

www.twitter.com/policescotland

Arnprior:

Incidents of note

A call was received in regard to 2 males who had attended a local farm in a vehicle and were acting suspiciously. No crimes were established however an intelligence log was submitted should any similar incidents occur. Please bare this in mind and report any suspicious activity.

Balfron:

Anti-Social Behaviour:

Whilst carrying out enquiries at an address, a female began to act in an abusive manner toward Officers. The female was arrested, charged and conveyed to Custody for her conduct. She was released a short time later and a report submitted to the court.

Theft:

A report was received of a theft which occurred at a clothing bank. Enquiries are ongoing to identify those responsible.

Other:

A report was received from a local resident in regard to a male breaching a non-harassment order. Enquiries are ongoing.

Incidents of note:

A member of the public attended at Balfron Police Station seeking advice having received a phone call claiming there had been fraudulent activity on her bank account. The reporter did not disclose any personal information before terminating the call and contacting her bank. It was confirmed no fraudulent activity had occurred however the call could have been an attempt to gain personal information. Safety advice and documentation on Scams were provided to the reporter.

Please ensure you never share any personal information over the telephone / online.

Buchlyvie:

Assault:

A report was received from a local resident in regard to an assault which had occurred. The assault resulted in a slight injury to the victim. The suspect is known to Police and while efforts were made to trace the suspect in order for them to be cautioned and charged, those attempts proved unsuccessful. As a result, the suspect has been reported to the Court.

Fraud:

A report was received of a fraud whereby a local resident placed an order to purchase a toy online for an agreed price. Thereafter the victim's bank account was debited on a further 6 occasions with a 4 figure sum of money taken. The victim made her bank aware and cancelled her debit card. At present her bank have yet to refund the money. Enquiries are ongoing to identify those responsible.

A report was received of an attempted fraud whereby the victim was contacted by someone purporting to work for Sky and claiming he could reduce her monthly mobile phone payment. During the call the scammer was able to confirm with the victim her bill payment information and was taken through security questions. Thereafter, the scammer informed the victim her account had been hacked and she required to change her password, which she did over the phone with the scammer. Later that day the victim received multiple emails from "Sky" regarding her password and confirming the date her new phone would be delivered. The victim contacted Sky and was informed she had been subject to a scam and should not accept delivery of the new mobile phone. The victim was informed she would likely receive a further call from the scammer telling her a phone had been sent to her home address in error and they would arrange for DPD to attend and uplift the phone. The scammers would then have possession of the mobile phone. This phone call did take place as did DPD attending at the home address however the victim sent them away and informed the scammer that the phone had been sent back. The victim made her bank aware of the scam at which time her debit card was cancelled. Enquiries are ongoing to identify those responsible.

Incidents of note:

A vehicle left the road, B835, striking a tree in the process before coming to rest within a field. Fortunately, no injuries were reported, and the vehicle was recovered. A number of vehicles were observed by a member of the public near to Flanders Moss with persons within acting in a suspicious manner. Police attended however were unable to trace the vehicles in question. Please bare this in mind and report any suspicious activity.

Croftamie:

Road Traffic:

Having received information and following proactive patrols by Officers in the area, a male was traced while driving under the influence of alcohol. The male was arrested, conveyed to Custody and cautioned and charged. The male was released once sober and informed a report would be submitted to the Court.

Incidents of note:

A report was received after two vehicles collided on the A81. Both vehicles were damaged and while the driver of one of the vehicles was initially trapped there were fortunately no injuries reported.

Drymen:

Incident of note:

No incidents of note reported to Police during this reporting period.

Fintry:

Anti-Social Behaviour:

A report was received from a resident of a male acting in an abusive manner. Enquiries are ongoing.

Road Traffic

Enquiries were carried out to trace the driver of a silver MG which collided with another vehicle which had been within a car park. The collision caused damage to both vehicles. The driver of the silver MG left the scene without exchanging details or reporting the matter. The driver of the silver MG was not identified and at this time the incident remains undetected.

Theft:

A report was received of a theft of a quad bike which was removed from within a hay shed. It is unknown how the quad bike was removed as the owner was in possession of the key. Enquiries are ongoing to identify those responsible.

Incidents of note:

No incidents of note reported to Police during this reporting period.

Gargunnock:

Road Traffic:

There have been a number of reports of speeding within the village. Officers are aware and will be carrying out speed checks over the coming weeks.

Incidents of note:

A report was received following a 2-vehicle collision on the B8075 at the junction with the A811. Both vehicles were damaged however no injuries reported.

Killearn:

Road Traffic:

Enquiries are ongoing to trace the driver of a red Renault which collided with another vehicle, causing damage to both vehicles, and left the scene without exchanging details or reporting the matter.

Incidents of note:

No Incidents of note reported to Police during this reporting period.

Kippen:

Anti-Social Behaviour:

A report was received from a resident of a male acting in an abusive manner. The male was traced, arrested and interviewed under caution. He was subsequently released without charge.

Incidents of note:

A report was received of a male chapping doors selling household products in the area. Police attended, carried out a search of the area however were unable trace the male. There were similar reports from surrounding villages and of note a male was traced, arrested and charged in the Doune area for failing to hold a suitable licence for doorstep sales.

Please remain vigilant and if unsure report any suspicious activity.

A report was received following a Facebook account being hacked. The reporter was not extorted of any money / no threats were made and the reporter reported the incident to both Facebook and Police for awareness.

Please remain vigilant and ensure your usernames / passwords are kept safe.

Strathblane

Hate Crime:

Enquires are ongoing to identify the suspect who sent via post a letter containing anti-Jewish, pro neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic comments.

Wildlife:

Enquiries are ongoing to identify 2 males who were reported to be poaching within Mugdock Country Park.

Other:

A report was received from a member of the public who had been bitten by a dog while out running. This resulted in the victim requiring medical attention. The dog owner did provide her details to the injured party and enquiries are ongoing.

Incidents of note

A report was received of a collision near to Mugdock Country Park. A vehicle left the road coming to rest within a ditch. A male was taken to hospital to be treated for minor injuries.

Several reports have been reported in regard to fly-tipping within Mugdock Country Park. Enquiries are ongoing.

A report was received following a bank account being opened in the reporter's name which they had not requested. The reporter was alerted to this when he received a debit card in the post. The reporter contacted his bank, the account was closed, the reporter suffered no financial loss and their credit score was not adversely affected. Please ensure you keep your personal information safe.

The Police asked FCC for feedback regarding this new style of report which includes information regarding nearby villages instead of just Fintry. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

VII. Finance

MB would like to apply for a grant for picnic in the garden on June 21st 2025. It would be for £800. The councillors present agreed that she could go ahead with this application.

VIII. Resilience update

- The resilience Christmas party was a great success this year and the FCC would like to thank the volunteers and especially the Fintry Inn for all their help and all who attended.
- Thanks were also given to The Uncharted Whisky Company for their help with a recent resilience project. It was greatly appreciated by all involved.
- A member of the public complained with regard to not seeing our posts on Fintry Buddies. After investigation it was found that the member of public had unfriended FCC.
- Phase One of the willow spilling project will be complete tomorrow. This was funded by Nadara and the FVL CLLD fund. A member of the public offered some willow that they no longer require. Thanks are given to Dougie Spence for his assistance.
- Phase one of the Clachan Burn Leaky Dams will be complete tomorrow this included the installation of 5 small dams. The rest of the works on this project will be carried out in April. Thanks are given to Andrew Haslam and Kenny Dixon and Brenda Ross for helping this project go forward.
- Good use has also been made of old Christmas trees to help with flood prevention.
- The defibrillator at the church was used recently. **ACTION: MB to check with the Trossachs Search and Rescue team to see if the defibrillator now needs to be checked over and if it will need any parts replacing.**
- Storm Eowyn –The resilience plan was activated –hot food, breakfast and evening meals for over 40 people were supplied during the power outage which did not come back on until Sunday evening. Water was also delivered to houses on the private springs etc.
- A letter of thanks was received from a grateful resident:
I would like to thank you so very much for checking on our situation during the recent power cuts. We are outliers up here and your concern and offers of help made us feel like part of the Fintry community. You are a true asset to Fintry which is a rare thing in many communities these days. A real breath of fresh air in a stressful period. Thank you so very much.

IX. Planning

- No applications have been submitted.

X. Roads/paths

- The A818 Killearn Road will be closed on Monday 27th February between 9.30 a.m. and 3.30 a.m.
- The street lighting in the village which is not working has been reported and the repair work should be completed this week.

XI. Correspondence

- A newsletter has been received inviting Chairs of community councils to a meeting.
- A change to flight paths from Glasgow Airport has been proposed. There will be a third consultation about this soon.
- Information about child protection training sessions has been received.
- Resilience training sessions are available.
- Information about bin collection changes has been received.
- Correspondence with the sports centre about changes to their lease has been received and is ongoing.

XII. Any other business

- Trees – a resident mentioned that some trees came down in the storm behind Culcreuch. MB thought they might be on council land. **ACTION: MB to check and notify the council if appropriate.**
- Playpark – there are pieces of metal sticking up out of the ground. MB has reported this to SC once already but will report it again. She noted that FCC has money ready to pay for the addition of a flying fox to the playpark but are waiting for SC to arrange a date when they can install it. **ACTION: MB to report the dangerous metal in the playpark to SC again.**
- Car charging – a representative from FSC outlined the ongoing saga of the replacement of the electric vehicle (EV) charger at the sports centre. The first one that was delivered did not have the capability for contactless payment so had to be returned. The second one was installed but was found to have a faulty card reader when it was commissioned so a third one has been ordered FSC will not be making any profit out of the EV charger – they will need to increase the tariff to take account of rising electricity prices and V.A.T. but users will only be paying cost price. There was a suggestion for EV chargers to be sited in other parts of the village.
- It was agreed that the Community Council would take forward with Stirling Council funding for the sports Centre in regard to public usage of the sports centre toilets as there no public toilets within the village

XIII. Date of next meeting

- The next FCC meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March at 7.30 p.m.