

Minutes of Crown & City Centre Community Council
AGM and Meeting
Tuesday 24th June 2025, 7pm
Fraser Park Bowling Club

AGM		
1.	Welcome	<p>Members present: Fiona MacBeath (FM), Julia Dall (JD), Pat Hayden (PH), Donald MacKenzie (DM), Val Falconer (VF), Becky Fretwell (BF)</p> <p>In attendance: Cllr Ian Brown (IB), Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie (IM), Cllr Michael Gregson (MG), one member of the public</p>
2.	Apologies	Mike Smith; Colin Mackenzie; Francis Williams; Cllr Kate Maclean; Cllr David Gregg
3.	Minutes of Previous AGM	Meeting on 18 th June 2024: proposed an accurate minute by PH, seconded by VF.
4.	Chairperson's report	<p>The year in summary: some ongoing topics have been the use and maintenance of both Walker and Fraser Parks, Walker Park CCTV application, ongoing monitoring of planning issues, and the completion of many consultations, development plans and reviews.</p> <p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy Street discussions • Donation of £800 to Crown Primary for equipment and benches. • October meeting attended by residents of Old Edinburgh Court to outline the difficulties of short term lets on residents which first highlighted the issue. This led to increasing general awareness through newspaper publicity and finally, last night's bulletin on BBC Scotland News on Highland Council's handling of the situation. • October meeting also attended by staff of proposed Bellfield Community Sauna, which is still in progress. • We welcomed Bet McAllister in joining the community council. <p>Some areas of focus for the year ahead:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain links with Inverness Community Partnership and Ward Forums. • Monitor progress of Helen Crawford's Community Council Energy Infrastructure and the energy plans for Highland area. • Development of unused section of Fraser Park. • Monitor town centre plans. • Keep meaningful contact with Crown Primary School and local residents. <p>Special note: FM thanked all members for support over the years, confirming that she will neither seek nor accept nomination for the position of Chair next year.</p>
5.	Finance report	<p>A copy of the accounts was emailed to members including all the expenditure for the year 2024/2025 up to 31st March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The year's starting balance was £7,739.07, the annual grant from HC was £1,069.94, totalling £8,809.01. • Total expenditure was £2,196.71, including usual costs such as hall hire, CC insurance, domain name, web hosting, plus honorarium to secretary, and also unique costs such as floral displays at £552 and a donation of £800 to Crown Primary • Final balance as of 31st March 2025 was £6,612.30.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted that Bank of Scotland have introduced charges for administering the account which start at £4.25 monthly. Option available to change to internet banking, to be discussed. <p>Proposed as accurate by PH; seconded by DM.</p>
6.	Election of office bearers	<p>Process of election of office bearers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair: Donald MacKenzie, nominated by FM, seconded by BF Vice Chair: Pat Hayden, nominated by VF, seconded by DM Secretary: Julia Dall, nominated by BF, seconded by FM Treasurer: Colin MacKenzie, nominated by PH, seconded by DM (note that this is temporary until confirmed by CM who was not in attendance) <p>Special note: All members of the Community Council expressed their sincere thanks to Fiona for her dedication and commitment during her time as Chair. The role has involved many years of tireless voluntary service, often under challenging circumstances, and her hard work has been deeply appreciated by all. Thanks were also extended to Val for her efforts and support in carrying out the role of Treasurer, which has been equally valued.</p>
7.	Date of next AGM	To be held on or about 23rd June 2026.

Meeting of Crown & City Centre Community Council

Abbreviations: Crown & City Centre Community Council (CC); Highland Council (HC); Crown Community Association (CCA); High Life Highland (HLH); Short Term Lets (STLs)

1.	Welcome	
2.	Apologies	
3.	Minutes of previous meeting	<p>Meeting on 22nd April 2025:</p> <p>Proposed as an accurate minute by DM, seconded by BF.</p>
4.	Matters arising	
4a.	Parks	<p>Walker Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repainting equipment: nothing further from community payback team about returning to repaint the play equipment after sanding was completed at the start of the year. Suggested that PH get in touch with David Lamont in the amenities department at HC. Suggested that PH cc in the Cllrs for visibility. Grass cuttings: cuttings have been sitting for at least 2 weeks, it's piled up around the picnic tables. Noted that it would be great if those who cut it could spend a bit of extra time picking up the cuttings. Benches: benches at Walker Park need some maintenance. The local Men's Shed have a contract with HC to maintain 90 benches – they can look at these benches in July. Wooden spars also need repaired on the BMX track. Toddler park flooring: HC have awarded £6,000 for this. <p>Fraser Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing to note.
4b.	Crown Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-week trial underway to closing school car park during pick-up (14:45–15:05) to improve safety, supported by parent volunteers and positively received so far. Other suggestions included restricting exit times, widening pavements (not feasible), and using the back gate (not currently possible).

		It's hoped this could lead to further initiatives like bike trains.
4c.	HC updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No updates.
4d.	Parking permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re: abuse of visitor permits: FM reports that residents in her area are concerned about people abusing parking permits and parking on their streets. Think it's coming from businesses. We discussed again the ticketed system like Glasgow or Edinburgh, i.e. limit to number of times a visitor pass can be used. This has been raised with HC over the years, the problem is enforcement. It's noted that this is likely the reason the other cities moved to the ticketing system. Between Cllr IM and Cllr MG will pick this up.
4e.	Short term lets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested that STLs are under-analysed by HC but noted that HC must now be aware of the issue as there are at least 2 motions in place. • Understood that it's also a Scottish Government matter and it needs to be reviewed at that level too. • BF says HC needs to urgently do both an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) to measure the potential impact/damage on people in the area - children will be disproportionately impacted because there are fewer children living close to them. Whilst Scottish Government also need to reevaluate their policies on this, HC must take some responsibility for this area. • It's suggested that we should take the opportunity to submit comments on a current long-term let to STL application (Hill Street) in the portal to see how this goes through the system. BF to draft a response and JD to submit. • Situation at 112 Academy St. – the appropriate parties are investigating. • Briefly noted that there is another STL application around Bellfield Park.
4f.	Old High Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank account established and money starting to come in. Hopefully enough to pay for an options study. Noted that another party could still buy it at any time. No further updates.
4g.	HC Local Dev. Plan Evidence Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive response was submitted. Thank you to BF for pulling that all together. To be removed from agenda.
4h.	Broad stone cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FM reported that the previous gardener is unavailable due to workload, and most local gardeners are currently overwhelmed. It was suggested that the team who maintain Kingsmills Nursing Home might be able to help - DM will try to identify and contact the company. Once the area is tidied, the condition of the stone can be assessed. • Members agreed that the CC should not be responsible for the cost; local residents or external funding (e.g. via Historic Environment Scotland) may be more appropriate. If there's no progress, it was suggested someone could contact David Haas for further support.
4i.	Bins in city centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is being looked at by the waste team, BID is also aware of it. Ideally a bin shelter would be built at the bottom of Stephen's Brae for tidiness and to keep gulls away. Smaller bins should go back into the businesses. MS to send his email to JD and then will be sent round members for context. Cllr MG will follow up with HC.
5.	Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local resident informed us of their complaint to HC about STLs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rep from Highland People's Power enquired about community buildings for potential solar PV support. JD to reply advising to contact them directly. • Cllr Crawford's open letter to HC Leader Raymond Bremner seeking re: Motion passed by Council in September last year – forwarded to group. • Highland Energy Training for Community Councils session on 29/05 - JD attended, interesting overview of energy application process. • City centre wayfinding – signage email from Cllr IM/Mark Greig. • Parking charges at Eden Court – JD submitted a response saying we hope that the charges will not be a barrier to participation. • Torvean quarry – JD sent round everyone on 13/06 for comment.
6.	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consultation is ongoing for a proposed hydrogen facility on Common Good land at Longman. BF and JD will draft a response, highlighting the importance of securing community benefit from the outset. • Local residential planning applications: some discussion around whether the CC should comment on these, both in reference to a specific application for Culduthel Road, and in general. It was decided that individual members may respond in a personal capacity if they wish.
7.	Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous balance was £6,612.30. • Expenditure was £593.50, made up of: Bowling Club for April (£30); BID floral displays (£552), Bank service charges (£11.50). • New balance as at 27/05 is £6,018.80. • VF questioned bank charges with Bank of Scotland and why they vary monthly – min. charge of £4.25 per statement period, 50p per cheque. • Option to go to internet banking available (cheques free but still charge for each statement) – this is a matter for new treasurer to take on.
8.	AOCCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking on Castle Street: if spaces are lost on the street due to drop off for Castle Experience it will be a loss for tourists and locals alike. Suggested that this be revisited once it's up and running to review. • Lorraine at Bid re: gulls. FM sent an invitation round everyone to comment to Douglas Ross. Request to include other areas of Crown in the gull problem area. • A local resident raised concerns about the condition of the viewing platform area at the top of Crown Road, which requires maintenance. A separate offer to tidy the area for a fee was noted. There is some uncertainty over land ownership – while it may belong to HC (possibly the fencing), this is disputed. The land appears on the register as part of 1 Crown Circus, with changes over time possibly causing confusion. The area was previously maintained by a dedicated volunteer for many years. The Community Council does not intend to fund maintenance. DM will contact David Haas to seek clarification on ownership.
9.	Date of Next Meeting	Next meeting: Wednesday 20 th August, 7pm, Fraser Park Bowling Club.