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MINUTES OF FORRES AREA FORUM MEETING WEDNESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2025

PRESENT

Ann Rossiter, Chair (AR)	Lindsey Standing, Vice Chair (LS)
Lorretta Oliphant, Treasurer (LO)	Gerry Fraser (GF)
Ray MacDonald (RM)	Mike Scott (MS)
Tina Coffey, Minutes (TC)	

1.	Welcome and Apologies: Chair welcomed those attending and apologies received from Andy Hall and Angela Sutherland.	
2.	Minute of meeting held on Wednesday 5th November 2025: The minutes from this meeting had been circulated, there was one amendment in item 3, Family Bub should read Family Hub. The minutes were proposed by Lorretta and seconded by Lindsey.	
3.	Matters arising: Item 3 – Treasurer completed and emailed to the Secretary a signed bank statement re the AGM Item 14 – RM – reword to read “submitted funding application to Inspiring Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government who are providing a £10 million funding provision to achieve an additional 150 changing places toilets in Scotland”	
4.	Treasurer’s report: Currently have a balance of £2,124.25 which includes £900 ringfenced with 3 payments this period of £30 room rent, £50 secretary duties and £118.80 STP invoice.	
5.	Correspondence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forres Heritage Trust – Rhododendron talk on 22/11/2025 Quarriers - Unpaid Carers Update FABA – AGM on 19/11/2025 Veterans Marketplace – Erskine Moray Council Procurement Event STP Funding Finder November 2025 	
6.	Mount Dora Twinning Association – update from Andy Hall The Forres Mount Dora Twinning Association has not been an active community organisation since 2018 due initially to lack of volunteer support which was exacerbated by the pandemic.	

Almost 18 months, I was contacted by Eve Passmore, who with her husband and young family had recently settled in Mount Dora and established a local brewery - Eden Abbey - were visiting friends in Scotland and wished to visit their "twinning city" Forres. The visit was a great success and Eve has since gone on to become the new President of Mount Dora Sister Cities Association - who represent the US side of the twinning relationship. She and the groups vice president Taryn Souder visited formally in late August - and a report on that visit is attached.

Since the August visit Morgan Jenkins has visited Mount Dora and completed her collaborative art project - and we are in discussions with the Forres Heritage Trust to display one of the murals created in the Tolbooth - with the other mural displayed in Mount Dora.

A small group of local residents - including me and Morgan - are working on plans to reinvigorate the Twinning Association here in Forres with particular focus on business to business, tourism, education and arts and cultural links - including reconnecting with groups that have maintained their own direct links with community groups in Mount Dora.

It is hoped in the new year a formal Committee will be reestablished - but more importantly there is a vibrant working group actively establishing links with groups in and around Mount Dora. If you need anything further please let me know.

Promotion Article

Forres and Mount Dora Strengthen Ties Through Cross Pond Connections

Forres, [29 Aug 2025] – The recent Cross Pond Connections event held at the Mosset Tavern was a resounding success, bringing together a diverse group of individuals from Forres and Mount Dora. The gathering aimed to foster stronger connections between the two towns, reinvigorating their long-standing Twinning relationship of over 30 years

Andy Hall, former Chair of the Forres – Mount Dora Twinning Association, welcomed visitors from Mount Dora, Eve Passmore and Taryn Souder, President and Vice Presidents respectively of the Mount Dora Sister Cities Association (who had funded the event), and their partners Ben and David, introducing them to a roomful of Forres business owners, community leaders, and other interested Forres folk. There were introductions, a brief history of the link between Forres and Mount Dora before discussions then focused on current connections and hopes for future collaborations.

While the relationship between the towns was once primarily centered around student exchanges, the early re-focus will initially seek to build other connections. These include business-to-business, person-to-person, and organization-to-organization links, with the goal of creating a stronger bond between the two communities.

Several current examples of these connections were highlighted during the event:

- **Morgan Jenkins**, the Forres-based recipient of Mount Dora's Artist Exchange award for this year, will be traveling to Mount Dora in October. Morgan will work on a tapestry project with the Mount Dora Center for the Arts, meet with other artists, and participate in the annual craft fair – one of the largest in the USA.
- **Speyside Brewery** and **Eden Abbey Brewing Community**, twinned businesses, showcased "Out of the Woods," a barrel-aged wee heavy collaborative beer that both breweries brewed their respective versions of back in February. The beer was paired perfectly with salted caramel chocolate cookies baked by Tortas by Katalin for the occasion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taryn Souders, a Mount Dora-based children's author, shared her experience visiting Pilmuir Primary School. She gifted one of her books to each of the P-7 students from all three Forres primary schools, thanks to a generous donation from the Kiwanis Club of Mount Dora. Souders also delivered hand-written letters from students in Mount Dora, hoping to jumpstart a pen pal connection. • David Souders, leader of one of Mount Dora's run clubs, joined Nadine Williams and her son Laurence for a hill run with the Forres Harriers. Conversations have started about the possibility of a Mount Dora run club joining the Harriers for a race in the next year or two. • Various other tourism and cultural participants were able to introduce themselves to the Mount Dora visitors who will look to share contact deals with interested parties back in the Florida <p>The event flew by as new friendships formed and collaboration opportunities were dreamt up. As Forres looks to re-start its own Mount Dora Twinning Association, anyone interested in being part of this beautiful, decades-long story is encouraged to reach out for more information on how they can support the Twinning Association or find out how to connect should email Andy at kirkfield11@gmail.com</p> <p>Discussed at the FAF meeting but limited as there was no representative present. The group are looking for willing volunteers who would like to get involved and are looking towards engaging with projects and schools in the ASG, initially creating an opportunity for virtual engagement and future planning and development. FAF could facilitate if the group wanted to meet.</p>	
7.	<p>FACT: Gerry updated all on the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events in Town Hall (TH) – have spoken to a promoter who would be interested in hiring the TH for various bands and comedians, talks are ongoing. Negotiated with the promoter to sell physical tickets in the TH – working on a process going forward. In discussions and hoping to hold a Mother and Toddler Group run by Moray Pathways initially for 3 months starting in January 26. On 29th November held a warm space coffee afternoon in the TH, lots of positive feedback. Hoping to have lighting for the stage donated by MODS including installation, await reply from the group. Donated sound equipment and awaiting a delivery date. Pricing of room hire to be addressed in the new year. Forres On-line – meet on Tuesdays and a volunteer is helping small businesses to create their own website and Job Centre is looking to help. • Food Hygiene Certificate for the Town Hall – Gerry to raise with Moray Council Environmental Health. 	GF
8.	<p>Forres Conservation and Heritage Scheme: – update since previous FAF meeting (Project Lead Fiona Skiffington) Chair emailed FS and was given the following response: There are a few changes within the Partnership Management Group at the moment and we will be updating our members list accordingly. Our next full PMG meeting won't be until the next year now therefore details will be shared nearer the time. We are holding a shorter meeting with existing members in December just to give a final update and to discuss and approve a number of changes to group representatives/member roles. Although we appreciate this is a busy time for everyone and not everyone can attend. We hope to confirm and share details of these changes following the December meeting and welcome all new members to the next full meeting in the new year.</p>	

9.	Forres Connected Culture and Heritage: – update since previous FAF meeting (FAF Representative Lindsey Standring) – no progress at this stage.	
10.	Spirit of Community (SoC) 2022/3 & Local Place Plan (LPP) – update from meeting held on 24 th November 2025 – reviewed the SoC document and progress has been made and recorded. The plan has been shared with other groups with regard to strategic planning with other partners.	
11.	Moray Forum: – no update.	
12.	Transport Forum: – informed by Angela she has spoken to Peter White the Secretary and there has been no communications from anyone within the group for the last 10 months and no date arranged for a future meeting.	
13.	<p>Forres User Group Meeting 1 – Update</p> <p>The leisure group has been set up to consider leisure as a whole in the area and not simply focus on individual facilities. Moray Council wish to take a place-based approach regarding leisure provision in each area, considering both the natural and built environment. The Local Authority does not have the ability to provide all forms of leisure to the local population, and rely heavily on public, private, and voluntary organisations to provide leisure opportunities across the Moray area. There are no statutory minimum or maximum levels of leisure provision required to be adhered to by the Local Authority.</p> <p>Capital and revenue funding for leisure remains a challenge. The current three-year capital plan for leisure and culture services is £7.255m, however, condition survey work for leisure facilities alone is estimated at £31m. Sufficient income also needs to be generated to sustain delivery of current services.</p> <p>The leisure user groups have been set up with a similar aim to the library user groups that have been operating for several months. Here, we engage with users on service delivery and direction, discuss and progress improvements and ideas, and act as a sounding board regarding proposed changes to the service. Through engagement, user Groups will help identify potential opportunities and improvements to ensure local need is met and that the service operates in as efficient and effective a manner as possible.</p> <p>Those in attendance at meeting 1 continued to complete a SWOT analysis identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.</p> <p>Moray Engage, an online community engagement hub, giving people the chance to have their say on a range of projects, activities and decisions being made in and about Moray. A dedicated space where the public can gather information, share their ideas and have their say. Within the Moray Engage platform there is a section for the Leisure and Culture Hub. It is planned to launch individual user group project pages within this hub where meeting notes will be made available and the opportunity to promote the facility.</p> <p>User group members will be able to register on the MORAY Engage site and be added to their specific user group page.</p> <p>Chair is awaiting confirmation of when and where meeting 2 will take place and intends to attend.</p>	
14.	<p>System Based Approach to Physical Activity and Health (to be re-named Active Moray Strategy and Plan) (AR)</p> <p>This approach, engaging with all departments, partners and community will be evolving and will change through time to meet the needs, demands and health focus. This document needs to be embedded into other plans and strategies; a few examples:- Physical Weight – Public Health Framework – reflected in Corporate Plan (Our People), Learning Estate Strategies, Active Travel, Sustainable Travel, Disability embed with Grampian Physical Activity and Sport. Ownership of this plan needs to be across all levels e.g. Recreation and Sport – ‘Partners in Care’, - Health and Social Care Plan; Need to link with Mental</p>	

	<p>Health and Social Care – new 2026 plan; LPP – Improving Spaces, LDP Development Programme – Improving Open Spaces/Lands and Parks. It is planned to launch in January. FAF may be able to assist with this especially with the sharing of any promotional material, links and opportunities for engagement. ALISS will be available late February to Moray. It will be a Moray engage platform to help with the engagement of the Community; public opinion on e.g. play parks, this could be the central platform for further dialogue. Chair was approached to attend the Moray Healthy Weight Initiative meeting and shared the SoC and LPP documents. It is hoped to launch the Active Moray Strategy Plan in March.</p>	
15.	<p>Round the Table:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RM – Rays Rest Rooms – initially submitted a pre-planned application and there were problems with the design, met with Moray Council yesterday with Transport and Planning to look at their concerns and come up with changes to the plan which will support a full planning application. Will submit a formal planning application on 12th December and have taken on board changes in design and they will cater for any concerns, mainly to do with access. Looking at having a food outlet to create sustainability and cover running costs, although will not cover a permanent attendant onsite. Not heard from Inspire Scotland and hope to hear if successful with the initial funding application for £95k. Charity bingo event on 17th December at 6.30pm in Costa at Tesco. Applied to the Wolfson Foundation for funding, 6-week period to see if able to go on to further funding. CPT funding application submitted, if successful the outcome is up to 6 months and hoping to start in April/May 2026 • GF – Highland Hospice – updated and had a request for a radio interview with Keith Community Radio. FACT AGM on 10th December at 5.30pm in North Room of TH • MS – Highland Games on 4th July 2026 • LS - Forres Academy Plan application comments have reopened on 1st up to 22nd December - https://publicaccess.moray.gov.uk/eplanning/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=T3122WBGK0C00&activeTab=summary • TC – upcoming coffee mornings in the TH, Friends of Guiding on 6th December and Forres Theme Day on 20th December, FACT on 10th January 2026 and FAF on 17th January 2026 • AR – still awaiting outcome of the Auchernack Trust funding application. Warm Space Lunch at St Laurence Building on 13th December. St Laurence Trust were successful in their bid to Berry Burn for £10k (to cover costs for an evaluation and survey of the building) 	
16.	<p>Councillors No Councillors attended.</p>	
17.	<p>AOB No other business to be discussed.</p>	
18.	<p>Date of next meeting 7th January 2026, venue North Room, Forres Town Hall</p>	

Meeting dates in 2026: 4th February, 4th March, 6th May, 3rd June, 1st July, 5th August, 2nd September, 7th October, 4th November and 2nd December

For further information please email: forresareaforum@btinternet.com