

KINGUSSIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1st December 2009 at 7 p.m. in Kingussie High School.

Present: Councillors Mr A Davidson (Chairman), Ms G Wright (Vice-Chair), Mrs V Emmett (Sec.), Mr T Wade (Treasurer), Mrs M Brown, Mrs A Schofield, Mr D Fallows (Highland Council), Mr N MacAulay, Mr. M Stone, Mr J Taylor, Mr D Whyte.

Apologies: Cr. Mr C MacRae.

Visitors: Ms K Sutcliffe (RSPB), Mr A Dunn (KCDC), Sgt A Crawford (Northern Constabulary).

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the visitors.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (3rd November 2009)

Correction: Para 14(v) Mr. George Gibson not Mr G Simpson.

The minutes were then agreed and signed as a correct record. (prop. AS, sec. MB)

2. **Matters Arising**

- (i) The Sec. read out the draft of a letter to Transerve about the re-marking of the car parking spaces along the High Street and the request for new signs at the entrances to Kingussie.
- (ii) **Para 10. Senior Citizens' Christmas Party** The Chairman reported that 67 people had attended the party; it was very successful and the Star Hotel provided an excellent spread and facilities. The entertainment was also very successful. He was disappointed more Councillors had not attended, especially since the Rotary Club had not been able to help with transport this year. Several Councillors reiterated their apologies for non-attendance. It was agreed that letters of thanks should be sent to individuals and organisations that had helped with the event.
- (iii) **Para 11. Highland Council Draft Local Transport Strategy.** The Sec. commented on the report, which gave too little attention to the needs of rural transport issues and made virtually no mention of Badenoch at all. She suggested the Council's response should include the following points: provision of adequate public transport is a major factor affecting the economic well-being of rural areas such as Badenoch; Kingussie is a major transport interchange in Badenoch and any strategy for transport should ensure coordination between bus and train services. Steps urgently need to be taken to resolve the rail ticketing issue, especially since electors living north of Inverness receive favourable terms for rail travel. Cr Brown observed that some people from Fort William prefer to travel to Kingussie to take the through train London because it is a better service, even though there is no public transport link between Badenoch and Spean Bridge or Fort William. Cr Fallows commented that the last time there was a bus service to Fort William it was much underused and the cost per ticket proved too high.
- (iv) **Para 12. Request for a public subscription towards a memorial to the late Chairman.** The Sec. reported she had met informally some members of Mr Bennett's family and had discussed with them the suggestion by two residents of a public subscription for erection of a memorial, so as to seek their views. The family felt there was already a memorial in the form of the commemorative seat beside the Glebe Pond paid for by the Community Council, the Christmas Lighting Committee and the Angling Society; they themselves had planted trees there in his memory. They expressed no strong views either way about a public subscription. After discussion, it was proposed the Council takes no further action at this time, this was agreed unanimously. The Chairman agreed to contact the two residents again to apprise them of these views.

3. **RSPB Insh Marshes National Nature Reserve**

The Chairman invited Ms Sutcliffe, the RSPB reserve manager to speak to the Council.

Ms Sutcliffe told the Council of plans to improve the visitors' facilities at the reserve since the current facilities are more than 30 years old. The plans are to replace one of the hides near the Invertromie car park with a visitor centre, which will include provision for disabled access, a new picnic area and alterations to the car parking arrangements. Scottish Natural Heritage, the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Leader are contributing towards the total costs of £86,000. The new building will be on two floors, be of timber construction and will provide panoramic views over the reserve. It will also include new interpretation information, which will be broader in scope; in addition to information about the reserve and its wildlife it will include general public information about the area, such as location of nearest public toilets, travel and community facilities etc. Work on the new building is in progress and the estimated completion date is 25 Jan. 2010.

The RSPB also plans to move the current signage about the Badenoch Way to a more prominent position in the car park near to the road. She hoped the Council would approve this move, since the original signage was paid for by the Community Council. At present the Badenoch Way terminates at the car park and then walkers have to use the road into Kingussie. Mr Dunn observed that the Badenoch Way is part of the longer Speyside Way. There was a brief discussion about the possibility in the longer term of the path going up and around Gordon Hall to increase the off-road potential, although it will always be necessary to use some road sections in order to cross the River Spey to continue the Speyside Way's route onward to Newtonmore and further west.

Ms Sutcliffe ended by telling the Council that the RSPB's current five-year management plan ends in March 2010 and she would like to have the opportunity to discuss the new draft plan with the Council in due course.

The Chairman thanked Ms Sutcliffe for her interesting input and on behalf of fellow Councillors wished the project well.

Local Footpaths

The Chairman then invited Mr Andy Dunn of the Kingussie Community Development Company to address the Council. Mr Dunn explained that he led the KCDC Footpaths Group. The original Footpaths Group was established by the Community Council, but when KCDC became a Trust that could access grants the Footpaths Group became part of KCDC. The CNPA helped with the signage for the Badenoch Way and KCDC contributed towards the original leaflets.

Mr Dunn updated Councillors about the Community Path Network. The Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT), which has been helping with footpath developments on the eastern side of the National Park is now offering to help with the western side of the Park, e.g. it helped with the work on the Gynack Bridge and Footpath. COAT has taken on the Speyside Way and involves KCDC with the Badenoch Way component of this long distance path. It is regarded as part of the "Core Path" network, running from the Kingussie Golf Course along the south side of Loch Gynack to Newtonmore and connecting up with the Wild Cat Trail. Developments to connect sections up are progressing well.

COAT has appointed an Upland Path project officer to look after footpath work on the Cairngorms. At some time in the future COAT will ask Communities to look after core paths and upland paths in their areas. Cr Fallows explained that responsibility for the Speyside Way rests with the CNPA, but COAT will effect delivery. Communities will not have responsibility for the maintenance of Upland Paths.

"Walking to Health" Mr Dunn explained that the Badenoch Arthritis Care Support Group is involved with this national project, but Kingussie is not a good area for an all abilities path. The walk around Creag Beag is popular, but it is showing wear and tear.

Town Trails: Cr Brown asked about the development of Town Trails and recounted her experience of them elsewhere. Mr Dunn commented that KCDC has been working on the potential for such a trail for Kingussie, but currently had no funds to progress it and it was not top of the priority list. KCDC had received funding for the Gynack Trail, but had no funding for a Town Trail. After further discussion, Cr Emmett suggested that Cr Brown might join the KCDC group to help with the development. Cr Fallows commented that Town Trails are usually business led. In response to a question from Cr Wright, Mr Dunn clarified the route of the footpath by Loch Gynack. The chairman thanked Mr Dunn for his input.

Additional Agenda Item. Police Matters (Sgt Crawford)

Cr Taylor outlined the issues arising from the Household Survey and further public consultation as part of the “Our Community - A Way Forward” Project (i) Police presence; (ii) traffic lights at the Star crossroads, (iii) traffic warden. .

(i) Police Presence: Sgt Crawford explained local cover was a problem for Northern Constabulary, which has undergone a complete restructuring of its regions. Officers in Kingussie, Aviemore, Grantown-on-Spey and Nairn have all been reorganised into one regional division. Five officers are stationed in Kingussie, and at least one Officer is on duty throughout the 24 hours; but Officers can be called away to deal with incidents arising at any time in the large area they now have to cover – from Dalwhinnie to Nairn. At weekends there is a planned profile, so that resources can be targeted quickly to where problems might arise, such as youth disorder or vandalism. Sgt Crawford commented that at present there are no youth problems in Kingussie.

(ii) A missing traffic light at the Star crossroads. Sgt Crawford said it was a matter for Transport Scotland but he would complete a hazard form about it. It was agreed that the Community Council should also write to Transerve.

(iii) Traffic Warden. Sgt Crawford reported that the permanent warden is on long term sick leave, but he hopes the warden will eventually return to work. On occasions two Traffic Wardens have been deployed from Inverness.

Youth Fusion Project: Sgt Crawford reported that there was Police involvement at the first event in November: a “Blue Light Disco”; it had gone well.

4. Planning Matters (AS)

Application for re-development of Invertromie Steading on the Insh Marshes Nature Reserve.

Cr Schofield informed the Council that the CNPA has called in the application, which is for formation of six properties by conversion of the old steading into five houses and replacement of the cottage. Sale of the property, which is still owned by the RSPB, is dependent on planning permission being granted. She went through details of the application. In discussion the following points were considered: concerns about overdevelopment, questions about drainage, flooding issues. Cr Schofield agreed to draft a response on behalf of the Council.

5. “Our Community- A Way Forward” (JT)

Copies of the draft action plan for Kingussie, which arose from the public consultation exercise on 21st November and subsequently prepared by the project team, were circulated to Councillors. The action plan sets out the aims, actions and major obstacles/issues as well as the agencies and community organisations that need to be involved. Cr Taylor went through the plan. He regretted that the public consultation on Sat. 21st Nov. was not well attended; nonetheless it was a productive session with good discussions and identification of the top priorities and opportunities for action. A good discussion ensued. Cr Taylor commented that the draft plan has already been circulated to the major agencies, such as the CNPA and Highland Council. It is intended to take it forward in the New Year.

Cr Brown commented that Care of the Elderly and the future of St Vincent's have been identified among the top priorities. She is concerned about recent developments in the provision of care in the community. In discussion, Cr Fallows suggested a small working group is formed to look at potential actions that might be taken. Cr Brown agreed to bring a group together – names were put forward – Crs Brown and Wade, Rev Cook and THC Cr Fallows. Cr Brown agreed to draft a paper for consideration.

6. **Highland Councillor's Report** (Cr Fallows)

Cr Fallows reported that Mr Gilfillan (THC) is near to finalising plans for refurbishment of the Court House. Whilst it is not a priority, he is hoping to include some community use and that the Council could identify the minimum space and potential uses. In discussion it was suggested that provision of a meeting room would allow the Community Council and other groups to use it for meetings.

Cr Fallows also reported that THC Property Services recognise that the Folk Museum complex is a high priority for the community and that some areas of the site will have a lower commercial value and might be able to be put to community use, he suggested this could be accomplished relatively soon. Plans to acquire the buildings can be regarded for the longer term. Cr Fallows commented that he fully supports the Community Council's aims to acquire the site for community use, but the THC has to consider best value, although this was not defined. He commented that issues concerning the future of the Museum complex need in-depth consultation for the whole of Badenoch, but he is of the opinion there is time for the community to do this.

7. **Highland Council Review of Community Councils**

- (a) **CC Boundary decisions.** The Sec. reported that she and the Chairman had attended a meeting on 19th Nov with other Badenoch Community Council reps. to revise and agree the boundaries between the communities. This had been accomplished agreeably and KVCC was now in a position to make a submission to THC. She would draft the KVCC response for the Chairman to sign and then it would be submitted before the 23rd Dec deadline.
- (b) **New Standing Orders.** Copies have been circulated to all Councillors. Discussion was deferred to the next meeting since there is no deadline yet for response.

8. **Ward Forum Meeting 11th Nov – Youth Issues**, verbal report (AS)

Cr Schofield provided a verbal resumé of the main points emerging at the meeting. The next Ward Forum is to be held on Wed 9th Dec in Grantown, the theme is "Housing" and she hoped to attend on behalf of KVCC.

9. **AOCB**

Town Twinning: Cr Fallows commented that an approach had been made from a Council in a hilltop town near Marbella in Spain for twinning with a community in Badenoch. Funding is available to start such a project, but then it has to be self-sustaining. After a brief discussion, he agreed to seek further information. Vice Chairman Wright commented that some years ago KVCC had considered the possibility of twinning with a community called Badenoch in Canada, but it had not been pursued in depth at that time.

10. **Date and Venue of the next meeting.**

It was agreed not to hold a meeting in January. The date of the next meeting will be Tues 2nd Feb 2010, venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.