



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2012 in Talla Nan Ròs Kingussie

Present: Crs. Ms G Wright (in the Chair); Mrs V Emmett (Sec), Mr J Taylor (Treasurer) Mrs M Brown, Mrs A Schofield. Mr D Fallows (Highland Councillor; Sgt. Mr J Crawford and PC Mr P Robinson (Northern Constabulary).

Apologies: Cr Mr A Davidson.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 6th December 2011.

Cr Taylor drew attention to a minor omission in his report – the balance in the Children’s Christmas Party account should read £2017.15. The minutes were amended and then approved as a correct record. Proposed Cr Mrs Brown, Seconded Cr Mrs Schofield.

2. Matters Arising.

None.

3. Police Matters.

Sgt Crawford introduced his colleague PC Robinson, who has recently transferred to Badenoch and Strathspey from Inverness. Councillors welcomed him.

The paper setting out recent statistics provided by Insp MacLeod at the Ward Forum was discussed. Sgt Crawford commented on the apprehension of two vehicles containing illegal drugs on the A9 recently; in each case the occupants were arrested.

He regretted that the message about the dangers of drinking and driving still has not been understood; 12 drivers had failed breath tests over the Christmas period.

The Police speed check van has visited Kingussie twice recently carrying out speed checks within the 30mph area on the Newtonmore Road and the 20mph limit on the Ruthven Road.

Traffic Warden: Unfortunately the Warden, who was only appointed in May 2011, has resigned. Advertisements for a replacement should appear shortly; in the interim, Wardens from Inverness will cover the area.

Community Warden: In response to a question, Sgt Crawford and Cr Mr Fallows confirmed they are not part of Northern Constabulary. The two Wardens seen with Ms Palmer, Ward Manager are part of Highland Council’s team; one is a mediator and the other deals with neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Oil Thefts Sgt Crawford commented that in the past few months there have been several thefts of heating oil, mostly from more remote locations or holiday houses. He recommended householders of such properties, who are concerned about the possibility of theft, should install CCTV. These are not too expensive and actually act as deterrent to would-be thieves.

A discussion followed about “Twenty’s Plenty” reported in Agenda item 7(vii)

The Police Officers then left the meeting.

4. **Treasurer’s Report** (Cr Mr J Taylor)

Cr Taylor presented his monthly report:

KVCC current account stands at £4206.95

Income £1250.00

Outgoings £642.00

The income of £1250 represents a grant that Council has received from the Ward Discretionary Fund towards the production of leaflets for the Town Trail. Councillors expressed their thanks to local elected members and the Ward Manager for this award.

Cr Mrs Emmett asked if the OCAWF grant of £250 as part of the Ward Discretionary Fund has also been received as she had received a letter announcing this award. Cr Taylor reported it has not yet been credited to the account. Cr Mrs Brown had proposed KVCC should apply for this grant, which is to be used for plant tubs to be placed at the railway station as part of scheme to make the station more attractive.

Senior Citizen’s Account stands at £4654.97

This includes donations of £234.00.

Payments total £645.02 – for the Christmas Party.

The Children’s Community Christmas party fund stands at £1945.44

The account has received donations for £173.79

Payments for the Party in December amount to £245.50.

5. **Planning Matters** (Cr Mrs Schofield)

- (i) Recent weekly planning lists do not include any applications in the Kingussie area.
- (ii) Cr Mrs Schofield reported the “Developers’ Meeting” organised by the CNPA that she and Cr Mr Taylor attended at the Grant Arms Hotel in Grantown on Spey on 18th January. The meeting was well attended, although some notable local developers were missing. It had proved a useful meeting, although not all the inputs were relevant to communities in the National Park. They found it helpful to be more aware of what is being discussed between planners, applicants and developers about several aspects of planning, e.g. pre-planning discussions.
- (iii) Cr Schofield drew Councillors’ attention to changes in national planning legislation which came into force on 4th February. Some small developments will no longer need planning permission.
- (iv) Claire Ross, Communities and Inclusions Manager at the CNPA, is planning to set up a Planning Network for representatives of local Community Councils and Associations. The aim is to enable the group to meet on a regular basis and gain a greater understanding of the planning system, etc.

6. **Highland Councillor’s Report** (Cr. Mr D Fallows)

Cr Fallows reported he is now the vice-chairman of the Highland Council’s south area planning committee and he commented on several aspects of changes in planning:

- (i) Highland Council plans to issue new guidance on wind farms.

- (ii) Changes affecting the local planning office in Kingussie. In future telephone enquires will be routed to the main service point in Alness and queries will be forwarded to an on-call planner. It will still be possible to visit the Planning Office in Kingussie, where basic enquiries will be dealt with by office staff on the front desk. More detailed queries and those requiring an on-site visit by a Planning Officer will require an appointment.

7. Updates.

(i) Town Trail

Cr Brown reported that the script for the Town Trail leaflet is almost complete. The working party has encountered some problems since the third CNPA officer assigned to the group is off-sick and this has hindered progress.

The group wishes to support local people and businesses in the production of the leaflet, they have located a local graduate graphics designer and a meeting will take place on 8th Feb. to discuss design and layout of the proposed leaflet. The plan is then to use a local printer. Cr Fallows advised Mrs Brown to make sure she has all the appropriate quotes.

(ii) Am Fasgadh Project

Cr Mrs Brown reported that she has made contact with Ms Cornfield of Caberfeidh Horizons about their participation in allotments and a community garden. Caberfeidh has 30 volunteers and 25 trainees who would like to participate in a gardening project.

(iii) Allotments:

Cr Fallows asked about progress with the formation of an allotment society. He advised setting this up very soon so that Highland Council officers are fully apprised of the project's intentions for allotments on the Am Fasgadh site and support from residents. After discussion Cr Mrs Schofield agreed to progress the work.

(iv) St Vincent's Support Group

Cr. Mrs Brown gave a verbal report of a useful meeting on 30th January, which involved all the local elected members, MSPs David Thompson and Rhoda Grant together with NHS officers. The Estates Manager gave assurances that maintenance is being carried out, but that there is a backlog of repairs requiring expenditure of about £3.2 millions. Mr Small assured the meeting that St Vincent's is safe for the next 6 or 7 years. In the longer term the intention is to build a new community hospital, but St Vincent's would not close until this is up and running. The facilities at the new Migdale Hospital at Bonar Bridge were cited as a model of what Badenoch and Strathspey might expect.

(v) 150 year celebrations in 2013 of the opening of the railway line.

Cr Mrs Emmett reported the Council has successfully obtained a grant from Ward Discretionary fund towards the provision of planters, etc at the station. Discussions are at a very early stage with First Scotrail about their "Adopt a Station" scheme and of ideas for setting up a "Friends of Kingussie Station" group. She hopes to set up a meeting with the Folk Museum archivist, when she returns from her holidays, to discuss the museum's collection of railway memorabilia donated by Mr Angus Blackstock some years ago.

(vi) Glebe Ponds Working Group

Cr Ms Wright informed councillors of a proposed working party on Sunday 4th March. Mrs Emmett asked if Ms Wright had followed up the information about the scheme for provision of tools from the CNPA, Ms Wright replied she had not done so yet.

(vii) Kingussie Karnival

Cr Ms Wright informed councillors that the annual event is planned for **Saturday 16th June**, the day before the Charity Bikeathon. This year's theme is "Creative Kingussie" as part of Creative Scotland 2012. The festivities committee hopes that local artists and crafts people will take part, give demonstrations and be able to display and sell their works. Cr Mr Taylor regretted that the date will clash again with the Camanachd Association's McTavish Cup shinty final match in Inverness.

(viii) Twenties Plenty

Councillors reported progress:

This item had been discussed at a recent Ward Business Meeting. (Cr Fallows)

An email has been received from Mr McIver (TECS) about Highland Council's intention to carry out a survey and assessment of roads in Kingussie that might benefit from the 20mph limit. (Mrs Emmett)

Two types of sign can be used: one is mandatory and will require a local traffic order, the other is advisory only. (Mrs Brown and Sgt Crawford).

Cr Fallows commented that in order to be able to go ahead with 20mph limits the Primary Schools must submit a travel plan to the department in Highland Council running the Safer Routes to School Initiative. This then unlocks funding. The Council cannot act until they receive the travel plan and he was not aware that Kingussie Primary School has done this yet.

After further discussion, it was agreed the secretary should invite the Headteacher to a meeting with KVCC to help make progress.

(ix) Planning for the Senior Citizen's Christmas Party 2012.

At their meeting in December councillors had agreed to discuss this event so that it did not clash with the Kingussie Shopping Sunday event again. They hope to be able to continue to use the Star Hotel because of the welcome, good food and good service provided.

Cr Ms Wright reported she has approached the Star Hotel about available dates for 2012 and had been offered **Sunday 25th November**. After discussion Councillors agreed to proceed with this date. Prop Cr. Schofield; seconded Cr Taylor.

Cr Ms Wright agreed to speak to the manager again confirming this date.

(x) AOCB

(i) KVCC donations to events and organisations

Cr Taylor reminded councillors about the need for a policy for donations from KVCC to local events and organisations. He was concerned that with the implementation of the Highland Council's new orders, KVCC's budget will be reduced in future years and Councillors will need to be prudent in managing their financial affairs.

After discussion Councillors agreed to set a policy:

In future, KVCC will only provide donations, on request, (i) to local organisations for events that benefit the community as a whole, and (ii) for individual sponsorship for promising talent. All organisations and events must be non-profit making. Councillors will decide on the merits of each case. Proposed Cr Taylor, seconded: Cr Schofield. All in agreement.

Cr Taylor then raised the matter of payment for drinks at the Star Hotel for the Pipe Band on Shopping Sunday. In 2010 he was surprised that KVCC was asked to pay this bill. He paid on that occasion, but made it clear he did not regard this as an appropriate cost to be met by KVCC. No bill had been presented in 2011 and he was concerned that the Star Hotel had themselves met the costs. A discussion ensued, and Councillors agreed that since Shopping Sunday is not organised by KVCC, but is organised by the Business Forum principally for the benefit of traders, that such a cost should be more appropriately met by their members.

It was agreed the secretary should write an explanatory letter to the Chairman of the Business Forum, Mr Adamson.

(ii) Potential Closure of the Public WCs

This matter had been hotly discussed at the Ward Forum on 1st February and Cr Black assured those present that the information about closure was incorrect; elected members were seeking clarification.

Cr Fallows indicated that it is likely that future funding will be sufficient for the WCs in the Strath to be open and manned for about 60% of current hours. A discussion ensued about the extent of use and the availability of the showers.

Councillors regretted the reduction in hours, but stressed the need for them to be open and manned on special occasions at least, such as on the Bikeathon afternoon when cyclists return from their rides, during times when there are likely to be numbers of walkers taking part in the Coast to Coast events and on Kingussie Karnival day.

Councillors also expressed concern about the future employment of the two local residents who work as attendants.

It was agreed the secretary should write to Mr Cameron Kemp, the Highland Council official in charge of the new proposals.

(iii) Loss of swimming facilities at MacDonald Hotels.

This topic was also hotly debated at the Ward Forum. Councillors regretted the loss of the facilities since there is no other venue for the community in the Strath; they expressed concern about lack of facilities for pupils to learn to swim.

It was agreed the Council should support the campaign to try to obtain a reversal of the decision by MacDonald Hotels.

(iv) Meeting with MSP Mr David Thompson

Cr Mrs Brown said that at a recent meeting, she had approached the MSP for our constituency about the possibility of a joint Community Council meeting with him. He has agreed and offered some dates. After discussion it was agreed to invite other Community Councillors to a meeting on Monday 12th March, to be held in Talla Nan Ròs, starting at 7 p.m. KVCC agreed to provide light refreshments.

The secretary undertook to contact the secretaries of Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Kincaig and Aviemore and the Laggan Community Association to invite their members. It was also agreed to ask the councillors in advance for items they would like to discuss with the MSP. Cr Mrs Brown agreed to contact the MSP's office with confirmation of the date, venue and time.

(v) Participation in other meetings

Cr Mrs Brown will attend the "Planning for Integration" meeting at the Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore on Mon 27th February. She has also been invited to speak about Community Buy-Outs at a meeting in Ballater on Mon 5th March organised by Ms Claire Ross, CNPA.

Crs Mrs Emmett and Schofield will attend the Association of Cairngorm Communities meeting at The Lecht on Tues. 6th March, when one of the topics for discussion is Affordable Housing.

(vi) Rail Franchise:

At the Planning Partnership meeting on 1st Feb., Cr Schofield had learned that The Scotrail Franchise is coming up for review and a consultation organised by Transport Scotland is in progress. The consultation period ends on 20th Feb. so time is short.

Councillors agreed it was important to respond and stress the need for maintaining stopping services and sorting out the anomalies of the pricing policy whereby it is cheaper to buy a ticket for a southward journey from Aviemore than from Kingussie. Councillors suspected this might be a move to reduce the number of stopping trains in Kingussie. Cr Schofield agreed to respond on behalf of KVCC.

(vii) Post Office.

Cr Mrs Schofield commented she is still concerned about the future viability of Kingussie Post Office. Despite announcements of more funding, the number of services that can be offered by a "Post Office Local" is steadily being reduced. She reminded councillors that she and Mrs Emmett had met MP Mr Alexander at one of his local surgeries last year and he had given them assurances that "*Kingussie PO would not close under his watch*". She was worried that although this might be true, the PO might still have to be closed - but by its Postmaster if it became financially unviable. It was agreed she should write again to the MP expressing Councillors' concerns.

"Gang Show" A letter and poster has been received announcing a Scout and Guide Gang Show event at the Eden Court Theatre. Cr Ms Wright agreed to display the poster.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 2145.

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday 6th March at 7p.m. in Talla Nan Ròs.