



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1st APRIL 2014 IN TALLA NAN RÒS AT 7p.m.

Present: Councillors: Mr A Davidson, Ms G Wright, Mrs A Schofield, Mrs M Brown, Mr J Taylor, Mr J Patchett, Mrs V Emmett.

Highland Councillor Mr D Fallows; Sgt J Crawford (Police Scotland)

Visitors: Mr O Bray, Rector of Kingussie High School; Mrs I Malcolm, Community Development Officer VABS.

The Chairman welcomed the visitors.

Kingussie High School

Before the business meeting, Mr Bray the Rector of Kingussie High School spoke about recent developments at the School.

The school is benefiting from the new extension; most of the snagging is completed.

An HMI Education team has made a return visit to the school as a follow up to their previous inspection report. They are pleased with the good progress made since their original inspection.

Current priorities for further improvement are pupil behaviour and appearance, and the reputation of the school in the community. One of the challenges they face is that most of the pupils arrive from other communities by bus each day. The school has been working hard with the local newspaper (the Strathy) to publicise the good work that is going on in the school, but until recently not known about publicly.

Since Christmas much work has been done on a new curriculum and enhancing the range of courses. Until recently the school provided a very academic curriculum that was not wholly relevant to all the pupils. The school is working with partners: UHI, Inverness College and an Aviemore business, Hydrasun, preparing for the introduction of several vocationally orientated courses.

As part of a three-year pilot project with Inverness College, selected groups of pupils from S4, S5 and S6 will spend one day a week at the college and the other four in school and they will be awarded a Scottish Vocational qualification at the end of the course. Another innovation will be pre-apprenticeship training, with a group of pupils spending three days at the College and two in school. In partnership with Inverness College, some pupils will do a National Certificate course in outdoor education using the local environment as an "outdoor classroom".

Twelve girls are currently attending Inverness College one day a week following a hairdressing and beauty therapy course. Ideally the school would like to use local facilities as the base for such courses and bring the college lecturer down from Inverness to tutor them locally. A course with links to travel and tourism is also being planned for next year.

The technology department is reintroducing a “skills to work” programme with elements of construction and engineering technology. A Rural Skills course, in collaboration with SNH and the RSPB, will be introduced in June for pupils in S4, S5 and S6; to be viable it will be a mixed year group.

As a small school, one of the other challenges is how to provide specialist subjects for small numbers of pupils and so the management team is investigating the possibilities of using distance learning. The school has a good balance of long serving and new teachers. The challenge is holding onto staff with good knowledge and expertise. The school is currently slightly overstaffed, but this is used to good effect, for example when problems arise, such as staff illness or staff’s attendance at courses.

Community Links:

On the community front, the school is collaborating with the Kingussie Little Town of Festivals initiative: in the Bikefest in June and Food on Film next February. They will also take responsibility for leading the Dance Festival in November. Mrs Malcolm commented that some S6 pupils are helping with a gymnastic club for primary school pupils at the Badenoch Centre.

To further their community links, the School has joined the Kingussie Business Forum. Mr Bray and the staff would like to develop more opportunities for the community to use the school’s facilities, for example the stage and performance base.

In reply to a question from Mr Patchett, Mr Bray commented that the school does not plan for whole year groups to undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; instead they prefer that pupils volunteer to do the courses. As part of the broader curriculum, the school is planning to introduce a “flexible Thursday afternoon” for pupils in S1, S2 and S3, which will include some skills useful for the DOE award.

In response to a question asking if the staff is involved in the Youth Club, Mr Bray commented that the staff knows about what it offers, but they prefer to keep their distance so that the Youth Club offers pupils something different from the school curriculum and after school clubs. S1 pupils are currently following a programme that will result in a “Kingussie High school Dynamic Youth Award”.

During the academic year starting in August, S1 pupils will spend four days doing outdoor activities: skiing, conservation (at the Highland Wildlife Park), an ecology project and another outdoor activity. This programme will then follow on into years S2 when they will study at the Highland Folk Museum and in S3 at the Insh Marshes Nature Reserve.

At the end of the discussion, all the councillors expressed their thanks to Mr Bray for attending the Council meeting, and they congratulated him on his excellent presentation. They commented they felt quite out of breath at the breadth of the school curriculum and its many different facets that help to make pupils’ experiences exciting, interesting and valuable for their future careers and adult lives.

Mr Bray left the meeting at this point.

BUSINESS MEETING

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th March 2014.

The minutes were approved as a correct record. (Prop AS, sec. MB)

2. Matters Arising.

Planning Matters. Mrs Schofield requested an amendment to the reference about a planning application dealt with under delegated powers. She asked for the insertion of Highland Council – “... *was dealt with by Highland Council under delegated powers.....*” to make it clear that KVCC does not have such powers.

The Court House. Mrs Schofield commented that despite assurances about the sale of the building in King Street to Highland Council, it appears that the owner and his solicitors still have not heard from the Council about it. Mr Fallows replied that whenever he raises this matter, he is assured that the solicitors for both parties are in contact. He confirmed that to his knowledge the Highland Council has made a conditional offer to buy the premises, i.e. the sale/purchase is subject to planning permission being granted and this has been agreed by the owner’s solicitors. He undertook to pursue the matter again and ask for written clarification of the position from Highland Council’s solicitors.

3. Police Matters (Sgt Crawford)

Sgt Crawford conveyed apologies from the Chief Inspector that the monthly statistical report is not yet finished.

Sgt Crawford reported that the past month was quiet, with few crimes were committed in the area. However, over the weekend 23/24 March, there has been a major spate of break-ins to commercial and domestic premises and to vehicles in Newtonmore, with significant thefts from both the premises and the vehicles. Investigations are underway. If the past pattern of such crimes is followed, the criminals are from outwith the area and their “visits” follow the route of the A9.

Sgt Crawford urged all business owners, householders and vehicle owners to be more vigilant, to lock their premises and vehicles and, in the case of the latter, not to leave items such as tools and equipment on view when their vehicles are unattended. He commented that Police Officers still come across parked vehicles, unlocked and with the keys in the ignition, and some householders still do not lock their doors when they are out or at night. Local communities need to be more security conscious.

Councillors asked if he has any posters that can be displayed in the area urging greater awareness of the need to be secure. He undertook to look for suitable posters.

Mr Davidson commented that the problem of long term parking on the High Street has emerged again.

4. Treasurer’s Report (Mr Taylor)

The Treasurer presented his monthly financial statement (appended).

He commented that the Little Town of Festivals account is now clear and closed. The LTF programme organisers are setting up their own account and KVCC will no longer act as the banker.

The “All Our Stories” account is in deficit, but repayment is expected from the CNPA.

He reported that he anticipated Mr Munro, who checks the accounts at the end of each financial year, might make a charge this year, since it has been a busy year on account of all the projects organised through the KVCC account and there have been many transactions.

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

Several local planning applications are included in the weekly lists, these were discussed in turn and the Council's responses were agreed.

(i) Detailed planning applications for three houses on land adjacent to St Vincent's Hospital.

Mrs Schofield provided a brief synopsis of the history of applications for the land. There are four plots on the site which gained planning permission in principle on appeal. Although upholding the appeal, the Government Reporter imposed stringent conditions. Highland Council granted detailed planning permission for one of the plots; the three new applications are for the remaining plots. Councillors looked at the house plans and after discussion, agreed to ask for conditions to minimise interruptions and effect of noise from the building works on neighbours and the hospital; to request restrictions on working times; and to ensure access by ambulances and other vehicles to the hospital is not impaired. It was agreed that KVCC should request to be statutory consultees.

(ii) New application at Brookville, Gynack Street.

The new application is for the three houses, one facing directly onto the street and the other two set back in the current garden land. Councillors considered the plans. Mrs Emmett asked about the finish to the walls of the house facing on the street; these are to be wet harled. She commented that the existing houses on the street are faced in stone and that the new house would not blend in as well. A discussion followed and at the end councillors took a vote: in favour of the finish as shown (4), in favour of a finish more in keeping with existing houses (2). It was agreed therefore not to comment on the finish. Councillors agreed with Mrs Schofield's suggestion that, in their response, concern is raised about vehicular access onto the street from the new driveway to the houses, since parking is currently allowed along the complete length of the street and it becomes in effect a single track street.

(iii) Extension to the rear of Arduish, Gynack Street, the premises used by the dental practice.

Councillors looked at the plans and observed that the external finish of the extension will complement the original premises. A discussion followed about parking for the practice staff. Mrs Schofield commented there is already parking for two vehicles on the site and these will not be affected. It was agreed that, in response, the Council should welcome the development since it will increase the range of dental facilities in Kingussie.

(iv) Mrs Schofield updated councillors on progress with the appeal for proposed Kingussie housing development.

The Government Reporter had asked for more information from the developers about proposed road improvements at the junction of Dunbarry Road and the High Street; they have provided the information dated April 2009. The CNPA has also responded and pointed out that Highland Council has not approved the developers' proposed road modifications. After consideration of the documents and new information provided by Mrs Schofield about the number of existing properties already using the junction, they agreed their response to the Reporter.

Transport Scotland plans to resurface the pavements on the south side of the High Street from Manse Road to Gynack Street during April.

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

The Court House: Mr Fallows reported that, to his dismay, the Highland Council's planning application has not been included in the agenda for the meeting of the CNPA's planning committee in April. The delay has arisen because the Park planners queried if they were competent to make a decision since it is a listed building and the Park does not have a conservation officer; they questioned if the plans should have to go to

Historic Scotland for their views. In the Highland Council's view this is an over-reaction by the Park's planners since the Highland Council's Conservation Officer has already considered the plans in detail. Mr Fallows reported he has been chasing up the application with the planners of both parties and the plans should now be included on the agenda for the May meeting. If approved the building work will commence in July.

Highland Councillors, Mr Fallows and Mr Lobban have asked that, in the interest of local tourism, the security fencing in front of the building is removed in the interim until building work starts.

7. AOCB.

VABS: Mrs Malcolm introduced herself as the new Community Development Officer for VABS. She is visiting all the local community councils. She hopes councillors and community groups will contact her about community matters.

CNPA's consultation: Priorities for Economic Development in the Cairngorms National Park – documents had been provided for the March meeting but not considered then.

Mrs Emmett asked if councillors had looked at the papers and had any views. None were forthcoming, so she offered to draft a response on behalf of the Council and submit it before for the closing deadline of 7th April. Mr Fallows commented that he felt Badenoch is dying on its feet, with many High Street shops in both Newtonmore and Kingussie closing due to the rise in Internet shopping and fewer people shopping in local shops. He expressed the view that the area needs government funding for economic regeneration. Councillors agreed and a discussion followed, at the end Mr Fallows undertook to investigate sources of funding.

Mrs Brown undertook to send him a copy of the Badenoch Heritage Strategy document. .

The meeting closed at 2130 hours.

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

Treasurer's financial report for April 2014.

Account Balances

KVCC	£4079.65
Senior Citizens' Party fund	£2528.65
Children's Christmas Party Fund	£1552.86
Reserve Fund	£1819.53

Lodgements

Little Town of Festivals Project	£100.00
All Our Stories Project (CNPA)	£905.45

Payments

All Our Stories Project	£2379.83
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KVCC Account Balances

Station Adopters & Rail Anniversary	£575.17
Town Trail Project	£368.85
Heritage Project	£535.80
KVCC	£2599.83

Total	£4079.65
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