



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1st NOVEMBER 2016 IN TALLA NAN RÒS, KINGUSSIE

Present: Councillors Mrs A Schofield, Mrs S Rowley, Ms J Morse, Mrs V Emmett, Mr J Taylor, Mrs M Brown.
Highland Councillor: Mr B. Lobban

Visitors: PC A Courts (Police Scotland); Mr I Moffett and Mr G Fraser of the Badenoch Heritage Project

Apologies: Mrs F Dallas, Mr D Fallows

The meeting began with a presentation Mr Moffett and Mr Fraser about the Badenoch Heritage Project:

Mr Moffett informed the Councillors about progress with the Badenoch Heritage Project. Each of the community areas in Badenoch: Kincaig, Kingussie, Newtonmore, Laggan and Dalwhinnie, has representatives on the project group. The group has carried out an extensive audit of all the important heritage buildings, sites, roadways, footpaths, etc. The National Park and the Highland Council have been helpful and given good support for the work and have helped to produce a map of the area showing all of the heritage features in the countryside and in the villages. They have also helped with the reproduction of the ancient Roy maps for the area. Routes suitable for walking, cycling and driving have also been identified to enable tourists to visit the heritage sites. Councillors were able to view these maps, which were on display.

Masters Business students at Strathclyde University carried out a research project for the Heritage Group and produced a marketing plan for the group; this included a video which was shown to councillors. The Group has also held extensive discussions with the A9 dualling design team working on routes through Badenoch. Their plans have not yet been produced.

The Group is now at the point where there is a need to boost tourism and this requires the support of the councils, tourist organisations, local businesses and the communities themselves.

Mr Fraser commented that development of the website for the Heritage Group is progressing well and going to be linked to the community websites. The information on their website will not need changing very often, so maintenance should be low. Mrs Schofield suggested they also plan to use Facebook because this is proving a successful way of communicating with communities.

The Group is also seeking funding for a business and enterprise plan and this will require the appointment of a development worker. Mr Lobban asked what steps had been taken so far and how much the group needed. He suggested the Group applies to the Ward Discretionary Fund.

Mr Moffett asked if the Community Council would provide a letter of support to enable the group to do further work. Councillors agreed to this unanimously and Mrs Emmett agreed to write a draft.

At the end of the presentation, on behalf of all the councillors, Mrs Schofield thanked Mr Moffett and Mr Fraser for their interesting presentation and wished the group well.

Business Meeting

1. Minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 4th October 2016 (already circulated)

The minutes were unanimously agreed as a correct record and were signed.

2. Matters Arising

Mr Taylor reported that the Silverfjord Hotel is open and trading again.

Spey Street Car Park: Mrs Schofield reported the outcome of a telephone conversation with Mr Porteous in reply to her email in September. Apparently it is subject of an interdepartmental issue.

Mr Lobban commented that the car park area, formerly part of the Highland Folk Museum is not a public car park. It is the property of the Care and Learning department and therefore effectively in private ownership. As a consequence, nobody who currently parks there illegally can be booked -unless the C&L department takes action. He anticipated that Mr Porteous will discuss with the C&L department if it can be made a public area, when it will be subject to the rules about parking.

It is not for sale however. Mrs Brown confirmed that ARC (Kingussie) would like to acquire it along with the rest of the former Museum site and agreed with Mr Lobban's suggestion that when the acquisition of the buildings and grounds is complete, ARC would like to be able to use the area for safe storage of construction materials.

3. Police Matters (PC A. Courts)

PC Courts provided an oral overview of the past month. There have been 31 incidents, amongst them a serious house fire at a property in Carrbridge, which virtually destroyed the building completely; a chimney fire at a property on Kingussie High Street was dealt with promptly and successfully by the Fire Brigade; the recovery in King Street Kingussie of a small amount of drugs that has been sent away for testing; several incidents of straying livestock, some road traffic incidents on the A9 and others involving overweight lorries and drivers exceeding their hours without taking rest periods. There was an incidence of vandalism and damage at the former Folk Museum site with attempted entry into the buildings. A serious assault on male person at the Vault nightclub in Aviemore resulted in him losing part of one ear.

The Half Marathon event in Aviemore went off well.

The question of parking on Kingussie High Street is still not resolved and action against drivers parking illegally has to await the repainting of the parking spaces and no waiting areas.

Mrs Schofield thanked PC Courts for his input and he departed at this point.

4. Treasurer's Monthly Financial Report (Mr J Taylor)

Mr Taylor presented his monthly financial report. (Appended)

He confirmed he has ordered a commemorative wreath on behalf of the Community Council for the annual Armistice Day service at the War Memorial.

5. Planning Matters (Mrs A Schofield)

No planning applications have been received recently.

The visit by Mrs Morse, Mrs Rowley and Mrs Schofield to the site of an application at Torcroy was very useful and helped the Council to make an informed and considered response about the application to the CNPA's planning department.

6. Highland Councillor's Report

Mr Lobban presented an oral report:

- (i) The owner of the Duke of Gordon Hotel has finally agreed to the installation of a bus shelter by the bus stop outside the hotel. The shelter has been in store for six months. The shelter will be installed near a stone dyke wall and at right angles to the road.
- (ii) At a recent Area Ward meeting, the four councillors agreed to make some changes to the Ward Discretionary Fund to encourage more involvement by the communities in the Ward. In early February 2017 part of the current fund will be separated off and topped up from another fund. Communities will be invited to submit applications for funding of community projects. Then as part of community empowerment, instead of the Councillors deciding who should receive funds, the communities will be asked to choose which projects receive funding.
- (iii) Highland Council redesign: the work on this is complex and progressing slowly but Councillors hope to be able to make some decisions by Christmas.
- (iv) The proposal that HighLife Highland (HLH) should be awarded a contract for the cleaning, catering and janitorial services for schools and Council offices was rejected by the Councillors. HLH has never run such services and the Council is of the view the service should remain in-house.
- (v) The 2017/18 budget is likely to be similar to this year's with a cut of £25 million. Further cuts have to be made in subsequent years. The Scottish Government has agreed that Councils can raise Council Taxes. The increase will be considerably greater for larger properties in the current upper Bands. This is likely to hit house owners in Badenoch and Strathspey hard, since there are a greater proportion of larger villas in the Ward and hence in the upper bands than in several other Highland Wards.
Highland Councillors are objecting the Scottish Government's decision that Councils will only be allowed to keep 3% of the income, the other 97% going to the central government. Highland Councillors have voted to oppose this decision, fearing that it will be spent largely in the Central Belt and Highland region that has many needs will miss out again.
In response to a question from Mrs Brown, Mr Lobban confirmed that the huge grants awarded in the "Inverness City and Region Deal" will not benefit the shire regions at all, despite earlier assurances they would.
- (vi) The Highland Council's Capital Plan includes a fair amount that should benefit Badenoch and Strathspey. It is planned that 120 houses will be built in the Ward.
- (vii) The Ward councillors have been in discussions with HIE about the need to increase the number and range of small businesses in B&S. Unemployment is rising and there is paucity of jobs in the area, as well as too few affordable houses for rent or sale.
More facilities are badly needed to attract tourists and encourage them to remain in the area. Support is needed from businesses to attract and retain visitors, they need to be open for trading when tourists are about, e.g. in the evenings and at weekends. The amount of tourist accommodation is also declining, and much of what is available is being used by workmen on long stay jobs, such as the A9 dualling.

7. Correspondence

None.

- (i) **Outside Meetings:** None of the councillors has attended outside meetings in the past month.
- (ii) **Donation of a new Memorial Bench** (to replace an existing worn out High Street bench).

Mrs Schofield reported she met with Mrs Margaret Mackay to discuss the gift of a commemorative bench to the town, and accepted her kind offer on behalf of the Community Council. Mrs Schofield is now progressing a quote for the manufacture of the new bench, which will be identical to the existing "Ackie" Dunbar benches. She commented that she will keep everyone informed developments.

(iii) **Strengthening Communities:** Questionnaire from the Scottish Community Development Centre & Community Health Exchange in Glasgow, as part of a new proposed "Strengthening Communities" project set up by the CNPA. Mrs Emmett and Mrs Schofield had looked the questions and come to the conclusion the remit of Community Councils did not fit the implied model of a community group, its focus is narrow, and it was not possible to answer many of the questions; Mrs Brown commented she had also attempted to complete the questionnaire on behalf of ARC and found it difficult to respond to many of the questions.

(iv) **Scottish Water:** Mrs Rowley commented that all households should have received a letter from Scottish Water about their plans.

8. AOCB

(i) **Highland Main Railway Line.** Mrs Schofield reported she had attended a meeting of the Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership (CRP) in Pitlochry that day. The CRP area covers the Highland Main line from Dunkeld & Birnam to Carrbridge. The group is trying to improve the appearance and facilities at the rail stations, and work with local organisations and businesses to maximise the potential benefits of being on the Highland Mainline. Bureaucracy had meant that things were progressing very slowly but the CRP will soon be in a position to provide two heritage panels for each station, which will be unique to each community.

(ii) Several councillors highlighted problems with the new Club 50 card scheme introduced by the new franchisees. Activation of the cards is proving impossible – the cards have to be activated at a railway station and ScotRail's system is failing to be able to do it.

In addition the new scheme has fewer advantages for regular users compared with the old scheme run by the previous contractors.

Rail users are also reporting overcrowded trains on the line with rolling stock having too few carriages to accommodate all the passengers. Mrs Schofield commented that Abellio plans to introduce new rolling stock next year.

(iii) **Pavements:** Mrs Emmett reported she had met representatives from BEAR (Mr Hossack, Mr MacDougall and Mr Marshall) to discuss the possibility of resurfacing a section of footpath along the A86 at the western end of Kingussie. Apparently it was last repaired in 1960, the surface is very degraded with many loose small stones making it difficult for some elderly pedestrians living nearby to use it safely. Mr Hossack confirmed that he plans to submit repair of this section for the 2017/18 budget consideration. He mentioned that BEAR is also concerned about the HITRANS cycle/pedestrian path on the opposite side of the road, particularly the very steep section where it joins the main carriageway. It is proving unsafe for many pedestrians and cyclists to use. BEAR is looking into the possibility of redesigning the junction.

(iv) **Memorial Benches:** Mrs Schofield reported that she is still attempting to progress a funding application under the "Tesco Bags of Help" scheme to finance replacement benches. The organisation responsible for administering the applications was insisting on a completed "Landowner Permission Form", despite the existing benches having been placed in their current locations for many years. As this permission form needed to be endorsed by Highland Council before it could be submitted, there was likely to be a significant delay.

- (v) **New offices for the Dental Practice:** in response to a question, Mrs Schofield confirmed the Practice has acquired the former Trading Post premises and has planning permissions for conversion, but they are encountering some problems commissioning builders to take on the necessary work.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th December 2016 at 7.15 p.m.

(Note the later starting time on this occasion.)

Appendix

Treasurer's Monthly Financial Report to end of October 2016

Overall Balance £3992.06

Lodgements £55.04

Projects

Station Adopters/Railway Project £525.17

KVCC £3466.89

Current Account Total £3992.06