

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 14th March 2019

Council Chambers, High Street, Elgin

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	Anne Skene	Findhorn & Kinloss
Christine Allan	Buckie & District	Louise Marshall	Findochty
Meg Jamieson	Buckie & District	David Parker	Forres
Jim Patterson	Burghead & Cummington	Shaun Moat	Forres
Billy Davidson	Burghead & Cummington	Graham Hilditch	Forres
Colin Burch	Cullen & Deskford	Graham Murdoch	Forres
Tom Lewis	Dyke Landward	Carolle Ralph	Lossiemouth
Iain Catto	Elgin	Karen Pryce-Iddon	Strathisla
Nicola Howard	Finderne		

In attendance:

Jane Martin, Community Council Liaison Officer (Moray Council), Catherine Sinclair (minutes), Steve Henderson (Age Scotland)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Morag Stewart & Ann Mitchell (Buckie & District Community Council), Mike Mulholland (Lossiemouth Community Council), Eddie Wallace and David Chapman (Elgin Community Council), Colin Hanover (Lennox Community Council), Steve Hickin (Keith Community Council), Marion Ross (Speyside Community Council), Colin Hanover (Lennox Community Council) Phil Lovegrove (Cullen & Deskford Community Council) and from Dufftown and District Community Council

2. Presentation: – Age Scotland Veterans' Project: The Services, Activities & Benefits that the Unforgotten Forces Partnership provides.

Steve Henderson (Community Development Officer)
This project will run from 2017 to 2020 and aims to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life for veterans over 65 years old (and their immediate families). It is a consortium of 16 partner support organisations such as Action on Hearing Loss Scotland, Age Scotland, ILM Highland, Poppyscotland, Royal Air Forces Association, Scottish War Blinded and SSAFA. The Age Scotland Freephone number is available 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and is a single point of contact to access a wide range of support. There are an estimated 500,000 veterans in Scotland, about 1 in 10 of the population, so potentially 9,500 in Moray.

A veteran is defined as anyone who has served for one day or more in any armed force. National Service is a particular target of this project. Community Councils can help by being aware of this definition of a veteran and helping veterans to identify themselves – some think they are not veterans if they never deployed out of the UK or got a medal or fired a weapon, but this is not the case. They can also help by spreading the word about this free and impartial support and encouraging people to make contact if in need.

The project is being evaluated on an ongoing basis and it is hoped the case can be made for longer term funding. Steve is happy to be contacted if anyone has questions and Jane will circulate his presentation to Community Councils.

Moray Ecovillage Development Network – posters were available to take away. This is a LEADER funded project plans to use knowledge from Global Ecovillages to develop a model for sustainable community building in Moray. Organisations or Communities can contact Moray GEN to enquire about support in taking their projects to the next level.

3. Approval of minutes 14th March 2019

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting; proposed by Karen Pryce-Iddon, seconded by David Parker.

4. Matters arising

None

5. Treasurer's Report

The balance at 8th May is £10,853.99. Of this £2,134.05 is JCC grant funds and the remainder is Participatory Budgeting funds. We have opened a new bank account so we can keep grant and other funds separate and have completed a form requiring us to confirm the JCC's country of residence for tax purposes.

6. CCLO Update – Community Council Planning Training; Future Training; Community Council Promotion and Recruitment

Jane thanked those who attended the Planning training and Moray Council Planning team who delivered it. The Planning team has produced an information booklet for Community Councils. Jane is planning Complaints training with groups of Community Councils and asked everyone to submit any other training requests to her.

Thanks to Shaun Moat of Forres Community Council who has designed a poster tailored to each Community Council. Many Community Councils are looking for additional members and would like to raise their profile in the community. Jane suggested having a coherent Community Council brand would allow us to speak with a louder voice and requested that all Community Councils promote the work they are doing over the summer. Shaun is willing to help Community Councils with free of charge advice on social media and offered to build a website at cost (hosting and domain registration) for interested Community Councils.

7. Community Councils Grant

Alastair touched on the 'Strengthening Community Councils' report (circulated by email), which recommends increased funding and support for Community Councils rather than cuts. Moray Community Councils were advised to continue to use the grant for travel expenses, stationary and printing costs etc. and not to try and husband their resources. It is important to claim expenses to help foster diversity in Community Councils and to give Moray Council a clear idea of the cost of running a Community Council. It was suggested we lobby our local elected members to ensure the grant is reinstated as they will start work on next year's budget soon. They should also note that our Community Council Liaison Officer is an asset and essential to the effectiveness of Community Councils in Moray. Moray's CCLO and the work of the Joint Community Council is held in some regard nationally and by Scottish Government. Not all areas have a Joint Community Council.

8. Group updates

i. JCC Working Group – Moray Wide Service Cuts – Jim Patterson

The subgroup has had 2 meetings so far and identified school crossings, public toilets and grass cutting as priorities. There has been a lot of work behind the scenes but more work and research is needed and the short timescale is challenging.

School crossings – options including volunteers vs paid staff have been discussed. Carole, Mike and Jim met with Nicola Moss of Moray Council to discuss this and the possibility of carrying out Vehicle Pedestrian Assessments to see where crossings are most needed. They also met with Graham Leadbitter to ask that if it the £175,000 costs could be raised that current staff could be kept on. For example if parents could be £10-15 per child per term, it may be possible to fundraise the rest. School buses are paid for by the taxpayer so should these parents also be asked to make a contribution? It is worrying and time is running out to retain current staff, with some crossing patrollers already leaving to take other jobs.

Grass cutting – some groups are already maintaining public areas but this is not practical for larger areas. Discussions have covered possible sources of funding, converting some areas to meadows and other ideas. The Group wants to find out if Moray Council is willing to share skills, training, risk assessments and share of hire out equipment. Formal volunteers for Moray Council would be covered by their public liability insurance. If responsibility for maintaining an area is transferred to a Community Council (in writing) volunteers would be covered by the Community Council insurance. Colin Bell has had enquiries from other groups and has suggested they join the JCC subgroup to explore options together.

Public toilets – Harbour toilets will remain open. Some organisations have taken on the lease but it is proving challenging for smaller communities to fundraise and manage toilets. The idea of a Moray wide company to take on and maintain toilets was discussed further at the meeting attended by Laurie Piper from Moray Speyside Tourism.

ii. Clash Gour Community Ownership – Graeme Hilditch

Potential Clash Gour Wind Farm Community Benefits are likely to be Moray-wide. Any development is also some way off, particularly in light of the objections submitted. Both these factors can make it more difficult to quantify compared to Community Benefit funds for a defined area. Community Ownership is a share of profits rather than a share in the windfarm so the risks are lower as there is no maintenance burden.

Community Ownership would be in addition to Community Benefits. At this stage, we should set up a group of interested parties who are keen to sign or who have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to look into investing if the wind farm goes ahead. Advice received from support organisations including Community Energy Scotland, Local Energy Scotland and the Scottish Investment Bank was to get involved early, canvass widely and ensure benefit reaches community level.

Alastair attended the CARES conference in Perth and underlined the fact that there is a lot of time and hard work to be invested in order to achieve success with community renewables. Grant funding is available to investigate options. Iain Catto advised that CARES can supply a list of pre-approved lawyers and financial advisors for advice.

iii. Participatory Budgeting – Money £or Moray – Alastair Kennedy

A meeting has been set up with Moray Council Finance department. They are looking at identifying which elements of local authority budgets could be decided by participatory budgeting.

The Community Choices Fund has re-opened but criteria have changed so will have to be looked at in more detail. Information was circulated to all Community Councils by email.

iv. Community Engagement Group (CEG) – Alastair Kennedy

There is a meeting at the end of this month

v. LEADER – Energising Communities Conference - Alastair Kennedy

The Conference went well, was informative and the quality of presentations was very good. It is hoped a peer learning visit to Huntly can be set up soon to keep the momentum going and give another opportunity to ask questions of a successful project. One of the key messages from the conference is to establish a working group early and be prepared to work hard before making any decision about investment.

9. Community Council Information sharing

Buckie & District Community Council – the Chair has stepped down and a new Chair has been appointed and another member co-opted. Members have recently attended ALISS training (a digital platform for health and wellbeing events and organisations), the Joint Community Council subgroup, tsiMORAY's Join the Dots conference and attended and assisted with the Energising Communities conference. Work on the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) is ongoing.

Buckie Roots (aka FOBS) have successfully secured 2 pots of funding and hope to have a polytunnel erected at the Phoenix Centre soon. A dance is arranged for 26th May and all are welcome.

Money £or Moray members supported Church of Scotland to put on Participatory Budgeting events in Rothes and Lhanbryde. The next "Bucks for Buckie" is on 11th May with 10 groups applying for a total of £20,000. All are welcome to attend.

A second 'Working Together' meeting was held in April, bringing together local groups in the community with the aim of sharing, information, volunteers and skills. A focus group then met and another meeting is planned later in May.

Community Councillors are also involved in local beach cleans and litter picks and have purchased hi-vis vests and gloves that can be loaned to other community groups.

Burghead & Cummington Community Council – the dredger is nowhere to be seen and some boats are moving to Nairn as they can no longer afford harbour dues. Grass cutting is negligible and Jim Patterson has cut the Cummington park twice. Jim is looking into taking over the lease of the toilets and has a team of 6 volunteers ready.

Cullen & Deskford Community Council – a few volunteers are doing a lot of work and are too overstretched to attend many other events. The Community Council is planning to liaise with Portsoy Community Council to look at possibly joining Cullen and Portsoy sections of the cycle path.

The Three Kings Cullen Association took on the care of the toilets and has employed a worker, as volunteer labour was not working. Other Community Councils taking on toilets may want to take note. It remains to be seen how to fund this long term.

Dyke Community Council – the Community Council and other local groups are holding an open day at the village hall to encourage community participation in organisations.

Elgin Community Council – numbers have dropped so a recruitment drive would be very welcome.

Two members were involved in a successful Fair Trade event. Members have attended pre-Planning drop in sessions and the Cooper Park stakeholders' workshops and are satisfied with what is proposed.

Finderne Community Council – Community Council membership is full. The café is open again and is highly recommended.

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council – Community Council membership is full.

The Community Council recently met with the Group Captain in Kinloss to get more information on the Typhoons and P6's that are coming to RAF Lossiemouth, which will be using Kinloss runway for 2 months, flying up to 16 sorties a day. Kinloss runway is being upgraded in preparation so the area will be busy for some time.

Two members attended the Energising Communities conference and have written a report and hope to encourage the Community Council to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Negotiations about wildfowling issues are ongoing. The Community Support Unit is coming to discuss the pivotal role of the Community Council in community engagement on this issue. It is hoped there will be resolution soon.

Findhorn Village Conservation Company is planning a Community Asset Transfer for the toilets in Findhorn.

Findochty Community Council – a maintenance and gardening group has been set up and is busy repairing benches and maintaining public gardens. The Community Council will be supporting litter picks along the coast set up by a Findochty pupil.

Forres Community Council – Work on Leancoil is ongoing with an options appraisal underway, which should be completed July/August. The Community Council will be engaging with the community to get their views on what it could be used for. The Community Council is pleased to have secured the £30,000 to finance the options appraisal. They have also raised some funds and found match funding to engage a consultant to assess the current state of Mosset Burn.

The Community Council has started forging links with Forres Academy with a view to attending school council meetings so they can hear the ideas and issues young people have, rather than asking young people to attend Community Council meetings.

Thanks were given to Shaun for the new website, re-branding and Facebook, which are helping Forres Community Council reach a wider audience.

A subgroup has been set up to investigate the route of the A96. Subgroups are a good way to involve other volunteers who care about an issue but do not want to become Community Councillors.

Lossiemouth Community Council – a 'Lossiemouth Lavvy' subgroup has been set up and has taken on a worker 5 days a week with volunteers covering weekends. This leaves volunteers to focus on the hard work of fundraising including crowd funding and working on fundraising events.

Community Councillors met with Ken Kennedy in Lossiemouth and were shown which areas of grass will and will not be cut. It is a relief that grass in housing schemes will be cut.

Lossiemouth Development Trust and Lossiemouth Business Association are looking at setting up an amenity fund and all 3 groups will look into the Town Centres fund and the Community Choices Fund.

The Community Council is looking at taking Bank of Scotland to the financial ombudsman.

Hi-vis vests with the Community Council logo have been ordered.

The Community Council has been making good use of social media and promoted Community Councils on Twitter during #CelebrateCCs month in April.

Graham Hilditch attended the Community Council meeting and Lossiemouth Community Council has now signed the Clash Gour Memorandum of Understanding.

Strathisla Community Council – membership is low. There have been problems with fly tipping including food and grass clippings, which could be as a result of local authority cuts. The person suffering the fly tipping has installed CCTV cameras and the Community Council advised they should put up signs to this effect as they are near a public road.

The Community Council will be administering Beatrice Micro Grants of up to £250 per applicant and these will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

10. AOCB

Moray Towns Fund – this fund will be available for Moray towns with a population of over 1,000. All are requested to feed in thoughts and ideas about what the fund can be used for in their area. The Fund aims to make high streets more diverse and sustainable. Moray Council has focussed on turning empty spaces into living spaces. There will be roadshows later this month.

11. Date of next meeting 8th August 2019. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.