

## **Elgin Community Council Minutes**

**Time: July 11th, 2023 7:00PM**

*Town Hall, Elgin*

### **Attendees:**

Alastair Kennedy Steve Christie Brian Irvine David Chapman Graham Jarvis Douglas Clark Joyce Bremner Alison Stockley Alastair Murdoch Katherine Bowditch Richard Dyce Councillor Peter Bloomfield Councillor Sandy Keith Councillor Amber Dunbar Councillor John Divers Vhari Marandola John Cryans Laura John McGee

### **Apologies:**

James Wiseman Neil Alexander Councillor Jérémie Fernandes Councillor Graham Leadbitter Hazel Lawson

### **Minutes:**

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Police
  1. Community Police Officer Vhari Marandola read the police report. There has been an increase in vandalism, and assaults were up in June. Many incidents reported in the Bus depot in Elgin. Vandalism also occurred in Primary & Secondary schools. 44 assaults reported, with 23 being detected. At the Elgin Youth Cafe - members of a band were assaulted. The offenders were under the age of 16, and so were reported to youth services. Door stewards in Elgin are working with Police on identifying drug suspects. Those detected are being reported to courts, or given written warning, with 3 warnings allowed per year. Thefts from shop lifting are up, mostly of alcohol and food items. The road policing unit has been out. Last Friday on Batchen Street, 12 tickets issued on Batchen St. High visibility foot patrols are out on the High St. The Police continue to liaise with Stagecoach. The Keith bus, and Lossiemouth are the current trouble spots. AK asked if the hot weather makes a difference to the behaviour? VM - they can be. The nature of assaults include juveniles after school, up to and including serious domestic. There has also been an increase in Police assaults, which are not included in the stats. BI asked if this was an influx from other areas. VM felt that it was mostly Elgin youths going to Lossiemouth. Last week had seen an improvement over previous the year. GJ asked the name of the offence that for parking on Batchen St pavement. Parking on a Public Walkway, which carries a £30 fine. AK had heard that there was a consultation coming, on not being able to park on the pavements. JD said this was coming in in December.
3. Stagecoach

1. John Cryans (JC) wanted to thank Police Scotland. Stagecoach had seen an improvement over the last couple of years. MSP were involved, and local Police, especially PC David Baird who had provided help with good ideas. They were looking at the potential of plain clothes on buses. Wet weather has helped recently, and the trouble spots are moving eastwards. AK asked what Laura what her role was? Laura was based at the bus station, and is the Late Controller. Stagecoach had been dealing with groups of 20 - 30 youths, but have identified the 2 or 3 trouble makers. Laura has been trying to interact to be able to calm them down. BI noted that there had been Facebook 92 comments regarding passenger abuse on Buses: he wondered if there a way to coordinate police? JC - drivers can now contact Control from on-board ticket machines. Laura - the issue is with minors, and therefore difficult. There was a meeting between Richard Lohead MSP and the local Stagecoach Directors. If safety is compromised, a bus will stop. However there is a difficulty given the remoteness of the terrain. AK noted that people in Elgin were unhappy.
2. JC was keen to discuss the "other problem": bus cancellations. Moray has bucked the trend in recruitment until recently. Staff are in Moray in excellent. However there was a false sense of security, and they had stopped actively recruiting. JC started recruiting in his second week in the job, and has only just released the first new recruit. The company has also had more drivers leave. Drivers can leave after a week, but training a new driver takes 3 months. There are two main requirements causing issues in recruiting new drivers: suitable licences for training, and medical requirements. Recruits don't generally have appropriate licences, and the DVLA is the biggest barrier. With the planned service changes, they are currently 17 drivers short. GJ asked what the fully staffed requirement was ? JC 30 duties per staff. Most staff are Ex-forces. There has been a marked improvement this week, mainly due to temporary drivers moved from Perth, Skye, Thurso, and Glenrothes, as tenured school runs elsewhere have been dropped. Moray are now the priority in North Scotland, and JC felt that he was getting the support needed from head office. They had 10 drivers on loan. People should see more recruitment signs up, at the station and depot. A new recruitment team in place. On the 21st August there will be a total review of all services in Moray. Reinstating buses heading west. DC sympathised. The Drivers are very good, and are putting in extra hours. DC asked JC confirm that fewer drivers means fewer services? JC replied that it was more about reconfiguring existing serviced to cover more stops. AK gave an example from his recent experiences. JC noted that the Inverness Commercial director knows the area well. Duties have been moved to Macduff depot. The 38 will move to a town service, the 35 will run to Elgin, the 31 will be withdrawn, but the 32 will be extended to Forres. DC asked if this was just re-routing? JC replied that it was not about re-routing, more

about getting Elgin back on track. DC noted that Jack Wright had removed information board - claiming it was a temporary measure. JB asked if the the app was updated for cancellations.? JC noted that Stagecoach don't run the app. DC was clear that it was not working well. AK observed the difficulty in identifying stands for buses that were leaving. AS noted that electronic displays are difficult to see it when it's sunny. JC said that they are currently relying on posters. AK asked if the ECC could help?

4. John McGee from Innoflate gave a lengthy presentation outlining a proposed new leisure facility. He is keen to look at listed buildings in Elgin. AK asked what help Innoflate was looking for from the ECC? It was suggested that JMcG come back to us once more concrete proposals are available
5. Minutes of last meeting
  1. Proposed: GJ Seconded: BI
6. Matters arising
7. Parking Update
8. Local Bus Services
9. Committee Reports
  1. Transport Forum - nothing further to report
  2. Planning - nothing further to report
  3. Education - meeting planned for the 23rd August.
  4. Media & Engagement Strategy - BI to liaise with RD to put out newsletter.
10. Resilience - BI: hoped to explore sub-group of Community Council. There was general assent to this proposal.
11. High St, Litter: BI asked if anything was being done. JD noted that the area around ALDI had been cleaned the day after our last meeting. Nicola Moss will contact Amey. JD had raised it with Elgin BID. AD to look at Pansport area. JB asked when the street cleaner was due? JD said that the street cleaning machine on order.
12. Cultural Quarter: JB attended meeting with Claire English, concerning the Plans for Town Centre, Cooper Park, Grant Lodge, and the 10 year plan. Work will be starting in 2026. GJ went to the Library meeting.
13. Asylum Seeker Meeting & Follow-up. AK personally thought it had gone ok. GJ felt it had been a good meeting, with good attendance, and good feedback. BI was concerned that people with genuine concerns had felt that they were being ignored. GJ felt that it killed off a lot of myths. JB said that Karen's presentation had been good, and that the meeting should have happened when people were first placed in Elgin. AK noted that it was the first meeting of its kind held in Britain. JB felt that there were still questions that would have to be answered by contacting the Home Office. Could the MP not have attended, in order to put the questions Home Office? GJ was clear it was the Home Office. AD said that a list of questions could be asked, and they could be passed on to Douglas Ross MP. JD said that questions were in the Press. JB felt that the majority of people had their questions answered. AD will ask if a home office FAQ

could be produced? Overall the night was well received. ECC should do it again on another subject.

14. Gulls situation: Jimmy Talbot, asked to speak. He has been resident in Elgin since September last year, and is a retired Ecologist. He had been hit on head 3 times on head by common gull. They were unhygienic, dangerous, and gulls had drawn blood. This was not good for the Gulls. Elgin is now an Artificial Colony. This could lead to more problems. AK discussed the NatureScot meeting, and asked if the Sonic devices put in place - had they achieved what they were supposed to do? PB noted it was a blanket restriction. JD noted that 5 years ago egg removal had been allowed, but had been stopped 2 years ago. During last years sonic experiment, the usual 180 eggs had been reduced to 6. However the gulls had returned when shut down in last two weeks. The devices were only in place for 3 months in place. JD noted that NatureScot said that egg removal was not allowed for a second nest. JT noted that the measures have displaced birds to surrounding area. Nesting on chimney stack. RD why were they shut off. JT felt that NatureScot should take the same approach as the do with deer. Gulls should be nesting on cliffs, not on chimneys. SC noted that there were just as many nests and chicks, but that they seem to be more aggressive. JD noted that the device operating radius was 0.5 miles. JD has asked Edward Thomas (housing management) for a meeting after recess. Specialist vermin control will have the performance numbers by then. JB noted that people were feeding gulls in the Cooper park. DC noted that this was not an Elgin-only issue.
15. Just Transition
16. Elected members update
17. PB: 23rd June Meeting - Any feedback on Mackie Chief Constable, slight underspend on CCTV. Camera may. Canadian Men's shed for veterans meeting tomorrow.
18. AD Tomorrow Elgin - Fochabers. Corepath - improve the path network.
19. JD a Parking Paper was going to committee 5th September. AK asked if we were getting traffic wardens?
20. IOC Renewal - RD will renew our certificate.
21. AOCB
22. ECC has received an invoice from Bob Floor for the Website.
23. Old Mills - SC can somebody tidy it up? JD noted that Mr Thirkel was having an Order placed on him.
24. Date of Next Meeting
25. August 8th, 2023