

Elgin Community Council Minutes

Time: September 12th, 2023 7:00PM

Town Hall, Elgin

Attendees:

Alastair Kennedy Steve Christie David Chapman Joyce Bremner James Wiseman
Neil Alexander Hazel Lawson Katherine Bowditch Alison Stockley Richard Dyce
John Cryans Councillor Peter Bloomfield Councillor Amber Dunbar Councillor
John Divers Councillor Sandy Keith Councillor Graham Leadbitter

Apologies:

Graham Jarvis Douglas Clark Brian Irvine Councillor Jérémie Fernandes

Minutes:

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Police
3. Minutes of last meeting
 1. Amends requested by Joyce Bremner & Douglas Clark
4. Matters arising
5. Bus Services
 1. Update Mid-September. Changes: service change, fresh duties, Unionised. 4 day working in MacDuff. Lost candidate during training. They are still getting applicants, including 6 returnee drivers. Training & Recruitment team are working well, but staffing still suffering with 6 long-term absentees, and a couple of covid cases. There are 130 staff. There is disruption due to service change. Tourist season ending, so there are some returnees. The Trainer works 6 days a week. JC Has been given permission to over-recruit. DVLA stage can take between 2 to 6 weeks.
 2. Printed Timetables - they are looking at getting timetables in Bus Station. Laminated timetables being posted around Buckie, and Burghead. ETA: a couple of weeks.
 3. Connecting service to Roseisle - JC has spoken to commercial team. Looking at re-timing the route. Timeframe - possibly next month, depends on the ease. AK noted that it was raised at Moray Transport Forum. JC confirmed that the MSP & MP have been in touch on the same subject.
 4. DC asked when the office in St Giles centre was open. JC said that usual staff member was on holiday, and they had taken the decision to run services rather than staff the office. They don't make much money in the office. DC asked about the 366 Bus. GL said it was the Aberlour to Elgin bus. AS complemented service she received from cover staff in St Giles office.
6. Citizens Advice - JB. JB described the staffing situation at CAB Elgin. They have a full time staff, with a reliance on volunteer staff. They handle

enquiries concerning benefits, consumer issues, bereavement, debt, houses, wills, law & courts, taxes, utilities, and NHS complaints amongst many others. They have an Outreach project in Buckie. Volunteers are required, both for day-to-day, and also board members. They have a full-time staff of 6, and 30-40 volunteers. There is a Walk in service as well as phones also to be manned. There training is comprehensive, including on data system, for giving people accurate information. Part of the job is managing people's emotional responses. JB was clear that it was one of the best things she has ever done, and an immensely rewarding role. A report is written up for every client, attaching references that are given out. Reports are checked at random. JB said that most enquiries were regarding debt, driven by rising utilities & food costs. There were also enquiries re family & divorce. JD said that there were 432 active cases with, 220 new clients. 3 full time were funded by CAV, with some funding from other bodies. AK if there was more info available? JD sad that the AGM coming up. JB said that Mary Riley (Manager) would be happy to give 15minutes talks on any CAB subject. JW wondered if it was worth having a more open event? JB noted that the next advisor training program about to start. JW asked if it attracted many people? JB made it clear that wthey you go to citizens advice as a volunteer, you don't start straight away. They do get volunteers, but people drop out. The Online training, and online testing is very in-depth. You have to deal with 35 clients, before you can become a qualified generalist. JW wanted more insight into what's involved. AK asked if they ECC were to host an event, would that be helpful? JB to enquire. JB with a dedicated trainer, first training can take a while. JW are there other groups that we could combine? AK asked JB to contact Mary Riley, and discuss.

7. Parking Update

1. RD - GJ was interested to hear about raising of parking rates for Lossiemouth Green, which might result in more illegal . AD said that the recommendation was that long stay car parks £1 to £2. Committee recommended it stay at £1. PB said that they were looking to start charging in Forres & Keith. DC asked if this was run by private company? JD said no, the council, but out-sourced. DC asked if the use Ringo Scottish was a Government directive? GL No. Subcontracts where used for cash collection (G4S), and an App (PayByPhone), but the Council manages it all. Parking rates are entirely under control of the Council. DC said it was a useful thing to know that committees have different view than full council. RD asked if it was possible to charge for the Car park in Forres or Lossie? Lossiemouth car-park was on a Long term lease, and the Forres car park was common good land. For the Lossie Green car park revenue, 1/3 goes to the Elgin common good. DC noted the problems with the parking meters in Torrison Woods.

8. Royal Mail Deliveries - BI - AK had spoken to his Postie, who explained

that the issue was due to lack of staff, with some locations only getting delivery every 2 days. JD noted that New Elgin deliveries arrived late afternoon. JB was unamused to note that a 1st Class letter from Forres had taken 6 days to get to Elgin. SK had a once-a-week delivery. AK will ask BI to draft a letter.

9. Tug o' War - AK Thanks to Council for Contribution towards costs of bins. Organisers had been very helpful, and were keen to return in 5 years time.
10. Parking around the Cathedral - RD. JB noted the speeding on Maisondieu Rd.
11. Council Tax Consultation. Closes next week.
12. August JCC Update - AK
13. Just Transition PB - AK On-going. They had received 30+ applications, with only 2 rejected. Voting opens on Sept 29th, closes 14th October. AK gently asked for some support of Elgin Men's shed. There would be an applicants Market-place event Friday 29th. RD asked if the voting was the same approach as last year. AK said that there was an improved process this year.
14. Committee Reports
15. Transport Forum - presentation from new project officer from M-Connect.
16. Planning - No planning applications. 8 Acres planning change of use, retrospective planning application. AK already there. JD noted that planning officers can take decisions. JW asked about the planning application. GL said it had been made 15th May, approved 14th August. The applicant was an agent. JB asked if there was there a public consultation, as JB didn't receive a letter.
17. Education - Date for set fro August, S6 date changed. Will go along to school coffee mornings instead.
18. Media & Engagement Strategy. TBD
19. Elected members update
 1. PB Noted that the Moray Council had received the MoD Gold Award for Armed Forces Covenant. Among the larger local employers, Walkers are yet to sign up, Johnstons are in the process, and Forsyths are looking at the paperwork, approaching Baxter's. PB would also be attending the Holyrood Parliament Kosovo K4 25th anniversary.
 2. Gulls - JD This year had been positive, overall, with areas which didn't work identified. They were looking at another 2 systems being added.
 3. SK council housing service had been removing moss on properties. NaturScot had given permission to kill 50k other animals, but not gulls. JD said there was an a discussion with officers & specialists, will give more openings next year. RD wondered about blank spots in coverage. JB noted that there were a lot of later hatchings. JD said that the specialists couldn't explain these changes. AD pointed out that where eggs removed, eggs had tested weren't viable. GL noted that West End gap aound Wittet Drive. Potential buildings had been identified. GL nnode that there had been unwarranted littering

criticism of Elgin youth, when there culprits were gulls.

20. AOCB
21. SC AGM - 14th August.
22. Revised Allocation - Council Housing Rules SC will look at them.
23. JB - Queried what was status of Tennis Courts in Cooper Park. JD to be completed this month. SK noted the relationship with Lawn Tennis Club.
24. JB - Heavy rainfall noted that the gutters in Elgin were over-grown, and that there had been sewage smell by the PDSA, following heavy rain. SC Fife Arms close was running with sewage. JD said that the best option was to call Scottish Water - JW note the number as 08000 778778. JD said that the issue was down to private properties. They had been offered funding from BID, but that there had been little interest. AK noted that Anne Glover had done some work on it. SC was concerned with falling masonry. JD said that would be a matter for Building Control. AK asked if it was worth speaking to Elgin BID again? GL will raise it. JD will raise it with Elgin BID. GL said that inspections could be implemented. The Drive to get upper stories converted back to flats, meant that Factoring fees might be used for clean-ups.
25. AK asked if road sweepers clearing corners and Islands? GL said that there were fewer sweepers, and the service was too tight. AK noted it took 5 minutes to step out of a cab and sweep. GL said it was a more reactive job, e.g. rural road diesel spills cover-up, wind blown sand. JB asked if the new street cleaner had arrived? JD said it was delayed. SK suggested that the delay due to procurement. DC asked if it was electric? JD said that Elgin Bid were responsible.
26. Date of Next Meeting: October 10th, 2023