

Minutes of Meeting of the City and Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council
Tuesday 7th April 2009 at 7.00 pm in the Moray Council Chambers

1. Present

Chairman:	Alex Macmillan	
Members:	Bryan Watson (Vice Chair)	Donald McIntosh (Treasurer)
	Murray Ross	George Littlejohn
	Anne Glover	Morna Abernethy
	Harry Torry	Alastair Kennedy
	Lewis Watson (Youth Rep)	
In Attendance:	Cllr Divers	Cllr Leadbitter
	Cllr Russell	Cllr Shand
	Cllr Sharp	Inspector Mowat (until 19.35)
	Ann Griffin (Minutes)	Mary Dow (Minutes)
Apologies:	None recorded	

The Chairman introduced Mary Dow who was considering becoming the Community Council Minutes Secretary.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 24th February 2009

The following corrections were proposed and approved for previous minutes of 24th Feb.

4. 10f – Should read “Smoking Policy at Elgin Bus Station”.

9c. – Should read “Murray Ross reported that currently the man-hole covers on Hay Street and Station Road were in a poor state of repair but this was the responsibility of the utility company”.

With these corrections recorded, the previous minutes were approved as accurate.

Proposed: Alastair Kennedy Seconded: Harry Torry

3. Matters Arising from 2^{4th} February 2009

1. Gypsy Travellers Presentation. The Chairman had received feedback from Moray Council regarding questions raised. No consultation had taken place regarding the use of Common Good land for travellers as this is an unauthorised site and the use of this land is not endorsed either actively or passively. The Chairman had responded and asked “If the Sawmill owners have the right to object to the use of their land for travellers, then could the citizens of Elgin not object to the use of common good land for this purpose?” Moray Council legal department are considering this and will feedback as appropriate.

3.10b Children’s Play Park at Glassgreen. Cllr Leadbitter had spoken to Elaine Penny, Moray Council. Anne Glover reported that she had spoken to Elaine also and that she and Morna Abernethy had since visited the site and considered that the play-park is not as dangerous as first thought. It was also decided that there are enough signs in this area. It was therefore decided to no longer pursue action.

9b. Deanshaugh Playing Fields. The Chairman had spoken to Bob Stewart, Moray Council and an investigation by the internal auditor will be carried out and therefore no

comment will be made at this time. The Chairman has expressed concerns and raised questions in writing about finances, restorations and the fields being a hazardous to the public. He will await a response.

10b. Youth Member – Schools Energy Efficiency. Lewis Watson reported that the school pupil council had met with members of the Energy Efficiency Team and that they will be signing up to ensure lights are switched off and other energy efficiency measures will be taken to reduce consumption.

10f. Smoking Policy at Elgin Bus Station. The Chairman had spoken to Angela Lamb and no smoking signage will be erected under the canopy at the bus station. It was acknowledged that it will be difficult to enforce but employees will ask members of the public and passengers refrain from smoking under the canopy.

9a. Car Sales on verges of A96. Alastair Kennedy reported that he had spoken with Theresa Ruggeri and the issue of garages parking cars for sale so close to the A96 has been placed in the hands of the enforcement officer.

9c. Speed bumps on South Street. George Littlejohn is awaiting a meeting with Richard Gerring and Gordon Holland.

5. Traffic on Plainstones. Alastair Kennedy reported that in his opinion, there was an ongoing problem with vehicles accessing the pedestrian area of the town centre out with permitted hours. With Lossie Wynd also being closed, there had been additional traffic using unauthorised routes. Inspector Mowat reported that there was an ongoing report about this problem and there is currently investigation being carried out regarding signage. He has also made representation to Moray Council to authorise Traffic Wardens to enforce legislation with regard to unauthorised vehicles on the plainstones.

Anti-social behaviour at the Wards. Bryan Watson reported that he has again witnessed and reported antisocial behaviour on the Wards Wetlands Nature Walk including drinking and injuring wildlife. He also thanked Moray Council for their speedy repairing of the pathways.

4. Police Business & Terrorism Update

Inspector Mowat reported that statistics have been gathered regarding antisocial driving for the period 1st Feb through to the end of March. There had been 24 warnings issued and 2 vehicles seized. There had also been a spate of sneak in house thefts. He did point out that these tend to be where doors are left unlocked and valuables left in the vicinity of the entranceways.

Murray Ross reported that the Marks & Spencer's car-park has been encountering problems with litter, alcohol bottles and fast food containers. He suggested that this area is used by motorists in the evening as a congregating point. There is a car-park attendant for working hours but it is sometimes the case that cars are parked before he commences work so litter is left. M&S staff are responsible for the car-park area. Additional litter bins are being considered. There was a discussion whether the alcohol bottles signified drink driving and if CCTV would pick this up. Inspector Mowat confirmed that there is CCTV in the surrounding area but that drink driving in this area had not been identified as a problem.

There was a discussion regarding what qualifies as antisocial noise when driving and Inspector Mowat explained that it is a grey area as noisy vehicles are very often quite legal. Alastair Kennedy highlighted that the clear up rates for antisocial behaviour has increased by 40% and congratulated the police for this.

5. Bypass Steering Group

The Chairman reported that the group had met with Richard Lochhead and had discussed the press release. There had been no meeting since to discuss thoughts. The Chairman to feedback at next meeting. There was an acknowledgement that there was a need to improve the internal road infrastructure in Elgin

6. Deanshaugh Playing Field

Covered in matters arising 3. 9b above.

7. Young Citizen Certificates

Morna Abernethy reported that she had sent letters to 32 school or youth organisations regarding the scheme. She expected a response after the schools recommence after the Easter Break. The Chairman confirmed that expenses for the work done should be submitted to the Treasurer.

8. Community Planning – Local Area Forums

No update had been received. The Chairman reported that the Elgin North Area Forum had arranged a litter pick for the area on the 23rd April.

9. Committee Reports

- a) Planning. Alastair Kennedy reported that he is awaiting plans for the erecting of a windmill in Tesco grounds. He has also been working on resolving the problem of cars for sale being parking too close to the A96. He had attended an information session on e-planning where applications can be submitted and tracked on line. He had also attended the National Planning Framework 2 session. Bryan reported that the group had been disappointed that the retail development on the old Sawmill site had been turned down and gave a detailed explanation why they felt this had been a good proposal for Elgin. Cllr Divers reported that he had seconded the motion to reject the proposal on the grounds of flooding. The Chairman suggested that the Linkwood Development should not be fighting against the City Centre development as they were both within the boundary for the City of Elgin but if the development was to hamper the flood scheme in any way then it should not go ahead. Alastair Kennedy suggested that the flood alleviation programme should be in place before the work commenced on the proposed site. Bryan reported that in his opinion, to do nothing would not help and any new development would surely build in improvements to prevent flooding. Harry Torry suggested that that there are already 10 empty retail units on Edgar Road and there was no need for any more. Alastair Kennedy highlighted the economic and spin-off advantages to the City if the Linkwood Retail development was to go ahead. George Littlejohn suggested that the City Centre needs to become a niche market and not compete with out of centre retail units. Cllr Russell reported that he had proposed the motion to refuse the development. This had been on the basis of the Moray Local Plan and highlighted that the development is in-fact out of the centre. Also, the refusal

was on the ground that there was no evidence that a sequential approach had been taken and he outlined the retail impact assessment.

- b) Recreation, Leisure & Environment. Anne Glover had nothing to report.
- c) Roads & Transportation. Murray Ross reported that they had been in discussion with Ken Kennedy Moray Council regarding the planters for the Beautification Scheme and that this was now going ahead. It was anticipated that the first planter will cost approx £500-£600 and will be in place by the end of May. Murray will report this progression to the Area Forums. Murray also reported on various matters concerning Bear Scotland for the A96 corridor within Elgin and the continued dialog with Ralph Newlands. Murray reported that the group had done an inspection of manhole covers and had reported repairs which were necessary to William Ross Moray Council. He also reported on consideration needed by BT, Scottish Water, the current budgets and the resurfacing work. The Roads and Transportation Group are still concerned about the 30 mph zones off the A96 and will continue pursuing this. George Littlejohn reported that there will be a meeting with Gordon Holland, Moray Council and Stuart Stevenson MSP (the Transport Minister) to consider traffic flow through Elgin and that they will also be meeting with Richard Gerring. They will also be discussing the speed humps on South Street and the future plan for traffic through Elgin. Alastair Kennedy expressed that the work that the Roads and Transportation Group are doing is proving very creditable and is being recognised as the way forward.

10. Correspondence

The following correspondence was presented and members were invited to read the following submitted documents:

1. Letter regarding Lady's Walk Refurbishment – Ken Kennedy
2. Survey of A96 & A941. Brander & Surface subsidence – William Ross
3. Bear Scotland re A96 corridor through Elgin
4. Reply from Gordon Holland re major submission, thanking committee for work
5. Reply from William Ross re settlement of surface on Lesmurdie Road
6. changes in Planning System – Scottish Government & Moray Council
7. Letter from Peter Peacock re relocation of Civil Service Jobs, Update from John Swinney
8. Bids News
9. National Spring Clean Event – 23rd April 2009. Morrision & Academy paths. Elgin North Area Forum
10. ACSS – Delegate pack. Message of thanks. It was reported that is was a well attended event and thanked the Moray Council for hosting
11. SNH Biodiversity Awards
12. Model Constitution – model Standing Orders, Model Scheme. Covering letter from COSLA
13. CDC Yearbook

11. Treasurer Report

Donald McIntosh distributed copies of the financial statement. The statement of account at 16th March 2009 number 1 account = £1288.87.00 and on 20th March 2009 number 2 account = £5181.48.

12. AOCB

- a. The Chairman reported that a submission for the regeneration fund had been lodged on behalf of the Community Council. A letter of acknowledgement had been received. He also reported that Northern Textiles had collected waste fabric/clothes in the area and that weight of collected amounts and a cheque for the collection would be received. The Chairman also reported that the CDC yearbook submission has been paid and copy of the book available. The subscription for the Association of Community Councils is due. George Littlejohn proposed that this be paid, seconded by Alastair Kennedy and carried by all. The Chairman also reported that he had corresponded regarding the early closure of St Giles Car Park due to vandalism. It was felt that this could have an affect on local businesses. A response received indicated that there is a very low usage of this car-park at the proposed times of closure.
- b. Anne Glover had been consulted and had responded to an audit with NHS Grampian regarding no smoking anywhere on the premises. She highlighted her disappointment about the lack of local merchandise available for purchase at the new Tourist Information Centre in the Library. She felt that this is a missed opportunity and suggested that tourists liked to purchase local mementos from their visit. Cllr Russell reported that during consultation, there had been criticism that there had been too much souvenir material available and he highlighted the opportunity for local retailers on the High Street to take advantage of this opportunity. Anne Glover also reported that she had still not received a copy of the Spotlight magazine through the postal service and had approached the Post Office. It would appear that the publication might be classified as junk mail and if residents register for no junk mail, then they would not receive a copy of the Spotlight magazine.
- c. Murray Ross reported that the Reiket Lane Bridge and roadworks are going well and that the contractors are keeping residents up-to-date with correspondence. He also enquired what was happening to the previous Tourist Information Office. Cllr Russell confirmed that it will become a Business/Economic Development Advice Centre and that the press were invited to the opening on Wednesday. The Chairman highlighted that the temporary banners had been erected advertising the new Tourist Information Centre and expressed that he hoped that the permanent ones would be in place soon. It was also suggested that, according to interviews with staff, the only reason the Tourist Information Centre was moved, was because Moray Council wanted the building it was occupying. George Littlejohn suggested that the cloth temporary signages were illegal and that Bear Scotland would be requesting that they be removed. He also enquired on how the ASCC event went? It was reported that the event went well and that Tracy Rae should be congratulated for her professional efforts for this event.
- d. Cllr Russell reported that on 25th April there will be an archaeological conference in Elgin Museum which should prove a very interesting event. He also suggested that members are welcome to contact Moray Council regarding the legality of signage for the Tourist Information Centre and highlighted the need to relocate to the current location was due to space and facility enhancement.
- e. Alastair Kennedy asked that the Roads and Transportation group would consider the signage at Elgin Railway Station as there was nothing to highlight onward travel.

Visitors arriving by train had no idea where to go for further information. Cllr Russell offered to investigate this further. Alastair Kennedy also highlighted the Gypsy awareness session which he would be unable to attend. Morna Abernethy and Anne Glover offered to attend on behalf of the Community Council. The Chairman will forward their details to Tracy Rae.

- f. Cllr Leadbitter reported that he had been made aware of ongoing problems of transporter vehicles offloading cars in illegal locations around the Arnold Clark dealership on Edgar Road. He suggested that if citizens see this happening, then they need to report it so that police can reallocate resources. Also, any unauthorised parking in Batchen Street and South Street should be reported in the same manner.
- g. Bryan Watson said that the double yellow lines had now been painted on the Wards. He also reported that £2k had been received from the Police for Ladyhill project and the money had been passed to the Elgin Fund.
- h. Lewis Watson said the new Skateboard Park in Cooper Park is now open and will be a welcomed facility for the youths in Elgin.
- i. George Littlejohn said that the previous comment about the Tourist Information Centre cloth signs being illegal was based on information from Bear Scotland (Ralph Newlands).
- j. Cllr Russell said that applications for town centre regeneration funding was not yet available but he would be very grateful if any comments or ideas were submitted to him via email.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting.

The date of the next meeting of City & Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council will be held on Tuesday 19th May 2009 at 1845 in Elgin Library Activities Room.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.58 pm.