

BURGHEAD and CUMMINGSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of regular meeting, held at Burghead harbour office
1st April 2010

Present:- John Gordon (Chair); Mollie Fraser; Jennifer Walker; Billy Davidson; John Main; Alistair Mackenzie; Jim McCourt.

In attendance:- Moray Councillors Mr David Stewart and Mr Allan Wright
(No Police attendance).

Apologies:- Jim Patterson; Chris Tuke

Before the meeting commenced, a group photograph was taken.

John Gordon opened the meeting at 7.30PM, and welcomed those attending.
Jim McCourt took the minutes.

Adoption of minutes of previous meeting (following corrections)

Two corrections were made to the previous minutes:-

1/ John Main discussed road signs for Burghead with James Smith, not John Stewart as recorded (top of page 3).

2/ Alistair Mackenzie is owed £20 for a fee he himself paid, for the piper attending the Cenotaph ceremony last year – the previous minutes (page 3) did not make this clear.

With these corrections, acceptance of the previous minutes was proposed by Jennifer Walker and seconded by John Main.

Police report

No police report was available, but the meeting commented on the apparent lack of a noticeable police presence in Burghead and Cummington in recent weeks.

Matters arising from the previous meeting

The Clavie

Eric McGillivray has set up a preliminary meeting for 7PM, 7th April with members of the Clavie Crew and “broker” members of the Community Council with relevant experience (either of the Clavie itself, or health and safety matters).

Billy Davidson, John Gordon, and John Main will attend – but any other CC members will also be welcome.

A key concern and hope of the CC is that the essential character of The Clavie must be protected, and that positive action now will make this more likely.

Coat of Arms

There is still some uncertainty as to whether the Coat of Arms will show the “white bull” as before, or the traditional “Burghead Bull”.

No definitive course of action was agreed by the meeting.

Conservation Area

This is now in effect. The meeting hoped that the harbour area generally would be made tidier and more presentable.

A planning application has been submitted for a block of six flats at the harbour. These have already been rejected because of inadequate parking provision, but the meeting felt the application may now also fail because of the recently introduced conservation status of the area.

Licensing Laws

The Scottish Government decides licensing legislation and so Moray Council have limited room for manoeuvre.

The CC continues to have concerns over licensing requirements for small-scale BYOB events – and opposes these requirements in any form. The current proposal is that such events should obtain a £10 catering/temporary licence, although this has not yet been ratified. The meeting felt that this might be the thin edge of the wedge, and that the licensing trade were promoting this idea due to their fears of losing trade. The CC made their views clear to the Councillors and asked how they could formally make their representations. It was not clear if the Scottish Government were still accepting consultations on this matter.

Re-location of library

This development continues – the new library should be open by the end of the Easter holidays.

Some worries have been expressed over possible uses for the old library building, but there are no definite proposals in this direction.

Pot-holes

Temporary fillings have been put in some of the worst holes – repairs will be made more permanent when the weather improves. However, there is a particularly hazardous hole at the corner of a road near the Burghead playing field.

It is unclear if Moray Council will succeed in getting extra funding to repair roads.

Environmental health

Refuse is still accumulating in the rear lane of the “Morning Noon and Night” store. This may be partly due to adverse weather i.e. high winds, but it is not being well-contained.

The CC continue to have anxieties about the threat of rat infestation, and **will make strong written representations** to the environment health department requiring that they take appropriate action.

Plans for wind-turbines at Cummingston

John Gordon’s proposed letter was superseded by emails from Chris Tuke. Chris has written to the Scottish Executive on this matter.

The CC were highly concerned about the approval of plans for a wind-turbine in Cummingston. They felt that this occurred in contradiction of Council policy and planning laws (the turbine is too close to private properties).

Both the turbine in Cummingston and the one proposed for Clarkly Hill are commercial enterprises.

Councillor Wright will find out how and why the Cummington proposal was passed. The Council Planning Committee are to assess a paper on wind turbines and planning on 6th April. He will report back thereafter.

Eplanning

The CC still have concerns that they have no guarantee, and no way of ensuring, that some planning applications will be omitted from planning lists.

All planning application should be in the weekly list. Chris Tuke receives the list, and then distributes it to all Community Council members.

Members' items

John Main

SEPA - No progress has been made.

Cycle track – John has had several contacts with Frank Knight of the Council. There have again been broken assurances that the problem has been resolved – at one point the problem worsened, with heavy wire lying across the track. The most recent attempt at repair has been thwarted by the weather. John has been told that the Council will resolve the problem in the very near future.

The CC expressed appreciation for all John's efforts.

Amenities association – Ownership of the land in question remains unclear (it is definitely not Council land). **The CC agreed to try and decide this point** e.g. by writing to the Land registry in Edinburgh.

The CC has stated its willingness to support the Amenities Association, but any development must remain under the ownership of the Burghead community and be for their benefit. There is a lack of clarity around the Amenities Association proposals and how far these have progressed. Their Chair has resigned and a recent meeting shed little light on the matter. There are plans for a large building unit/shell, subdivided internally.

The CC will write to the Amenities Association regarding the above points.

Alistair Mackenzie

The Sigurd Way Tenants Association have contacted Alistair with serious complaints about the condition of their properties, recent excessive electricity bills, and their landlords (Moray Housing Partnership).

Despite the houses being designed to be eco-friendly, residents have had bills ranging between £300 and £1300 for their quarterly electricity usage. These are causing anxiety and possible hardship (some of the tenants involved have health or disability issues). The heating system may be deficient and/or poorly calibrated.

Councillor David Stewart has also been involved (as has Councillor Barry Jarvis), and has had discussions with the tenants group. Moray Housing Partnership have suggested "teething problems" with the system.

The CC discussed what appropriate action they could take, and the options open to the tenants. It was decided that Alistair will continue to find out all the facts and the up-to-date position.

Mollie Fraser

Great concern was expressed at the subdivision of Marchwood Cottage in Cummington into a series of developments involving nine bedrooms, resulting in inadequate parking space. The feu has previously been halved and this new proposal was felt to be a gross overdevelopment of the site.

The policy of Moray Council is to allow for one car-parking space per bedroom of development.

The CC agreed to write to the planning authority objecting to the development on the grounds of overcrowding and lack of parking space.

Billy Davidson

Concern continues regarding the problem of dog-messing in Burghead. This was stated to be an issue raised frequently by all CCs.

Andy Jamieson (anti-social behaviour unit) is responsible for dog-walking issues. A Forres scheme using armbands with the motto "I am a responsible dog-walker" has had surprising success.

Moray Council have no definitive action plan for tackling problems arising from seagulls – whether resulting from their being fed; their mess; or their aggression in the coming breeding season.

It is possible to take action against their nests and eggs, but all effective measures tend to be expensive.

John Gordon

Concerns were raised about the role and cost of the Communities Support Unit. The CC expressed their agreement..

Councillor Wright stated that the CSU was available for use by community groups if they wished, and could be contacted for help on virtually any matter. The unit arose because help had previously been provided to community forums and it was felt that other community groups might want to benefit from their input. The CSU do not intend to impose on any community group.

There being no further business, the meeting was brought to a conclusion by John Gordon at 9.02PM.

Next meeting – 7.30PM, Thursday May 6th