



The Community Council for the Royal Burgh of Forres

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Minutes of the meeting of the Community Council for the Royal Burgh of Forres held in the Tolbooth, Forres, on Thursday 21st November 2013.

Present : Community Cllrs J. Bremner, J. Duncan; S. Ferris, J. Guthrie, E. Hayward, S. Kennedy, J. McDowell, G. Murdoch, S. Noble, L. Piper; H. Shaw and M. Walker.

Also Present : Moray Cllrs G Alexander, L Creswell, A McLean, A. Skene, Sgt Jones, Police Scotland, G McCartney (Forres Gazette) & 11 Members of the Public (M.O.T.P.)

Apologies: Apologies for absence came from Cllr J. Guthrie

Approval of Last Minutes : The Minutes had not been received by Councillors. The ratification was therefore deferred until the next meeting. Councillor Noble asked that, in future, Minutes identify where **Action** has been agreed. Cllrs Ferris and Noble will meet with Minute Taker to agree format of Minutes.

Action: Cllrs Ferris and Noble

Public Session:

- The Chair welcomed Sgt Jones who briefed the meeting with the **month's statistics**. A man in his twenties and another in his thirties were arrested and charged with drink driving. An 18 year old man was reported for careless driving. Four motorists were dealt with for speeding and two for driving vehicles without an MOT. A woman in her 70s was arrested for driving whilst disqualified. A male and female in their 20s were arrested for theft of cable from a building site. A 16 year old man was arrested and appeared from Police Custody at Elgin Sheriff Court charged with public disorder and possession of a knife. Anti-Social Behaviour fixed penalty notices were issued separately to two males, one in his 20s, the other in his 30s for urinating in public. 5 notices were issued for street disorder to two males in their 20s and a female in her 40s for separate incidents and two women in their 20s for fighting in the street. There were a number of break-ins to coin operated car wash/garage facilities over the wider Moray and North area. Three men were taken in to custody and released on bail. While Police Scotland are not looking for anyone else in relation to these crimes, enquiries continue. Police are also seeking a known suspect in connection with a number of break-ins which are spread outwith the area. **Ongoing Engagement Activities:** Additional directed patrols to focus on Road Policing will take place in the latter part of November: Antisocial and careless driving; careless and illegal parking; speeding and cyclists who are particularly vulnerable without adequate lighting or suitable equipment. Officers will distribute high visibility vests where necessary. A national campaign focussing on personal and general security during the festive period will follow shortly. **Police Scotland review of counter staff:** Forres will have front counter staff on duty Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. Outwith these times callers will be seen by Police Officers on duty if they are within the building.
- M.O.T.P asked if the **Dragon Spire** on Anderson's Primary School which has been removed for remedial work to be done will be replaced. Moray Councillor George Alexander replied that a Press Release had been issued on Friday 22nd November. The vane will be replaced lower down on the roof.
- Brian MacDonald, Chair of FACT and Forres Area Forum, reported on progress with **Sanquhar Pond restoration**. A survey of the pond is to be conducted by The Moray

Council to find out if the dam is likely to be reclassified as a reservoir with a capacity in excess of 10 000 cubic metres.

- M.O.T.P. enquired about the new **Cycle Path** to be created as part of the Flood Alleviation works. He is of the opinion that the path is located on the wrong side of the road. Moray Councillor Alexander will investigate and enquire about the final plans.

Action: Moray Cllr Alexander

- M.O.T.P reported that Chris Hall had been very helpful in supplying new **Timetables for the town Bus Shelters**. She had changed the backing papers in the display panels. Dial-a-Bus and Travel Line information is also available.
- Colin Lipscomb asked if a reply from Audit Scotland regarding **Forres Common Good Fund** has been received. Bob Hellyer, former Vice Chair of Forres Community Council, offered to provide background information and passed a document to the Chair, Councillor John Bremner. Councillor Noble will write to ask Audit Scotland if further action is required.

Action: Cllr Noble

- M.O.T. P. asked if there has been a change of Moray Council policy about **advertising signs on roundabouts**. Forres in Bloom and Forres Area Forum had enquired about placing signs in the past and had been informed that it is not The Moray Council policy to do so. An advertising company had contacted some local businesses to seek sponsorship. A local businessman reported that the company retains 40% of the fee and The Moray Council retains 60%. Moray Councillor Alexander confirmed that there has been a change of policy. Concern was expressed that the signs may divert motorists' attention. It is unclear if Planning permission is needed for these signs. In other local authorities the sponsorship money is used to maintain floral features on roundabouts.
- M.O.T.P. asked about the **fountains in the Sunken Garden** at Grant Park. Scottish Water has indicated that the system is unfit for purpose and requires new filters and piping. Councillor Creswell offered to seek more information.
- **Forres in Bloom is seeking volunteers** to clear the beds in Grant Park on Sunday 24th November at 1pm.

Action: Moray Cllr Creswell

Secretary's Report: Councillor Laurie Piper tendered his resignation. He regrets that he has to demit office because his work commitments have changed unexpectedly. No correspondence of note had been received.

Chair's Report: Councillor Bremner reported that he had attended the information session hosted by Transport Scotland about the dualling of the A96. The planning options presented are for the Nairn area and go no further than Feddan Farm at Brodie. The representatives present were unable to answer any questions about plans for the Forres area and beyond. The Chair laid the wreath on behalf of Forres Community Council at the service at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer confirmed that the account stands at £763.80: £676.35 in the CC Operating Account and £87.45 in the Special Projects Fund. The Treasurer proposed, and was seconded by Councillor Murdoch, that £50 be given to Forres Christmas Lights to provide prizes for the Fancy Dress Competition. Councillors approved the proposal. The cost of the wreath for the service at the War Memorial is £27.60. Councillor Shaw asked about the small grants made to groups from the Special Projects Fund. The Treasurer explained that Councillors do not usually claim expenses and donate the surplus to local projects of their choice. Councillor Shaw asked if there are any criteria for disbursement. The Treasurer confirmed that it is money that Councillors are foregoing and is of their choosing based on local knowledge and approaches from groups.

Representation on Local Bodies:

Forres Community Councillors have a statutory responsibility for Planning Applications. Forres Community Council is a Corporate member of The Friends of Falconer Museum. An annual fee is paid to The Hub. The Chair of Forres Community Council is required to be a member of the Angling Association. The Golf Club and The Osprey Trust require representation.

Local Groups may invite Councillors to attend their meetings if they so choose. Councillor Shaw asked if this is widely known by groups. It was agreed to consult the list of groups compiled by Forres Area Forum and to advertise the opportunity to invite Cllrs. **Action Cllr Noble**

Co-opted Members to Community Council: There are two vacancies on Forres Community Council. The post of Secretary is vacant. Councillor Bremner explained the procedure for co-opting members. No member may be co-opted within six months of an election. The workload for the Secretary is significant. The Minute taking is the lesser part of the task. It was agreed to consider employing a Secretary.

Communication: It was agreed to continue using The Hub as the mailing address and central store for Community Council documents. Councillor Noble offered to run training sessions for Councillors at The Hub in the use of Google Box and Drop Box. Councillors to arrange a suitable time with Stewart directly. He also offered to set up a Facebook Page. **Action: Cllr Noble**

A.O.C.B:

- Cllr Ferris enquired why Forres Community Council had not been given the opportunity to comment on the draft of **The Moray Council Ten Year Plan**. He expressed concern that Third Sector Interface Moray (TSI Moray) has approached local volunteer groups for comments. He enquired when the Community Council would be brought in to the process. Moray Cllr Creswell advised him that this would happen before 5th December. Community Councils are not part of the Community Planning structure but could be if they became a member of TSI Moray.
- Cllrs Murdoch and Noble attended a meeting of **The Joint Community Councils of Moray** (JCC) with Chief Executive Roddie Burns. They felt that the Chief Executive had been dismissive and they are concerned about the structure of consultation and the role of Community Councils. Mr Burns suggested that one member representing all 250 Moray Community Councillors could become a member of the Community Planning Board. Cllr Noble feels that this is disenfranchising. He said that the Scottish Government is keen to empower Community Councils and involve them in issues such as Common Good Land. Moray Cllr Creswell explained that the 10 year plan is in draft. It will be renewed continually and will also sit with the 4 year plan. Moray Cllr Skene will seek information and report back. **Action: Moray Cllr Skene**
- **Mercat Cross:** Cllr Ferris asked about the repair to the Mercat Cross. Cllr Duncan reported that three loose pieces of masonry have been removed for Health and Safety reasons. The main Cross is unaffected. A quote will be submitted to The Moray Council and the pieces will be replaced. Funding is required for further work. Funding could come from the Common Good Fund capital sum. Cllr Bremner said that it is the responsibility of the Moray Council not the Common Good Fund. Moray Cllr Alexander said that if all four Forres Moray Councillors agreed to money coming from the Common Good Fund then that is a possibility although the fund is not huge and any money withdrawn would affect future spending. Cllr Ferris said money could come from The Heritage Lottery Fund but only the owner, The Moray Council, may apply. A MOP said it is possible to apply under a joint partnership. Moray Councillor Alexander offered to find out more and Councillor Ferris asked that the outcome be reported to the January meeting. **Action: Moray Cllr Alexander**
- **Buildings on Common Good Land:** Cllr Hayward asked if buildings are erected on Common Good Land they then become Common Good property. There are ongoing discussions between Forres in Bloom and The Moray Council about the use of the Greenhouses at the Grant Park Nursery.
- **Transport to New Hospital:** Cllr Hayward asked if there will be anything in place. Moray Cllr Alexander reported that there is a survey of Thornhill footpaths being undertaken. As far as he is aware there are no plans for transport services. Cllr Hayward asked that there be a review of bus services. Cllr Bremner reported that although there is Moray Transport Forum there is not a representative from West Moray. Cllr Shaw suggested that the Patient Participation Forum be asked to take the issue further.

- **Forres Heritage Trust:** Cllr Duncan reported that the Trust has been offered a five year lease of The Tolbooth. Funding for major work will not be granted for such a short lease. Funders require longer security of tenure such as Community Asset Transfer. Councillor Duncan asked for the support of the Forres Community Council by writing to The Moray Council for their meeting on 3rd December. Unanimous support was given.
Action: Cllrs Duncan and Bremner.
- **COPD Treatment Facilities:** Cllr MacDowell reported that due to lack of staff facilities for treatment of COPD is no longer available in Forres but is available elsewhere in Moray. In reply to Moray Cllr Skene he said that there is no transport provided and, as far as he is aware, no plans to reinstate facilities at the new Health Centre.
- Responding to a request from Cllr Noble, Moray Cllr Alexander reported on the latest developments with **Redco Milne**. He has asked the Chief Executive on three occasions to make a statement about the current situation that Redco Milne may wish a long term lease of the land. This has not happened. The Chief Executive has said that Redco Milne may be rethinking and are not obliged to answer. Moray Cllr Alexander said that is important that the people of Forres know what is happening. Redco Milne have not sought planning permission to demolish the former TESCO building.
- Moray Councillor Alexander also commented on the closure of **libraries in Moray**. The Forres area has one Library for the area which supports thirteen and a half thousand residents. A small sacrifice by communities could have saved thousands of pounds in costs of going to court. Councillor Ferris asked Councillor Alexander about the cost of the **proposed Elgin road**. Moray Councillor Alexander has written to Keith Brown, Transport Minister, and he replied that a new road to include a second bridge over the railway line is a necessary investment for the future.
- Moray Cllr Skene reported on the progress of the **Sustainable Education Review**. There have been consultations with Head Teachers and pupils; Community Groups including Forums; Community Councils and Parent Councils. These consultations should be finished by the end of December. A long list of options will be compiled and shared with communities before being considered by the council at the end of March.
- A **Sport and Leisure Review** will also be undertaken by the end of March to link in with the school review. Cllr Ferris asked why there had been such short notice, four days, for the first Community Consultation Meeting. Moray Cllr Skene agreed that the October meeting had been at short notice but fourteen days notice had been given for the meetings held today.
- Moray Cllr Creswell reported that she is now **Chair of Health and Social Care** and about a visit she had made to a very successful Social Enterprise in The Old School at Boyndie.
- Moray Cllr McLean is a member of the **Sport and Leisure Review Group**. There will be a public meeting in Forres Academy on 9th December at 7.30pm

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 19th December at 7.30pm in The Tolbooth.



Ratified by John S Bremner (Chair.)

Seconded by

Minuted by Sandra MacLennan Filed under FCC Draft Minutes 13.11.21.doc