

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 12th February 2015

Council Chambers, High Street, Elgin

Present:

Alastair Kennedy (Chair)	
Gordon Methven	Elgin Community Council
Sonia Ritchie	Buckie Community Council
Ann Mitchell	Buckie Community Council
Carolle Ralph	Lossie Community Council
Maureen Garden	Lossie Community Council
Harvey Morton	Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council
Les Morgan	Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council
Ian Ross	Strathisla Community Council
Karen Pryce	Strathisla Community Council
Eleanor Hayward	Forres Community Council
Graham Murdoch	Forres Community Council
Steven Mill	Cullen and Deskford Community Council

In attendance:

Allan Wright, Convener, The Moray Council	Gary Templeton, Principal Planning, The Moray Council
Tracey Rae, Community Council Liaison Officer	Eily Webster, Planning Officer, The Moray Council
Cllr Lorna Creswell	Cllr John Divers
Catherine Sinclair (minutes)	John Calder KCR FM

Spectators:

Sandy Anderson James Mackie

Allan Wright, Convener, The Moray Council - Budget update

The budget was passed with one amendment. It has no severe or swingeing cuts for 2015-16, however around £11 million will need to be saved over the following two years and savings are harder to find now, after the initial cuts have been made. The budget from Scottish Government is as yet unknown.

There is a culture of prudence throughout the council. Approx. half a million pounds will go into reserves this year. Savings continue to be made in e.g. legal, IT, HR and financial, partly due to Designing Better Services processes. The Annexe office has been a particularly good example of this.

Discussion was held on Council Tax freezes. A freeze has been agreed for a further year. If not, a penalty would have to be paid, requiring a 3.6% increase in Council Tax to cover it.

After intensive negotiations, Moray has received an extra almost £4 million on the basis of need. This is due to a population increase of 6000 and an increased school population.

Speakers - Developer Obligation Consultation Supplementary Guidance - Gary Templeton & Eily Webster, The Moray Council

Developer Obligations are compensation for new developments in an area. They could take the form of infrastructure improvements in the area e.g. lighting, roads, new school or extension to existing school, or affordable housing.

There is an opportunity for community groups and Community Councils to make suggestions based on local needs e.g. changing facilities at a pitch or improvements to a village hall, to reflect the fact that new residents in a housing development mean these facilities will be used more or need expanded.

During the upcoming consultation period (expected to be April - June 2015) suggestions for infrastructure and facility requirements will be accepted as long as they meet all five criteria (see circular). Groups wishing to put forward a suggestion should be constituted and have a plan in place for the proposed project.

Money may be paid 'up front' as soon as a plan is approved, but in larger developments, may be paid in phases according to triggers e.g. number of houses completed. The example of the Springfield development in Elgin South was given - having produced a health centre, followed by shops, followed by further units and play parks over the years of its growth.

The money is not intended to pay for the whole costs of a project, but could act as a catalyst for match funding. Projects should be planned to be a legacy, not a burden e.g. if a new green space is created, plans should be in place to maintain it.

Amounts of money available vary with scale and type of development and its impact. The formulations are complex and developers can challenge amounts if they are felt to be unreasonable. There is also a balance to be struck so that developers are not forced to pass costs onto homebuyers, which could mean the houses are no longer affordable.

Work is ongoing as how best to make this consultation digestible. The format used in the consultation on integration of Health & Social care was suggested as a good example of a consultation document.

Alastair reported on items coming up from Planning in future:

Open Space Strategy - This is a requirement of Scottish Planning. It aims to look at the types and amount of spaces we have, where we have shortfalls, surplus/underused/poorly managed spaces, where we can connect spaces. Planning Work Plan has this project starting in April 2016, to be complete in time to inform the start of the next Local Development Plan review in September 2017.

Rural Groupings - This project aims to review existing rural groupings and consider the potential for new rural groupings, either for the purpose of providing further opportunities for development or restricting opportunities due to pressures, character, landscape etc. This is tied into the pressure we are experiencing for new housing in the countryside and some particular hotspots where the cumulative impact is creating a problem.

Masterplans - Planning is working collaboratively with developers and landowners large-scale masterplans in Elgin and Forres. These will be subject to public consultation as they develop. It would be useful to raise awareness of these as they are significant developments (e.g. Elgin South and Findrassie) and there are opportunities for new community facilities.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Carol Shaw (Dyke and Landward)

2. Minutes of previous meeting 13th November 2014

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Les Morgan, seconded by Alastair Kennedy.

3. Matters arising

Page 4, Item 5d - CCLQ Questionnaire

Being considered

KCR

John Calder has made arrangements to attend the meetings of around half of the Community Councils so far. KCR can promote Community Councils, what they do and what they hope to do. John will record an interview for the Moray Matters programme on KCR.

JCC training

Martin Kirwan is on a phased return to work and will be in touch soon regarding training.

4. Reports

a) Financial Report (Carolle Ralph)

The bank balance is £335.00. Expenses were for attending Rural Parliament and admin. Once the account has been audited, the £500 grant will be received.

b) Rural Parliament (Gordon Methven)

Gordon feels reasonably positive about the rural parliament, but has some concerns about how it may proceed in future (see previously circulated report). Community Councils came in for criticism as it was felt they are not given enough power to make a difference to their communities.

The JCC and Elgin Community Council have applied for membership of Scottish Rural Action (necessary to be a member of Scottish Rural Parliament). Gordon has been invited to take part in the advisory forum. It was agreed Gordon attend the forum to represent the JCC. Proposed by Les Morgan, seconded by Graham Murdoch. Gordon encouraged everyone to look at www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk

c) CCLO Report (Tracey Rae)

Dyke Landward

Tracey held the inaugural meeting of Dyke Landward Community Council. They plan to meet with BEAR regarding issues on the A96 at Brodie.

Planning for Real

Tracey attended this training on improving engagement

JCC Training

Tracey plans to draw up a schedule for training to accommodate Community Council schedules

5. Community Council Show Case - Findhorn & Kinloss Community Resilience Plan

The plan arose after a presentation to the JCC by a planning officer from Aberdeen a few years ago. Donna McLean of The Moray Council Planning department has supported its development.

The plan calls for volunteers with useful skills and equipment e.g. 4x4s, boats, and chainsaw training, to register. They are called out depending on need. The plan is intended to supplement the emergency services by providing e.g. first responders, or longer-term support in an ongoing emergency such as a power cut in bad weather. There are now 15+ volunteers registered and a tabletop exercise is planned for this year, with Donna McLean and the emergency services.

The plan is available at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_94830.html

Discussion was held on insurance and health and safety. It was suggested questions be directed to Donna McLean.

ACTION: Tracey to circulate link

6. Information Sharing

Strathisla

There has been no attendance by police the last 4 months and no attendance by local councillors in the last few months. Ian Ross is very disappointed by this situation. All agreed that face-to-face meetings are often more effective and give a better feel for what is happening in the area.

ACTION: Tracey to speak to Acting Inspector about police attendance.

Lossie Community Council

Lossie Development Trust has been working with a wide range of groups including sports, tourism etc. Road safety issues at schools have been raised, particularly speeding traffic and parking at junctions. The placing of bollards between the two harbours has caused a great deal of dissatisfaction. There was no community consultation carried out or notice given. A petition has so far collected 13,000 signatures and discussion with the Harbour Board are ongoing.

Forres Community Council

The woodland at Cluny Hill is looking neglected and the Community Council are exploring a long term project to use the hill as the site of a light display, similar to Faskally, which attracts thousands of visitors. First steps would be to tidy up Cluny Hill and manage the woodland.

A 'who's who' with photos and contact details of Community Councillors and their areas of interest e.g. sport, health, heritage, planning has been produced. This is proving useful, even as an internal document.

ACTION: Tracey will circulate the document

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council

The F+KCC has applied to, and started to receive grants, from the Berryburn Wind Farm Community Fund.

The Findhorn Village Conservation Company, a charity company set up in the interests of the residents of Findhorn, has received a £520,000 grant from the Scottish Land Fund for the purchase of Novar Estates land holdings in Findhorn. Basically, the FVCC will own the dunes land to the east of the village and to the west of the Beach/Dunes Road.

Hopefully using grants and Community Payback labour, a section of public path along the bay side near the Royal Findhorn Yacht Club will be upgraded.

The badly potholed state of the Beach/Dunes Road and the Beach Car Park just to the east of the boatyard continues to attract public criticism. Unfortunately neither the landowner, Novar Estates, nor the Moray Council will spend money to fix the problem and the F+KCC continues to work on securing funding to undertake repairs.

Speeding at some entrances to Findhorn + Kinloss continues to annoy members of the public.

It is planned that the Stagecoach bus serving Kinloss and Findhorn will be re-routed to include the new Forres Health Centre. It is possible that the frequency of the service will be increased.

Elgin Community Council

The Community awards ceremony was successful with the ultimate winner proving a very popular and emotional choice. The steering group has met since and there are requests to hold the awards again this year, which will be dependent on sourcing funding.

The Western Link Road plan is to be resubmitted and a subgroup has been formed.

Fair Trade Elgin is working towards Moray achieving Fair Trade status. Graham Leadbitter is the new Chair.

Cullen & Deskford

Several members had left but after co-options there are now 7 members.

An environmental subgroup is looking at improvements including e.g. more hanging baskets. The Millennium Garden has been tidied up.

Although Cullen and Deskford Community Council look into problems that are raised to them, one of their main activities is fundraising and distributing funds locally. The next calendar is being organised.

Buckie & District Community Council

Buckie Community Council raised a question on what Community Council grants could be spent on. Grants are for administration, printing, venue hire etc. and publicising Community Councils. Tracey advised that members should all regularly submit expenses, as nobody should be prevented from being a Community Councillor for financial reasons.

7. AOCB

Abellio

Alastair and Elgin Community Council associate George P Littlejohn met with Abellio, the new rail franchisee in Scotland. Abellio is keen to work with local communities and asked for top 5 local issues. Alastair also met with The Moray Council to discuss rail transport and Abellio's proposals.

ACTION: Alastair to circulate notes of meetings

Spaceport

A bid has been submitted to base a spaceport in Lossie or Kinloss. There is unlikely to be a decision before the general election. The officer dealing with the bid would be happy to speak to the JCC.

ACTION: Tracey to invite Gordon Sutherland to give a brief presentation to the JCC in May.

Linkwood GP Practice

The practice sent letters to around 500 patients in Lossie & Hopeman to say they were off the practice list. People were quite upset and it also means there is no choice of GP in these areas. Lossie Community Council may need to take up this issue. Cllr Creswell advised this is a matter for the Integration of Health & Social care and advised submitting to them.

8. Date of Next Meeting - 14th May 2015

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.24pm

ACTIONS

Tracey to speak to Acting Inspector about police attendance at Strathisla Community Council.

Tracey to circulate Forres Community Council 'Who's Who?' document

Alastair to circulate notes of meetings with Abellio and The Moray Council

Tracey to invite Gordon Sutherland to give a brief presentation about the spaceport bid in May

Tracey to circulate link to Emergency Resilience Plan