

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 14th May 2015

Council Chambers, High Street, Elgin

Present:

Alastair Kennedy (Chair)	
Gordon Methven	Elgin Community Council
Sonia Ritchie	Buckie & District Community Council
Ann Mitchell	Buckie & District Community Council
Donald Cameron	Lennox Community Council
Mike Mulholland	Lossiemouth Community Council
Les Morgan	Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council
Stewart Noble	Forres Community Council
Graham Murdoch	Forres Community Council
Steven Mill	Cullen and Deskford Community Council
Bunty Campbell	Dufftown & District Community Council
Dennis Dalgarno	Dufftown & District Community Council
James Mackie	Innes Community Council
Lansana Bangura	Innes Community Council
Sandy Anderson	Innes Community Council

In attendance:

Cllr Lorna Creswell	Cllr John Divers
Tracey Rae, Community Council Liaison Officer	Catherine Sinclair (minutes)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Allan Wright, Convener, The Moray Council, Robin Paterson, Health & Social Care Integration Project Officer and Trish Richford, Criminal Justice

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 Gordon Methven.

3. Matters arising

Planning

The Planning department reported they had received useful input from those who attended the Working Together consultation event on 20th April.

CCLO Questionnaire

The method of reporting is being changed so a survey may not be the way evaluation is carried out. Tracey will update us once a decision is made but welcomes comments on the service from her and the team at any time.

JCC & CC training

The first training session 'Fundamentals of Participation' will be on Thursday 11th June and cover participation at meetings, the role of the Chair and other office bearers

The second session 'Conflict Resolution' is on Thursday 2nd July and will look at constructive and destructive conflict. Delegates from all Community Councils are welcome and a good turnout is sought. The aims of training are to support Community Councils and help avoid the turmoil that several have faced recently.

AOCB - Spaceport presentation

As Moray is not currently on the list as a potential site, the presentation has been cancelled for now.

4. Reports

a) Financial Report

No report

b) Rural Parliament (Gordon Methven)

Gordon has circulated 2015-16 draft Action Plan from Scottish Rural Action (SRA). Comments are to be fed back to SRA this week so get in touch with Gordon ASAP with any.

A subgroup is to be formed to look at the action plan as some of the items are controversial and some have implications for rural communities. In particular, input should be made into 'how concerns about Community Councils be addressed'. Some of those attending the Rural Parliament felt Community Councils had too many powers, some not enough. Gordon Methven, Jim Mackie, Les Morgan, Stewart Noble and Alastair Kennedy agreed to be on the sub-group with Community Councils to ask their members if there is any interest as 1 - 2 more members would be useful.

The Moray Council have submitted an expression of interest in holding the Rural Parliament in Moray next year.

**ACTIONS: CCs to ask members if any members interested in joining sub-group
Gordon to email sub-group members to arrange meeting**

c) CCLO Report (Tracey Rae)

Handbooks

Updates were circulated. These are to replace key document sections in member handbooks. It is important that members leaving Community Councils return handbooks.

Interim Elections

One Community Council has used the full complement of co-options and is in a vulnerable position. Tracey has asked them to write to the Democratic Services Manager requesting that an Interim Election be held. This allows co-opted members to become full members, thus opening up vacancies for further co-options.

Another 2 Community Councils have been advised they would benefit from having an Interim Election. Tracey is willing to assist CCs with some promotional work if they are having an Interim Election. It is essential membership numbers be maintained to avoid a Community Council being dissolved. Tracey asked that resignations be formally notified to her via the form provided in the Members handbook.

ACTION: All - Please ensure CC membership details are up to date on the Moray Council website and notify Tracey of any changes if they are not.

CCLO Conference

Edinburgh, 1st June. The Agenda is yet to be finalised but a great deal of interest has been expressed in Community Council collectives and it seems Moray is well advanced in this area. Tracey will share her experiences with JCC and examples of the work that the JCC has carried out.

Grants

Figures have been passed to Finance with a request they be processed ASAP. This payment is for the period April – September 2015.

5. Care at Home - Jim Mackie

Following research carried out in Innes and through questions put to The Moray Council, Innes Community Council found:

Scottish Government aims to provide as much care at home as possible. To that end, The Moray Council employs 400 staff and contract private organisations, particularly for Moray's large ageing population, but also to provide care for people of all ages.

Vulnerable, lone residents may be given a personal alarm if necessary. However, although there is a scheme to sign up volunteer responders, many residents are being refused alarms if they cannot themselves provide the contact details of 2 responders who live less than 15 minutes away. Moray Council carers are no longer allowed to be alarm responders. There is a lack of communication between different local authority and health care departments leading to this frustrating and distressing situation. The Moray Council believes there is no demand for volunteer responders in Innes Community Council area at this time, yet carers know lists of people there who have no alarm because they have no responders.

Innes CC would like to see the departmental situation resolved. They also ask Community Councils to assess the situation in their areas and try to find out if there are people who need volunteer responders and see what can be done. Discussion was held on the best approach.

ACTION: Alastair to circulate any figures he has to relevant Community Councils and to request the figures for other areas

Cllr Creswell took note of this situation and advised she had met with carers to discuss a number of issues. She feels information about care volunteers available through The Moray Council (managed by Margaret Cowie) and tsiMORAY needs to reach all departments.

She also gave a brief update on the progress of the Shadow Integration Board

Integration of Health & Social Care - Cllr Creswell

The Shadow Integrated Joint board has met for the first time. They will meet monthly and report to The Moray Council in August. Within the first 18 months the Board needs to produce an integrated plan in response to needs in local areas. The ultimate aim is for seamless patient care with all departments and agencies working together.

The Moray Council chairs the Board for the first few months, then NHS Grampian. There are 6 voting members consisting of 3 members of the NHS executive board and 3 local councillors, Sean Morton, Patsy Gowans and Lorna Creswell. Other board members are members of the community, patient participation representatives, tsiMORAY and clinical and mental health roles. There is also a planning board made up of lay people with a lot of expertise in specific areas e.g. autism, learning disabilities

A mix of strategic and frontline work is going on and change is happening rapidly. However there are many challenges to face while continuing to provide healthcare and social care services under pressure and patience will be required.

ACTION: Cllr Creswell to seek permission to circulate details of shadow board members to Community Councils

6. Community Council Funding Review

The status quo will remain i.e. Community Councils receiving admin grants rather than top-ups. Regardless of the model used grants awarded do not take into account other monies held by Community Councils. Some Councils have separate bank accounts for the admin grant, others use a system of bookkeeping that shows different budgets and either is acceptable.

Further discussion was held on the review of admin grants and the level of work done by Community Councils. Tracey again encouraged all members to claim expenses as a matter of course as nobody should be precluded from becoming a Community Councillor due to financial barriers. If Community Councils do not claim expenses, The Moray Council will not have a clear picture of running costs.

Cllr Creswell advised that reviews would be ongoing with participatory budgeting likely. There will be a need to meet the eventual outcomes of the Community Empowerment Bill but also to meet budget cuts.

7. Community Council Show Case - Moray Community Awards - Elgin

The awards rose out of an idea Gordon had as a new Community Councillor in 2010, as a result of a discussion about lack of community spirit. Elgin Community Council discussed it over the years until the idea was shared with other partners and the Awards were fully developed.

A steering group made up of Elgin Community Council, tsiMORAY, SPICE (Strategic Partnership for Improving the City of Elgin) Elgin BID, Elgin Youth Development Group and Jim Hart (ex-tsiMORAY director) from Speyside, Elgin Youth Café and the Northern Scot was set up and The Moray Council gave support.

UHI Moray College made the Alexander Graham Bell building available at no charge and will again this year. The Northern Scot was a partner and the majority of nominations were received via the newspaper.

Sponsorship was received from businesses and groups across Moray, including Findhorn & Kinloss and Keith Community Councils, for which thanks was given. All sponsors wish to sponsor this year's Awards, due to be held in November again and Community Councils are again welcome to donate.

This year's ceremony has a provisional date of 20th November, with nomination forms to be circulated in September and October. Nominations may also be made online at www.moraycommunityawards.co.uk Gordon described a moving and worthwhile evening celebrating the unsung heroes, and concluded that community spirit is alive and well in Moray.

8. Information Sharing

Buckie & District Community Council

Buckie & District is still establishing and finds attending JCC very useful. They are receiving support from Tracey, and Alastair advised other Community Councils would be happy to offer support and assistance.

Cullen & Deskford

Several members had left but after co-options there are now 7 members, including a new secretary and Vice Chair.

Fundraising has been successful with £460 raised at a recent race night. The calendar will be printed soon and usually raises thousands of pounds. Grants from funds raised are available to local groups and are advertised in the regular Community Council newsletters and locally, but so far only one application has been received from the environmental subcommittee.

Dog fouling remains an issue of concern. Discussion was held on stencilling warnings on pavements, either with suitable paint as was done in Elgin, or power-hosing the design on.

The footbridge over the burn has passed Planning.

Dufftown & District Community Council

There have been a number of resignations and co-options.

Dufftown & District Community Council's contact with Planning has led to a 'Planning for Real' event. There will be a public session at Dufftown British Legion Club, Saturday 16th May 3-5pm, to view the model of Dufftown and submit suggestions. It was suggested Dufftown & District Planning for Real would make a good Community Council showcase for the next JCC meeting.

Dog fouling is an issue in Dufftown, including bagged dog dirt.

ACTION: Alastair to circulate Planning for Real documentation

Elgin Community Council

Four new members have been co-opted, giving almost full membership.

Elgin Community Council had given support to a proposed amphitheatre in Cooper Park. The planning application was initially successful but later refused on the advice of a consultant. After a meeting with The Moray Council and support from elected representatives, the plan has now been approved.

A subgroup has been set up to look into school rezoning.

After an initial, very short consultation, which was agreed to be inadequate, Community Councillors organised their own successful and useful meeting on Monday 11th to view a draft plan of new housing at Findrassie.

Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council

A table-top exercise to test their Emergency (Resilience) Plan was held in the Kinloss Church Hall and 20 people from the Community Council, local volunteers and the emergency services took part. The Emergency Planning Officer from Moray Council led the exercise, which assumed that a period of prolonged heavy snow and power outage was causing problems for the vulnerable people in the community. Participants discussed what actions would need to be taken in that event.

Forres Community Council

A Town Centre working group has been set up by Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) but so far the response to it has been poor. Graham has suggested the group merge with and reinvigorate the existing 'Forres Area Businesses' group.

A parking survey was carried out in response to comments from members of the public. Disappointingly, businesses have only returned 13 surveys. There have been no responses from the public survey, which is available through FACT.

Zone 18, at the eastern Forres roundabout has been rezoned from agricultural to industrial. After 300 objections locally the decision was referred to the planning reporter who passed it. Both Findhorn & Kinloss and Forres Community Councils were unanimously against this rezoning. A site at Waterford would have been preferred, however SEPA were unable to declare it safe for use. The Moray Council had to find 10% industrial land for Forres.

There are currently 10 councillors. A half page advert was placed in the Forres Gazette but there have been no new applicants.

There are several planning issues including new houses at Lochyhill, the Springfield development and dualling of the A96. There is a feeling the Community Council are responding to consultations where decisions have already been made. A Planning for Real presentation is scheduled, which the Community Council hopes will better equip them to be more proactive and encourage members of the public to be more involved in the planning process.

Innes Community Council

Innes have faced challenges with membership over the last year and have had 3 resignations in the last 2 months, but are now back on track. Thanks were given to Alastair for his support and acting as a Chair at meetings.

Work on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) including hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed on the Spey continues. Innes have drafted a request to Scottish Government compelling landowners to remove INNS. Although orders are available, only 1 has been issued - for animals, not plants. A resilience plan is to be developed, initially talking to each community to see what is already in place in order to create an overall area plan.

Innes pressed The Moray Council to repair the viaduct at Spey Bay and are pleased to report it is now fully repaired.

Innes have responded to a planning application in Lhanbryde to convert a hotel into flats and a shop on the grounds of traffic safety, as there are existing problems on St Andrews Road.

Innes have undertaken coastal research previously and wish other community councils to be aware that dredging at Invergordon, Nigg and Ardersier works will lead to millions of tonnes of silt being dumped in the Moray Firth. This may affect tidal patterns and coastal areas. The health of the Moray Firth also impacts watercourses further inland, which could affect the salmon life cycle and fishing tourism income.

Innes is also pleased to note the successful Community Asset Transfer of a property on South Street by Lansana for Jamia Islamic Centre Trust Fund.

Lennox Community Council

There are now 11 members with possibly one more due to join. The previous Chair is now Secretary, the previous Vice-Chair now Chair and an ordinary member has become Vice-Chair.

Investigation has been undertaken into work carried out without consultation by the Forestry Commission, which led to flooding of neighbouring properties.

Dog fouling is also an issue, as is speeding cars in Fochabers. Concerns have been raised about a proposed development of 50 houses as this would lead to an increase on traffic on East Street, already an area of traffic concern.

Lossiemouth Community Council

Lossiemouth Development Trust continues to work very well.

Dog fouling is also an issue here and Mike proposed a sub-committee of Community Councils might form in future to look at new ideas for tackling this issue.

The issues caused by the bollards at the harbour are ongoing. The Moray Council has been advising the Harbours Authority on potential other options.

7. AOCB

Moray Local Development Plan training

Training on how to respond to the next Local Plan will take place Wednesday 17th June in the Inkwell at Elgin Youth Cafe and a good uptake is hoped for.

Community Council Governance

Alastair met with Mark Palmer, Corporate Director of Corporate Services, who wishes to review the current Community Council scheme and governance system within Moray, in time for any changes to be approved by The Moray Council ahead of the next general election. It was agreed this be dealt with by the subcommittee for the Rural Action Plan.

Community Engagement

In response to a request for information on community engagement, documents on engagement and the engagement and monitoring cycle are available to take away.

Hi-trans travel card

A card is available for public transport users to display to drivers/staff showing any issues they may have and requesting help e.g. mobility 'please wait until I sit down before driving off'. The card can be personalised using stickers that come with it. Alastair asked Community Councils to publicise the cards.

Richard Lochhead MSP

It was agreed to invite the MSP to August's meeting. A suggestion was made to invite Angus Robertson MP, to a meeting in future.

Speakers

It was noted this meeting, with no speakers had allowed for longer networking during the break and a more Open Space style format for Community Councillors to air issues, learn more about how other Community Councils operate, and provide support to each other. It was felt it might be useful not to have speakers at every meeting.

Community Asset Transfers

The question was raised if there was any support for smaller organisations to come together to undertake a community asset transfer, perhaps to form a hub for multiple organisations. The example of Bishopmill House was given, although it still has a place in the Flood plan until alleviation works are completed in August, and its future use will then be discussed.

ACTION: Alastair to enquire if tsiMORAY can provide this type of support

John Calder

Sympathies and good wishes were expressed to John Calder of KCR FM on his illness.

8. Date of Next Meeting - 13th August 2015

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.25pm

ACTIONS

Alastair to enquire if tsiMORAY can provide support for smaller organisations undertaking a joint Community Asset Transfer

CCs to ask members if any members interested in joining sub-group to work on Scottish Rural Action plan and Community Council structure and governance. (1-2 more members sought)

Gordon to email sub-group members to arrange meeting

All - Please ensure your membership details are up to date on the Moray Council website and notify Tracey of any changes if they are not.

Alastair to circulate any figures about volunteer responders re alarms to relevant Community Councils and to request the figures for other areas

Cllr Creswell to seek permission to circulate details of shadow board members to Community Councils

Alastair to circulate Planning for Real documentation