

Minutes of JCC Meeting held on Thursday 8th November 2018

Council Chambers, High Street, Elgin

Present:

Name	Community Council	Name	Community Council
Alastair Kennedy	Chair	David Parker	Forres
Ann Mitchell	Buckie & District	Graham Murdoch	Forres
Morag Stewart	Buckie & District	Lesley Edwards	Forres
Christine Allan	Buckie & District	Eleanor Hayward	Forres
Jim Patterson	Burghead & Cummington	Graham Hilditch	Forres
Colin Burch	Cullen & Deskford	Jim Mountford	Heldon
Stewart Black	Cullen & Deskford	James Mackie	Innes
Iain Catto	Elgin	Sandy Anderson	Innes
Eddie Wallace	Elgin	Peter Fitch	Innes
Diane Anderson	Findhorn & Kinloss	Steve Hicken	Keith
Anne Skene	Findhorn & Kinloss	Karen Pryce-Iddon	Strathisla
Carolle Ralph	Lossiemouth	Marion Ross	Speyside
Maureen Garden	Lossiemouth	Karen Pryce-Iddon	Strathisla
		Iain Lax	Strathisla

In attendance:

Jane Martin, Community Council Liaison Officer (Moray Council)

Roddy Burns, Chief Executive, Moray Council, Cllr J Divers, Cllr L Creswell, Anita Milne (Moray Area Forum), Andrea Fuller (Speyside Area Forum), Catherine Sinclair (minutes)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Billy Davidson (Burghead & Cummington Community Council), Nicola Howard (Finnerne Community Council), Louise Marshall (Findochty Community Council), Mike Mulholland (Lossiemouth Community Council), David Chapman (Elgin Community Council), Cllr G Leadbitter, Cllr T Eagle, Cllr S Morrison, Cllr M Macrae and Cllr D Ross

2. Presentations: Moray Council Budget – Roddy Burns, Chief Executive Moray Council

Roddy Burns discussed Moray Council's budget, covering financial planning and challenges. He circulated figures on income, expenditure and financial planning. There are a large proportion of the budget where Moray has limited control or budgets are sensitive e.g. care of elderly and young people. This means savings of £20 million in 2 years need to be met out of only a proportion of total budget and means some areas will suffer a higher proportion of job losses. It is hoped some employees can be redeployed to areas of growth.

There is also a tension between making savings and continuing to invest in change and development. Moray's population is growing at about 4% with the population of older people growing most rapidly. This creates demographic pressure as some older people will have care needs and these may be complex. Short, medium and long term plans are required and Moray Council is looking at different ways of delivering services as well as reviewing capital projects to make savings or re-profile where possible.

There are 4 levels of communication and engagement:

- Where a saving can be made it will be made
- Where a service will change e.g. increase in cost, the public will be informed
- Consultation on changes – has been ongoing over the last few weeks
- Engagement – discussion with communities on how things can change

Elected members would like to see engagement ongoing between budgets and Community Councils have a role to play in keeping this channel of communication open.

Questions were asked about:

Designing Better Services (DBS) – this work has led to substantial savings. Education and Social care were not covered in DBS as they were undergoing a lot of change at the time. They will be included in this review

Shared services – functions such as procurement and recruitment are shared nationally, some other services are shared with Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire however sharing services is not always possible for logistic or 'political' reasons.

Impact of the Northern Alliance (A partnership between 8 local authorities in the North of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles). There has been an impact on influence and sharing good practice and innovative ideas such as best use of technology and stronger representation about issues affecting rural education.

Green spaces - Will cutting services to green spaces lead to loss of amenity and a reduction of Moray's good quality of life? This is one of the dilemmas in decision making. Compared with care of older or young people, budgets for green spaces have to be a lower priority. It may be possible to use other models involving the community and private business in looking after green spaces.

Moray Growth Deal – Moray Council has to invest in this from existing funds and has already allocated £20,000. There is an expectation that the private sector will invest heavily and the Growth Deal will also be about using existing assets and doing things differently.

Participatory Budgeting - How does Participatory Budgeting feed into cost savings? It is a useful tool for democracy, co-production, engagement and doing things differently.

Bureaucracy in service delivery - particularly social work, and the culture of risk aversion. This led on to a discussion on the transactional nature of public interactions with local authorities and lack of personal responsibility and intolerance. There needs to be a culture change and a recalibration in the relationship between the public and local authorities. For example Moray Council does not drop litter but spends £3-4 million a year dealing with it and is felt to be responsible for dealing with it.

3. Approval of minutes August 2018

Colin Birch was amended to Colin Burch. With this amendment, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting; proposed by Morag Stewart, seconded by Jim Patterson.

4. Matters arising

Public toilets sub-committee

The committee has met once and will meet again if there is interest in taking this forward.

Jane Martin has been supporting Strathisla Community Council, with help from Jim Patterson.

5. Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance at year end (30th September 2018) was £12,273.82 including a Joint Community Council grant balance of £1,832.63. The balance is Participatory Budgeting monies and Voluntary Action Fund with expenses still to be paid for Participatory Budgeting. The annual accounts have been independently examined.

6. Community Council Liaison Officer Update

Democracy Matters Conversation – Forty-five people attended and fed in to the local governance review and Jane Martin has completed a report. There were good examples of how communities can get involved but barriers were also identified such as volume of consultations, lack of knowledge, and the feeling that Community Planning Partners do not listen.

Overall, communities do want more control over decision-making and budgets. Community can be defined in many different ways – a town, a community of interest etc. Community Councils are seen as a good example to use for local decision making as they are strong and statutory, but would need to be sustainable and transparent.

Moray's Community Councils are recognised at Scottish Government level for the work done including individual projects.

The annual grants should be processed shortly.

Jane suggested planning a training day next year for Community Councillors involving several departments such as roads, planning etc. for people to meet the officers and get more information.

7. WW1 Commemorations – minute's silence

Lossiemouth Community Council Commemorative Concert Sunday 4th November

Jim Patterson and Carolle Ralph described an excellent and moving concert featuring talented performers and tremendous community spirit. Over 200 people attended. The RAF Voluntary Band played, the Brownies and Guides spoke about their role in the war, Lossiemouth Military Wives choir and Lossiemouth

High School choir sang. Thanks to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund for funding the 'there but not there' silhouettes. Thanks to Richard Anderson for piping everyone in. There is a commemorative bench that will be sited once it arrives.

8. Group updates

i. LEADER

A flurry of applications is expected for the final deadline. Applications totalling £516,002 are to be considered at the next meeting. There is an intention to spend as much of the fund as possible and the Local Action Group is lobbying to have a similar fund post-Brexit.

ii. Participatory Budgeting Update – Money for Moray

An outline of the various roles of participatory budgeting was given, along with the 9 values of PB, which include transparency, community, democracy and shared responsibility.

Alastair Kennedy went to Santiago de Compostela to give a presentation on participatory budgeting and has been contacted since by other projects.

Karen Pryce-Iddon and Anne Mitchell went to the participatory budgeting festivals in Stirling and Dundee which was a good opportunity to share experiences of participatory budgeting.

The Money for Moray Participatory Budgeting conference is being held on Friday 9th November in Elgin Town Hall. Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government will attend and there are several speakers on different areas of expertise. Mrs Sandra McKandie is going to speak about how participatory budgeting has benefitted the family's charitable work providing defibrillators for Moray.

iii. Community Engagement Group (CEG)

Recent focus has been on the budget consultation. The next meeting is February 20th and will include updates on 2 Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.

iv. Clash Gour Wind Farm

Alastair Kennedy and Graham Hilditch met with Force Nine Energy about Clash Gour wind farm and discussed community benefit and the memorandum of understanding (MoU). Graham Hilditch gave a briefing about the community benefit and noted the recommended rate of £5,000/MW would equate to £1.57m at full capacity. The community buy-in is separate from the community benefit. The MoU is a non-binding agreement which holds open the opportunity to invest in the wind farm once it is operational. A few Community Councils have already signed. The developer (EDF) would prefer to deal with a single body. Local Energy Scotland have grants of up to £25,000 available to help put a working group together and advise on sources of funding. The Energy Investment Fund (held by Scottish Investment Bank) has £20million to invest between now and March 2019.

Alastair Kennedy proposed that Graham Hilditch represent the Joint Community Council in future talks with Force Nine. There were no objections. Those interested in attending an information meeting or being on a sub-group should contact Jane Martin.

9. Information Sharing

Buckie & District

There has been an increase in harbour traffic and the harbour master is looking at ways to increase usage further. Repair to the harbour wall is progressing well. There is a ban on fishing on the North pier following a fatality.

Two new members have been recruited bringing the total to 12. A minute secretary is sought.

Community Councillors attended the launch of Lady Cathcart Nursery.

Buckie Toon house toilets are open again after being taken over by the library.

The Community Council has been supporting local groups including the Well Road Play Park group and Friends of Buckie Square. The work the community is doing on the square sorting out planters and dressing the war memorial for remembrance is building up community spirit.

Burghead and Cummington

Alongside the usual Community Council business, a group has visited Norway regarding the wartime 'Shetland Bus' route.

Cullen

It has been a busy year involving budget cuts, the community centre and the closure of toilets. The Community Council plan to complete an emergency resilience plan, fill their planters with winter pansies and set up a memorial bench.

Elgin

Two members have been lost due to work and education commitments.

Community Councillors attended the Rural Transport Conference in Inverness, which was useful for information and networking. Elgin Community Council has responded to several consultations including Transport, A96 dualling and rail fares. They were identified as key stakeholders for the rail fare consultation and invited to Leeds or London so have suggested a meeting should be held closer at hand. They are pleased to see some of the changes they requested have been made to the bus timetable. They are working as stakeholders in developing the future of Cooper Park and looking at some green spaces that could be taken on from Moray Council and seeded with wildflowers.

Elgin Sports Trust is looking to buy some common good land to develop a 3D pitch. There is local support for this.

Dr Gray's issues are ongoing. Pam Gowans, Chief Officer of Moray Health & Social Care Partnership is coming to the next Community Council meeting and all are welcome to attend.

Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council

Ongoing wildfowling issues have escalated again this season and Moray Council has set up mediation talks which Findhorn & Kinloss Community Council will attend. The aim is for safe usage of the bay by all parties.

The Community Council has been working closely with Findhorn Village Conservation Company on parking issues and Moray Council will be improving signposting, double yellow lines and access to the stryplies (lanes between houses). Speeding is an ongoing issue and Moray Council and the Police are involved. Expert advice is being sought about seagull control and information is being circulated.

The Community Council would like to streamline the community resilience plan. One member attended a national conference.

A new member is about to be recruited, bringing the Community Council to a full complement of 10. They elected not to receive their administration grant this time.

Forres

Talks about the future of Leancoil hospital are ongoing and there have been some exciting proposals for its use after a community asset transfer, should the hospital be sold. Forres Community Council is also struggling for members and planning a recruitment drive.

There will be a trial of an electric bus on a route between Forres and Aberlour.

Ken Major Senior Traffic Engineer, Moray Council, spoke about potential options for a 20mph speed limit in Forres High Street and cycle paths in Forres. Following more work, the public will be consulted before any final options are decided.

A Health & Social Care Plan for Forres was circulated on 26th October, leaving approximately a week until the deadline to reply to the 33 page document. A complaint has been raised.

ACTION: Alastair Kennedy to raise this with the Community Engagement Group

Heldon

Although broadband coverage has improved recently, there are still problems with mobile phone coverage. Defibrillators have been installed in phone boxes, partly funded by Rothes Wind Farm.

A community liaison group has been meeting with Clash Gour representatives and will meet again in December before the planning application is submitted.

Innes

Innes Community Council held a successful meeting about A96 dualling plans.

Police attended the last Community Council meeting.

Garmouth and Kingston Amenities Association has bought a defibrillator which will be installed in the phone box Innes Community Council took on. The planned Heritage app about sites of interest in Innes is on the back burner for now but will be developed.

Representation is being made to the Crown Estate after Kingston beach suffered in the latest storms.

Members are being sought.

Keith

Work to strengthen the A96 bridge over the railway line is disrupting traffic and will do for months to come.

A defibrillator has been installed on Fife Keith Square.

There is ongoing anti-social behaviour in St Rufus Park badly affecting residents. Moray Council has worked on mediation and further meetings concerning young people in Keith are planned.

Lennox

Three members and a secretary are sought and a meeting is planned in Milnes Secondary School. There are also problems with mobile phone coverage.

There will be Remembrance services in Fochabers, Bellie and Dallachy on Sunday 11th.

Lossiemouth

The Community Council has been busy in the run up to the Remembrance Concert and working with the school on community remembrance projects.

The community run toilets are now shut until 1st March by which time it is hoped Moray Council can supply information on winter running costs and a long term strategy. Lossiemouth Heritage Group has given up the lease of the James Square toilets so plans will need to be made for care of the flower beds and heritage items. Community Councillors will attend Lossiemouth Library Community Day. The Community Council is looking into the possibility of funding projects through developer obligations.

Speyside

Speyside Community Council is also seeking a secretary. They are also represented on the Clash Gour community liaison group. They had a very good presentation by Moray School Bank and would recommend other Community Councils invite them to speak at a meeting.

They are working with Speyside Area Forum to buy a bus and run a rural service and are through to the second stage of funding – a lot of work has been involved in this project.

Strathisla

Two members have resigned leaving 5 members, which is half capacity, and the Chair has stepped down.

There are plans to become more pro-active and perhaps produce information leaflets.

The Mulben firework display was cancelled this year, in part due to the additional costs of an entertainment license.

10. AOCB

A Moray-wide recruitment drive for Community Councillors could be held if desired. Contact Jane if interested.

11. Date of next meeting 14th February 2019

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.13pm.

ACTIONS

Alastair Kennedy to raise short dated Forres Health & Social Care consultation with Community Engagement Group