

Elgin Community Council meeting 11 January 2022

Attending:

Alastair Kennedy, Eddie Wallace, Jim Wiseman, Graham Jarvis, Richard Dyce, Steve Christie,
Gordie Wells, David Chapman (Associate), Councillor John Divers, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Hazel Lawson, Gemma Cruickshank (Elgin BID)

Apologies:

Douglas Clark, Paul Briggs

Absent:

Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor Paula Coy, George P Littlejohn (Associate)

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Minutes of last meeting
 1. GJ proposed. GW second.
3. Matters arising.
 1. JW has emailed website details to RD.
4. Elgin BID – Gemma Cruickshank
 1. GC gave a presentational update on Elgin BID.
 2. Thanked Community Council for funding for Elgin Highstreet Closes lighting project.
 3. Current BID is in 3rd year of 5 year term. Next renewal ballot is October 2024 next term. There are 424 members, 2.5 staff, with annual budget of £170k, raised through levy, calculated on rateable value, currently 1.6%. Last year, there was a 25% discount due to Covid closures.
 4. Recent achievements include:
 1. Plan to gull issue until 2023. Up to 40% funding.
 2. Installed seating Elgin. In storage over winter. JW mentioned colours were great. Out in April
 3. Reduced vacant property rate 17.15% Nov 2015, down to 5.6% Jan 2022.
 4. AK asked about loyalty card. Participating businesses can endorse a customers card for sales over £15. With 10 endorsements from 5 different businesses, customers are entered into a draw every 3 months to win BID scheme £100 Gift Card .
5. Plans for the Future:
 1. Elgin in bloom, voluntary group being set up. They had great support from the positive action group. EW asked if the town hall were involved. GC said that they were in talks.
 2. Organising more Street cleaning events.
 3. Events to include a car and bike show, prosecco and pamper event. Plan on 4 events a year.
6. AK figures for footfall. GC suggested we ask Moray Council. Anecdotally footfall was down, but spend was up. JD believed that the Moray Council carried out a report in May/Jun. AK asked if footfall measurements included the footbridge. Confirmed by GC.
7. RD asked about funding breakdown for Close: 5k from Elgin Common Good Fund, 2k from ECC, 8k from Elgin BID, and 15k match funding. GC invite AK and SW so next meeting.

5. Report on Queens Canopy / Trees for Wetlands
 1. EW voiced strong opposition to the proposal to for an avenue in the Cooper Park. EW mentioned a survey. JD ask for report forwarded to JD and GL. JW pointed out that we have removed trees in Elgin. A recent survey of Elgin school kids cited "Open Spaces" as a main feature that they wanted, and that partitioning the park was not a good idea. EW enquired about pitch measurements for the trees. DC wondered from where on-going maintenance costs would be met. AK will contact officer Gary Templeton for more information.
 2. AK raised alternative approach with Trees for Wetlands. EW mentioned possible concerns from railway. AK proposer a wetlands visit: 10 am Sunday, at Cedar Wood. JW raised a works notice at the Wards junction. GL said this was part of a road widening scheme.
6. Money for Moray PB update
 1. AK: currently we do not have enough applications for a contest. Cut off date is th 28th Jan. AK in talks with PB Funding source for a further date extension.
7. Website update
 1. RD will have something by next meeting.
8. Flood channels – clearing
 1. EW suggested design of the weir was at fault. Some matieral removed. Left 3ft channel. DC has been monitoring it for a year. Debris not removed, as works order not included debris. EW pointed out that an island has been created where debris was not being cleared. Island was not there 10 years ago. DC said that the debris has been rooted since August. EW noted that there had been logs there for months. AK will email Debbie Halliday for more information. GL may send Engineers to inspect, but hightlighted that the remit was "Protections not aesthetics". He gave the example of Bishopmill bridge. Banks inspected quarterly. However, the budget is being depleted by essential repairs after vehicle bridge strike, which generally cost upwards of 100k per time, often due to discoveries when work begins, SEPA costs, etc. GL also highlighted that the current construction costs much higher to due inflation in building industry. GJ asked about Deanshaugh bridge.
9. Update on highstreet parking
 1. GJ will have letter to out to committee to before next meeting, but the situation has not improved.
10. Gulls update.
 1. EW willl put Letter out shortly. AK suggested fixing a public meeting date, to invite Nature Scot to explain the position on protection of Gulls. SC suggested that this was before the breeding season. AK to look for dates for Supper Room at Town Hall. DC hightlighter role of Herring Gull. He had been advised that egg removal bad, oil eggs instead. JD council advice not to oil, leads. Gulls only lay three eggs. GL Council Meeting report on Gulls next week. Egg & Nest removal unlikely. Nature Scot are now enforcing law on licence applications, due in part to increased applications from Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, etc. Pig farms expensive to Gull proof. Alternative approaches are seagull-proof bins.
11. Elected members update
 1. JD said the first meeting of the year had been held today. Ther Budget

meeting was scheduled for the 3rd week in Feb. The budget document from last year doesn't include inflation. GL said that the budget for next two years will be hard. EW asked if a rise audit on council tax was possible. GL council tax rise will be discussed. Budget is currently £220m: £90m on education, £45m on health & social care, £15m on loan charges, leaving £60m for all other services, including land and parks.

12. AOCB

1. A96 Forres construction offices had closed.
2. Pansport roundabout needs work.
3. JW warned about HMRC text scams. People should be aware that to report scams they can text 60599, or email phishing@hmrc.gov.uk, via the UK government website <http://gov.uk>, or by calling 101.

13. Date of next meeting

1. 8th February.