

Monthly Meeting, 12th July 2022

Elgin Town Hall

Attending:

Alastair Kennedy, Steve Christie, Eddie Wallace, Debra Duke, Katherine Bowditch, Neil Alexander, James Wiseman, Graham Jarvis, David Chapman (Associate), Richard Dyce, Hazel Lawson, PC Yvonne Squair, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Sandy Keith, Alison Stockley, Brian Irvine, Joyce Bremner, Jo Mullen

Apologies:

Gordie Wells, Douglas Clark, Councillor John Divers

Minutes:

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Police report from PC Yvonne Squair
 1. Update on Anti-social in Elgin: Mainly involves young people from Buckie, Keith, Lossie, and Forres. The situation has improved since the chaos of June. PC Squair has been getting to know the young people, and explaining that large groups of them together can be intimidating to other Elgin residents. PC Squair had received 9 calls initially in June; Last week only 1 call was received. Things are improving, but it will take time.
 2. Town centre parking: 3 books of tickets issued in last 8 weeks, issued for parking in Loading Bays, on double yellow lines, and in disabled spots. New probationer constables will be arriving in Elgin shortly. GJ asked about the Batchen Street situation, and the possibility of a “No Stopping” sign. PC Squair has random dates and times in her diary for parking patrols. GJ asked if any tickets had been issued for parking on the Planestones? PC Squair said that as most offenders have blue badges, discretion had been used. AK asked about the parking limits on the Planestones. PC Squair explained that access was allowed before 11am and after 4pm. Currently the signage is confusing, thanks to Poundland fencing. AK felt that Colin Matheson should be contacted regarding the signage. AK noted that 11 vans passed had passed him in 20 mins whilst seated in the Planestones area. GJ mentioned people parking at wrong end of the High St, and asked if the CCTV cameras were working yet? PC Squair confirmed that the cameras are now in operation. She will check if parking tickets can be given retrospectively. GL asked if the Police were able to free resources? AK asked about the coverage. PC Squair confirmed that Batchen St and the High St are covered, and that the Library has private CCTV. GJ wondered if there was a data protection issue with the Library? PC Squair made it clear that the only issue was access outwith Library hours. GL noted that there had been an improvement on Saturday on the Planestones. AK noted that the IT issue on South Street, resulting from the fire had been resolved.
 3. Youth volunteers: PC Squair said that there were 14 at the moment, with 7 more interviewing. Volunteers were mostly planning to join the Police. AK asked what the Volunteers did? Volunteers practice drill, undertake team activities, listen to guest speakers (teachers, police), and work with Rotary and Elgin BID. They do not do car-park marshalling! Volunteers can work towards a Saltire Award, and the Police also support DofE. PC Squair claimed that Organising the Youth Volunteers is the best job she has had.
 4. SK asked if CCTV could be used to tackle the ‘Boy Racer’ issue in Elgin. JM suggested that we ask young drivers themselves for a solution, and invite them

into the community. GJ the police need to identify them first. PC Squair will speak to the traffic sergeant.

3. Minutes of last meeting
 1. Prop – SC 2. Sec – GJ
4. Matters arising
 1. Was there an update on the Old Mills issue? PB – Council will check, but can only make recommendations.
5. Levelling up fund. £0.5B is available across Moray, Aberdeenshire, and Aberdeen City.
6. Gulls public meeting – Monday 20th June 1:30pm. AK GJ forwarded Aberdeenshires Gulls management plan. Could be re-used by Moray. EW felt that there was nothing new in plan, just organisation. AK had spoken with Nature scot, who underlined our need for a gull management plan. It would be looked at by Moray Council, and actioned. GL suggested that this will be sent to Common Good fund, and AK asked if this was a short-cut. EW felt that the problem in Elgin had worsened. NatureScot don't have figures for Urban Gulls. An attempt to obtain figures had been made in 2017. JW wondered how gulls are protected if no numbers known. JB noted Press interest in how Avian flu was having an affect on Gulls.
7. Planning update: JW had nothing to report. Major applications were out for consultations. AK thanked JW for his helpful explanatory email.
8. Wild-flower meadows: SC pointed out the the meadows had a grass seed base. AK asked if Seafield was a trial area. PB noted that mowing these areas was every 7 weeks. PB Glen Lossie – cleared edges. JM wondered if use solar power was possible for powering the mowers? AK asked for Ideas for Just Transations. JM asked about verges, and wondered if this was an opportunity for smaller community projects ? DC noted that even meadows needed to be mown at least once a year, and that many councils had found other problems with Wild-flower meadows.
9. Transform Scotland: SC and AK will organise these items, and RD will thee forward them to the committee.
10. Hospital Service Improvements: NA noted that it is expected to take 9 years for maternity cover to be restored in Elgin. Joint Community Council will be writing to the Health Secretary asking this to be accellerated. AD noted that the first act of the incoming administration was to write to the Health Secretary. GJ noted that general obstetrics has been down-graded. AD raised the issue with the appointment system. JW felt this was as a result of the centralisation of services trend. Jamie Hogg had been talking about improvenments with Elgin and Inverness. Could we ask him to come and speak to us? AK felt that Aberdeen was like London in its drive to centralise. JW claimed that NHS managers blammed the consultants for the issue. GJ felt that previous promises remained unfulfilled. JM wondered if there was an issue with the number of new houses being built. DC noted that centralisation was key. For example it was clear that all cardiac surgery was being moved to Dundee, and that the new Women's Maternity building in Aberdeen was another example. SC hightlighted the changes in wards. GJ felt that this was problem for JCC as a matter of urgency. AK noted that it was already on the JCC agenda. NA will draft a letter. PB noted that currently orthopaedics must travel to Aberdeen. AS was keen to strees the positive work done by the Keep Mum Campaign. JB noted that Consultants are drawn to private hospitals, and that there are several in Aberdeen. GJ noted the lack of paediatricians meant that they were more on call: 1 in 3 rather than 1 in 8. There was a general recruitment issue. GL felt that a joint letter was a good idea. The Health Secretary can override the Health Board decisions, but it makes it easier if we back

him, as it gives him leverage with board. Chief Executive should be invited to the JCC as JCC is a community planning partner.

11. Banking – £5324.22. We are still waiting the grant payment.

12. ICO update – we will pay optional fee.

13. Membership: AK – Joyce Bremner and Katherine Bowditch are co-opted.

14. Elected members report:

1. SK – Spiney Hospital development now includes 22 affordable homes. JM asked for the definition of affordable, and why the properties were clustered. GL clustered by the nature of the design. JW the clustering was more to do with the services local plan. AD noted that a standard definition of 'affordable' was 25% of median work-place based incomes. GJ suggested that this was social housing which is only for rent. AK noted that that affordable housing was not allowed to look different to other properties on the same scheme.
2. GL – Some of the £18 million levelling up fund may be available for Moray. AK noted that the last package had not benefited Moray. A letter had been sent to the UK government re cost of living. GL noted that the capital plan for allotments will go ahead this year, and that additional discretionary business rates relief of 20% had been made available for the sports centre.

15. AOCB

1. DC asked if there was an update on the A96?
2. NA asked if there was a preferred insurance provider for Moray Council with respect to Rugby posts. AD will investigate.
3. AK asked if the lines on the Deanshaugh pitch would be sorted soon. AD to check.

16. Date of next meeting: 2022-08-09