

# Monthly Meeting, 9th August 2022

Elgin Town Hall

## **Attending:**

Alastair Kennedy, Steve Christie, James Wiseman, David Chapman (Associate), Graham Jarvis, Alison Stockley, Brian Irvine, Joyce Bremner, Jo Mullen, Neil Alexander, Richard Dyce, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes (had to leave early)

## **Apologies:**

Eddie Wallace, Gordie Wells, Katherine Bowditch, Hazel Lawson, Douglas Clark

## **Absent:**

PC Yvonne Squair

## **Minutes:**

1. Welcome & Apologies
  1. AK reminded members to please wait to be asked to speak.
2. Minutes of last meeting
  1. Prop – SC 2. Sec – BI
3. Matters arising
4. Police
  1. The Committee had received the latest Police Safety report. AK noted that this new report was an Elgin only report. RD to send a copy to all Elgin Councillors.
5. Gulls update: AK noted that we had received a copy of the Aberdeen gull management plan. SC & AK will complete an Elgin version based on this, which ECC will present to Councillors. SC Noted the recent gull attack in Lossie, and that the husband of the victim may pursue Moray Council for info on action being taken. JD noted that some members present had attended a meeting between Chris Donald from Naturescot including Elgin Bid, and Moray Council Bird Control . They have asked for meeting with the Housing and Environmental health. The Sonic device under test has now been removed. It has proven to be successful: on the High Street last year 120 eggs in gulls nests vs. 19 eggs this year. AK asked about the price. GL suggested that it was between £3-£5k. Replacement devices will need to be in place by March 2023, prior to the next breeding season. AK asked if they were battery operated? GL noted that the Moray Council were looking at different devices, and whether to lease or purchase them. BI wondered if the devices were just moving the problem? JD answered that the Sonic devices were ensuring that the birds can't lay eggs. AK asked if the test devices had been bought or leased? JD said the Moray Council devices had been leased, but he couldn't speak to the BID devices. RD wondered if devices could be mounted on the roof of Tesco? JD said that point had been raised. It was important to look at radii coverage. AK said that the ECC will produce document in conjunction with NatureScot.
6. Planning update; JW noted that the application from the hospital was for a smaller MRI facility than the previously approved application. Should we issue a statement of support for reduction? JD suggested that we put in an observation. JW pointed out that the it was important that the details be made to applicant. PB asked if the scanner was the same size? JW noted that there might be space for other treatments. Since the ECC had previously discussed erosion of services in ECC and Elgin South, this would be an opportunity to re-raise the issue with NHS Grampian. RD asked if the device was smaller, and that they were making a better use of space. JW was clear that the

erosion of services was an important point to make. JD noted that dermatology patients were now being asked to go to Aberdeen. AK suggested that we move on to the related agenda item.

7. Hospital update – NA had drafted letter to Scottish Health Minister, as a re-draft of a 2014 letter. It will be presented to the JCC on Thursday, and already has consensus support from 7 other Community Councils. Returning to the planning, JW said that one positive was that the building looks less of a box. GJ pointed out there are lots of variables to consider: Is accommodation better? why it is smaller? JW it was noted in the application supporting statement that although smaller, this not controversial. But it was smaller than previously approved. GJ welcomed new scanner at Grays. BI felt that there was no harm in raising the erosion of services point. JM asked where the new building was to be sited? SC said that it was underneath the bridge-link to Ward 4. JW was happy to help if anyone needs to see the detail, which also includes comments from other statutory bodies. JW would encourage all community councillors to examine the planning applications. JB asked if we get sight of the Grampian Health Boards strategic plan? GJ noted that the website as a legal requirement. JB noted that there had been a delay due to covid. PB noted that they are working together. NA noted that Marjorie Adams from Keep Mum will also be attending the JCC on Thursday. JD wanted to we clear that we needed to keep the focus on the Keep Mum campaign. AK Agreed. JM was concerned that at some previous meetings there had been some seemingly deliberate confusion between the terms ‘temporary’ and ‘permanent’.
8. Update on High Street parking. GJ noted that today he had seen no cars parked on Batchen St. PB noted that there had also been nothing yesterday. GJ was pleased with notable police action, and that the Police should keep the pressure on. He asked if the north side of High Street’s CCTB Cameras were working? JD said Moray Council members had attended the CCTV launch 3 weeks ago. The Police had confirmed that fines will be issued for drivers sat parked. SC related a parking incident last week in South St. JD noted that the quality of the camera output had really improved. GJ said that Simon Reid claimed that the Police were already prosecuting offenders based on CCTV footage. JM wondered if caught, offenders should be required to take a gull away from the town centre with them. SK was keen to note that the temporary road narrowing outside Farm Foods was due to be removed before the October holidays. The process for widening the pavements was currently at the tendering stage. GJ noted that the Council’s social distancing money had been spent on the temporary works. JW felt that it had been put up at the correct time. AK was keen to thank the police for their sterling work.
9. Availability of Council Chamber. JD noted that the Jannie was not allowed near new hybrid system. AK email received an email from a Moray Council employee that made him feel that he was “too stupid” to operate the system. PB explained that each section in the Council Chamber seating needs cards to operate. JF noted that users needed a half-day of training to use the system. GL was not sure if the issue can be solved. The system is complex. It includes names on screens, auto camera selection, and is governed by a card system, with accounts for individual councillors. There was an unknown number of cards available. RD wondered if the council bought a locked-in system. JW Is this an account-driven system, and felt that it sounded over complicated. GL noted the auto-selecting cameras. AK asked if it worked? GL explained that there were teething problems such as gain, feedback, etc. RD asked if it was unfair for the ECC to be asking for access? GJ suggested that the ECC write to the Chief Executive. There was a precedent for requiring access. Forres CC could

meet in the Tolbooth as a result of such a request. GL suggested we start from first principles ask what's required for ECC meetings. RD suggested that a good start would not be having to pay £50 to hold meetings. GL raised concerns about disabled access for people. JW was surprised that it was not possible to webcast. GL said that webcasts had to be paid for, as an operator from the supplier had to be present to run things. RD felt that some of these devil's advocate questions that GL were raising were red herrings. Surely the attraction of being in Council in Chambers would be an incentive for members of the public to attend? JM asked why the ECC needed to pay to use the Town Hall? AK noted that this was simply the charge.

10. Elected members update

1. JD – There will be a full council meeting tomorrow.
2. SK – had planned to talk about the CCTV which has already been covered.
3. AD – has been busy with standard case work, and graffiti removal.
4. PB – had received a query from Stephen Duff – “Why can't the Cooper Park be owned by the people?” He cited a similar scheme in St. Andrews. JD noted that the park had already been donated to people of Elgin as a Trust. GJ noted that the St. Andrews park wasn't actually in St. Andrews, and that asking people to pay to use the Cooper Park was counter-productive in the current climate.

11. Wild-flower Meadows update. AK noted that Douglas Clark had asked if the ECC could commend the Moray Council for trying the scheme. AK had received a complaint from a resident on Bailey's drive – it was “a mess not a meadow”. Seeds may not have germinated very well this year. JD noted that mowing had not been cut to fence lines, and this was now being rectified. They were now also cutting the rear of properties. DC noted that wild flower meadows should suppress weeds. AK asked if a grass mix had been used. AS pointed to the Duffus Park wild flower strip as a great example of success. AK was happy to support them, but had been surprised to hear it described as a Community Council lead initiative? DC noted that it must be done correctly, but that it can cost a lot more than previously. SC suggested that it should naturally improve year on year.

12. Draft Social Media Consultation – AK asked who had read the social media policy? Clearly members were now really interested in this consultation.

13. Transform Scotland – BI noted that there was a meeting in Glasgow in September. SC pointed out that ECC was the only Community Council in Scotland that were a member of Transform Scotland. DC may attend.

14. Training Courses. AK noted that there was training available, including on planning. He asked members to consider if they felt they needed training.

15. Elgin Recycling Centre ; RD was concerned by the continued online scheduling system in operation at the Elgin site, and the arguments for justifying it. JW uses the Forres site in preference to Elgin. PB agreed with RD that it was an issue. GJ was also concerned at the two-week limit. AD said that the issue has been raised at the council, and that it was not because of the investment in ANPR. A New Recycling centre for Elgin was planned. AK asked about the traffic management. GJ Noted that there was a clear ‘No waiting’ policy on A96 behind the St Giles centre. GL said that it was down to access issues at peak times, and safety concerns with large vehicles, and that the new site was in prospect. AK asked if this was 4 years away, and that GL's explanations sounded like excuses. JW noted that the plans for the waste transfer had been finished, and that the site was in place. GL noted that the waste transfer site was now combined with Moray Waste Watchers. AK asked about the council's zero carbon policy. Surely having people drive to Forres made a farce of the whole thing. JW pointed out the benefits of role of a ‘banksman’ in large vehicle safety. SC was

keen to understand how the booking system worked. It was an added difficulty for people after a bereavement or house clearance. BI asked why are there gaps in availability? GL said that the booking software can be changed. He raised concerns with the loss of business, and the traffic management concerns of the police. AK asked how long should Elgin residents wait for a new recycling plant. JM felt there had been some positive news: she had been able to go because there were fewer people. RD suggested improvements could still be made, whilst also providing times for people suffering from crowd anxiety to use the site. DC said that there were slots available, but the coning off and officiousness made it feel like Checkpoint Charlie. GL said that one surprising benefit from the barrier was reduced fly-tipping in Chanonry. GJ why was the system only operating in Elgin then? RD wondered why it wasn't already on the council's radar as a problem? JM appreciated idea of anxiety-friendly slots. JW felt that these might be appreciated by older people. GL noted that historically it was only place available. GJ asked about brown bins. JD said that the Labour group were challenging the fee for brown bins, and its unintended consequence: food waste being sent to landfill.

16. Anti-social Behaviour in Elgin – SC said that there would be a follow-up meeting Monday 22nd August. AK noted that the previous meeting had been held at the Ditsy Tea Cup. The issue on North & South Guildry St. with people running on car roofs had returned. AS said this was a regular thing. The Police had been there all day taking witness statements. SC noted that there had been graffiti in some of the closes along the High Street.

17. Banking – Current account now stands at £5193. RD will put in a request to be reimbursed for the £40 for ICO subs.

#### 18. Website

1. RD asked what the intended purpose was. AK had notes for purpose BI suggested that topics might include: What we do, Minutes of meetings, funding sources, charities information, etc. JW felt that the important question was: who will do it? JM liked the website, and had read the minutes. However, people respond more to a Facebook page, and this should be a priority. BI disagreed re Facebook – we require both, not one or other. Both have a limited audience. AK noted that Brian Watson had also maintained an ECC Twitter account. SC noted that it is possible to link your Facebook account to website. Should look at if we fund another year? JM felt getting people involved was important, and that Communities were too big. JM wondered if interactive displays on every street were a possibility. AK asked if this was realistic? JW explained that a experience at KCR had made it clear to him that a chat group cannot properly replace proper decision making process. Websites were good for fixed info, Facebook was good for chatty media. GJ noted that the Moray Council already had a system, and that the problem was always with keeping it updated. Regular updates are what's required. BI wondered if a column in the Northern Scot was worth pursuing. AK noted our thanks to Hazel Lawson for press coverage. JW asked if BI wanted to do it. BI "I would do it!" AK suggested that we convene a meeting re website, everyone welcome!

#### 19. Membership

1. AK asked if JM should be co-opted? JW felt this was a great idea. RD seconded. JM was keen to focus on public engagement.

#### 20. AOCB

1. JB – dog walkers had been scared about news of dogknapping. SC was aware of men marking the pavement outside properties with dogs. RD suggested pairing of dog walkers?

2. DC asked if there could be an increase in Elgin recycling booking slots.
  3. AK noted the JCC Meeting on Thursday at 7pm.
21. Date of next meeting: 12 Sep 2022