

**Cullen & Deskford Community Council
Meeting on Thursday 18th April 2013
Cullen Community and Residential Centre**

MINUTES

- Present:** Ashley Mowat (Chair)
Malcolm Watt (Vice-Chair)
John Aitken
- In Attendance:** Sheila Donn
Tom Gunn
David Paterson
Cllr Gary Coull
PC Ian Fraser
Andrew Mackie
- Apologies:** Zillah Jamieson (Secretary/Acting Treasurer)
John Robertson
Cllr Stewart Cree
Cllr Ron Shepherd

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all attendees to our 38th meeting of the new term, and, in particular, welcomed the three observers who had expressed an interest in becoming Community Councillors - Sheila Donn, Tom Gunn and David Paterson. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (21st March 2013)

The Minutes were approved as a true record.

3. Reports

3.1 Police

PC Ian Fraser gave his report - as per the attached Local Policing Report (Appendix 1).

Inspector Louise Blakelock has now been transferred to Inverurie, and has been replaced by Inspector Scott Mann who has worked in the Moray area for many years. Inspector Mann was previously in Road Policing and started in Buckie on 8th April 2013.

The Chair confirmed that he had met with Cllr Cree and representatives of Moray Council (Keith Stratton, Roads and Allison Kennedy, Lighting) on 10th April 2013 to discuss additional security lighting at the harbour. It was agreed that a report will be issued shortly on the suitability and costs of better lighting on the jetty; it may be possible to obtain better lighting through health and safety funding. The Chair took the opportunity to highlight the poor state of repair of the piers and the stone steps; it was agreed that, on necessary safety considerations, this also would get priority. The warning pole/marker for the concrete "extension" to the west pier is identified and ready to be put in place (obtained from Lossiemouth harbour).

It was noted that the CCTV Working Group has experience from Fraserburgh per Andrew Mackie, Community Warden.

ACTION: Ashley Mowat

3.2 Community Warden

Andrew Mackie went through his Community Warden Report (as attached in Appendix 2).

Andrew Mackie provide full details on the dog fouling quiz; it was agreed that the Community Council would donate 2 prizes of £25 each - for winners from Primary 1 to 4 and from Primary 5 to 7.

3.3 Local Councillors

No items were raised.

3.4 Treasurer

The Secretary confirmed (via the Chair's Brief) that the last bank statement (28/02/13) indicated a balance of £3,374.37. There have been no transactions since that date. This sum includes £250 ring-fenced for Neighbourhood Watch.

The Secretary also indicated that, despite having completed two sets of paperwork supplied by the Bank of Scotland and bank statements since December 2012 having been sent to herself as the new (Acting) Treasurer, she had received a letter from the Bank indicating that the paperwork completed was the incorrect form and requesting completion of further enclosed forms. It was agreed that this documentation must be completed, otherwise the account may be suspended; it was also agreed that photocopies should be kept (as has always been done).

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. Moray Council Budget Proposals

Meeting with Councillors: In the absence of any communication from the 6 councillors invited to a meeting, the Community Council had arranged for a Public Meeting. The Chair confirmed having received a response from Fiona Hyslop MSP to the open letter - attached as Appendix 3.

Public Meeting: The Chair confirmed that he had written to all 3 locally elected councillors (26/03/13) inviting them to attend the Public Meeting scheduled for Monday 22nd April at 7.30 p.m. in Cullen Town Hall. He indicated that there was a strong desire in Cullen and Deskford for a public update and discussion on the current position of the proposed closures of the library facility and toilet closures in Cullen. The aim of such a meeting would be to explore the reasons for closure and to seek reasonable alternatives. If they were unable to attend, he requested their comments on the points raised in the open letter and their views on the toilet retention proposal. The Chair also advised the respective Chairs of the Portknockie and Findochty Community Councils of this development.

To date, Cllrs Cree and Coull had confirmed their attendance at the Public Meeting; Cllr Shepherd had not responded.

Subsequent to this, it became clear from press coverage in the Northern Scot (29/03/13) that Moray's libraries and public toilets had been handed a temporary reprieve while a probe into the impact of closures took place. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are now underway, and cash held in reserves is being used to plug the budget savings gap.

Cllr Cree's response to the Chair's e-mail (28/03/13) reflected the need for the EIAs which seek to examine, amongst other things, measures that might be put in place to mitigate the community impact of the cuts. He confirmed that no firm timetable for the publication of the EIAs had been set owing to the complexity of the assessment over a range of services. He expressed doubts as to what he could bring to the public meeting, but would be happy to attend a meeting to discuss alternative ways of providing the services that are being affected.

In the light of these developments, clarification is also required on the net savings (if any) from library closure after the Council repays the penalty required by the EU and also when account is taken of the costs incurred by measures legally required to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups.

A press release was issued on 3rd April 2013, and achieved coverage in the Northern Scot (front page on 05/04/13), the Banffshire Journal (front page 09/04/13), the P & J (05/04/13) and the Banffshire Advertiser (09/04/13).

Libraries: The Chair confirmed that he had written to the Save Burghead Library Group (26/03/13) indicating that Trish Watt, who had put in a tremendous effort locally, would deliver the petition against closure of the Cullen library, together with a covering letter (attached in Appendix 4). The Cullen petition contained 782 signatures.

A further copy communication to the Convenor of Moray Council was received from the Save Burghead Library Group (04/04/13) - attached in Appendix 5. In Cllr Cree's absence on holiday, Allan Wright, Leader of the Council, responded (04/04/13) as follows: "Cllr Cree is on leave this week and will consider your letter on his return. But let me make a couple of points: in quoting the 82% tax rise, Cllr Cree was simply pointing out the magnitude of the funding gap. There was, of course, never any consideration of a tax rise of anything like that. Indeed there was no consideration given at all because of the penalty clause which he spelled out for you. Answers to your questions are not being smokescreened; it is the failure of some people to accept the unprecedented pressure on our future budgets and the absolute need for major savings that leads to the lobbies and petitions for services and facilities which are good to have but are no longer affordable."

Roddy Burns, Chief Executive of Moray Council, responded (26/03/13) to Stewart Stevenson's letter - attached in Appendix 6.

Cllr Coull confirmed that the cost of the Cullen Library is £14,000.

Public Toilets: The Secretary confirmed - via the Chair's Brief - that she had e-mailed all 3 locally elected councillors (24/03/13) according to the details contained in the Minutes of 21st March 2013. She had received a response from Cllr Shepherd (27/03/13) indicating that "Cllr Cree and myself cannot support your proposal to open the Town Hall to the public for the use of toilets. This was discussed many times in the past and it would not be practical because the main point being that it has no wheelchair accessibility."

In addition, she had received a response from Cllr Coull to the effect that he was unaware of the discussions mentioned in Cllr Shepherd's response - but suggesting that Ian Bruce or Nick Goodchild would be able to help on this issue. He also commented: "If there were improvements needed to be done to the Town Hall to enable the toilets to be used I cannot see the Council putting in that investment to make it happen. There would also need to be discussions, in my opinion, with the Town Hall committee given that there is an asset transfer process ongoing.....If the Cullen Harbour Association were willing to take on the harbour toilets with the Council operating the one in the Square I think that this seems to be the best option on the table (in the absence of any info on the Town Hall situation and the current asset transfer). However, I am content to see what the outcome of discussions are as I don't think that something which was spoken about years ago should preclude the options being looked at again this time under very different financial circumstances."

Subsequently, the Secretary had contacted the CAT team to put forward the proposal outlined in the Minutes of 21st March 2013 - including a registration of interest in the Cullen Harbour toilets, on behalf of the Cullen Harbour Association. This communication was acknowledged (28/03/13) with an indication that the proposal would be forwarded to the CAT Steering Group - and someone would be in touch in due course.

The Chair confirmed that he had written to Cllr Shepherd (29/03/13) following the discovery that both the Cullen Harbour and Beach toilets had remained closed, with members of the public being directed to the Square - despite the reprieve publicised in the press during the week preceding Easter. His communication requested urgent action to ensure that these toilets were opened up as soon as possible, and supported this with the following: "Adequate public toilet provision is necessary for our struggling tourism sector to survive and prosper. For the final decisions to be dictated by a blanket decision covering all of Moray is too simplistic by far, does not allow for all the variable factors that apply and should be part of any credible EIA investigation. From previous e-mail communications from yourself we understand that which of the 3 public toilets is to be retained is a matter for public consultation and choice, and this will be part of the discussion at the public meeting arranged for 22nd of April. Furthermore we understand from press statements today that Moray Council have commendably suspended any cost savings accruing from library and toilet closures until this complex, time consuming and presumably costly, EIA is completed. It is therefore very surprising that closure notices are already posted on the two seasonal toilets in Cullen, with desperate members of the public re-directed to the distant toilet in the Square. In the case of the beach toilet there is, ironically, also a self-congratulatory notice of the recent clean beach award, presumably meant to attract the tourists who will certainly not be encouraged to return when there are no public toilet facilities within a mile of the beach! The negative impact is already with us when the town is already full of visitors!! Cullen does not need any negative publicity during this period of recession. Since there is now a moratorium on the proposed MC cut backs on toilet and library facilities I request that the closure notices are now removed and the seasonal toilets are opened until the EIA is completed and mitigating proposals are agreed and implemented."

Cllr Shepherd responded (02/04/13) indicating that he had met with the Leader and Chief Financial Officer, and confirmed that the Council had agreed to open the toilets until a full EIS had been completed - possibly by 22nd May. The toilets were subsequently re-opened.

In response to a concerned member of the public, Cllr Shepherd indicated (30/03/13) that he had "been in contact with Cullen C.C. many times in the past to take charge of the links toilets. It is now in the hands of our asset transfer team and they will be in a position to offer the transfer shortly. I would hope that a community group will show a interest in the harbour toilet as it works very well in other parts of Moray." In response to this e-mail (30/03/13), the Chair expressed his puzzlement that no such contact had been made by Cllr Shepherd during the (almost) 6 years of the current Community Council's existence. Cllr Shepherd later acknowledged his mistake - he meant the Cullen Golf Club.

The respective costs of the beach and harbour toilets were estimated as £4,500 and £3,400.

5. Cullen & Deskford 2014 Calendar: discussion on progress.

The number of entries as at the closing date amounted to 167 photos from 44 individuals. The Chair confirmed that the judging would take place on Friday 19th April 2013. The Vice-Chair confirmed that sponsorship arrangements are on-going.

6. Planning

6.1 Aultmore Wind Farm

Cross-party Working Party: Cllr Coull confirmed that the whole model had been abandoned, and future arrangements are sub judice.

ACTION: John Robertson/John Aitken

7. A.O.C.B.

7.1 New Members: The Chair welcomed again Sheila Donn, Tom Gunn and David Paterson.

7.2 Certificates of Achievement: John Aitken advised that the Deskford and District Association wish to present 3 certificates - to Mary Jesson, Ann McLaren and Sandy Christie; work is in hand for them to be presented at the next meeting of the Association on 1st May 2013. The Secretary is to advise on Cullen recipients at the next meeting.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

7.3 Centenary Memorials Restoration Fund: The Chair advised that frustrated enquiries are on-going, with Cllr Coull not yet having established responses to the Chair's queries, including who "owns" the Cullen War Memorial, whether Moray Council has a conservation officer whose help and advice we can seek, whether there is anyone else in Moray Council who can advise on acceptable forms of cleaning of historic/listed structures and whether the Memorial is listed.

ACTION: Ashley Mowat/Cllr Coull

7.4 Seafield Arms Hotel, Cullen: The Secretary confirmed (via the Chair's Brief) that a concerned resident had phoned her regarding the possible "illegal" boarding up of a listed building, and suggesting that those windows facing the main street could possibly be unboarded without risk to the building. She subsequently passed on these concerns and suggestions to Richard Smith, Planning Department (02/04/13) who undertook to pass on the

information to the Enforcement Department. It is unlikely that anything tangible will happen for some weeks.

7.5 Cullen Town Hall Clock Repairs: The Secretary confirmed (via the Chair's Brief) that she had submitted an application to the Cullen Common Good Fund for this initiative (15/04/13); the total cost is £300, of which the Community Council will contribute £150.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

7.6 Forthcoming Community Council Elections: The Secretary had circulated (30/03/13) to all members the plans by the JCC to undertake promotional activity to encourage members of the public to stand as Community Councillors. A request had also been made by the JCC that all Community Councils should contribute £75 to this campaign. Following discussion, it was decided not to contribute to this campaign.

7.7 Review of the Moray Council Community Council Scheme - Public Consultation: The Chair confirmed having received documentation re this consultation.

There are no changes proposed to:-

- the model constitution
- the model standing orders
- the code of conduct for Community Councillors
- the geographical boundaries of Cullen & Deskford Community Council
- the minimum, maximum and quorum numbers for Cullen & Deskford Community Council.

Other changes proposed include:-

- minimum age required to stand or vote at a Community Council election is to be reduced to 16
- the youth membership scheme minimum age is reduced from ages 16-18 to ages 14-16
- co-opted members to be able to become full members 12 months from the date they were co-opted
- community councillors can be disqualified if they fail to attend a community council meeting for six months or more
- the definition of the administration grant has been added; the grant can only cover: auditors fees, production and circulation of documentation, stationery, photocopying, postage, travel and telephone costs, accommodation lets, affiliation fees, subscriptions, bank charges, advertising, general publicity and promotional activities, community consultation, honorariums to secretary or treasurer
- some changes to the electoral arrangements

All attendees were made aware of these details, for which there was unanimous agreement, with no need to submit further comment.

7.8 Launch of Older People's Strategy: The Chair distributed details of the Older People's Information Fair 2013 - to be held in Elgin Town Hall on 1st May 2013 (10.00 - 16.00). The Secretary had undertaken to display the poster in Cullen Library and Cullen Post Office.

7.9 Review of Aultmore Forest Design Plan: the Chair confirmed having received a draft of the new forest design plan (on CD) from Forestry Commission Scotland. Comments require to be submitted by 9th May 2013. The CD was passed to John Robertson for action.

ACTION: John Robertson

8. ITEMS FOR NOTING/DISCUSSION BY EXCEPTION

8.1 Cullen Medical Centre: There was nothing further to report.

ACTION: Ashley Mowat/Malcolm Watt

8.2 Cullen Community and Residential Centre - potential Asset Transfer: Work is in hand to obtain funding for the feasibility study/community consultation/business plan.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

8.3 Cullen Harbour Association Report: There was nothing further to report beyond the comments made in Item 3.1.

8.4 ITEMS AWAITING ACTION/CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN

AWAITING ACTION:

8.4.1 Lawtie Trust: The Trust is to be reviewed in 2014.

8.4.2 Community Website: Investigation on traffic statistics from Google Analytics remains an outstanding action.

There are currently 98 subscribers to the Newsletter; newsletters are sent out regularly, with the prime objective of driving traffic to the website.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

8.4.3 Logie Head Path: The Secretary confirmed (via the Chair's Brief) that she had spoken with Eleanor Munro of Aberdeenshire Council (10/04/13) raising the points discussed at the October meeting and highlighting that there had been a further landslide on the path. Eleanor Munro confirmed that she would inspect the path when she inspects the coastal path to ensure that all is well for the 6-Harbours Walk. An outcome is awaited.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

8.4.4 Cullen Town Hall Flag: The Secretary confirmed (via the Chair's Brief) that she had approved the final proof of the flag (24/03/13), that the repaired flag and 3 new flags had been received and that she would contact the Cullen Fire Brigade to arrange for the flag to be raised as soon as is practicable.

ACTION: Zillah Jamieson

CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

8.4.5. Nothing to report.

8.5 Planning - Weekly List

The following application appeared in the Weekly List of 15th March 2013:-

- Erect house at site south of Birchfold Drybridge.

This was not considered to be of community interest.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as 16th May 2013 at 7 p.m. in the Cullen Community and Residential Centre (TV Lounge).

**CULLEN AND DESKFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MEETING ON 18 APRIL 2013**

1. LOCAL INTEREST INFORMATION

CULLEN and DESKFORD

On 12 March 2013 there was a break in to an electrical substation located on the Cullen to Keith road. Nothing was stolen.

There have been two separate reports of anti-social driving.

2. FEEDBACK ON POLICE ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING

None

3. DETAILS OF ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO LOCAL PRIORITIES

From Monday 15 April to Thursday 18 April 2013, there was a campaign in the Moray and Aberdeenshire areas targeting speeding and inappropriate drivers where education/enforcement action was undertaken.

The campaign concentrated on

- Speeding, Careless or dangerous driving;
- Using a mobile phone or hand held device whilst driving;
- Failing to wear a seatbelt; and
- Driving without insurance or a driving licence

4. ONGOING LOCAL/ FORCEWIDE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Police Service of Scotland

On 1 April 2013 Grampian Police joined The Police Service of Scotland and the former Chief Constable of Grampian Police Mr Colin McKerracher retired. The Chief Constable of The Police Service of Scotland is Mr Steven House.

A great deal of work has been done to ensure that the transition to the new force will not negatively affect the service provided to the Public.

MORAY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMUNITY WARDEN REPORT
Cullen & Deskford Community Council
18/04/2013

The information included on this document covers the period from last community council meeting on Thursday 21st March 2013 to Thursday 18th April 2013 for the Cullen and Deskford area only.

Local Interest Information

- There has been no anti-social behaviour incidents created for the attention of the community warden. This includes noise complaints, neighbour disputes, youth annoyance etc.

Dog Fouling

- There have been 0 incidents created for persons reporting dog fouling to Moray Council.
- There has been a further 1 complaint made directly to the community warden reporting dog fouling.
- The community warden has issued 3 FPNs, 1 in Buckie and 2 in Portknockie.
- Hotspot areas targeted for patrols to deter dog fouling are
Seatown
Seafield Place
North Deskford
Playing Fields

Litter/Fly Tipping

- There have been 0 incidents created related to litter.

Initiatives

- A junior warden scheme has been organised for the Keith area as a pilot. The scheme is aimed at P7 children to learn about anti-social behaviour and the impact this has on their community.
- A dog poo quiz has been compiled for distribution to all primary schools. This quiz is designed for parents interaction and will educate on the results dog fouling has on an individual and their community
- The community warden has teamed up with Duncan Falconer to deliver a number of litter and dog fouling awareness events with the Moray Council trailer. This was deployed within Cullen on 11/04/2013 with further events focused on dog fouling planned throughout the summer.

Other

The community warden continues to work alongside a number of partner agencies to tackle a number of anti-social issues within the Cullen and Deskford area.

Contact details

Andrew Mackie 07800 670 662 .Email Andrew.mackie@moray.gov.uk
24hr Antisocial Behaviour Reporting Line 0800 5877 197
Antisocial Behaviour Office 01343 563322 . Email: antisocialbehaviour@moray.gov.uk
Moray Council Call Centre 0300 123 4566 or Online Antisocial Behaviour Reporting Form accessed through The Moray Council website.

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cultair agus Cùisean an Taobh a-muigh
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs
Fiona Hyslop MSP/BPA

T/F: 0845 774 1741
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Ashley Mowat
Chair
Cullen and Deskford Community Council

By e-mail: bucholie@btinternet.com



Our ref/Ar faidhle: 2013/0006755

8th April 2013

Dear Ashley

Thank you for your e-mail of 11 March sending me your correspondence with the Councillors at Moray Council about their plans to close Cullen, Portknockie and Findochty Library as well as other libraries in the area.

I can assure you that the Scottish Government recognises the valuable role that libraries have in communities and in helping to delivering many of our priorities in areas such as digital participation, education, employment and strong communities as well as providing access to information, learning and community spaces.

It is with regret that I note Moray Council's proposal to significantly reduce its library service. Moray's library service is seen as a sector leading and highly regarded service by both the communities it serves and partners it works with, which gives me further concern at the decisions taken by the Council. As you will know the Scottish Government has publically urged Moray Council to reconsider its budget proposals.

As you have rightly stated, local authorities have a statutory duty under legislation to provide adequate library services for all and the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix for Scotland (PLQIM), developed by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) with the Scottish Government and SLIC's member organisations (which includes most local authorities), defines adequacy.

Given the complexities of providing a modern public library service I would be concerned if there was a trend towards services being provided by community or voluntary services, particularly if such services reduced the onus on local authority's to provide the adequate service they are obliged to offer under the current legislation.

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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www.scotland.gov.uk



The Scottish Government certainly values the important roles that community councils play and I would be keen to encourage Moray Council to do all that they can to recognise the potential of community councils and to work with them positively. It is of course entirely for Moray Council to decide precisely how to do this but I hope they take advantage of your generous offer of continuing constructive dialogue on the provision of adequate library provision across the Moray area.

You may wish to note that later this year we will set out with COSLA our response to the recommendations of the Community Council Short Life Working Group. This will be with the aim of strengthening the valuable role that community councils currently play.

Kind regards

Fiona Hyslop

FIONA HYSLOP

Letter accompanying Cullen Library Petition

Dear Mr Campbell

As a resident of Cullen I am writing to you today to ask that the decision to close Cullen library might be reconsidered.

It has come as a huge surprise and disappointment to most of the residents of Cullen that such a decision has been passed, as it is a busy library and is widely used by all sections of Cullen and Deskford; it is part of the vibrant and flourishing Community centre which is at the heart of our community.

Demographically, Cullen has a very large number of over 60s in its population and part of the attraction of retiring here (apart from the stunning scenery) is the ability to walk to everything that is necessary to everyday living – doctors' surgery, pharmacy, post office, newsagent, co-op and the library are all within easy walking distance. This accessibility is so important to seniors as they age and become less able to clamber on and off buses after standing waiting, often in cold, wet weather. Much easier and healthier to get fresh air and exercise walking or riding in their buggies to the library, there to change their library books and enjoy a little socialising with Margaret, our friendly and very efficient librarian, and their peers. Margaret is also on hand to help them to understand and fill in their bus-pass renewals etc and to show them what they need to do on the computer.

There are partially-sighted people in Cullen who read the large print books available to them in the library; it is very difficult to obtain such books in book shops as I know from trying to buy them for my mother. They also blow up the crosswords each week and print them off so that they can see to do them.

Children in Cullen are regular users of the library, from toddlers who walk up with their mothers to choose bedtime stories to read, thus laying down the foundations for good reading practice in their future, to primary school pupils who regularly use the library to work in little groups on the computers. Contrary to popular belief, not every child has a computer at home or a smart phone – both expensive commodities for parents to buy in this recession. There is also 'story time' for young pupils once a week and older siblings often join in en route home from Cullen primary. Should primary children require help in accessing books for project research, Margaret points them in the right direction and can tell them which books will be helpful to them.

With regard to computers, the ones in Cullen library are invaluable to all who do not have a computer at home; especially in this recession when job-seekers must have access to a computer; pensioners need one to pay certain bills, etc., and the new Universal Benefit payment being introduced on April 1st by the government must be applied for and administered online, thus creating yet another necessity to having computers available for the public.

To close the library would be a retrograde step. We must encourage education in the young and this stems from reading and establishing good reading habits from an early age. This recession will not last forever, but once our library is closed it will be gone forever. Whilst I know that unpalatable cutbacks must be made, surely there could be reductions in bureaucracy, expenses, etc., which could be implemented instead. Even reducing hours of opening, re-introducing late fines for all and charging £2 per reservation of a book instead of 70p and increasing other charges would be possible to help defray costs and make the library more cost-effective. Would that not

be more acceptable than closing the library altogether? We would still have our local library intact for now and the next generation.

Elderly people and children are going to be severely disadvantaged by the closure of Cullen library and their quality of life in the community will be affected. A return to the dark ages!

As you will see from the number of signatures (782) in the Cullen petition handed in to the Council this morning, this matter has caused huge worry across the community, and we seek your intervention to ensure that such a valuable service is saved from destruction.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Watt

Dear Mr Cree

BURGHEAD LIBRARY

I have read your letter of 28/3/2013 to Kelly Crudace who, like myself, is a member of the Save Burghead Library Group.

Thank you for the detailed work you have put into your reply and I hope you can also now answer a couple of questions I have already asked of you and of Mr Alan Wright. But firstly, I would like to discuss one or two points you have raised - I quote

" Firstly, in order to continue to receive Government Grant at even its current level, the Council has to give an undertaking to maintain the freeze on Council Tax which was imposed as a political imperative in 2007. Should the Council choose to ignore this requirement the Government Grant, which represents 75% of the council's 'income', would be reduced by the amount gained from the Council Tax increase and no benefit would arise.

Secondly, as a rule of thumb, an increase of 1% in Council Tax will generate approximately £370,000. Consequently, to meet the required savings of £30 million without reducing services, we would need to increase Council Tax by 82%. I heard little support for an increase of this magnitude during the budget consultation."

If, as you say, any increase in council tax would result at present in a £ for £ reduction from central government allocation, it seems unfathomable that anyone would expect any such consideration of such a measure as you cite re the budget consultation. It seems preposterous that you imply above that the council actually considered this and in this context you cite a figure of putative tax increase of 82% - surely time would be better spent on considering feasible measures.

What we need from you rather is a direct answer to our repeated requests for information which is more to our point. It seems like our case is being smoke-screened by your repeated quotation of big total figures such as - " closure of 7 libraries will result in a saving of £200k in year 1 and £357k thereafter."

What we would like to hear from you under the Freedom of Information Act and as a matter of urgency is -

what net savings, if any, do you now calculate will result from a closure of Burghead library.?

We have been told that the annual running costs of the 11-hours per week of our library are in the region of approx £8,000 p.a. As is now widely known, any saving under this head will need to be offset in the first year by the repayment to the EEC of the recent removal-grant.

Then, once you have done your Equality Impact Assessment, we need to know the estimated costs of any mitigating measures you may be legally required to put in place as a result of it.

We would also like to remind you that, with a population of just over 1,600 at the last census, the cost of library provision to our town is a little more than £4 per head per

year. Given that there are no other council-funded facilities in Burghead, this little sum is not too much to expect even in the austere times where you ask us to scale down to Minis from our Rolls Royces, especially given the recent increased council-tax yield from our town through the building of many large new homes. Such an expenditure as you already make moreover gives great value for money.

We look forward to a detailed reply at your earliest convenience

Yours sincerely

Daphne Francis 18 Sellar Street, Burghead IV30 5UL



Chief Executive's Office

Roderick D. Burns

Chief Executive

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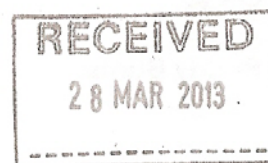
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 Aberdeenshire
 AB42 3AW

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Our reference: RB/hm/1217076



26 March 2013

Dear Mr Stevenson

Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen and Deskford Community Councils. Library Closures.

I refer to your letter of 15 March regarding the above.

As you will be aware, the ongoing reductions in public expenditure present councils with very difficult choices. Over the previous 3 years Moray Council has managed to reduce annual expenditure by more than £15M and current estimates are that over the next 4 years we will need to make further reductions of £30M on a recurring basis.

The council undertook a substantial programme of consultation with local communities using its website and a series of road shows to provide communities with information about council services and the scale of reductions required. Suggestion boxes, a questionnaire and a series of workshops were open to all members of the community to engage with the council about the budget reduction programme. This programme was held over 3 months from early October to late December and was well publicised in local media. The council was clear about the scale of reductions and there was open discussion about the potential for facilities, including libraries and schools, to be closed.

Councillors led the consultation process and have been provided with comprehensive information on the feedback received. The feedback is available to view on the council's website. For the year ahead the budget was set on 13 February and it is the Administration Group's intention to prepare a longer term plan for consideration by the council in July.

The 2013/14 budget includes savings of £5.8M and £1.3M from council reserves. The budget was agreed subject to staff consultation and the completion and consideration of equality impact assessments (EIA). The EIA for the future libraries

service requires further engagement with local community groups and due to the ill-health/absence of 2 managers in this area it has not been possible to commence this part of the exercise as yet. Once the EIA has been completed it will be reported to the council for consideration and this will include an assessment of actions proposed to mitigate the impact of library closures. A copy of your letter and the attachments will be provided to the manager responsible for the further engagement work on his return.

I trust the above comments are of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Roddy Burns