



Minutes of Meeting of the City & Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council,

Tuesday 13th August 2013 at 7pm held in the Moray Council Chambers

1. SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES

MEMBERS:

Alastair Kennedy (Chair),
David Chapman,
Pat Paterson,

Gordon Methven (Secretary),
Steven Christie,
Mary Wall,

Steven Milne (Treasurer),
Anne Glover,
Gordon Wells

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr John Divers,
Michael McGovern,
PC Stuart Sim (Police Scotland)

Cllr Barry Jarvis,
Hazel Lawson (Northern Scot),
Richard Lochhead MSP

Kayleigh Hysert,
PC Philip Cameron (Police Scotland)
Laura Mitchell, Parliamentary Constituency Officer

APOLOGIES:

Bryan Watson (Vice Chair)
Cheryl Robb,
Cllr James Allan

Murray Ross,
James Wiseman (Minutes)
Cllr Graham Leadbitter

George P Littlejohn,
Cllr Mike Shand,

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced the guest speaker, Richard Lochhead, MSP.

Mr Lochhead spoke about concerns in Moray, including economic, healthcare, transport, social, employment, and housing issues. He said it was important to rise to the challenge of spending every pound with maximum efficiency as austerity measures have led to cuts in national and local government budgets, and affected public service provision. He was optimistic about key local sectors including food and drink, offshore and renewables, and whisky, which are bucking the trend and performing very well.

A blueprint for improving road and rail links is in place although it will take time to deliver. In spite of austerity, it is possible for new and innovative projects to be delivered all over the country. Moray needs to improve its record in applying for funding and asking for what is needed, as happens in other parts of Scotland where vision, local leadership and innovation have led to securing funding for the delivery of state of the art sports and cultural facilities.

Questions

Would Scottish public pensions be guaranteed if Independence went ahead?

Yes, this has been 'triple lock' guaranteed. Scotland is in a better position to pay its pension contribution as a percentage of Gross National Product than the rest of the UK.

For those receiving pensions from England, paid in Sterling, how would this be converted to Scottish currency? Pensioners lose out due to fluctuating currency rates and conversion fees if not paid in their home currency.

In the event of Independence, sterling will be kept as Scotland's currency. Westminster government will not guarantee this in the current political climate however, it is in the best interests of both Scotland and the rest of the UK that Scotland retains sterling. In the event of a yes vote, negotiations will be carried out 2014-16 and Independence delivered at the end of this period. Many other countries have been through similar such changes in the last few decades, and Scotland is in a stronger position than many of these were.

It would be much more economic to carry out road-works on e.g. the A9 in larger sections. In England, contractors were given 20 mile sections of the M1 to complete over a few years, why is this not done?

The tendering process currently delivers a single contractor producing the best value bid. It was suggested this matter could be taken up with Transport Scotland. Road improvement have been made e.g. the Fochabers bypass and the plans to dual parts of the A9.

Is there any further information on the bulk transport of whisky by rail?

Richard Lochhead will be attending the launch of this pilot project now that required changes have been made to the line.

In the face of reducing cleansing and budget cuts, how can groups such as SPICE secure funding to help realise the vision of a Litter Free Scotland.

The Litter strategy is currently under consultation and Mr Lochhead urged everyone to have their say on it. Part of the strategy involves increasing resources to Keep Scotland Beautiful for the Clean Up Scotland campaign, which ties in with the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Other components include reviewing the marine litter strategy, increasing spot fines for littering and fly tipping, and develop better educational programmes. He mentioned <http://www.peopleagainstlitter.org/> and said grass roots action was important. He felt litter picking could be part of Community Service. He said other Local Authorities had different approaches than The Moray Council, citing Renfrewshire Council and Glasgow City Council, who have made marked improvements recently. He felt there was a need for more recycling bins in Elgin City Centre.

Police issuing fixed penalty spot fines was welcomed, but it was felt litter had been a low priority for the police and procurators fiscal, and action may require more police and community wardens. Mr Lochhead replied that this was a matter of priority. It was hoped by using spot fines, the majority would be paid at the time and stay out of the justice system. Cllr Divers advised the Community Warden and an undercover police officer had issued 6 spot fines for littering in one hour on a recent operation.



How do we keep young people in Moray?

Mr Lochhead was pleased to see young people at Elgin Community Council. Being involved in civic society is a good first step. It is important to listen to young people's ideas and ask them how they'd like to be involved. Education and jobs are key, and the increasing number of locally available apprenticeships is to be welcomed. Having UHI in Elgin has made a difference as higher and further education opportunities are traditionally the top reason for young people to leave an area. A good quality of life with facilities such as the newly improved cinema and better shopping were also important, as was the development of improved sporting facilities to allow people to stay in the area to develop their sporting potential.

Do you think the Elgin Western Link Road will deliver economic benefit to Elgin or should it be stopped now?

This is a very contentious issue, but Elgin's internal traffic issues must be addressed. It is a difficult issue for The Moray Council. Whether this route is the right route or not, will be debated for some time to come. At a time of financial resource issues, when there is demand for expenditure elsewhere, should we the pause button and do only some of the amendments and improvements?

In response to a question about waiting for the Elgin bypass as an alternative, Mr Lochhead explained this route is not a bypass, but is to deal with internal Elgin traffic. The issues are linked but separate.

What are the big benefits of windfarms to the country and to what extent should public opinion be allowed to influence where they are built or not built?

Although there is a world energy shortage, Scotland has wave, wind, tidal and oil resources. Exploiting them can deliver economic gain and energy security. Renewable energy is considerably cheaper and safer than nuclear, which is subsidised to a far greater degree. The SNP believe the future lies with offshore renewables and development is ongoing. Windfarms must be built in the right places, have community views taken into account, and ensure community benefit is delivered. Community benefit is not consistent across Scotland and work needs to be done to change this.

In Moray, windfarms must be placed in the right location, cumulative effect should be taken into account and benefits should be assured. In Moray, several developments were in place before a strategy was developed, leading to aggravation, objections and lower levels of community benefit being delivered. This situation has improved recently but an up-to-date, robust strategy is required from all local authority areas, not least because it can be used as part of the decision making process during appeals. Currently two thirds of appeals are in line with local government views. One third are not and this is because there is a strategic, as well as local element to windfarm sites, and there will always be tension between national and local decision-making.

What role will Community Councils have after 18th September 2014 and how do you see public opinion being involved in shaping Scotland thereafter?

The SNP want independence to engage everyone in democracy and on how to best use resources and benefit communities. Mr Lochhead hopes Community Councils will have more power after September 2014. The recent consultation on the Community Empowerment Bill also examined the role of Community Councils and their future. He looks to the Nordic countries where there is more local democracy and less centralisation, something he has long fought for.

Mr Lochhead thanked members of Elgin Community Council for their service to Elgin, and said they were an important voice for making community's views known. He wished those standing for election good luck.

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES – 9th JULY 2013

Cllr Jarvis to be removed from apologies, is noted present under in attendance

Robbie Hope, rather than Robin Hope (attendance and item about Elgin City Football Club)

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Steven Christie, seconded by Anne Glover.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Page 1, Item 3a KING STREET: Ongoing

Page 1, Item 3b GLENMORAY: Ongoing

Page 1, Item 3c ORIENTEERING EVENT: The Chair had received several thanks for the welcome banners. Anne Glover reported a family who had competed all over the world said they had never seen a welcome banner anywhere else. The banners could be used at the world Orienteering event in 2 years.

Page 3, COMFORT SCHEME: The lack of facilities during the daytime and lack at night are to be tackled as two separate issues requiring different solutions.

4. AGENCY UPDATES

4a. POLICE – PC Stuart Sim

SPEEDING: Speeding checks were carried out on South Street. Five instances of speeding were recorded, none of them high enough to warrant action. A further week of checks has been planned and the lady who raised the issue has been contacted with this information.

In response to a question about the legality of driving with lights on: lights are only a legal requirement during the hours of darkness but it is good practice to use them when visibility is reduced.

4b. STAGECOACH UPDATE

Apologies. A meeting was held with George P Littlejohn regarding destinations as previously mentioned and new destinations will be uploaded this Sunday.



4c. COMMUNITY WARDEN – No Report

4d. TELL ME ONCE - public information notices are now all listed on the www.tellmesotland.gov.uk website. Moray Council now publish their Planning, Licensing, Roads and General public notices there. It is possible to sign up and receive updates local to you. The Chair urged everyone to look at the website.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5a. PLANNING - No Report

5b. RECREATION & LEISURE – Anne Glover

LADYHILL: Is looking well thanks to the efforts of a good team. The grass cutting was very poor this time and Neil Duncan planned to report back to The Moray Council. Water butts have been mounted on blocks and are slowly filling. There has been some interest in the site from tourists and Mhairi Duncan has done some research on the cottages, which were gifted in remembrance of soldiers from Elgin who died in Suvla (near Gallipoli) and Messine (Near Ypres). Anne wondered if consideration should be given to putting up some more information plaques, which would be a good addition to the Castle to Cashmere trail.

EIGHT ACRES: Is in need of weeding. It may be that an arrangement for its maintenance needs to be made as per last year.

ACTION: Chair to investigate

5c. ENVIRONMENT – Mary Wall

The Fair Trade group met 6th August. They plan to have a stall at the Food and Drink Festival on 14th September 2013 and would be grateful if any Community Council member could volunteer on the stall for half an hour, or would like to donate Fair Trade items.

Mary Wall and Pat Paterson will attend the Fair Trade Festival in Perth on 7th September 2013 on behalf of Elgin Community Council. Elgin Fair Trade Group has a Facebook page and Elgin's Fair Trade businesses are listed on the Moray Fair Trade Forum website.

ALLOTMENT: Plants are thriving at the gardenshare and work parties are held most Saturdays to maintain the general area. Thanks to the Fire Brigade for filling the water butts during the dry weather. A petition was submitted to The Moray Council. All are welcome to sit in the willow arbour and contemplate the garden.

5d. ROADS & TRANSPORTATION – No Report

5e. YOUTH - nothing new to report

6. COMMUNITY PLANNING

6a. ELGIN NORTH AREA FORUM - No report

6b. ELGIN SOUTH AREA FORUM - No meeting in July

Next meeting is on 20.8.13

6c. SPICE

Met on 1.8.13 and discussed the comfort scheme, funding and the consultation Towards a Litter Free Scotland. Volunteers are sought for 22.9.13 to help clear bushes and shrubs on Alexandra Road.

6d. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

A request had been received to write a letter of support in favour of an asset transfer of the building on the corner of Gordon Street to members of the Muslim community for worship and a community centre. In view of the fact there is more than one community group interested in this building, Gordon Methven proposed to write a letter supporting community asset transfers in general but not favouring one group over another. Steven Christie seconded. There were no objections.

7. EDUCATION

7a. ELGIN HIGH SCHOOL – the strategy group for the new school will meet next month

7b. ELGIN ACADEMY – no report, school holidays

7c. PRIMARY SCHOOLS – no report, school holidays

8. TREASURERS REPORT

No 1 Account £2502.59

No 2 Account £3,173.68 as before.

ACTION: Steven Milne to email expenses sheet to Ann Glover

9. ONGOING TOPICS

9a. DEANSHAUGH PLAYING FIELDS – No Update

9b. OLD MILLS – Restrictions were lifted after the area was cleared but there may still be some concerns over the site.



Jc. MORRISTON RUNNING TRACK – no update

9d. LESSER BOROUGH RIGGS – This site is in Elgin City for the Future Economic strategy, so if developed would be worth a lot of money. There is also a proposal to develop a 3G pitch elsewhere in Elgin so it was suggested it may be wise to gather more information before supporting a bid. The 6 Elgin Councillors expect to meet with David Duncan, Planning, The Moray Council as part of the Main Issues Report, so may have some more information for us then.

9e ELGIN FUND – COOPER PARK - The Elgin Fund have produced drawings for a proposed amphitheatre in Cooper Park, assuming there is enough earth to build it from the flood alleviation works. There was general support for this proposal.

10. EVENTS

10a. SCOTTISH 6DAY ORIENTEERING EVENT – as above.

There were no objections to ordering a banner to promote Community Council elections and placing it at the Eight Acres flowerbed.

ACTION: Chair to order banner

10b. COMMUNITY AWARDS –No Update.

The JCC also discussed a ceremony recognising good service. It was suggested this be tied in with community awards.

10c. TRAINING - No new opportunities

10d. INVITATIONS

An invitation to the Community Safety Strategy Response on 21.8.13 at 10am in the Town Hall was circulated. David Chapman will attend.

11. JCC UPDATE

A subgroup developed the 'Be at the Heart of Your Community' leaflets and posters to raise awareness of upcoming elections. Leaflets were handed out. The opening date for applications is 19th August, closing 26 September, and results will be reported on 31st October 2013.

ACTION: ALL to distribute posters, and are encouraged photocopy and distribute leaflets

12. CONSULTATIONS

EXTENDED LICENSING HOURS FOR MCDONALDS - 7 for, 4 against.

ACTION: Chair to email accordingly

PLANNING SCOTLAND - National Marine Plan - including renewables plans and conservation areas. Circulated

THREE TIER COMMUNITY CARE MODEL - circulated, received late, responses must be submitted by 20.8.13

LITTER FREE SCOTLAND - Steven working on a reply

13. CORRESPONDENCE

'Be at the Heart of Your Community' leaflet received from Tracey Rae

Bill from The Moray Council for Eight Acres flowerbed

14. AOCB

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP - Elgin Community Council is now represented via JCC

FIELDS IN TRUST - presentation to JCC was interesting. Fields in Trust protect playing fields, green spaces and open land in community use. FiT work to prevent such sites being developed on, or if they are, ensure another site is made available to the community. Morriston Playing Fields is protected by the trust (and free event boxes are available for clubs using it). The Chair suggested we get some more information and consider looking at Deanshaugh and the Wetlands etc.

MORAY FOOD NETWORK MEETING - email from Rebecca Kail, MFN development worker. Next meeting is on 13th September 2013 12 - 2pm at the Inkwell, Elgin Youth Cafe and includes a free soup and bread lunch and a presentation from Transition Black Isle on community markets and how they allow occasional, local and seasonal small producers opportunities to sell and how such markets can benefit the community. For more information contact rebecca@reapscotland.org.uk

ARNOLD CLARK - cars are being displayed on the banks of the Tyock Burn on the opposite side of the road.

ACTION: Steven Christie to contact TMC Planning to see where boundary lies and if this is allowed

TRAIN CANCELLATIONS - it is noted the 7.32am from Inverness is often cancelled due to staff shortages

ACTION: Could George P Littlejohn please follow up on

FACEBOOK - It was unanimously agreed that Elgin Community Council should have a Facebook page

ACTION: Kayleigh Hysert and Michael McGovern to liase with Bryan Watson to set up page



FOCHABERS BYPASS - Cllr J Divers noted that although the bypass was build under an SNP administration, it was brought forward under the Labour-Lib Dem administration.

APOLOGIES - Gordon Methven tendered his apologies for the next meeting.

15. CLOSE

There being no further business to discuss the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 9:10pm

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 10th September 2013 - 7pm at Moray Council Chambers

ACTIONS:

Chair

Investigate maintenance of Eight Acres flowerbed

Order banner promoting Community Council elections

Email response in support of McDonalds extended opening hours

Treasurer

Email expenses sheet to Ann Glover

Steven Christie

To contact Planning re Arnold Clark

George P Littlejohn

Follow up 0732 Inverness train cancellations

Kayleigh Hysert, Michael McGovern, Bryan Watson

Set up Facebook page

ALL

Distribute posters and leaflets promoting Community Council elections

CITATION: These Minutes were adopted as a True Record of Proceedings:

Proposer: _____

Secunder: _____

Chair: _____ Mr Alastair Kennedy

Date: _____