



# Keith Community Council

## Minute of meeting held on Monday, October 6, 2014 at Keith Community Centre

**1 Attendance:** Jane Martin, Neil Kidd, Sadie Ogg, Susan Hutcheon, Marguerite Cruickshank, Sandy Dickson, Dave Carson, Charlie Lawson, Councillors Stewart Cree and Garry Coull, minutes secretary Esther Green, and Moray Council lands and parks officer Ken Kennedy.

**Apologies:** Lorna Mulligan; Sgt Bayliss; Wendy Clarihew, Banffshire Herald.

**2 Minutes:** With one small amendment, the September minutes were approved as accurate by Neil Kidd, seconded by Susan Hutcheon.

### 3 Matters arising:

a) Stewart Cree had promptly dealt with a number of specific issues raised from the previous month, namely:

- Speed radars on the A96 Moss Street approach to determine speed of traffic entering the town – reply from ... This matter is expected to take a month, thereafter Frank Mills will be in touch to discuss funding/proposals. Any queries should be made to Frank Mills on 01738 448648.
- Planters –nothing can be done this year, to be discussed at a future meeting
- Pigeon mess – SC informed this was scheduled for removal
- A96 through Keith need for weed clearing/pavement clearing – SC informed this is being attended to by BEAR.
- Hospital steps – this work has started, and is due to be completed by mid-October.

b) **79 Mid Street** – notification has been received that this application has been refused.

c) **Sport and Leisure:** the review meeting held in Keith on September 10 was regarded as worthwhile. It was fairly well attended, views were taken note of and increasing usage was underlined as being important.

**3 Presentation:** Members had previously raised concerns about grass cutting and weed killing operations in the town and Ken Kennedy, Moray Council's lands and parks officer, gave a on the role of his section, which covers lands, parks, cemeteries, woodland and open spaces, ie non-built environment.

He explained that following last year's review, the service had a budget reduction of £500,000, which had resulted in a loss of 10 full time and 6 seasonal staff. Less frequent grass cutting and the removal of floral beds (with the exception of war memorials) were accepted by the wider public as tolerable at the time, in the face of budget pressures facing the council.

Grass cutting: A reduction in frequency of grass cutting, combined with growthy weather, has provided challenges across Moray.

Street weed spraying: the strength of weed killer available for amenity spray has been reduced, and this works only on weeds that are visible. Less staffing means that there are less workers to spray for weeds in the right weather conditions. Less money to spend on street sweeping has also resulted in the build-up of detritus that makes perfect seed beds for growing weeds.

Cemeteries: plot owners have a duty to maintain their family's plot and headstone areas are being infilled across Moray. One member said cut grass was ending up on headstones. Mr Kennedy said that this should not happen, and is likely due to the wrong technique being used by a worker.

Members were sympathetic about the conditions that have led to a reduction in the service provided, and acknowledged other local authority areas do not have such well maintained open spaces as Moray does.

KCC asked that where people pay for the hire of a venue, ie Fife Park, that the grass is cut just prior to the date of booking. One parent said that on some occasions at Fife Park, youth league teams have played in a field with grass as long as silage. He also reported that sometimes the pitch lining was done the day before the grass cutting. **Action – Councillors Stewart Cree and Gary Coull to pursue the pitches/paying issue.**

The grass appeared to be rolled rather than cut at St Rufus Park owing to its length. This park is well used by families, including summer visitors, and this is one area where KCC would not wish to see a reduction in cutting/maintenance.

Mr Kennedy was thanked for his attendance and the explanation of the challenges facing his service.

**4 Police report:** In the absence of Sgt Bayliss, the September report was read out to members showing that there had been 37 crimes for the month, an increase on previous months. A number involved fixed penalty tickets issued for anti-social behaviour and vehicles being stopped for speeding.

Efforts are underway to set up a Pubwatch, regarded as a valuable tool to help stamp out anti-social behaviour. There has been an increased amount of licensed premises visits by officers in uniform and this will continue in order to keep people on nights out safe. Publicans are being asked to be more strict in rejecting people who have had too much to drink.

## **5 Correspondence:**

- a) **Night Flying:** notification given that an operation will mean increased night flying in Moray
- b) **Doric Festival:** details of a Doric Festival in Aberdeenshire were passed on to see if there as anything that could be learned.
- c) **Community Awards:** ballot papers and voting box available in Paterson's for these Moray wide awards. Members encouraged to submit nominations.
- d) **REAP:** Ann Davidson has requested if the joint working between REAP and the Community Council can be used as part of a new funding bid to continue its work. **EG to write letter**
- e) **Hill of Towie Windfarm application:** £5,000 is being awarded to Keith's Christmas Lights. Other projects that were successful included KERBS, the Loft, Newmill Renewables, KDRA. KCC to send a letter of thanks that can be used for publicity purposes. **EG to write submission. JM to supply email address to EG**
- f) **Institute:** Jane Martin, Valery Dickson of KSRP and Stewart Cree to continue investigations re the future of the Institute, and will liaise with Dawn Brodie, Community Support Unit. A

number of parties interested in the building, but on a small scale, ieno one body operating it in its entirety so there may be weight in a co-operative use of the premises. There could be various avenues of funding to explore, too.

- g) **Joint Community Council Questionnaire** – Because some members having problems with the KCC gmail account, JM to email questionnaire to all members to complete. **JM to action.**

**6 Treasurer's report** – KCC account sitting at around £900; Christmas Lights £9796. The £846 grant funding from Moray Council is to be paid in directly by BACS to the account this month.

## **7 Community Councillor updates**

- A. Planning/Licensing – no issues
- B. Signs/Street Furniture/Marketing – Agreement that the new A96 signs highlighting the town centre location look good.

**Scots Toun** - Plans to give £250 each to seven schools towards education materials. Stewart Cree suggested that providing themes for the schools to work towards would result in better outcomes and provide more value for evaluation purposes. **Action - Marguerite, Jane and Esther to revamp letter based on a 'Scots throughout the year' theme.**

**Doric Trail** – Marguerite shared the concept of a Doric Trail with a mix of plaques and wooden sculptures featuring some of Keith's favourite Scots words. Wooden sculptures would have maintenance costs and these might need to be under cover.

**Scots Christmas Lights** – Proposals to create a light with the message 'Have a couthy Christmas' or something similar were discussed. As this would be readable from only one direction, it was suggested it be fixed against a wall or building. Longmore Hall one of the venues suggested. Given the amount of Scots Toun themed business, agreed to hold another meeting dedicated to Scots Toun planning.

- C. Environmental and cleansing – nothing to report
- D. Roads and rights of way – nothing to report

## **9 External group updates**

- KSRP – AGM takes place on 29th October at 7pm in the Ugie House Hotel. All welcome.
- CARS -Still progressing with previously approved works.
- Christmas Lights – 15 volunteers required in order to have a staggered 'switch on' of the lights on 29th November. 50 plus brackets need to be put in place as a matter of urgency. **Action - Dave Carson to see Keith builder Michael Craig and liaise with Sandy Dickson from there.**

## **10 AOCB**

**Membership** – Jane Martin has notified Moray Council that Dave Carson is joining the community council. She further announced that Charlie Lawson is standing down after many years' service. Jane said she was sad to see him go and thanked him for all his hard work over a long period and said that he would be a big miss. The door would always be open for him to return. With Charlie's departure, Neil Kidd accepted the post of vice-chair.

**Next meeting** – This will take place on Monday, 3rd November at 7pm.