

# GRANTOWN ON SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Minutes of Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 at The Grant Arms Hotel Grantown –on – Spey at 19.00 Hrs

**Present:**

Linda Coe	Chair (LC)
Ewan MacGregor	Vice Chair (EM)
Beatrice Oliphant	Treasurer (BO)
Martin Bradshaw	Secretary (MB)
Catriona Brown (CB)	
John Halliday (JH)	
Laurie MacLeod (LM)	
Bill Sadler (BS)	

**Also present:**

John Bruce	Highland Council
Jeannie Munro	Resident
Margaret Ross	Resident
Lynn Stevenson	Resident
Jane Hope	Grantown Initiative
PC Neil MacIver	Item 2 only
PC Claire Maclellan	Item 2 only
Matthew Garstang	Item 4 only
Stuart Urquhart	Item 4 only
Steve Rustage	Item 5 only

### **Apologies:**

#### **1. Welcome:**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, there were no apologies save for Tim Artus who was unable to attend.

#### **2. Police Report:**

PC MacIver reported that since the last meeting the police had received a total of 73 calls concerning matters relating to Grantown which included for example 6 RTAs, 1 act of vandalism and 1 assault. As far as the much publicised throwing incident in The Square, and the less publicised vandalism at the Primary School were concerned then, unless there can be some identification of the car/persons involved, it would be difficult for the police to do anything but they were planning additional patrols in Grantown. He encouraged the community as a whole to report any incidents at all to the Police/Crimestoppers so that they can be followed up. There was a general discussion surrounding the alleged throwing incident and it was generally agreed that it was not representative of Grantown or its young people. PC MacIver confirmed that Grantown was one of the more peaceful locations

certainly when compared to other parts of the Highlands. He agreed to arrange for the police to provide some form of written support and confirmation of their opinion.

LC thanked PCs MacIver and Maclellan for their attendance and expressed appreciation for their support

### **3. Minutes of last Meeting:**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved

**Proposed: EM Seconded: BO**

### **4. New Distillery:**

Matthew Garstang (MG) the Project Manager from Gordon & MacPhail (G&M) introduced himself and Stuart Urquhart the Operations Director. By way of background he advised that G&M started with the retail shop in Elgin, they then purchased Benromach Distillery in 1993 and are now intending to expand further into Grantown. He stressed that all of their businesses are firmly rooted in the communities where they are located and it is their firm intention that the new distillery will be the same.

They are building a distillery with a contemporary design, they are not simply recreating a traditional distillery design. This has involved not only the Architects but landscape designers and environmental advisers who have worked closely with CNPA in order to enhance the wildlife diversity with substantial planting of new trees. He pointed out however that they have no wish to 'hide' the distillery and they hope it will enhance also the entrance into Grantown. The building is designed to encourage views of the Cairngorms, and they are expecting to cope with approximately 50,000 visitors a year to the distillery once it is operational, but it will take approximately 25 years for the brand to be fully established.

Jeannie Munro asked about the extent of community involvement in the project, MG said that they were trying to establish an international brand with the product and that this created challenges to find a name with Grantown connections. He confirmed he had JH's book on place names and would consult him no doubt in due course.

MG confirmed that the planning application was almost ready for submission hopefully in early June. The application will be called in by CNPA so they expected the application to go to Committee hopefully in October 2019 and if the decision is favourable they would hope to break ground by the end of 2019. He said that his MD had charged him with producing spirit by the end of 2020 as part of the 125 year anniversary celebrations – he thought that this was quite a challenge.

Lynn Stevenson asked what arrangements were planned for access to the distillery – MG said that they were creating a new entrance and access way and there would be some alteration to the existing arrangements to create the new access between Craggan Outdoor and the site.

Jeannie Munro asked what community benefit if any would result from the distillery – MG stated that they were working with Sustrans in connection with the proposed paths and cycle tracks between Dulnain Bridge and Grantown. He said that they were expecting there to be a report back on this towards the end of May. She also asked what levels of employment were likely. MG said that, to begin with, they would be working one shift a day, five days a week with initially 2 – 5 full time employees - the expectation was that in the long term there would be around 10 full time posts.

Lynn Stevenson enquired about the steam railway; MG said that meetings were being held to consider how the 3 projects (railway extension/cycle paths/distillery) could work together

for the benefit of all. She suggested that the railway could be extended to the new Distillery and then buses could be available to bring visitors into Grantown. MG said they were looking at all possible options but any minibus service to Grantown for example could only be seasonal. Finally, she asked whether or not they would be taking steps to display up to date information for residents and visitors. MG confirmed that they were considering how best to deliver this.

Jeannie Munro asked whether G&M would consider becoming involved in community life and events such as Hogmanay in The Square. MG replied that they were looking at all of the events in which they could participate in Grantown.

JH enquired as to the source of the water to be used. MG said that two types of water were required, pure source water – used in the manufacture of the whisky itself, and additional water needed for cooling. The pure source water was to be extracted from Glenbeg Burn. They are aware that other local residents also draw water from the burn so their extraction point is downstream from all the private residences so as not to affect their supply and they will constantly monitor the water levels and if they fall below sufficient for all usage they are drilling 2 boreholes nearer the distillery site to cover any shortfall. The cooling water will be extracted from the Spey and returned after use. They are awaiting a final environmental Report as to how they can ensure that the water returned to the Spey can be returned in a way so as not to increase the temperature of the river water or in a way which would affect the biological systems within the river itself.

LC thanked MG for the detailed information he had provided which was of great interest and invited him to remain for their rest of the meeting if he wished.

#### **5. B&S Community Transport Company ('BSCTC'):**

Steve Rustage (SR) introduced himself and thanked the CC for the opportunity to address them on the work of the BSCTC.

He explained that BSCTC is not just about transport and is looking for more Clients and Volunteers. He explained that Badenoch & Strathspey ('B&S') as an area covers 909 sq. miles and BSCTC has at the moment 600 registered users and some 200 Clients. BSCTC is very aware of the isolation many people experience in living in B&S so that a large part of the scheme is transporting Clients to and from existing commercial bus services and routes. Another major part of the scheme is getting Clients to and from the various Health Service providers in B&S.

In answer to a question from Jeannie Munro he confirmed that Dava, and indeed Advie, are not within the National Park and so do not come within the CNPA definition of B&S with the result that residents fall outside the scope of BSCTC. This is something they are aware of and are looking at ways to change this.

The work of BSCTC takes two forms – the Car Scheme which originally was used primarily for medical journeys but this is changing as more and more car journeys involve community activities – and the Registered Bus Routes, these follow set existing routes but they only run when people book them but this actually means that they run almost every day. The buses will pick Clients up from their door, so there are no allocated stops for them to have to get to. There are regular Wednesday buses between the villages in the Strath. He added that the buses are available for hire but they can only be driven by qualified drivers and, if one is not available, BSCTC drivers can also be hired. A recent development has been the introduction of trikes as part of the transport system and they have been warmly welcomed and BSCTC is currently looking at various locations where they can be used.

Other activities carried out by BSCTC include:-

- A befriending service which is available as group sessions designed to connect otherwise isolated people;
- A link worker is in place in Doctor's Surgeries;
- A music afternoon is held once a month;
- Fish & Chip suppers are held at regular intervals
- Assisted shopping mornings in Aviemore and Grantown
- Wednesday Lunch group is held in Andersons weekly

but they are constantly looking for other activities to alleviate isolation and loneliness

SR advised that the cost of the car scheme was a minimum of £4.00 per journey and thereafter was charged at 4p/mile and he added finally that NEC bus passes were valid on all the BSCTC registered bus routes.

LC thanked SR for the detailed and helpful information he had provided.

#### **6. Matters arising:**

**Burnfield Toilets:** discussions are continuing with HC because the CC is aware of the continuing problem of people urinating in and around the Burnfield Car Park. It is clear that the best provision is not being kept open and the problem is made worse by the unreliability of the opening hours of the toilets in the South West High Street Car Park. These discussions are centred on the possibility of re-opening the Burnfield toilets or if this is not possible replacing them temporarily with porta-loos. In the immediate term the unreliability of the other toilets must be addressed and the HC Comfort Scheme also exists but regrettably to date no business in Grantown has been identified as being suitable.

Lynn Stevenson asked why the Garth Hotel or GAH could not be used in the Comfort Scheme. EM replied that, apart from hours of operation, any premises must be able to provide a Male Toilet, a Female Toilet and a Disabled Toilet and neither of the suggested premises can provide these;

**Parking:** LC advised that this is going to happen and suggested that any queries or concerns which members of the community might have should be raised direct with HC. EM asked JB whether or not the time limit can be raised from 1hr to 2 hrs – JB said he would take this under advisement;

**Bus Shelter:** the planning authorities have agreed to site this outside the Craiglynn Hotel, as preferred by the community rather than outside Ritchies;

**WiFi:** JH advised that £30k had been raised towards the £50k needed for Grantown alone or the £100k needed to cover the Strath (other than Aviemore) as a whole. However the CC have been told in no uncertain terms by HC that they cannot proceed with the project and that it can only be taken forward by a limited company because of the possibility of legal liability being incurred. The latter point was well understood by the CC hence the proposed involvement of the Grantown Initiative (GI) when appropriate. HC had also indicated that unless they were convinced that the necessary ballot of the non-domestic ratepayers had been 'done properly' they would veto the whole project anyway. JH stated that the project therefore was dormant but not yet dead.

JB advised that there was now the HC Town Centre fund available to improve town centres under which HC was allocating £265,289 of the £2.9m it had received from the Scottish Government to B&S, i.e. Aviemore, Kingussie, Newtonmore and Grantown and that applications should be made using Grantown Initiative. JH confirmed that the CC were aware of this potential source of funding which is designed to improve derelict buildings street furniture etc and not for example for the WiFi, and that the CC would be considering a project for an application with the GI.

#### **7. Treasurer's Report:**

BO advised that the current balance stood at £4,128.08 with a cheque out on 03/04 in the sum of £32.80 being the cost of bulbs and further cheques out in respect of administration expenses which she asked the CC to approve as a small contribution to the considerable administrative expenses all members now incurred. The proposal was to share £250 between members being half of the notional fee for secretarial expenses as a token gesture toward inevitable expenses

**Proposed: LC Seconded EM**

#### **8. Highland Council Report:**

JB stated that all the matters on his list had in fact already been covered in previous discussions. EM raised the situation of the drainage gullies and drains in Grantown which are in an appalling state and desperately need cleaning; what is needed is for the appropriate personnel to go through the whole town inspecting cleaning and clearing them all. This was noted by JB

#### **9. Planning Report:**

Birchview – apparent that planning permission has now been granted and that there are no further steps open to the CC

#### **10. Community Engagement:**

BS confirmed that a summary of the views expressed at the two events had been produced and this would be placed on the Website and on Facebook

#### **11. Grantown in Bloom:**

BO stated that some of the daffodils were still in bloom and therefore difficult to lift at this time and in any event there was still the problem of storage. She added that feedback from the community at large had been encouraging. The new plants will be arriving on 14<sup>th</sup> June with planting planned for 15<sup>th</sup> June and to be carried out by the people/organisations who have adopted the planters. Efforts are continuing to improve the sunken garden by the Garth Hotel and to keep it tidy.

Community Payback remain active and involved – some of the bollards and seats have already been painted with the rest to follow and attempts are being made, with help from GI, to obtain new rubbish bins for The Square and SW High Street.

BO pointed out that unfortunately CNPA appeared not to be in a position to contribute to any of these projects.

## **12. Correspondence:**

CC Network Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June – BS to attend

Petanque match between the Twinning Committee and the CC has been fixed for 2.00pm on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

## **13. AOCB:**

BS said that the CC should start getting things together with a view to producing a Local Plan he suggested that there should be a Community Fair at which all relevant parties would be present and collect and collate ideas. EM said that the Legion had confirmed that subject to dates and availability they would be prepared to hold such a Community Fair in the large back hall

Jeannie Munro expressed the view that the CNPA Welcome Board on the Dava was a disgrace. She was advised to take a photo and raise the matter with John Kirk who is the local representative on the CNPA Board and ask him to take the matter up with them

## **14. Date of the next Meeting:**

The next Meeting of the CC will be in the Grant Arms Hotel on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 19.00

**The Meeting closed at 21.46**