

GRANTOWN ON SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Meeting held on 16th July 2019 at The Grant Arms Hotel
Grantown -on - Spey at 19.00 Hrs**

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

Also present: Cllr. John Bruce (JB) Highland Council
Claire Thom (CT) Grantown Community Centre [Item 4 only]
Jane Hope Resident
Gordon Whyte Resident
Lynn Stevenson Resident

Apologies: Apologies received from Beatrice Oliphant and Tim Artus

1. Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending

2. Police Report:

There being no representative of Police Scotland present there was no formal Police Report. However, MB said that he had received a complaint from a local resident who wished to remain anonymous for fear of possible repercussions on her teenaged son who was known to a number of the relevant individuals.

This resident was extremely concerned at the speed and nature of driving by local youths, she had witnessed extreme speeds, reckless overtaking, verbal abuse and erratic dangerous tricks being carried out particularly on the back road towards Cromdale. She has called Crimestoppers and 101, reported the vehicle to the Police but to date nothing has been done and she was extremely worried that there will be a serious accident soon if the police do not address the problem.

Lynn Stevenson supported this concern, she has also contacted the police through Crimestoppers and reported the activities of a small black Audi vehicle, but again there appears to have been no effective response.

LC agreed to contact the Police and request a police presence at the next Meeting at which these concerns can be reported and the matter considered fully.

3. Minutes of last Meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May 2019 were approved

Proposed: BS Seconded EM

4. Community Centre Plans:

CT, the Chair of the Grantown Community Centre, said that the YM has been the heart of the Grantown community for a great many years. Some time ago the Trustees planned to completely re-develop the site but were unable to obtain the appropriate planning permission; as a result the then Trustees all resigned together, the building was closed and remained so for many years during which it deteriorated through neglect and inactivity. In 2010 it was re-opened to provide youth work in the community and since then the pressing issue has always been refurbishment of the premises.

CT said that she had joined the Board in 2012 and at that time the Board took the decision to keep the YM going and set about seeking funding for the necessary refurbishment. For a number of reasons access to the large grant funding was not available, however, a number of smaller grants have been obtained and this has enabled the Board to carry out small scale maintenance and repairs.

Largely as a result of the Board's engagement on a Social Enterprise Course two major developments have been planned for the YM which it is hoped will be successful:

- 1. Soft play area for the Under-5s:** following a successful trial in 2018 all the necessary equipment has now been obtained and it is hoped that this will be fully operational in the very near future and she confirmed that it was intended that this facility should be open to visitors as well as the Grantown community;
- 2. A cinema:** there has been substantial interest in this venture e.g. afternoon showings with tea/coffee/use of the bar; public and focus group screenings within a multi-purpose facility. The appropriate space has been identified, the room completely refurbished with new lighting, heating and retractable seating all in place. The new doors are under construction and it is anticipated that the facility will be open in August. She confirmed that this project had been assisted by grant aid of £48k

CT reiterated that the present level of fundraising covers only the day-to-day running costs and that it is a constant struggle to survive but it is hoped that the new enterprises will help significantly. They have replaced the carpet in the coffee bar which will lift the room and make it even more attractive for use, the youth work in the evenings is successful and will continue and fundraising is underway for the next project which is the provision of disabled toilets in the building. She mentioned that there has been an approach by Bespoke Housing for some of the land but this

was only at a preliminary stage and no decision has been reached. CT pointed out that at the time of the YM's heyday when it was much used and popular, the Craig Maclean Centre had not been built and it was therefore now necessary to identify possible new uses for the building. She added that the Board has been actively encouraged by HC Councillors to apply under the Town Centre Fund for grant aid to repair and/or replace windows. Jane Hope said that the GI had applied to the same fund in respect of improvements to The Square, toilets etc and added that under this Fund HC had made £265k available across the 4 communities in Badenoch & Strathspey.

LC thanked CT for coming to the meeting and for explaining all the good work being carried out by the Board and on behalf of the CC congratulated them on all their efforts

5. Grantown Compass Report:

BS reported that the intention is to have all the individual small plans and projects locally joined together to produce one overall project for the community which will then open up a large number of funding sources accessing a much higher level of grant funding. The idea of The Compass is to look for widespread answers and solutions.

Paul Harrington of HIE Land Fund has the requisite funding to distribute so that the necessary cash to acquire appropriate buildings should not in reality be too much of a problem to obtain, funding for and help and support with the relevant paperwork is also available. BS confirmed that there is a lot of potential so the necessary processes and projects have to be examined in detail. The aspiration of The Compass is to be in a position to set up a dedicated team to manage the overall project and, as part of this, The Compass is looking for new ideas as to the next step using as many social media outlets as possible. It is the intention to produce a preliminary Report within the next month or so and for this to be an integral part of the CC's next Community Engagement Event during the Fiddle Festival on 22nd September.

BS added that there has been an offer made for the Old Burgh Yard and that RBS are going to a closing date in mid-August, although it was not thought that there has been any real interest but if there was to be any interest from the community then it will be necessary to prepare a full and detailed Business Plan.

'Expressions of Interest' can be lodged in respect of possibly suitable premises and these can act as a 'marker' if anyone is interested in buying.

The cycle path (NMU) between Dulnain Bridge and the edge of Grantown has been agreed but it will be up to Grantown to move it through the town to the schools etc.,

LC questioned JB about the South West High Street Toilets which HC had assured the CC would be open 24/7 but which in fact were open on a seemingly random basis. JB said that it was his understanding that they should have regular consistent opening times but that there were problems and concerns about use at night - drugs etc.

EM said he thought that was not really a problem as the toilets have an automatic payment entry system.

JB said he will find out what exactly should be the position.

6. Matters arising:

- **Tree Survey:** this matter was first raised in November 2017 and an email has been received recently stating that the Survey will have to be done 'soon' – although there has been a sighting of a person in The Square seemingly carrying out such Survey but this cannot be verified.

BS said that it was essential that there be comprehensive community engagement and involvement in any plans for future replanting, not limited to just the varieties of trees to be planted but also their locations which should be considered in conjunction with other community ideas about The Square. JB said he will try and find out what is going on and get all the relevant proposed timings.

- **Old Spey Bridge:** it has been estimated that the necessary repairs will cost £600k, these costs have undoubtedly increased because of the delays and the fact that HC owns only half of the bridge seems to be an excuse for not taking responsibility for repairs; BS confirmed that the majority of the repairs are needed on the half of the bridge owned by HC but he expressed surprise at the high cost of the repair estimate.

LC said that as the boundary ran down the middle of the Spey she had been in contact with the Chair of Nethy Bridge CC and it had been agreed that they will meet to discuss the matter in.

JB said that it would be raised at the next Ward Meeting but there was a 'legal' issue about ownership, it had all been once part of the Revack Estate but when that was divided and sold the position became unclear. It was pointed out to him that there is no question about the ownership of the bridge, the position has been carefully researched in detail, there is no doubt whatsoever that HC own one-half and the other passed from the Trust, when it disbanded, to The Crown but The Crown has disowned it.

LC added that the bridge is 'Listed' and HC need to make more of an effort to say whether they can identify funding and as far as the CC is concerned they do not want the excuse of ownership issues to delay matters. HC must accept that the necessary repairs are on their side of the bridge and get on with it by contacting the Scottish Govt. regarding funding if necessary.

- **Skating Pond:** LC advised that this is an issue to be dealt with outside the CC and that the GI will take over.

EM said that the AWT does not own the site, in fact the Estate own the large part of it. The AWT paid for some work to be carried out about 2 years ago but now it will be a major project to have it cleared but if it is not done it will become a major eyesore and there will be considerable habitat loss rather than being the community asset which it could be. Discussions are taking place between HC/CNPA/AWT/Estate but these do not seem to be getting anywhere as no-one will accept responsibility. However, some efforts are being made to explore funding possibilities to have the reeds cut. Jane Hope said that the GI have the issue 'in their sights' but, in her view, the parties should stop arguing about ownership, the GI should buy a reed cutter and get on with it.

- **ICH:** LC has spoken with Kenny Rodgers on 17/07/19 and now that the GI are up to speed on the issue it has been agreed that there should be a meeting with the GPs in the Health Centre to discuss the proposal to use the separated ICH for short term housing for seconded staff in Grantown. These discussions will agree the scope of the project before putting in a 'notice of interest' and commencing discussions with NHS Highland.

LC to organise a meeting between the CC incl. TA (CC lead on ICH), the GI and the GPs

- **Parking:** LC said she had written to Shane Manning requesting details of the number of PCNs issued and the total revenue generated since implementation of the scheme but had had no response. JB said he will speak to Shane Manning and ask him to respond to her request
- **Bus Shelter: (opp. Craiglynn)** Action awaited from HC. It was reported that the 'turn' at Castle Grant will be re-instated in mid-October, the Health Centre had received encouraging response to their expressions of concern . JB said that he understood that 'officially' it will be mid-October but it hoped that it will, be much sooner so that the buses can serve the Health Centre Grant House and the Dental Practice. Stagecoach have confirmed re-instatement of the mid-afternoon bus from Inverness and the Elgin bus service is due to start in the near future. However, a decision on the re-routing of the Aviemore via Nethy service is still awaited
- **Public WiFi:** JH said he was considering going back for funding for the £20k needed; the closing date is in September with the meeting in October
- **Litter in Grant Road:** LC confirmed that the CC is no further forward with this issue despite many communications with HC Environmental Health.

7. Treasurer's Report:

LC reported that the balance as at 15/07/19 was £3,986.73 but there are 2 uncleared cheques - LM acknowledged that she had not presented her cheque for £27.00. Following discussion it was agreed that the CC should make a contribution towards the expenses incurred by BS in connection with the Grantown Compass event. BS advised that printing costs were £45 and ink costs £140.

It was agreed to pay the sum of £185.53 to BS in reimbursement of expenses incurred

Proposed: EM Seconded MB

8. Planning Report:

CB advised that the only reference was the erection of a canopy at the Nursery, and it was agreed that the CC had no issue with that.

9. Grantown in Bloom:

There have been numerous compliments about the planting in The Square and, on behalf of the CC, LC wished to express thanks and appreciation to all the volunteers involved in the weeding and watering.

However, there have been many complaints about the situation outside the new CNPA building in Church Avenue. JH said it was his opinion that it was so disgraceful they should be 'named and shamed' on social media

Jane Hope said that the bowser replacement was within the current scope of the GI and was out for consultation.

The litter bin outside the Museum was not included in the overhaul of those in The Square since the Museum has indicated that they have their own plans for it.

The Community Payback Scheme have indicated that they would be willing to do further work in the town including for example the draughts board and redoing the War Memorial paintwork.

10. Town Centre Fund Application:

JB will check with Liz Cowie that the application is in and that all is in order.

11. Highland Council Report:

JB reported that:

- The bus turning area problem had been sorted out;
- He had undertaken a YMCA 'walk-through';
- He had had a 'walk-through' the town with BO to look at possible storage solutions, it was clear that there are plenty of places available and he will take the matter up at the next Ward Meeting

EM stated that major concerns had been expressed at the condition of the Council housing in Castle Road. JB said he thought that they were being worked on, EM confirmed that all we have is scaffolding up with nothing being done

Concern was also expressed at the appalling condition of the access road to the community tip and it was possible that the condition of this road deterred the public from using it with the result that there has been a significant increase in fly-tipping locally. CC members and residents attending the meeting all expressed considerable disquiet at the increased fly-tipping. JB announced that the Council were building a new facility and agreed that improvements to then access road and additional opening hours may go some way towards alleviating the problem.

JB was advised that

- a. the Court House steps have been damaged - he will look into this
- b. the CC were still waiting for the gullies to be cleared in the town as promised - JB said that this was supposed to be happening in July.

JB did say that it was proposed that the street lighting will be replaced rather than merely repainted. BS said that it was imperative that the Community be consulted on and involved in all aspects of this proposal both design and location. JB said he was aware that certain elements in the community wanted 'heritage' lamp posts but if this was the case the community would have to pay the difference between the cost of standard and 'heritage' posts but he did say he would try and make sure that the CC concerns were flagged up on this issue.

12. Correspondence:

LC reported on the proposed Strathspey Railway Drop - in at the YMCA on 30/ 31 August

13. AOCB:

BS reported that an installation for the Millennium Fountain site had become available provided the CC arranged for it to be installed, he added that he was aware of help available to do so. He produced a picture of the object and it was unanimously agreed to proceed with this

He also asked about the Square Clock and was advised that some time ago HC were contacted and requested to write to the owners informing them that repair was their responsibility but the CC has no knowledge of the present position. Finally BS advised that the Fiddler of Strathspey Festival programme will be published shortly.

LM advised that the Dava Association had applied for Berryburn funding for a defibrillator in the telephone box on Dava, they asked for £178 per year for 7 years for installation and full maintenance but this was declined with no reason given.

JH reminded the meeting that the CNPA Economic Action Plan consultation was presently on their website

14. Date of the next Meeting:

The next Meeting of the CC will be in the Grant Arms Hotel on Tuesday 17th September 2019 at 7.00-pm

The Meeting closed at 21.34