

GRANTOWN-ON- SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE 2021 AGM

The Community Council

Since the last AGM in December 2020 the Community Council has remained operational.

The current Members are:

Linda Coe – Chair

Declan Gallacher - Treasurer

Ewan MacGregor - Secretary

Bill Sadler

John Halliday

Laurie Macleod

Lucy Edmondson

Michelle Maclean

Since the last AGM Emily Strang stepped down: we are grateful for her contribution.

Community Council Activities

The six-month period since the last AGM has continued to be dominated by Covid 19 and the consequential effects of the Country's response. Grantown has benefitted from the amazing work of the volunteers who set up and continue to support the Community Help Fund and in particular the Here to Help Group and the Community Table. These services have been invaluable to the Community and the generosity shown here, as well as the many individual acts of kindness around the Town, are evidence of a truly supportive Community.

However, not everything has been positive and uplifting during the pandemic, with a small minority has engaged in persistent and damaging anti-social behaviour. Regrettably, we have had to involve the Police and appropriate action continues to be taken.

The Community Council has continued to function despite the many challenges. We have held Zoom meetings and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Details are posted on Facebook, our webpage and the Noticeboard in the Square.

We continue to work closely with the Grantown Initiative on Projects to improve the appearance of the Square and to reopen Burnfield Toilets. The aspiration to have the toilets open in Spring 2021 has been thwarted by legal issues identified by Highland Council. We remain confident that the toilets will be open by Spring 2022. The improvements in the Square remain subject to support from Highland Council and steady progress is being made

The Grantown Forum inaugurated by the Community Council has continued to provide a degree of coordination and cohesion between various voluntary groups regarding their Projects in Grantown.

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Communications have been challenging during the pandemic but we have continued to raise issues with Highland Council including dog waste, pot holes, pavement repairs and Mossie Play Park.

Grantown in Bloom

We have again been able to source plants for the 45 planters around the Town and expect to plant these in June as usual. We remain hopeful for funding for the plants for the 24 hanging baskets. We have acquired a further 30 hanging baskets and await approval from Highland Council to affix these to the lamp posts to extend the display towards the Health Centre and the Craiglynnne. Thanks here are due to the small team of volunteers from the Community Council, U3A and local residents who continue to work tirelessly throughout the year to maintain the planters and tend the beds in Burnfield Garden.

Trees

The dead and dying trees in the Square were finally removed by Highland Council at the beginning of December. We await the removal of the stumps so that the replacement trees, which have been ordered, can be planted.

Rejuvenating Grantown 2021

We have initiated a Project to identify the areas of the Town which are in need of improvement. Highland Council does not have the resources to undertake much of the work required and we are hoping that the volunteer spirit seen throughout the pandemic, will rise to the occasion. More information will be circulated as Covid restrictions are lifted.

Grant Park

A Project has been set up with the Grantown Initiative and the Anagach Woods Trust to improve the amenities in Grant Park. Significant funds need to be raised before work can begin. In the meantime, Seafield Estates has kindly agreed to repair the fencing, to which we will make a contribution, as and when funds are raised. We are extremely grateful to the Estate for stepping in to undertake this urgent work.

Flags

Whilst lowering the flags to half-mast we noticed the Town Crest flag has seen better days. We have applied to Highland Council for the funds to replace it. The saltire is in fact Highland Council's responsibility and no doubt they will consider replacing it in due course.

Planning

We have continued to monitor Planning Applications and raise objections where necessary.

Scottish Opera

We are working with Scottish Opera to include Grantown in their touring Pop Up Opera outdoor season, with a provisional date of Saturday 31 July 2021. We are hopeful that we can confirm a venue and obtain any necessary consents, so as to give Grantown something to look forward to.

Linda Coe