

GRANTOWN ON SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 17th December 2019 at The Grant Arms Hotel Grantown -on - Spey at 19.00 Hrs

Present:	Linda Coe Chair	(LC)
	Ewan MacGregor Vice-Chair	(EM)
	Declan Gallagher Treasurer	(DG)
	Martin Bradshaw Secretary	(MB)
	John Halliday	(JH)
	Laurie McLeod	(LM)
	Bill Sadler	(BS)

Also present: Muriel Cockburn Highland Council (MC)
Tors Hamilton Cairngorm Connect

1. Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which was the first meeting of the newly constituted Grantown-on-Spey & Vicinity Community Council (GoSVCC) and thanked everyone for attending. The Chair also wished to express the thanks and appreciation of the GoSVCC to the Management and Staff of the Grant Arms Hotel for all their help and assistance throughout the year

2. Declarations of Member' Interests

All or any interests of Members in any of the matters under discussion were declared.

It was agreed that the Secretary for the time being of the Council will maintain a physical record of Declarations of Members' Interests and that the same will be reviewed and, if appropriate, revised at regular intervals

3.Minutes of Meeting held on 17th September 2019:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the CC held on 17th September 2019 were approved

Proposed : EM

Seconded : DG

4. Matters arising:

- 4.1 **Buses:** LC reported that discussions with the Commercial Manager of Stagecoach had confirmed that all buses should now be going through the town and that none should be

turning left at the traffic signal in the centre of the town. It had been further confirmed that this is a driver training issue and the Asst. Manager at the depot has been charged with carrying out this training. In addition it has been confirmed that the digital displays boards will be updated;

4.2 Anti-social behaviour: It was reported that since the last meeting certain actions have been taken to attempt to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour; ASBOs have been issued, fines imposed and vehicle confiscations carried out;

4.3 Trees: MC reported that nothing will happen in this connection before “the Spring” LC indicated that this was a question of definition but in reality it meant that nothing would be done before Easter. MC said she would chase up the appropriate Officer and try to get something done by February and obtain identification of those trees to be felled and those which will be ‘lopped’.

MC added that she was aware of concerns that there had been communication difficulties between CC and HC on this matter and advised that the new Executive Chief Officer for Badenoch and Strathspey has been appointed and has identified ‘communication’ as one of the major concerns to be addressed;

4.4 OSB: BS stated that the fact that HC appear to be intending to do nothing about the bridge does not mean that the CC should also do nothing and simply allow the bridge to collapse - this is a community issue and is one which must be addressed as such. LC confirmed that she will follow this matter up.

MC said that it is a problem of ownership.

LC replied that there is no issue or problem with regard to ‘ownership’ - it is clear that HC own one-half of the bridge and it is that half which requires urgent attention and repair; it is, therefore, clear beyond peradventure that this argument is no longer tenable. MC responded by confirming that in the present climate HC will not adopt any other asset.

LC pointed out that Lossiemouth received grant assistance for repairs to their bridge - JH said that this was probably because that bridge is a major tourist asset for the community. LM said she would investigate the possibility of grant funding for OSB as a ‘heritage site’;

4.5 Council Housing in Castle Road East: It was noted that the repair works have been started;

4.6 Gully Cleaning: again it was noted that some works have been carried out to clear the gullies - MC said she had requested am copy of the timetable for works in 2020 so that the CC can be made aware of when further works will be carried out in the community;

4.7 Access road to Community Tip: it was noted that the repairs to the track had been carried out satisfactorily;

4.8 NMUs: BS reported that the route into Grantown (ending at the Triangle) has been agreed and the Grantown Society is in discussion with Sustrans about the continuation of the route. He advised that this needs to be followed up and that the Grantown Society is happy to lead on this issue;

4.9 Grantown in Bloom: JH reported that there had been some confusion surrounding the removal of the hanging baskets in The Square but he has spoken with Barry Green and they will be removed when the lights are being taken down but that, once again, this will mean that there will be a storage issue. He added that all the bulbs have now been planted but the question of a portable bowser still needs to be resolved - various different types have been considered but they are all expensive, so he is considering an application to

Berryburn for grant assistance and confirmed that the next application date is 20/01/2020; JH added that it will be necessary to agree on a 'planting day' some time in June 2020 to put in all the plants for Summer.

EM pointed out that a 'bag-pack' day in the Co-Op can raise approx. £3/400 and it might be worthwhile trying to arrange one with the schools/Brownies/scouts etc. to raise funds for Grantown in Bloom;

- 4.10 Storage:** the previous item had raised the problem of storage in the town, BS pointed out that there is storage space available behind the Court House but the CC is not allowed by HC to use this space. LC said that it had been agreed that the CC would talk to hotels B&Bs etc. throughout the town to see whether any of them could help, but the answer has been a complete and resounding 'NO' so that it is now a matter for HC to determine whether any solution is possible. LC made it clear that at the present time the No. 1 concern for the CC is the question of community storage.

MC said she would speak to the relevant Officer but she was not sure what could be done;

- 4.11 Dulaig Park:** EM reported that the Dulaig Park Group is functioning really well and they will be contacting HC about their requirements, he confirmed that a number of events have been planned for the forthcoming year but there have been several issues, such as lighting, and these have been raised through the portal.

MC pointed out that there is budgetary pressure on Service Points generally and they are being reviewed by Anne McDougall, the Customer Service Manager for all HC Service Points, and it has been noted, for example, that the GoS Service Point has a relatively low footfall;

- 4.12** EM reported that the Charging Point in the Burnfield Car Park has been defective for some time.

MC noted this

- 4.13 Hedges in Castle Road:** it was noted that the hedges from Grant House to ICH had received some attention but those from ICH to the Lodge remain overgrown JH confirmed that responsibility for this latter stretch lay with Seafield Estate - they are aware of the problem but refuse to deal with it. It was expressed to MC that any pressure that HC could exert on the Estate by stressing safety concerns - road signage obscured, footpath obstructed etc. - would be very welcome.

MC said that she was happy to take up this issue;

- 4.14 Dava:** LM reported that the proposed traffic calming measures on The Dava have been discussed; HC are happy with the junction, but for the residents the area which is of greatest concern in fact lies within Moray Council and the residents are raising the issue with them.

5. Treasurer's Report:

DG reported that as at 17.12.19 the balance in the CC Account was £3,673.69. In addition that so far for 2019/20 income amounted to £1,443.13 and expenditure totalled £1,950.32. This meant that for the current year to date there is a deficit of £507.19 but the CC had received a Donation of £500 from Reidhaven Estate. MB was instructed to write to the Chief Executive of Reidhaven Estate to express the CC's thanks and appreciation for this donation.

6. Planning Report

BS commented that the Beachan development continues to confuse. He reported that the HMO application had been rejected.

LM said that she thought that it would be extremely beneficial if HC were able to offer some training in planning issues to CCs so that they would be much more aware of the issues and relevant concerns. MC responded by stating that in fact Liz Cowie is responsible for setting up such training. MB to contact Liz Cowie to enquire whether or not this has been done and, if so, obtain the appropriate details.

7. Highland Council Report:

MC reported that there have been changes in the Committee structure within HC; she no longer sits on Housing but is now on the Care & Education Committee.

During the First Quarter of the year the Budget will be the principal area of business and she reported that this is going to be 'extremely challenging'.

MC advised that Kate Lackie has been appointed Executive Chief Officer for Badenoch & Strathspey and she will attend the CC meeting in January if possible but the idea is to focus on the complexity of the area as a whole and the particular problems of the region.

MC also confirmed that the idea of a tourist tax has been approved in principle and that it is now going out to consultation.

8. Town Centre Fund Update:

LC confirmed that this is moving forward but that there was nothing major to report at this stage, the formal Contract has been received by Jane Hope for the GI and she has forwarded a copy to LC who will also consider its terms.

The GI has contacted a specialist contractor who will visit The Square to advise on possible WiFi sound system to replace the present system.

Discussions are taking place with the Dulaig Park Group to assess what assistance can be given to them

Jane Hope and Karen Martin from the GI are preparing the submission to the Scottish Land Fund for funding to acquire the Burnfield toilets which submission has to be made by 7th January 2020.

The approach for additional Twinning with Mesa, Arizona was raised and LC confirmed that she had spoken with the woman who had proposed it, who has returned to the US with such comments and her response is awaited.

9. Applications for Funding from CC

There was a general and wide-ranging discussion on this topic, it was generally felt that the CC should not become a lender to others of money to be used for matters which are the responsibility of the CC for example the provision of plants, planting and upkeep. It was suggested, and agreed, that the CC should 'ring fence' the funds it does have for flowers and plants etc. so cannot entertain applications from other community groups for financial assistance. It was also agreed that the model for the CC to take forward is to advise that the GI can assist such community groups with funding application.

Following the detailed discussion the following Resolution was proposed by LC and seconded by EM:-

The Community Council deeply regrets that due to severe budgetary constraints it is not in a position to be able to entertain any applications for funding from any community groups within its area. The Community Council will, however, continue to provide all practicable help and support, which it is able to provide, to such community groups.

The Community Council acknowledges that the organization most able to assist such community groups in accessing relevant funding sources and applying for grant assistance is The Grantown Initiative and that any community group requesting aid from the Community Council should be directed to The Grantown Initiative

The above Resolution was passed unanimously.

10 Town Clock:

BS produced his paper on the question of responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the Clock which lies with the owners of the flats in the building. MB agreed to prepare the form of as letter to be sent to the Owners/Occupiers of the flats in Strathspey House advising them of their joint obligations in connection with the Clock. In the absence of LC such letter to be signed by EM

11. Abandoned Car in High Street:

It was noted that this had at last been removed.

12. Post Office:

This was now out for Consultation by the Post Office. It was considered that wherever possible individual responses should be submitted but that a formal CC response was advisable. LM agreed to draft and submit a formal response on behalf of the CC.

13. Correspondence:

- The letter regarding The Grantown Society was approved and signed;
- The HC Discretionary Grant Application - this had now been received and it was noted that in previous years the application had been made successfully on the basis of the funds being used for plants etc. in connection with Grantown in Bloom. However BS proposed that this year the application for funding should be made for help in considering, preparing and producing a Local Place Plan (LPP) in accordance with recent Planning legislation. There was a lengthy discussion during which it was agreed that such an LPP would be a useful and desirable development in helping to create a comprehensive and coherent plan for the future of the town. However, it was uncertain whether or not such purposes for the Discretionary Grant would be acceptable to HC. MC pointed out that it was essential that any application was not 'rejected' since, if this happened, there was no appeal mechanism to claim it again. It was agreed therefore that if possible and if Kate Lachan was able to attend the next meeting on 17th January this should be discussed

with her to establish whether or not it was likely that an application on this basis would be rejected;

- **Rails to Grantown:** LC advised that in due course, and to advertise that this is still an active project, a train silhouette will be placed on the disused bridge outside the town with all relevant contact details;
- **JH** advised that Openreach have now been granted the contract for the Highland region and as they wish to have a project in Strathspey, Grantown is very much in the frame for the new revised Openreach funding model. He confirmed that the Coupar model, on which the Grantown proposal is based had received approval as a result of the validation vote carried out;

14. AOB

Tors Hamilton introduced herself and asked to address the meeting.

She informed the meeting that she was employed by Connect Cairngorm which is a partnership of **SRSPB, Scottish Heritage, Forestry Scotland** [ex Forestry Commission] and **Wildlife Ltd.** She is the co-ordinator of all the partners and is also responsible for community engagement and for creating the appropriate communication channels. The purpose of Cairngorm Connect is to combine all the land under the ownership of the various partners in one piece and to manage the land together under one single land management plan. The idea is to have a long term - 200 year -plan to restore and regenerate the land under the ownership of the various partners, which in total amounts to 13% of the total CNPA land area.

She said that there is a \$5m Endangered Landscape Programme available over 5 years to which they hope to have access and which is to assist in the preparation of plans for habitat rescue and the personnel required.

She added that Cairngorm Connect are carrying out surveys locally and they would strongly welcome CC involvement and interest in their work to establish a network of community views throughout the area which will impact on and inform the work of Cairngorm Connect.

LC thanked her for her contribution and confirmed that this was of interest to the CC who would offer all help and assistance possible

15. Next Meeting:

Date of the next meeting, which will be a formal meeting of the CC, is 21st January 2020 at 19.00

The meeting closed at 21.32