

GRANTOWN ON SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Zoom Virtual Meeting held on 21st September

Grantown –on – Spey at 19.00 Hrs

Present: Linda Coe Chair (LC)
Ewan MacGregor Vice Chair/Secretary (EM)
Declan Gallagher Treasurer (DG)
John Halliday (JH)
Bill Sadler (BS)
Muriel Cockburn HC Councillor (MC)

Members of the Community Present. Beatrice Oliphant, (BO)
Alison Weston (AW)

Apologies: Laurie MacLeod (LH), Michelle McLean,

1. Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. LC thanked EM for the organisation of the unveiling of the War Memorial event on Saturday 18th September and asked him to convey thanks and appreciation to all involved in the Royal British Legion Grantown-on-Spey. EM responded with it was a very successful event and it was nice to be able to do something positive for the town and put it firmly back on the map. LC also thanked JH for arranging the display of poppies bearing the names of those on the memorial and organising the display of 100 poppies outside the British Legion., it was very much admired and commented on by many.

2. Declarations of Interest: LC asked for any declarations of interest regarding anything on the agenda, no declarations were noted

3. Police Report:

EM had a long conversation with the Inspector regarding a few of the issues in the Town. The Inspector was very apologetic regarding the lack of Police presence in the area. This was due to staffing issues as a result of illness and personnel being moved to help in other areas. He is fully aware of all the issues affecting the community and is hoping to concentrate on the Grantown area within the coming weeks.

4. Minutes of last Meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 2021 were approved.

Proposed: LC Seconded BS

5. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising which were not on the agenda.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

DG reported that there was little change in the accounts. The balance as of 21st September is currently £6681.23. There are some payments to be made over the coming days, such as

payment for bulbs for the tubs and expenses for Grantown in Bloom. A full breakdown will be available at the next meeting.

7 PLANNING REPORT

BS reported that there were 3 planning issues, Rhuarden Court had dozens of complaints and objections, and this has now been withdrawn. The property in Grant Road - we submitted comments to the planners regarding the conserving of some of the changes, this was duly ignored. The Chip Shop on the High Street which has applied for retrospective planning, a lengthy statement was submitted to the planning department, outlining several objections and complaints, we are still awaiting a response on this.

BO asked if there had been any follow up to the property at the bottom of the High Street, which had been given 6 months to deal with Car Parking issues and cleaning up the area to the rear of the property. BS advised that this was for Highland Council legislation to enforce it. The COVID situation has not helped with such issues. LC advised we could take it up again with Highland Council. MC highlighted that such properties were going to be scrutinised by planning, as there is a greater need for more local housing and not necessarily for visitors, and certainly not more party houses, but was unsure of the timescale of this.

AW asked regarding Rhuarden Court as it had a direct impact on her and neighbours and asked if the community council had a direct involvement in the objection of this planning application, as she is concerned it will re appear for consideration later. BS advised that objections had been submitted, the plans were withdrawn as a result of the planners concerns, and rest assured if the plans are resubmitted we will lodge objections. If there are any planning issues in the community and members of the community gets in touch with us one way or another, then we are better able to represent the community rather than guessing what the community may or may not like.

LC advised that The National Park are arranging planning training workshops for the community council members, this should be within the next few weeks.

8. HIGHLAND COUNCIL UPDATE

LC asked about how the asset transfer of Burnfield Toilets was progressing, MC said it is still ongoing and there was an issue regarding the common good fund.

The Mossie Park was still causing concern due to the amount of vandalism and Highland Council cannot afford to keep replacing the barriers and fencing around the Fort in the park.

LC asked about the state of the building in the High Street and wondered if Highland Council was able to do anything about it, as the door is in a very dangerous state. MC advise that a bill was currently going through Parliament, MC was unsure of the timeframe for it, but it will put pressure on landlords and absent landlords to ensure any vacant premises are maintained. This will give local communities more powers to act on such poor standard premises, as this premises is in a Conservation area the Conservation Authorities should be able to put pressure on landlords. The Community Council could write to the Ward Manager to ask for information pertaining to the building. MC also stated that as there is a great need for housing in the area and wondered if the property could be purchased and converted into flats.

9 Grantown in Bloom

JH advised that the watering of the hanging baskets etc over the summer has gone very well, the hanging baskets are now beginning to fade as are the planters. JH intends to start removing the plants over the coming weeks in preparation for the planting of the bulbs and has also ordered some winter bedding plants. The hanging baskets will remain until the

Christmas Lights and Decorations are put up; the baskets will then be put into storage. We have been successful in our bid to take part in the Queens Green Canopy Scheme which is part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, we will receive 15 saplings. We are currently looking at Grant Park which has already a historical connection as the 3 large Fir trees were planted for the Coronation. This is in addition to the trees which are being replaced in the Square. JC mentioned the grass cutting in the Burnfield Gardens and highlighted that the grass cuttings were being left and not collected which makes the gardens look untidy. MC pointed out that the Council were no longer picking up grass cuttings but agreed to go back and speak to them. JH pointed out that if the grass was cut more regularly there would be less of a problem.

10 Rejuvenating Grantown

LC has spoken to Karren Derrick about several things one being the repainting of the Drinking Fountain and the Silver Bridge, which can now go ahead as the overhanging bushes and shrubs have all been cut back, the painting is going to be undertaken by two volunteers. The fence going down to the Skating Pond is going to be replaced by the Seafield Estate within the next few days. We will try to raise a donation towards the works including the £250 raised by the AWT. We have been allocated £485 towards the purchase of litter picking equipment for use in the community, and LC will place the order this week for the equipment.

The upgrading of the Square is still in hand and most of the equipment has now been purchased and is ready to be installed when the time is right.

11 Strathspey Now

JH advised that we had received confirmation from the Scottish Government that the project can go ahead. The initial cluster of 15 properties have now been contacted. It is proposed to hold a face-to-face question and answer session in the Grant Arms Hotel on the 6th of October between 14.00 and 19.00, Simon Baldwin from Destination Digital will be in attendance to answer any queries surrounding the project. We hope to go live around Christmas time.

12 Grantown Society Update

BS advised that the 3A's Project had completed the process of identifying the safe routes around the Town. Having completed the first stage, we will have to wait until the Spring of 2022 to apply for further funding. We are actively looking at a property for the community so as it could be used as a Resource and Information Centre, we are in the process of trying to secure funding for this at present. We have appointed a group of consultants to produce a business case feasibility study. We have put together a display about the Iain Charles Hospital which we are hoping to display in the Iain Charles once it is empty until the Health Centre moves into the building.

Moray College students are going to work on the Society website and bring a more modern approach to it.

The other big project is the Fiddlers event which we are looking to arrange for next year as everything was put on hold this year and last year due to COVID.

NEXT MEETING 16th November at 19.00