

GRANTOWN INITIATIVE AGM

Minute of 9th Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 7pm by Zoom conference call



Members present

Karen Derrick (Chair), Karen Martin (Treasurer), Mike Causey, Alan Shute, Anne Maclean, Bill Sadler, Katy Turton, Ingrid Artus, Beverley Cartwright, Pete Grant, Jane Hope, Sally Dowden.

1. The Chair opened the 9th AGM of Grantown Initiative and welcomed all to the meeting. The meeting was declared quorate.
Apologies received from Jaci Douglas and Bob Shorter.
Proxies received from Declan Gallacher, Francoise van Buuren, Neil Martin, Bill Steele, Joan Steele and Tom Clarke.
2. The minutes of the 2022 AGM, held on 10th May 2022, were approved with no changes, all were happy to adopt. Proposed: Katy Turton, Seconded: Jane Hope
3. Chair's Report. The Chair delivered her report (attached as an appendix) and stated that the report would go up on the website. Jane Hope expressed her view that the GI had done well in the past year - the Chair responded that Jane had left the GI in a good position when she left last year. Katy Turton thanked the Chair for leading the GI this year.

Alan Shute asked if the GI could take action about the notice board in the park opposite the Craiglynn Hotel, which had blown over. The Chair responded that she was aware of the storm damage but that it is the responsibility of Seafeld Estate. She said she would raise the issue with the Grantown Forum.

4. The Company's Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31st July 2022 were agreed unanimously. Proposed: Beverley Cartwright, Seconded: Ingrid Artus.
5. Election of Member Directors retiring by rotation and standing for re-election

Karen Derrick

Ingrid Artus

Karen Martin

The election of the Member Directors was agreed unanimously. Proposed: Katy Turton, Seconded: Beverley Cartwright

Zoe Laird and Mike Causey resigned from the board at the AGM.

The Chair thanked Zoe and Mike for all their support during the past year, particularly on projects: Burnfield Toilets (Zoe) and Parkrun (Mike).

6. The election of the new Member Director, Pete Grant, was agreed unanimously. Proposed: Karen Derrick, Seconded: Karen Martin
7. The Directors were authorised to appoint an independent examiner and fix their remuneration.
Proposed: Katy Turton, Seconded: Karen Martin

The Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 19.30hrs.

Appendix:

Chairperson's report 2022/23

Grantown Initiative board continues to meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, still mostly online over Zoom, but also in person a few times during the year. We have been very fortunate in these last 12 months to have added to the number of members of the organisation, mostly through promotion via project activities and events that the charity runs. Current membership of GI stands at 109, taking into account those who have moved away this year.

A reminder that GI acquired charitable status early in 2021 and so this year, we have reported to both Companies House and OSCR on our activities – financial and otherwise. The information that each regulator holds on the GI, ie the annual report and accounts, can be viewed by the public on the relevant websites, as well as on the Discover Grantown website, so maintaining our transparency to the community the organisation serves.

I will give a brief overview of the events, assets held and other projects sitting with the GI to bring members up to speed, but first would like to mention the agreement GI has with Gordon & MacPhail on behalf of the town.

Grantown Initiative is delighted that in year two of the sponsorship agreement with Gordon & MacPhail, we exceeded the £8,000 target of fundraising and raised £10,368 by the end of December 2022. These funds were raised during our events and also through donations made by residents and businesses throughout the year to support the work we are doing.

GI & The Cairn Community Fund

£2,400 was allocated to the fund in its first year. The fund was launched last August and five applications were received for projects that met the 'green' criteria that we'd produced. All five projects were funded:

- YMCA – upgrades to the youth club room
- Grantown Museum – education and conservation project
- Strathspey Camanachd – purchasing reusable branded water bottles for the team
- Grantown Re-Engage – funding afternoon teas for elderly residents
- Friends of Grantown Primary – refurbishment of the primary school's allotment for pupils

It is estimated that 400-500 residents have benefited directly from these projects from within a wide range of groups and initiatives: elderly residents, young people, sports, health & wellbeing, heritage, education, growing spaces and green initiatives. The total spent was £2,103.80. We expect more applications to be forthcoming this year when the fund re-opens again in August. It is expected that the total available pot for Grantown community projects will be around £2700.

Many thanks to Karen Martin for all her hard work in making this partnership so effective and successful.

EVENTS (in order of calendar appearance)

i. Thunder in the Glens

This event was extremely well attended. Having been cancelled for two years, there were more bikes than usual as well as visitors. Stallholders reported that the event didn't work particularly well for them as the bikes tend to only park up for an hour or so before leaving. So the committee is looking at other options for 2023, with the GI is looking to involve an events management company for this event in the future and the tender is currently out for this.

ii. Greentown Show

The Greentown Show is held by Sustainable Strathspey, one of the GI's sub-groups. It is now established as an annual event in Grantown, held on the first Saturday in September. Launched in 2021, it brings together experts on green energy and actions, from the private, public and voluntary sectors. All stallholders are there to provide inspiration, guidance and advice on how to tackle the climate emergency on an individual and household level. Activities are also provided for children and families in the form of sustainable crafts and a treasure hunt. This year there were around 20 stalls, including one for the Sustainable Strathspey committee and around 250 attendees. This is an increase from the previous year's 15 stalls and 150 visitors. Support from the Grantown Initiative helped to ensure the success of the show with advice about permissions needed to run the show, risk assessing and insuring the event. A full team effort!

In 2023, the show's theme will be Active Travel and this will enable SS to increase the number of stallholders again.

Many thanks go to Katy and her committee for establishing Sustainable Strathspey as such a strong community project and delivering the Greentown Show and many other benefits to help towards a 'greener' Grantown.

iii. Festive Lights switch on

Didn't happen this year due to technical difficulties with cabling and electrics in the Square. We are hoping that this work will finally be completed by THC in 2023, so we can try to reintroduce this much anticipated event in future. This is just one of the many events run by GI and other organisations in the town that use the Square and rely upon its infrastructure to make events a success. More about that later.

iv. Grantown Does Christmas

The event this year on the 3rd and 4th Dec was a big success, with excellent footfall and much better weather than in 2021. We secured additional funding from Scotland's Regional Food Fund which enabled us to hire in marquees for a food/drink festival in the Town Square which The Cairn took part in. This was a big contributing factor to the success of the event with queues formed at The Cairn's stall before the event opened for the free tours and they were full within the first hour on the Saturday and by midday on the Sunday. Everyone in the community was talking about the tours and expressing their appreciation for them being free of charge.

There were over 50 stallholders and most want to book again for 2023. There was also a music event with local musicians Hamish Napier and Su'a Lee, combined with whisky tasting by Gordon & MacPhail which was a resounding success. Spey Bank Studios opened their doors for this concert and gave us free use of their premises. We would like to put on record our thanks to Mike and his team at Craic events plus Andy and his team at the Cairn for all the work they did to make this event so successful. Many thanks to Karen Martin and GBA team members for their hard work too in delivering another fantastic seasonal calendar event which was a great credit and benefit to the town.

v. Torchlight Parade

December 23rd 2022 saw the return of Grantown on Spey's popular pre-Christmas tradition, The Torchlight Procession. This event has been run in Grantown on the 23rd for decades and after a break of 3 years due to COVID, its return was very overdue and welcome. Over 1,000 local people and visitors gathered in Grantown to escort Santa and his reindeer from the Craiglynne Hotel up the High Street to The Square. Flame and battery torches were sold and a warm glow lined the street. At the sound of the pipe band starting up, the parade moved through the street to the delight of those who watched on and those who walked along with it. The parade was met in The Square by carol singing and a chance to chat with Santa and the reindeer team. This event was phenomenally well attended after a 3-year absence and the new committee very much looks forward to running it again next Christmas.

Many thanks to Ingrid and her team for all their work in planning and delivering a great event.

vi. Hogmanay in The Square & Fundraising Concert

The Grantown on Spey Hogmanay Street Party 2022 was an extremely successful event held for the first time since 2019. Beverly, together with a small committee, managed the arrangements for the event alongside volunteers on the night who marshalled and kept attendees safe. The event was supported by Police Scotland who provided a mobile presence on the night. Attendance was estimated at 2,500 with people turning out as early as 10pm to enjoy music by Speysound Radio followed by the ceilidh with Maggie Adamson and friends and Lyall Kinnaird providing bagpipes at midnight alongside amazing fireworks. Additional costs for 2022 included road closure signage and support, mandated by Highland Council and additional bin hire. Planning is underway for 2023 and the biggest challenge is getting volunteers to come forward to help with the event management on the night.

Maggie Adamson also played a fundraising concert on the 30th December, which was a very successful event and helped raise funds to put into the pot for 2023's event.

Huge thanks to Beverly and her team for all their solid support and unstinting effort in continuing to make this an annual event that draws crowds to Grantown for the new year from all over the globe.

Many thanks to Tom too, who stood down from the GI last year, but was on hand to mentor the Hogmanay team through the complicated landscape that such an event has to cope with.

Increased Costs for Events

All our events are struggling with rising costs. One of the largest increases is with road closures. The Council is now insisting that a professional company be involved with officials to close any roads. Because most of our events are during unsociable hours, especially Hogmanay, this is putting a lot of pressure on costs. Hogmanay this year was quoted around £3k just to man the road closure, so we are having to review options for all events moving forward.

ASSETS

An update/reminder to members, of assets that GI holds and manages on behalf of the community include:

- the town logo
- the Discover Grantown website
- the community storage facility
- various marquees & gazebos, plus event paraphernalia such as signs, urns, cones, fire extinguishers etc
- the festive lights for the Square and High Street
- town entrance signs at each of the 4 entrances to the town
- and finally since July 2022, the Burnfield Toilets

GI activity over the last 12 months has continued to add value to all of these assets:

- We have spent money adding shelving racks to the community storage container, so that items belonging to GI, GVCC, Motormania and Twinning Society are all now stored according to ownership and are easily accessed when required.
- Work has continued on improvements to the Discover Grantown website and to increasing the reach to followers on Facebook and Instagram.

Highlights from social media are:

- FaceBook followers have grown from 605 to 1,635 at end of 2022 and are now at 2,100
- Total reach for the FB page in November / December for the festive events season was 75,269 which included paid campaigns.

Instagram reach for November / December was just under seven and a half thousand

- The number of Instagram followers has grown from 230 to 1,357 at end of 2022 and now at 1,801

Festive Lights

The festive lights have now come completely under the umbrella of the GI from last year and we have been very grateful to Paul Mathieson and his amazing team for helping bring Grantown its fantastic Christmas cheer this year again via the winter lights on lampposts, overheads and in the Square trees. It won't have escaped your attention however, that to everyone's great frustration, some lights didn't work and others started well but then failed halfway through the festive period. This was mortifying for those who had spent lots of time in maintaining and erecting the displays. Paul, Ingrid and myself have been in constant touch with the lighting team at THC to try and get the lights right for next year and we are hopeful that work that has just started in recent weeks, will put an end to those half-lit displays.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Charlie Sinclair and Duncan Thorpe for all their hard work in leading the lights team over many decades and who finally stood down this year – although I believe Duncan has still been working on some of the lights!

Burnfield Toilets

Work has now finally started on the toilets in Burnfield Avenue and with the new extension and revised internal layout, together with a complete revamp of the disabled toilet and provision for motorhome waste, I am sure it will be an addition to the town that we all can be proud of. When it opens this summer, the entrance walls will also boast a lovely artistic mural which is being put together by Angus Grant and his art pupils at Grantown Grammar School. The glazed tiles will depict many of the things to see and do in Grantown.

We are working on incorporating renewables into the building too, so that it follows a greener theme, but also will help to keep costs down in future. The total cost of this project has come in at around £130k including VAT, which is a huge increase from what was originally quoted, but with determined fundraising, we are very nearly there.

OTHER PROJECT ACTIVITY

Grantown Business Association

- This year the GBA focused activity on promoting the town which it did through advertising in the Landmark Press bedroom folders for visitors, distributing 30,000 leaflets across Moray, Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey and by growing its social media following, as previously outlined. It also successfully hosted a visit to the town by an influencer, Scotland and the Wee White Dug. This activity was picked up by the Bradt travel guides which will be featuring Grantown in its Scotland guide along with photos from some of our residents.
- A Grantown business meeting was held in March when 58 businesses came together to sample local food/drink and hear about activity for the 2023 tourist season. All agreed it was a very welcome and successful event with several collaborations being made between businesses.

Dulaig Play park

This project has been exemplary in its dedication to the cause, with untiring amounts of form filling to obtain grants totalling over £99k. The park had its open day on 1st April, drawing lots of people to see all of the new landscaping, equipment and planting that has been made possible through the incredible efforts of Sheena, Ingrid and the project team. The park and equipment have now been handed over to THC for maintenance and insurance, and we hope the families in Grantown can all enjoy this fantastic new facility.

Grantown Parkrun

This project has been planned and successfully funded through great efforts of Mike Causey as a director of GI and is now at the launch stage for sometime this summer. So well done to Mike for working to bring this great opportunity to Grantown residents and visitors.

Spey Shed

GI has taken Spey Shed under its administrative umbrella for the time being, to get it re-established after the Covid lockdowns and fully functioning again at its new temporary home at the YMCA community centre. Work has been progressing at full speed to provide not only this vital link for people (shedders) to improve social opportunities, and reduce isolation and loneliness in the area, but also is helping to bring yet another part of our much loved community centre back into use.

Looking forward – we are anticipating another successful year, with the opening of the toilets, launching of the Grantown Parkrun, building of the Sustainable Strathspey and Spey Shed activities, and of course another fabulous and successful events season.

I would like to end by recording my sincere and extensive thanks on behalf of the board to all the wonderful volunteers that work so tirelessly for the greater good of our lovely town and community. There is always lots to do, both to maintain the current activities and also to try and support new ones. And I hope as members, you feel you can get involved in greater or smaller ways, to add to the collective support our place needs to make it better to live, work and visit here.

Karen Derrick (Chair)