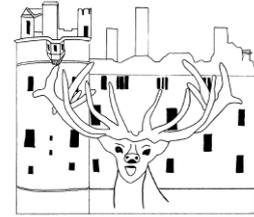


HUNTLY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of the September 2013 meeting of Huntly Community Council held in the Council Chamber, the Stewart's Hall, Huntly on Thursday 19th September 2013 at 7.30 pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Hilda Lumsden-Gill (Chair); Tony Gill (Vice Chair); Hazel McIntosh (Treasurer); Freda McRae; Rev Norma Milne; Bronwyn Gall (Youth Member); Mary Burgerhout (Secretary)

Others: Cllr Moira Ingleby; Cllr Joanna Strathdee; Pat Scott (Huntly Express)

Apologies: Bob Ness; Sgt Neil Binning

Hilda welcomed members, and Cllrs Ingleby and Strathdee and Pat Scott, to this, the first meeting after the summer recess. She advised that Bob Ness is back in hospital for an operation and wished him all the best on behalf of those present. An extensive list of the correspondence received since the June meeting, filtered as appropriate, had been circulated prior to tonight's meeting, some items from which would be referred to during the course of the meeting and some which were put on the table.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The June minutes were proposed for acceptance by Hazel McIntosh and seconded by Tony Gill.

3. Matters Arising

A. Police Issues Sgt Binning had provided a Police Report for the period 19th August to 18th September which Hilda read out. There were 21 crimes/offences recorded within Huntly, the majority for petty assaults and minor thefts and which have mostly been detected or have positive lines of enquiry. There have been two further collisions at the Market Muir junction, with both drivers (one a foreign national) being strangers to the area. There were no serious injuries. PC Malcy Smith has been acting as Sergeant in Huntly while Sgt Crighton is providing temporary cover elsewhere. Both will resume their own positions next week. Sgt Binning is retiring at the end of December.

Hilda advised that the July Marr Community Policing Team update was available for perusal, as was a letter from Police Scotland advising of a review of Traffic Warden provision.

B) Huntly Topics

i) Current Issues

1. Traffic Notices – five Notices, now past their dates, were received over the summer.
2. Benches/Play Equipment/Paving Stones Hilda advised that Sandy Grant of Aberdeenshire Council had acted on our requests concerning the above. New benches are to be installed at Deveron Road, the outmoded play equipment removed from Castle Park Road is to be replaced and the loose paving stones at the Gordon Highlander memorial are to be uplifted and replaced. The seating at the War Memorial has been reinstated.

3. Huntly Floral Group The annual request for donations has been received and it was agreed to award the Group, whose impressive displays in the Square were highly commended, £25. Hilda highlighted the Group's request for additional members and asked that anyone wishing to join contact any Group member.
4. Research Request Hilda read a letter from a Research Assistant with the James Hutton Institute who is carrying out a study on Community Councils, to which Mary will respond initially.
5. Letters from Concerned Residents Hilda advised that letters had been received from three individuals over the summer highlighting various concerns. All letters had been responded to and the correspondence was available for members to peruse. The apparent lack of clarity re the distinct roles of the CC and HDT was discussed.
6. Plants for Community Projects The order forms for 2014 plants have been collated and sent today to Sandy Grant at Aberdeenshire Council. The generosity of Aberdeenshire Council in making this annual provision was noted.

ii) Road Issues

- Market Muir Junction Aberdeenshire Council's proposals have been approved by the Marr Area Committee and the new measures should be in place by November, welcome news given that accidents are still occurring at the junction. Cllr Strathdee explained the rationale behind her request at the MAC that measures other than those already agreed by the Council be considered. Tony queried the fact that Planning Gain (or Developer Contribution) money is to be used to fund the MM junction upgrade despite us having been advised there was no PG money left. The councillors explained they do not have any involvement with this but understand that an element of PG money is earmarked for town centre improvements with a portion intended to alleviate some of the "downsides" of developments. Cllr Ingleby understood that a Shire-wide update of how PG has been spent is being prepared.
- Road Markings The repainting of both white and yellow lines began over the summer, with the work still to be completed.
- Car Parking The majority of CC members had attended the 2nd July meeting. Hilda summarised what had been discussed/agreed: the Gordon Street flats residents and Aberdeenshire Council are each to seek legal advice re the former's mistaken understanding that they would be allocated parking places. The Nelson Street car park is to be made a free zone, with the Square remaining as is. Hilda read out Ralph Singleton's email of 4th July re the Gordon Street issue of 45 minute restrictions posted on lampposts but no corresponding yellow lines. The email noted the extensive consultations require to resolve this anomaly and the need for a co-ordinated response in respect of any other outstanding road-related works, but Cllr Strathdee felt that the work should proceed, a view echoed by members.
- Signage Hilda read Cllr Latham's email of 30th June in which he advised that, as per Ralph Singleton, the Room to Roam signs are in store in Huntly, with the "Thank you for visiting" signs to go on their reverse side awaiting delivery with a view to them being erected in August. This has not happened and frustration was expressed that another tourist season is past with the signs not in place. It was agreed to forward Cllr Latham's email to Ralph Singleton with a request for an update. Hilda advised that the Business Association have been in touch with Bear Scotland re the insertion of additional information onto the brown A96 signs but that this will not now go ahead due to the costs involved ("passive poles" which will crumple in the event of a collision would have to be installed at a cost of £12,000 - £14,000)) and the fact that any facilities listed must be tourist-rated by Visit Scotland which would preclude for example the Cooper Park and the Ski Centre.

- iii) Clashindarroch Community Fund Hilda advised that a letter had been received from Donald Boyd on behalf of HDT thanking the CC for giving HDT the opportunity to present their case for managing the Fund. Hilda and Mary had met informally with Foundation Scotland, who

are to run the fund, in August to discuss issues such as the working group, make up of Panel etc. There will be a meeting of all groups on 8th October at the Glass Hall.

- iv) **CC Membership/Promotion and Image of CC** Hilda thanked Pat for the Huntly Express' continued coverage of CC activities and for the additional information included in the photo of Hilda welcoming Bronwyn to the CC. This, along with the feature in the latest AB54 magazine (to whom we have the option of sending updates of our activities), and the widespread availability of our minutes, means that our existence/activities are well-documented. Nevertheless, we only have seven members and efforts will continue to be made to co-opt further members. Mary was asked to consider becoming a member (while remaining as Secretary). It was agreed to leave the quorum at five members meantime but to keep an eye on the situation, with the 2014 AGM being the most appropriate point at which to amend the constitution if the quorum is to be changed.
- v) **Garden Competition** The competition was a success with a higher number of entries than last year, boosted by several entries from Sheltered Housing complexes, and Hilda thanked the three professional judges for their work. The winners were: Best First Time Entry – Helen and Neesha Rollo, Seton Drive; Best Garden – Helena Sierakowska, Torry Road; Best Hanging Baskets and Tubs - Keith and Pam Cockburn, Deveron Street; Best Community Garden – Deveron Street car park and surrounds (Keith and Pam Cockburn). A suggestion made by one of the judges for future competitions was that instead of gardens being nominated by the public, judges simply walk around the town on a nominated day and identify those gardens they feel are worthy contenders and make awards accordingly. Although no decision need be made straight away, it was generally felt that the suggestion was worthy of serious consideration.
- vi) **Summer Recess Activities** Hilda highlighted the fact that although the CC was in recess over the summer, work has continued behind the scenes (as evidenced by the volume of correspondence received); she listed the various events/activities which she, Mary, and other members had participated in, and thanked everyone for their involvement, particularly Mary. Included in the list was Hilda and Mary's aborted meeting with Sandy Grant at the Deveron Road bench which nevertheless had brought to light the mystery of the noticeboard in the area which displays out-of-date information, and is believed to have some connection with the Primary School. Hazel was of the view that the School may indeed have been responsible for its appearance and undertook to find out more.
- vii) **EIS 2014** It is planned to hold EIS 2014 on Sunday 1st June 2014. Our application for £1,000 from the Cultural Fund was successful, with further monies potentially available from the Council's Homecoming Scotland grant scheme. Hilda has already booked the town's PA system and researched children's entertainment. However, it would appear that other groups in the town are planning overlapping events on or around the same date. It was agreed to hold a meeting on 14th October at 7.30 in the Stewart's Hall inviting those wishing to volunteer to help organise EIS. Pat will publish an article in the Huntly Express which will also ask anyone planning to hold events at the same time to either attend the meeting or to contact the CC beforehand.
- viii) **Planning Applications** There was no significant comment on the list of current applications. Cllr Strathdee advised that the developer proposing to take over the former supermarket site in King Street is threatening to pull out due to over-onerous planning requirements, specifically that they have been asked to dig trial pits to check for any contaminated land. The Planning Dept will not accept the anecdotal evidence that there was never a fuel tank on the site. The prospect of the developer, whose business is a significant draw to the town, pulling out and the

site lying empty indefinitely is not a welcome one, and it was agreed that the CC write to the Planning Dept to express its concerns.

- ix) **Access within Stewart's Hall** John Greer, Hallkeeper, had suggested that in view of the inaccessibility of the Council Chambers for less mobile members, the CC might like to hold its meetings in the New Room downstairs. While this suggestion was appreciated, those concerned felt they could continue to manage the current arrangements, but a discussion was prompted on whether a stairlift should be installed given that the rooms upstairs are used by a variety of groups.

Cllrs Strathdee and Ingleby left the meeting at 9 pm.

4. **Treasurer's Report** Hazel reported that the General Account holds £1,000.31, the 2013/14 Admin Grant having been received. The Gordon Highlanders Account holds £496.35 (a 50p discrepancy has been traced back to the May 2012 handover and cleared by our Independent Auditor) and the EIS Account £4,721.74 which includes the Cultural Fund grant.

5. **Correspondence**

Items highlighted: Aberdeenshire Council/Marr Area Office: Hilda advised that several consultation documents had been received which Mary will now circulate. Community Planning: Lizzy Shepherd had asked to attend this meeting to gauge which issues the CC would like the Community Ward Forums to address, but Hilda had declined on the grounds of the already packed agenda. Lizzy is unable to attend the October or November meetings but Mary will circulate her email to members and ask them to come up with topics in time for the October meeting, which we will then feed back to Lizzy. Other A revised Cairnborrow Windfarm proposal is to be submitted for planning approval, with HDT continuing to be involved (assuming the scheme is approved) as potential managers of any subsequent community fund. There are to be public exhibitions locally over the coming days.

Pat left the meeting at 9.05 pm. Bronwyn left the meeting at 9.10 pm.

6. **AOCB**

Hilda advised that she had visited former member Gillian Petrie who is currently in Rothieden. The CC's good wishes were extended to Gillian.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

7. **Date of Next Meeting** – Thursday 17th October 2013.