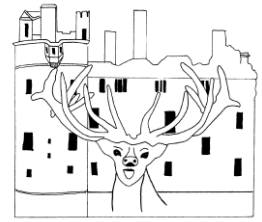




HUNTLY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of the January 2015 meeting of Huntly Community Council held in the Council Chamber, the Stewart's Hall, Huntly on Thursday 15th January 2015 at 7.30 pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Hazel McIntosh (Treasurer); Freda McRae; Rev Norma Milne; Ronald Pittendrigh; Michelle Goodall; Isadora Lee (Youth Member); Mary Burgerhout (Secretary)

Others: Pat Scott (Huntly Express); Cllr Joanna Strathdee; Sgt Andy Sawers, Police Scotland

Apologies: Hilda Lumsden-Gill, Tony Gill, Cllr Moira Ingleby

Hazel welcomed all to the meeting and advised she was taking the chair in the absence of Hilda and Tony as sadly Tony's father had passed away. The CC's condolences were extended to both and to Cllr Ingleby who has also had a family bereavement. A list of correspondence received since the November meeting had been circulated prior to tonight's meeting, some items which would be referred to during the meeting and some which were put on the table.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The November minutes were proposed for acceptance by Freda and seconded by Norma.

3. Co-option of Member Hazel welcomed Michelle Goodall, whose nomination for co-option had been proposed by Freda and seconded by Norma. All members being in agreement, Michelle was invited to the table to join the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

- A. Police Issues A welcome was extended to Sgt Andy Sawers who we met for the first time. He presented the police report: in the last four weeks 31 crimes were recorded in Huntly, most relating to road traffic issues. There were a few assaults in the Square over the festive period which are currently undetected and have few lines of enquiry. Some incidents of media and public interest occurred recently, including two where specialist units helped local police. There has been an increase in the reporting of domestic incidents following campaigning by Police Scotland - it is positive to see people coming forward to do so. In addition to the incidences of assaults, the Christmas tree lights were vandalised and damage was caused to cars by other cars in the Square over the festive period. The recent lowering of the drink-drive limit has had a major impact and there was an overall reduction in violent crime across the area and a notable change in attitudes, with fewer over-drunk individuals on Hogmanay in particular. Operation Collinsville, which is aimed at educating drivers, particularly in rural areas, has been launched again and runs till March 2015. In Huntly PC Grant has taken charge of this.

Sgt Sawers outlined his own background in crime reduction and gave an update on the proposed introduction of CCTV in the Square. The rationale is that, although

Huntly is a low-crime area, its introduction would greatly assist the police in resolving the crimes that do occur. The proposal is to have 6 (small, about the size of a fist) cameras in the Square, preferably attached to existing light poles as they are more unobtrusive on these and would not require planning permission to install. They would not be monitored, rather a wireless signal is transmitted to police laptops and images are then downloaded as required. They would be positioned so as to cover most of the licensed premises in and around the Square, cost around £5,500 to install, and be maintained by Aberdeen Technical Services. In accordance with Information Commission legislation, signs would have to be put up indicating that there are cameras in operation. CCTV is already operational in Elgin, Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Stonehaven. Funding would potentially come from the police Crime Reduction pot, Community Safety Groups, Aberdeenshire Council and the Security Review Group, and possibly local retailers. The proposal has the support of Huntly Business Association and licensed premises, and ex-Sgt Neil Binning who has a retail business in the Square, is to promote the scheme to other retailers. Sgt Sawers plans to meet with the Marr Area Manager end January/early February to seek her endorsement. Public consultation on the issue is not required but there will be media coverage. Whilst the introduction of CCTV was broadly welcomed by members, Hazel expressed concern that it would send out the wrong message about the town; Sgt Sawers advised that other towns initially had similar concerns which were however allayed once CCTV was in place. He pointed out that it was merely an additional tool for the police to enable them to solve crimes which might otherwise go undetected.

Tonight's discussion on CCTV will be put on the agenda for the February meeting.

Sgt Sawers acknowledged that the police presence at recent meetings had been patchy and attributed this to staff cutbacks. If a police report is sent to us, that is however classed as an attendance at our meetings. The aim is for he and Sgt Crichton/his replacement to attend at least one CC meeting a year. Meantime, "community drop-ins" are being introduced with officers popping into cafes, pubs etc and engaging with the public in this way.

Sgt Sawers left the meeting at 8.10 pm. Hazel thanked him for his attendance.

B. Huntly Topics

i) Current Issues

- a) Crow-proof Bins Sandy Grant has advised that consideration will be given to replacing, when the time comes, the existing bins with those with lids.
- b) Path Maintenance Course/Community Payback Scheme HDDT are looking for nominations for attendees at a Path Maintenance Course being run by Paths for All on 11th February. Ronald has put his name forward. A request has been received from the local Community Payback scheme supervisor to consider his team of young offenders for any work/jobs that may come up. Mary has suggested to him that they attend the Path Maintenance course and accordingly three of the team along with three supervisors will do so. Freda raised the issue of the path along the River Deveron which is a potential area for maintenance.
- c) The Gordon Schools – School Transport Issues Fiona Alderson, chair of TGS PC, has asked the CC and HDDT for support in their attempts to get Aberdeenshire Council to resolve outstanding school transport issues.. An impasse appears to have been reached following the response received by the PC in November to their letter requesting answers on specific issues raised originally at the 2013 meeting with Council Transport staff. Parking for school buses and the conversion of the car park beside the AWP to a bus park was discussed. Cllr Strathdee advised that the conditions imposed by health and safety legislation and the costs involved make the latter financially unviable. The issue of the route buses take going through the town (and the Square in particular) was also discussed, the fact that some of the school buses are

also service buses making the latter unavoidable. It was agreed that the CC write a letter in support of the School's concerns to the Council's Transport Unit.

- d) The Gordon Schools – Health Hub TGS plan to establish a Health Hub within the school and are looking for support (financial and/or other) from the CC. It was agreed we advise that our limited resources means we are unable to help financially but that we otherwise support the proposal which Hazel advised was similar to the “Nurture Room” which operates within the Primary School.
- e) Flood Alleviation Scheme The Council have provided a copy of a letter being sent to residents in the Meadows area advising of a Public Hearing to be held on 18th/19th February in the Gordon Arms Hotel. Ronald advised that there is still one objector to the Scheme.
- f) Aberdeenshire Annual Sports Awards Evening Nominations are sought for this event – nominees should be non-professional sports people and names should be given to Mary in the first instance.
- g) HDDT – Sports Hub – We have received an email from HDDT advising they were successful in their bid for funding for further research into the establishment of a Sports Hub and thanking all who provided letters of support.
- h) Green Dogwalking – the Council's Dog Warden has provided us with promotional material and forms for individuals to sign up to the Scheme, and the HE ran a front-page promotional article. We are obliged to hold two public events per year and the first of these was at the Stewart's Hall on 20th December where Mary and Freda manned a stall. To date 17 people have signed up.
- i) Deveron Arts – Wikipedia page DA are hoping to establish a “Room to Roam” Wikipedia page and have asked us to confirm the date of the Coat of Arms ceremony.

ii) Road Issues

Nelson Street Car Park Mark Skilling has finally responded that the Nelson Street car park has in fact been free since December - he will ask his staff to ensure that the pay and display machine is covered up or removed (post-meeting note: machine now covered up).

iii) Clashindarroch Community Fund Tony and Mary attended a Working Group meeting on 26th November. The Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding have been agreed by each of the CCs/community associations except Tap o'Noth CC who have concerns about the limitations of the microgrant scheme (max £250 award) to be managed by the CCs. Each Working Group is being asked to consider the number of application forms required and financial cut-offs for each, and how often the Panel should meet. The next Working Group meeting is on 11th February.

The **Cairnborrow Wind Farm** Liaison Committee has been relaunched following approval for the erection of four turbines, and we have been asked to nominate two CC members to attend the first meeting on 19th January. Ronald and Michelle have volunteered. Hazel took the opportunity to restate the CC's neutral stance on windfarms and asked Ronald and Michelle to be mindful of this when participating in meetings.

The operators of the **Dummuies** windfarm have advised their Community Fund is now registered with the Scottish Register for Community Benefit from Renewables and that as a recipient of funds from them we can now access the register. Huntly CC has in fact not applied for or received any funds from Dummuie and Mary will advise them accordingly.

iv) Planning Applications

There were six applications received since our last meeting. None drew any significant comment but the proposal to convert the former Clydesdale Bank into a restaurant was welcomed by all present.

v)AOCB

a) **Older People's Forum** Hilda had received an email from the Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network. Apparently an Older People's Forum has been set up in Huntly, the members of which are concerned with issues such as parking in the town. We have been asked to send a CC member to talk to the group. Mary has volunteered when time permits to collate all the instances of the CC registering concerns with the Council on parking/road issues and the responses received and to share these with the OPF so as to highlight the amount of work already done by us on the issue and to suggest that they may wish to lobby the Council directly on any areas of concern.

Dora left the meeting at 9.00 pm. Pat and Cllr Strathdee left at 9.10 pm.

5. **Treasurer's Report** Hazel advised that the General Account holds £628.53, the Gordon Highlanders Account £496.35, and the EIS Account £3,391.74. Michelle asked if fundraising would be required in the coming year and a discussion ensued on previous fundraising events, with the slideshow presented by Patrick Scott being highlighted as a particular success in terms of both popularity and the income generated. We hope to organise another such event, and Mary reminded members we now have a supply of Coat of Arms badges which can be sold to raise funds.

6. **Correspondence** Items highlighted:
Aberdeenshire Council/Marr Area Office – items already covered as appropriate.
Community Planning – Following the Planning workshop featured in the November CWF, a further workshop on Developer Obligations is to be arranged. When more information is received from the Council, Mary will advise members.
Other – HDDT are holding a general meeting on 21st January and welcome new members.

7. **AOCB**

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm. Hazel thanked all who attended, and Mary extended Hilda and Tony's thanks to Hazel for chairing the meeting.

8. **Date of Next Meeting** – Thursday 19th February 2015.