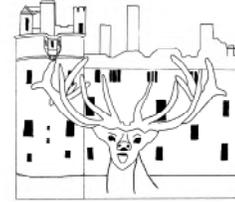




HUNTLY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of the January 2013 meeting of Huntly Community Council held in the Council Chamber, the Stewart's Hall, Huntly on Thursday 17th January 2013 at 7.30 pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Hilda Lumsden-Gill (Chair); Tony Gill (Vice Chair); Hazel McIntosh (Treasurer); Mary Burgerhout (Secretary); Bob Ness; Freda McRae; Rev Norma Milne; Cllr Moira Ingleby; Sgt Neil Binning; Pat Scott (Huntly Express)

Apologies: Colin Grant, Jordie Cole, Cllrs Strathdee, Ross and Latham

Hilda welcomed members and extended a special welcome to Cllr Ingleby, Sgt Neil Binning and Pat Scott, wishing all a Happy new Year. She advised that a list of all correspondence received since the November meeting had been circulated by Mary prior to this meeting.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The minutes of the 15.11.12 meeting were proposed for acceptance by Bob Ness and seconded by Norma Milne. Hilda thanked John for reinstating the CC minutes in the Stewart's Hall window although it was noted that a recent leak has rendered these unreadable. She asked him to rectify the situation if possible.

3. Matters Arising

A. Police Issues Sgt Binning advised that in the period 18.12.12 to 17.01.13 there were 31 crimes/offences recorded within Huntly, the majority for minor road traffic offences, theft, assault and insulting/abusive behavior. 44% have been detected and 15% have positive lines of enquiry. 2 people were charged with assault and 1 with disorderly conduct over the festive period, each incident being drink-related. 2 scrap metal thieves were captured (one was subsequently charged) on 12.12.12 having been stealing from the Scottish & Southern Electricity yard on the bypass. Cllrs Shand (Mid Formartine) and Strathdee, both members of the Central Licensing Board, patrolled with local officers on 15.12.12. Aberdeenshire and Moray Divisions will combine imminently to form one of the 14 Scottish Divisions of the amalgamated Scottish Police Force, due to take effect on 1.4.13. From a local perspective people are unlikely to notice any difference – Huntly Police Station will continue to operate; police representatives will continue to attend our meetings. Sgt Binning reported car parking concerns at the industrial estate near the Clashmach Centre.

Hilda asked Sgt Binning to elaborate on an email he'd sent to local CCs re the Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group. He explained there are 7 such groups in the Shire and he'd been asked by Cllr Ron McKail to raise the issue of lack of representation from areas north of Alford and to request that people from local groups such as the CC consider becoming reps. CSGs receive £5k pa for projects and meet monthly in Inverurie. Currently they are working with the police on the follow-up to the "Country Roads" initiative which aims to reduce the number of accidents involving young males on such roads. Hilda advised that some years ago a CC member had attended CSG meetings but for

various reasons stopped doing so. She asked if any members would consider attending them in the future. John expressed an interest – Mary to forward details to him.

Hilda read out the Huntly-related items in the quarterly Local Policing Update which included police assistance with sourcing funding for the Cooper Park pavilion, and speed- and parking-related initiatives in the town.

Sgt Binning left the meeting at 8 pm. Hilda thanked him for his contribution and reiterated our appreciation of a regular police presence at our meetings.

B) Huntly Topics

i) Current Issues

a) Road Closures – Deveron Street (street lighting works); Bleachfield Bridge (bridge strengthening works); the Square (2013 Farmers’ Markets).

b) Maintenance of Grassy Area to Right of Simpson Arch Hilda read Sandy Grant’s response to our email in which he advised that this area has never been maintained by the Council but may have been by the Cricket Club/school’s groundsman. The Council’s preference is to promote biodiversity in the area, however, they will undertake to cut the grass annually with the unofficial grassy path that runs through it being maintained more frequently.

c) Road-related Issues Hilda read Ralph Singleton’s response to two items in the November minutes. He advised the reason Duke Street had been closed once again was for gas installation works (re opening of new premises) and that it is planned to remove parking restrictions in Gordon Street when due process has been followed/resources allow. He also raised a concern from a Granary Street sheltered housing resident that the “Elderly People” signs might make the area a target for criminals. The CC had responded that the signs were important for road safety reasons and our regular police updates gave no indication that the area was a potential target.

d) Update re Cemetery Fence Hilda read an update from Sandy Grant re the wooden fence – it will take 12 years before the burial area needs to be extended beyond the fence and there will be no restriction re such an extension. The same email reported that the spreading of salt on the road and the quantity used is kept to a minimum but is sufficient to maintain road and pedestrian safety. Hazel noted that the area between the fence and the road has unsightly patches of growth which may be weeds or the remnants of the hedge. It was suggested that the work is still in progress – Mary to check with Sandy Grant.

e) Handrail at Stewart’s Hall Further to the request from local residents, we have contacted Kenny McLennan, Clerk of Works, to suggest a handrail be erected and find out how we should progress this. He has passed our query to his line managers. Per Steve Gray, Environmental Planner, it would require Listed Building consent and he has asked if we have a plan and funding in place. We have replied that we would expect the Council to provide these and do the work, the Stewart’s Hall being a Council property and the issue being one of Health and Safety.

f) Christmas Window Competition Congratulations were offered to the 2013 winners, the Bargain Box, to whom a certificate and shield were presented before Christmas. The shield is now to be collected and engraved. Hilda noted the high standard of displays and thanked all those who had participated in the competition.

g) Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Marr Extract Hazel had borrowed the plan and has now returned it to Mary, who will make it available to any other interested members.

h) Clashindarroch Community Trust Fund We are awaiting advice from Daljit Singh of Communities Scotland (formerly the Scottish Community Foundation) re the date of the first meeting of the Working Group. 2 members each from the local CCs and Cabrach Community Enterprise have been recruited. Apparently Vattenfall have still to formally approve the setting up of a Community Trust Fund – Daljit will respond with details of the first meeting when this approval is forthcoming.

ii) Town Events Diary As Colin is abroad, there is no progress on the “electronic” version.

John advised he is waiting for approval from the Post Office for a paper diary to be placed there but meantime Norma Hunter, as part of her AB54 magazine remit, is keeping a "What's On" diary. If PO approval is not forthcoming by end January, John suggested the diary be kept in the Stewart's Hall kiosk.

iii) Brander Museum Space Hilda outlined the background to this item which started with the conversion of one of the museum rooms to office space for HDT's use, and the concern expressed by many residents thereafter which led to a series of meetings and the formation of the Huntly and District Heritage Group. Hilda and Mary had learned at the Archive Day in November that the museum store room was to be emptied by the end of the month for use by Deveron Arts (DA). Subsequently a number of locals contacted the CC, with Hilda receiving one particular email which was highly critical of the loss of the space and the CC's handling of the issue. The CC subsequently contacted Les Allan to ascertain the full facts and was referred to Lorraine Grant, Cultural Services Manager. On receipt of her response, we invited her to meet with Hilda and Mary in January. She has since moved to another job but Carol Leathley, Acting CSM, is meeting with us on 28.1.13 in the Library.

A general discussion ensued on the negative perception by some residents of DA. It was felt however that whatever people's views were on the "alternative" nature of their projects, these were instrumental to their success and raised the profile of Huntly both locally and nationally. Additionally, DA brought visitors to the town and, free of charge have visited schools (thus saving Aberdeenshire Council money) and run a fundraising seminar for local groups. The issue of the Council's support of DA, in particular their occupation of the Brander on a rent-free basis, was discussed. Tony suggested it would be fairer if DA were seen to be contributing towards the costs of their occupation (as is done by other groups using Council facilities), particularly as they are able to attract significant funding.

iv) Planning There were two planning applications for the period 16.11.12 to 17.01.13 which drew no significant comment. Hilda had received comments from members of the public about the bright green frontage of the new kebab shop on Duke Street in what is a Conservation Area. Mary had written to Planning for clarification on the regulations. The response being unclear, she and Hilda had met with a Planner at the fortnightly Huntly surgery; he advised that no external works could be done under "Permitted Developments" and that planning permission was required. (Steve Gray's view was that a well-painted shop front would be an asset to Huntly). In addition he passed it on to the Planning Inspector. The result is that the shop owners are required to apply for retrospective Planning Permission for the painting. The Building Standards Officer at the same time had identified some issues which need to be resolved, therefore the shop did not open on 12.1.13 as planned.

v) AOCB

a) Parking at Granary Street Hilda has been approached by a Hanover Housing Association (HHA) resident who uses the off-road parking space, about drivers parking at the entrance to the complex, thus denying HHA car-drivers entry and/or exit at times. Although it is self-evident that cars should not be parked there, there is no white line to reinforce this, and it was suggested that HHA apply for such a line to be painted.

b) Balhouses Care Home Hilda and Mary had been given a tour of the recently-opened care home on 23.11.12 and found it a very impressive facility.

c) Raffle Licence The 2013 renewal notice has been paid and the licence received.

d) Public Entertainment Licence Changes These changes mean that events which do not charge admission will from 29.7.13 require a Public Entertainment Licence, meaning additional paperwork, hire of trained stewards etc. This will impact on any EIS event being held after this date.

e) Entertainment in the Square Doug Mackie, Grampian Police, has asked Hilda if EIS is going ahead in 2013. John advised that the Stewart's Hall is booked in June for another all-day music event. Members were asked if they felt EIS should be held this year, or whether, as suggested by Tony, it be held over to 2014 and an event organized as part of the Homecoming. This latter suggestion was agreed by all present.

f) Signage Our comments are with Donald Boyd and it is hoped the signs will be erected shortly. Hilda emphasized the importance of them being in place for the start of the tourist season.

g) Barriers The barriers, which the CC are custodians of, were taken out of the warehouse in the Council yard before Christmas and stored outside. We have written to Ralph Singleton of our concerns about their potential deterioration if stored externally, and await his response.

h) Invitation to Creative Places Award Hilda has been invited to the Creative Place Awards in St Andrews on 23.01.13 but is unable to attend. Deveron Arts have been shortlisted for the “small towns” category and if successful could be awarded £100,000, of which they have pledged to make £50,000 available for cultural projects such as the 2014 Homecoming (this could be a source of funding for EIS 2014 and other such community projects).

i) Huntly and District Heritage Group Meeting The next meeting is on 30.1.13 and, following their meeting with Carol Leathley (see under 3A(iii)), Hilda and Mary will endeavour to find out HDHG’s views/willingness to be involved in the future of the Brander museum space.

j) Dog Mess Freda raised the ongoing issue of dog mess on pavements. Mary to source flyers from the Dog Warden/check on procedure re posting these on lampposts. It was suggested Pat put an article in the Huntly Express encouraging people to report irresponsible owners and publishing the Dog Warden’s contact details.

4. Treasurer’s Report Hazel reported that the General Account holds £1,360.41, the EIS Account £3,721.74, and the Gordon Highlanders Account £632.69. Duncan Anderson has now submitted his invoice for the display case and a cheque has been prepared. Hazel sought members’ approval to change banks, her many attempts over the last 9 months to get the Bank of Scotland to amend the Treasurer’s contact details proving fruitless. It was agreed to close the existing accounts and open new ones with the Clydesdale Bank. Hazel will inform the BoS accordingly.

Pat Scott left the meeting at 9.10 pm; Cllr Ingleby left at 9.15 pm.

5. Correspondence

A list of all correspondence received had been circulated in advance, with relevant items discussed earlier in the meeting. Further items highlighted were: **Marr Area Office/Aberdeenshire Council** - a request from the Sports Council for nominations for their annual awards, advice from Steve Gray that the Huntly Conservation Area review goes to the Marr Area Committee on 29.1.13, a questionnaire re our views on the service provided by Aberdeenshire Council/the Marr Area Office, and West Coast Energy’s appeal re the Cairnborrow Windfarm. **Community Planning (MAP)** – information-gathering re CWF future sessions and questionnaire re Social Media Training (completed by Mary).

On the Table items – Huntly Matters (HDT publication); Press Release re “Dragons Y’Ken” Enterprise Challenge; “Your Views Count” (Scottish Water); Coping with Emergencies/Building Community Resilience leaflets (Scottish Govt); Deveron Arts Slow Marathon 20.4.13.

6. AOCB

Hazel wished the success of the Christmas meal at the Forbes Arms Hotel to be recorded and thanked Mary for organizing it. Hilda concurred and noted that a lot of work had been going on behind the scenes recently; she thanked Mary for her part in this, particularly when she (Hilda) had been unwell.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm.

7. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 21st February 2013.