



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 2 April 2013 in Talla Nan Ròs Kingussie

Present: Crs Mr A Davidson (Chair), Ms G Wright, Mrs A Schofield, Mrs M Brown, Mrs V Emmett, Mr J Taylor.

Highland Councillor Mr D Fallows. Mr D McKee and Ms K Donnachie (CNPA Planning Dept.)

Apologies: Cr Mr J Patchett

Visitors Ms J Drummond and Ms H Langlands.

The business meeting was preceded by a discussion between members of KVCC and Mr McKee and Ms Donnachie from the CNPA Planning Dept.

The principal topic for discussion was the recent detailed planning application made on behalf of Davall Developments for 55 houses on land above Dunbarry Terrace and Kerrow Drive.

1. Mr McKee began by apologising for the difficulties encountered in loading some of the large documents accompanying the planning application onto the CNPA's and Highland Council's websites.
2. **Decision Dates:** The CNPA planning committee is unlikely to consider the planning application until the end of May at the earliest. Only when the planning department staff has all the information they require, will they make recommendations to the CNP Board.
3. **Transport Assessments:** Transport Scotland now requires the developers to carry out new up-to-date transport assessments before Transport Scotland and Highland Council will make their responses to transport/traffic issues. KVCC will be consulted on this additional documentation once received, as will Transport Scotland and Highland Council Roads department. If other new documents are also received, which require re-advertisement then the public can respond to them; but the closing date for comment on existing documents is already past.
4. **Conditions:** When the original planning consent in principle was granted for the development, the Board set conditions and this included one that refused permission for access from Dunbarry Terrace/Road and Kerrow Drive. The developers have applied to overturn this condition. The planners will take public opinions on this condition into account when making their recommendations to the Board.
5. **Appeal procedures:** Once a final decision on the whole application is made by the CNP Board, should the developers go to appeal on any matter, then KVCC will have the right to make representations on the appeal, in writing. If the Reporter holds an informal hearing, then KVCC can attend and speak. All the existing representations from the public, as well as others made on fresh documents outlined above, will be submitted to the Reporter.

6. The Master Plan and Design Statements: Councillors expressed views and concerns about the design aspects of the master plan. If, as they intend to do, the developers sell off the house plots one by one for individuals to develop, then there is a danger of losing any sense of overall coherence and the result could be a hotchpotch of houses. In reply Mr McKee stressed that the planning dept. will scrutinise the developers' design statements carefully and decide if they are strong enough and will produce dwellings of sufficiently high quality.

Q. Who will decide if individual house submissions meet the standards required and how tight will the design brief be?

A. Mr McKee replied that if planning permission is granted, then each subsequent application will be referred back to the Master Plan and the approved design code, even if the plans for individual houses are considered by Highland Council rather than CNPA. The brief can be very tight, but it need not be so tight as to be prescriptive regulation.

7. Landscaping Matters.

The Roads: CNP plans to follow the recommendations in the Government document "Designing Streets". The document recommends that more than one type of road layout is looked at, and to provide variety of finishes, width of paths, provision of planted areas with trees and shrubs, etc.

Structural Landscaping. The planning department will scrutinise the developers' Master Plan to ensure good attention has been given to all aspects of landscaping. In response to questions, Mr McKee affirmed that individual plot owners would also be required to undertake landscaping of their plots, so that the development as a whole achieves something substantial in terms of its effect when viewed from across the Strath. The planning dept will be looking at all aspects of landscaping carefully and they also intend to take necessary steps to influence the design of individual houses. Mr McKee also agreed to follow up councillors' concerns about the plans and provision to be made for the long term proper and regular maintenance of the landscaped areas, so they continue to be attractive aspects of the whole development and not be allowed to be overgrown and rundown. Councillors enquired if the application or conditions included financial provision for this maintenance.

8. Area shown on the plan designated for Community Use.

Cr Mrs Schofield asked about the area designated for community use in Phase 2. The Community Council is unable to make proper comment since the plan does not indicate the size of the proposed area, what is the developers' intention in designating it and what plans they have for its long maintenance. Mr McKee and Ms Donnachie noted these points and agreed to follow them up.

9. Environmental Matters.

Cr Mrs Schofield commented that in Councillors' view the one-day mammal survey carried out in October provided just a simple snapshot and probably did not give a true reflection of the environment and its wildlife. There have been recent sightings of wild cat just a few fields away from the development land, with photographs of these truly wild animals caught on camera traps. Mr McKee reported that the CNPA's ecologist would be looking at the survey results very carefully. The Highland Council had expressed a view on the earlier application that the development did not require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and the CNPA planning dept had agreed.

10. Economic Development

Councillors were asked for their views and ideas about how the inclusion of a small area of the development for economic purpose might be used. Cr. Mr Davidson commented that it was difficult to interpret the plan meaningfully since it only outlined small units without sizes. A good discussion

followed about what the area needs in order to attract businesses in. Councillors feel that it is important to diversify, not rely almost wholly on tourism, and instead attract in businesses that allow young people to return and work in the area once they have gained their academic qualifications at university or college. Cr Mr Fallows commented that "shovel ready grants" are vital, but communities and businesses need to be in a position to be able to respond when such grants are available, and ideally be prepared so that bespoke premises can be constructed quickly. Mr McKee commented that the CNPA will be pursuing economic development matters across the Park.

11. Design Review Panel

Cr Mrs Schofield commented that when a group of councillors met the Park's new Chief Exec., Mr Grant Moir recently, he had mentioned setting up an "architectural forum" and she asked if it would include any lay people. Mr McKee clarified the point: the CNP planning dept intends to set up a panel of architects it can call upon for a view as and when development proposals are received, the planning officials want to be able to obtain and use expert opinion and inputs before making their recommendations to the Board. He suggested it might be appropriate for the CNP to organise a design workshop for Community Councils and developers. This was agreed.

12. Affordable Housing.

Councillors raised several points on this matter.

In their view affordable housing should be suitable for all abilities. From the outset provision should be made at the design and build stage to include features that allow residents with disabilities to remain in their own homes as long as possible. They cited examples of good practice: the provision of sturdy joists above bedrooms adequate enough to allow the installation of a hoist; wider doors and routes across and between rooms for easy passage by people in wheelchairs; the provision of wet rooms with showers rather than bathrooms with baths; French doors leading out of living rooms so that residents can easily access the outside and enjoy being able to sit out in the fresh air in appropriate weather. Research has shown that access to the outside environment is important in maintaining good emotional as well as physical health.

Councillors expressed the view that it made economic sense to build in these features from the beginning rather than rely on Social Services being able to afford to install such features from their overstretched budgets at a later stage, and also avoid the need to move residents out of their homes to other housing or into residential care homes. Mr McKee commented the planning dept will consult Inclusive Cairngorms about their views on the designs provided by the developers.

Councillors asked about the cost allowable for building affordable homes - currently said to be set at £115000 per home, but this includes the cost of the land. Their question was who decides on the land value? Is it left to the landowner? Mr Fallows commented that when Highland Council negotiates with landowners and developers about land for building of affordable homes, they rely on the advice from the District Valuer. He commented that he has been impressed by some recent builds and, in his opinion, Highland Council provides better quality in many cases compared with homes built by developers.

Finally Cr Mrs Emmett commented on the area set out in the planning application by the developers for the building of 18 affordable homes. In her view the area was too small for the number of houses, it is also the most steeply sloping on the whole site and likely to create problems for young families with young children in "buggies" and for residents with mobility problems. The layout was

crowded and residents would not really have adequate garden areas of their own. In her opinion the residents of social housing deserve better.

At the conclusion of the discussions, Councillors thanked Mr McKee and Ms Donnachie for suggesting the meeting and for taking part in the discussions, and wished their visitors a safe journey home. All the visitors left at this point.

Business Meeting

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 5th March 2103.

The minutes were approved as a correct record. Prop. JT; Sec. AS

2. Matters Arising.

None.

3. Police Matters

In the absence of an Officer from the Constabulary this item was not taken. The secretary provided copies of the relevant pages from Insp. MacLeod's monthly statistical report that had arrived that day.

4. Treasurer's Financial Report

Cr Mr Taylor presented his monthly financial statement.

Bank Balances

KVCC	£15,757.78
Senior Citizens' Christmas Party Fund	£4148.45
Children's Party Fund	£1776.85
Reserve Fund	£1808.08

Cheques Issued

Administration	£20.00
ditto	£45.00
Heritage Festival	£20.00

Cheques not presented

Little Town of Festivals	£516.00
Town Trail	£100.00

Overall KVCC Bank Balance £15,141.38

Project funds and accounts

All Our Stories Project	£9628.19
Station Adopters & Railway Anniversary Celebrations	£8673.00
Town Trail	£968.85
Heritage Project	£615.00

KVCC	£3056.34
Total	£15.141.38

Cr Mr Taylor reported that the Little Town of Festivals project fund had fallen short by £36 ,and that this had been made up with a donation from KVCC.

The organisers of the Children's Christmas Party plan to hold several fund raising activities this year to raise additional funds.

5.Highland Councillor's Report (Cr Mr Fallows)

Cr Mrs. Emmett enquired about the plans for replacement of the current Ward Manager, who is retiring by the end of the month. Cr Fallows reported that the post has been advertised internally within Highland Council. The new Ward Manager will cover Nairn as well as Badenoch and Strathspey.

6. Other Planning Matters (AS)

None.

7. Recent Ward Forum - Oral report (MB)

Cr Mrs Brown reported that it had been an informative meeting with a good presentation about care in the community from Mr Nigel Small NHS.

The new Police Chief Inspector (Ms Mhairi Grant) for the area was present, she has previously worked in the area.

Ward Forums will continue to be organised in future, but less frequently than until now, and they will be better focussed.

8. AOCB

(i) Travelling People Parked in Kingussie

Cr Mr Taylor reported that a group of travellers, who had parked illegally in the Spey Street car park, had been moved on by the Police, but sadly they left a lot of their rubbish behind including an old mattress and bags of empty food cans. Cr Mrs Schofield commented that she had reported the litter problem to Mr Shaun Finney, TECS and she assumed it had been removed. She undertook to check and report the matter again if the litter was still there. Mr Taylor reported that the fuel had been stolen out a resident's car parked in the street overnight and the timing coincided with the stay of the travellers. Councillors assumed the police had been informed and would be following up the matter. Cr Mr Fallows commented that a group of travellers parked overnight in the small public car park near to his home but had moved on by the following day.

(ii) Court House. In response to a question from Cr Ms Wright, Cr Fallows assured her that, as far as he knew, the planned refurbishment of the Court House is going ahead. When it is complete, the local Police team will move into the Court House alongside Highland Council staff. The Police Authority has a legal obligation to sell the vacated police station at market value.

(iii) Heritage Festival - Little Town of Festivals

Cr Mrs Brown reported on the programme of events taking place as part of the new Heritage Festival. Posters have been placed around the town.

Friday evening, 5th April Mrs Rosemary Gibson, who has been researching the history of shinty locally will be giving a talk on her research in the Church Hall.

Saturday 6th: The launch of the Town Trail is organised for 11 a.m. outside the Duke of Gordon and the ribbon will be cut by Mrs Isobel Harling, one of Kingussie's senior residents. In the afternoon, visitors will be able to find out more about shinty by talking to the Shinty Club Chieftain, Mr Taylor, during the two shinty matches taking place at the Dell. The Duke of Gordon Hotel has kindly opened its evening entertainment to visitors when they can take part in a traditional ceilidh. Mrs Brown invited all the councillors to the launch of the Town Trail event.

(iv) All Our Stories Project

The committee has appointed Mr Gordon Stewart, well known local resident, High School teacher and member of the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team as the project officer and he has begun his research. The project is funded by grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Leader and Highland Council.

(v) Commemorative Shinty match.

On Maundy Thursday, several councillors took part in the gathering for the opening of the former Boleskine shinty pavilion, now rebuilt at the Highland Folk Museum. They had stayed on to watch matches played by U14 teams from Kingussie, Newtonmore, Boleskine and a combined Kincaig/Laggan team. The latter team won overall and was presented with a trophy and all the players received commemorative medals.

A special shinty match commemorating a historic match played in the 1800s between Badenoch and Lochaber is to be played in traditional dress of the time at the Eilan, Newtonmore on Sunday 19th May. Spectators are invited to celebrate the event and enter into the spirit of it by wearing their kilts or Victorian dress!

(vi) Dog Fouling of Public Places.

The Chairman Mr Davidson reported a complaint by a member of the local British Legion about dog fouling of the Gynack Gardens. The Council's gardening team has also complained about some local residents irresponsibly allowing their dogs to run loose over the flower beds in the Gardens. Other councillors reported instances of dog fouling of the ancient church site and graveyard just off the High Street, despite a notice on the gates asking owners not to allow their dogs to contaminate the land.

Mrs Emmett commented that she had reported previous complaints about dog fouling on the football pitch and the old shinty pitch off Dunbarry to the Ward Manager, and requested action be taken by the Dog Warden. She had received an indirect reply from Mr Gillies of Highland Council that the Dog Warden had not been in post since last August; he was aware of issues owing to complaints by his service team with responsibility for maintaining these areas. Mrs Emmett undertook to report these fresh complaints and request some positive action be taken.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 7th May at 7p.m.

Note the change of venue:

The meeting will be held in the **Parish Church Hall on the Mound**, (door at the Western end of the Church.) The entrance path from the High Street is between the Drill Hall and the Planning Office. Either park on the High Street or else on the land at the bottom of the path in the entrance by the graveyard gates.