



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2015 IN TALLA NAN RÒS AT 7 p.m.

Present: Mrs A Schofield (Chair), Mr J Taylor (Treasurer), Mrs V Emmett (Secretary), Mrs M Brown, Ms G Wright, Highland Councillor Mr D Fallows, PC A Courts (Police Scotland)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 1st September 2015

The minutes were approved as a correct record (Prop. JT, Sec. AS)

2. Matters Arising

- (i) **Ruthven Bridge:** Mrs Schofield reported that although the bridge is now open for traffic, a formal opening ceremony has not been held yet.
- (ii) **Spey Street Car Park:** Mr Fallows reported he had contacted Mr Richard Porteous of THC about the problems of long term parking there and he has asked that a height barrier should be installed to prevent large vehicles using the car park.

3. Police Matters

PC Courts reported it has been a quiet month; however there have been a couple of road traffic accidents near Dalwhinnie but no fatalities. Following a disturbance at Bank House on the High Street, four people are due to appear in court from custody; local officers had also dealt with a domestic incident at the Royal Court.

Mr Taylor asked if there are any statistics about incidents of speeding since the installation of the average speed cameras along the A9. PC Courts undertook to investigate.

4. Treasurer's Monthly Financial Report (Mr J Taylor)

JT presented his monthly report (appended).

Town Trail and Heritage Project Funds: He reminded councillors that at the July meeting it was agreed to transfer funds in the Town Trail and Heritage Festival accounts to Badenoch Heritage and that when Kingussie Heritage is up and running as a separate constituted group and their own account is open these funds will be transferred to their account. Mr Taylor and Mrs Schofield signed the cheques to effect the transfer.

Railway Adopters Fund: The monies (£575.17) were provided by ScotRail; £250 is designated for the purchase of plants for planting in the planters on the station. The arrangement is that Mrs Schofield purchases fresh plants seasonally, she claims from the account in the KVCC account and this is then

reimbursed by ScotRail, so the fund is constantly topped up. The rest of the monies in the Station Adopters account (£325.17) are the residue from the funds they provided for the 150th Highland Mainline celebrations. The intention was to use them for a display of historical photographs in the waiting room and for posters advertising Kingussie along the railings on the platforms.

Mrs Schofield reported that since the rail franchise was transferred to Abellio it is not clear exactly what community involvement in the local stations they might want and encourage. She feels unable to refresh the planters by purchasing winter planting until Abellio's stance is clearer. She is to attend a meeting of the Community Rail Partnership on Mon. 12th October in Pitlochry and would probably know more then. It was agreed to continue to maintain the Station Adopters funds in the KVCC accounts.

5. Planning Matters (Mrs A Schofield)

Mrs Schofield reported two planning applications by Davall Developments to vary the conditions set by the Government Reporter on their building development in Kingussie. They are applying (i) to vary the condition applying to the haul road. They wish to alter the junction onto the Wade Road and junction with the A86, its route across the site and the siting of the contractors' buildings, (ii) not to have to carry out the landscaping and reseeded before the site is complete. Mrs Schofield commented that the plan for changing the route of the haul road does not show where it joins up with the road across the site for the first 55 houses. She showed copies of the plans to the Council. After discussion it was unanimously agreed to object to both applications.

6. Highland Councillor's Report (Mr D Fallows)

Mr Fallows reported that the new Highland Council administration is in place. They are in the process of setting the budget and this will need careful monitoring to ensure that vital services are not prejudiced by cuts and priorities. He confirmed that despite Press accounts to the contrary, the new administration does not intend to ignore the Scottish Government and to raise the Council Tax.

7. Correspondence:

(i) Proposals for Ward Boundaries (LGBCS)

No changes in our Ward boundaries are proposed, although the Ward number will change from Ward 21 to Ward 20 because one current Ward is being discontinued and merged into others. The number of councillors for our Ward remains at four. Mr Fallows commented that he trusts there will no post-consultation changes this time.

Badenoch and Strathspey is to be separated again from Nairn, and will become an area on its own again. It is to be hoped it will have its own area manager again, but this is not clear yet.

He suggested KVCC should write a response to the Electoral Commission supporting the plans for our Ward. The closing date for responses is 22nd October.

(ii) Enforcement of On-street parking – Highland Council

Mrs Emmett distributed copies of the letter about the undertaking to take responsibility for enforcement of regulations about on-street parking. The new regulations, which include the employment of traffic wardens, will come into effect in April 2016. The Council plans to renew worn out road markings so that motorists are clear about where they can and cannot park. Mrs Schofield undertook to respond to the proposals.

(iii) Citylink changes to Bus Services – withdrawal of the M90 service through Kingussie

Councillors were provided with copies of the letter from Highland Council's Transport Unit about the proposals by Citylink to discontinue the M91 service from Edinburgh to Inverness on 23rd November and replace it with a minibus for part of the route, which will not serve all the Badenoch area. The proposals seriously adversely affect all the Badenoch communities – residents and businesses alike. Several councillors had taken part in a photoshoot demonstration at the bus-stop on the previous day to alert residents of the looming problems. Several businesses are in the process of writing letters to Citylink protesting about the changes because of the threats to their livelihoods.

Mr Fallows commented that the Transport section of THC had heard from Citylink about the proposals on the 19th August, but had not informed elected members and Community Councils until late September. The Transport section had not objected to the proposals. He felt it would be very difficult to reinstate the whole service. The minibus will be a single decker bus, age and condition unknown. He felt that their proposal to take passengers from Kingussie via Newtonmore and Dalwhinnie to the House of Bruar did not make sense, a better proposal would be to make the connections in Aviemore, the distance is much shorter and in this way Kincaig would still have a bus service.

A robust discussion followed. Mrs Brown asked about the role of HiTrans in such circumstances; apparently they are not active in our area. It was agreed to write a robust response to the Chief Executive of Citylink. Mrs Emmett agreed to draft it and Mrs Schofield would send it off.

8. AOCB

(i) **A9 Roadworks traffic hold-ups:** Mrs Brown commented that Radio Scotland is not reporting the roadworks on the A9 as part of its regular traffic bulletins. She had been held up for a long period recently due to the works on Drumochter. Mr Fallows reported he had also complained about long hold-ups at Kincaig and Tomatin. Transport Scotland has now instructed Bear Scotland to monitor the works, adjust the traffic light sequences to reduce the length of holdups and generally to improve traffic management during the roadworks. The work at Drumochter is nearly complete.

(ii) **Rail Pricing:** Mrs Brown expressed her concerns about rail ticket pricing citing it is cheaper to buy a ticket from Inverness to Perth than it is from Kingussie to Perth. This problem has been expressed in the past and continues. Mrs Schofield commented that the Community Rail Partnership is not a lobbying body; it has been set up to help improve station facilities.

(iii) **New Hospital – a step closer:** Mrs Brown distributed copies of a press notice issued by NHS S&M Highland about the redesign of health services in Badenoch and Strathspey including the plans for a new hospital.

A site in Aviemore for the new hospital still has to be purchased but it is hoped that construction will be underway in autumn 2017 and complete by autumn 2019. The NHS Board is still looking at the old technology site in Aviemore between both railway lines. Questions were asked if this site, as well as the hospital itself, will be large enough in the longer term in view of all the housing developments planned in the area.

Work is in progress meanwhile to develop community services and step up/step down beds in care homes. Discussions about transport and access issues are continuing.

Mrs Brown commented that she has asked for a definitive list of services to be provided at the new hospital, in surgeries and within communities. In the subsequent discussion she asked if Kingussie patients can avail themselves of service at Grantown or Aviemore if this service is not

