



# KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2016

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Ailsa Schofield (Chairwoman), Mrs Val Emmett (Secretary), Mr Joe Taylor (Treasurer) Ms Jan Morse.

Highland Councillors Mr Dave Fallows and Mr Bill Lobban. PC Andrew Courts (Police Scotland)

**Apologies:** Mrs Mairi Brown, Mrs Faye Dallas, Mrs Sue Rowley.

### 1. Minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 (already circulated)

Mr Lobban requested an amendment to Paragraph 6(v) ref. increase in Council Tax. The revised wording is now: ".....Councils will only be allowed to keep 3% of the Council Tax rise, the fate of another 7.5 to 25% raised will be decided by the Scottish Government. ...."

The minutes were then approved.

### 2. Matters Arising

7(i) **Memorial Benches:** Mrs Schofield reported that the project to raise funds for the memorial benches is shortlisted in the new round of Tesco's "bag of help fund". She is of the view, however, that the arrangements for voting are flawed since we are in competition with two projects in Inverness; so we are up against the city population and 5 stores in Inverness. A visit to the Tesco branch nearest to Kingussie entails a 22 mile round trip to Aviemore, and a visit to any of the Inverness based branches entails an almost 100 mile round trip, leaving our bid at a serious disadvantage. She has spoken to the Groundwork Trust who administers the scheme; they have listened and will help if they can. She has also put an entry about the project on Facebook and it already has 1314 hits.

Mrs Schofield reported she is anxious to be able to resolve the question of the replacement of the benches in Kingussie. The Canadian family is keen to pay for one of the benches and see it installed in time for a family reunion here in the summer.

7(ii) Mrs Emmett reported that a meeting of the new "Building a Stronger Community" project is likely to be held in mid to late January 2017.

### 3. Police Matters (PC A. Courts)

PC Courts reported 34 incidents locally during November, including damage to a parked car, theft of a student's mobile phone at the High School and a problem about dogs at a local house, which needed the RSPCA to rescue the animal.

There were several road traffic incidents, including another on the B9152 (old A9) when a car went off the road and ended up in the Marsh. A discussion followed about the increase in traffic on this road by motorists trying to avoid the roadworks on the A9. Some of the drivers are clearly unfamiliar with the road, which has many sharp bends; they are going far too fast and overtaking in unsuitable places. Mrs Emmett commented

she has timed the journeys on both the A9 and B9152 from the Aviemore junction to the Kingussie junction and there is no saving in time by using the minor road. There could also be more problems during the winter in icy weather since the minor road is gritted less frequently than the trunk road.

Mr Taylor asked if the Police had followed up a break-in at the old Museum buildings (Am Fasgadh) which he had reported when he found the lights on one night at Pitmain Lodge and the door had been kicked in. PC Courts reported the Police had attended. Mr Fallows and Mr Lobban expressed concern that the electricity was still on as they had received assurances several months ago that both the water and power supplies were turned off as part of the steps taken to secure the buildings.

#### **4. Annual Grant for the Community Council (Mrs Schofield)**

Dealt with under item 5.

#### **5. Treasurer's Monthly Financial Report (Mr J Taylor)**

Mr Taylor presented his monthly financial report (appended).

He reported very recent receipt (late November) of the Community Council annual grant for 2016/17 from Highland Council. The gross grant this year is £1264.90. The Highland Council has followed usual practice and taken the annual insurance charge (£84.32) on behalf of KVCC before paying the remaining grant (£1180.58) into the KVCC account. In reply to a question from Mr Lobban, he commented that KVCC had submitted in June their annual accounts for the year ending March 2016, but notification and receipt of the grant for 2016/17 had only been received in November. Mrs Schofield thanked Mr Taylor for organising the Community Council wreath for the Remembrance Day service.

A discussion followed about what Community Councils may spend the monies on. The letter from the Ward Manager on behalf of the Chief Executive's Office about use of the grant indicated very restricted use of it. Mrs Schofield and Mr Taylor expressed concern, as the wording about limitations on the grant's use was at odds with verbal reassurances given at a recent Ward meeting of community councils. KVCC has often given a sum of money to help buy flowering plants in the summer as part of the town's High Street floral scheme. The restrictions appear to prevent such donations.

Mr Lobban and Mr Fallows were of the view that such use of the grant was not prohibited. Mr Lobban then read out paragraph 9.6 of the Highland Council scheme; the wording of this paragraph did not place any strictures that would prevent the Council from helping to make the town more attractive.

#### **6. Planning Matters (Mrs A Schofield)**

Mrs Schofield reported no new planning applications.

#### **7. Highland Councillors' Report (Mr Lobban and Mr Fallows).**

Mr Fallows reported that as a member of the THC administration he would be attending a budget briefing the following day. He anticipated some difficult times ahead. The full Council would debate the proposals the following week.

Mr Lobban commented that many councillors would object to some of the plans for capital spending, for example to spend £30million on building a Velodrome in Inverness. Mr Fallows agreed. No account appeared to have been given to the revenue expenditure that would be required to service such a spend – approximately £3million a year. They agreed there are many more important priorities for using the limited funds available and that would benefit many more people in the Highlands, both Councillors agreed on the need to concentrate on the "must haves" not the luxuries in a wish list.

## **8. Withdrawal of the City Link M91 Bus Service (Mrs Schofield)**

Mrs Schofield commented that this was a case of “Here we go again”. The Bus Company plans to withdraw the connecting link along the Strath with the M91 service from Inverness to Glasgow and Edinburgh, stopping in Aviemore.

She reported that the statistics about usage of the link service, presented by the bus company were incorrect and under-represented the actual figures and nobody is aware as to who has been consulted, resulting in their decision. Mrs Schofield agreed to write a letter asking how they arrived at their figures; if the numbers included passengers using bus passes and are the drivers ticketing accurately. Some passengers are still finding the drivers are not ticketing and recording destinations correctly.

It was agreed that neither City Link nor Stage Coach have cooperated with respect to timetabling to make more efficient and satisfactory use by passengers – the Stage Coach buses are running within a few minutes of those run by City Link, so they were in direct competition with each other. Some of the timings meant long waits and even missed connections for the passengers travelling to and from Aviemore. It was agreed the whole question of travel by public transport – both rail and bus continues to be unsatisfactory.

**Travel to and from the new hospital.** Mr Lobban reported that the Hospital Re-Design committee is meeting next week and plans to produce bus routes that will need to service all the localities from whence patients will be travelling to and from the hospital. They will look at redesigning the routes and at timetabling so as to provide the best services.

Buses and trains need to be programmed when and where people want and need to use them. The new hospital will act as “a bus hub” with electronic indicators showing when the next buses will arrive and depart. The plan (hope) is that the community car schemes will provide services in between the bus times.

## **9. Venue and timing of future KVCC meetings**

Mrs Schofield reported recent correspondence from Mr Robertson, chair of the Talla Nan Ròs committee. He asked the Council to begin the monthly meetings later, in an attempt to minimise disruption of the meeting by members of the Yoga group walking through the Foyer to the main hall for their starting time of 7.15 p.m. The group began meeting in the hall earlier this year and during the lighter evenings they had entered and left the main hall via the emergency exit on the side of the hall. Mr Robertson had asked Mrs Schofield to let him know if this was satisfactory, which it has been.

The group now wishes to use the main entrance since the side entrance is unlit. The Hall committee has no plans to install lighting along the side or to do any snow clearing of this route.

As a trial, the Council meeting this evening began at 7.15 p.m. In the ensuing discussions some councillors were concerned that while all the councillors arrived on time for a prompt start, this would not necessarily be the same for club members. It could disturb proceedings if they arrived after the council meeting has started and when they depart since the group finishes much earlier and during the Council meeting. Use of the small meeting room as an alternative was discussed, but it was agreed that it was too small when all the councillors are present. It was also pointed out that Council meetings are open to the general public and there are often external speakers with presentations of plans, materials, etc. and so the foyer could be quite full, unlike the current meeting when on this occasion council numbers were few. Councillors agreed there are few alternative venues in Kingussie that are so readily accessible for the public.

The correspondence from Mr Robertson indicated that the Hall committee is anxious not to lose the Community Council meetings and in return they were prepared to offer use of the small meeting room and the foyer to the Community Council with no charge. In conclusion councillors agreed to accept these terms and to start meetings at 7.15 p.m. but to ask that if possible, members of the Yoga group could try to arrive on time and to make a smooth exit at the end of their meeting since it will occur during the Council meeting. Mrs Schofield agreed to reply to Mr Robertson.

## **10. AOCB**

### **(i) Undergrounding of Power Lines – SSE’s Landscape project.**

Mrs Emmett reported she had recently met two members of the SSE design team who are looking at feasibility and costings for undergrounding the four power lines crossing the valley she had submitted on behalf of KVCC earlier this year. At a meeting in the spring with two SSE engineers, they indicated they might only be able to consider two of the lines, but the design team has been asked to consider all four. Mrs Schofield thanked Mrs Emmett for putting in the proposals for the Council.

### **(ii) Fishing Permits – Donations from Pitmain Estate**

Mr Taylor reported that the income from the Pitmain Estate’s fishing permits is being used this year to help rebuild the bridge near to the Clubhouse at the Golf Club, the previous one was washed away in the August 2014 floods.

Mr Taylor further commented that the Estate is asking for nominations of good causes using the income from the 2017 sales of permits. The sale usually raises of the order of £1000.

In discussion it was suggested that it might be used to help purchase new memorial benches or the purchase of perennial plants for the Memorial Gardens that will make maintenance of the flower beds easier– if there is no help from Highland Council in future. These suggestions were agreed wholeheartedly and Mr Taylor undertook to pass this on.

Mr Lobban suggested that the Ward Discretionary Fund might be used to provide match funding.

### **(iii) Town Christmas Tree – a new site for consideration.**

Mr Lobban commented that he had heard there was a problem about the siting of the usual Christmas tree outside the Court House now that the buildings are back in use as the principal Council offices and open to the public etc. He suggested that the Christmas tree might be sited in the memorial gardens in future since there is an electricity supply there and it would make a good venue for public Christmas and New Year celebrations.

## **Date of Next meeting:**

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 starting at the new time of 7.15 p.m.**

## **Appendix: Treasurer’s Monthly Financial Report to the end of November 2016**

Current Account Balances:	£5176.64
<b>Lodgements:</b> Highland Council Annual Grant	£1180.58
<b>Projects:</b>	
Railway Fund	£525.17
KVCC	£4647.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5172.64</b>