



KINGUSSIE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7th MARCH 2017 IN TALLA NAN RÒS STARTING TIME 7.15 p.m.

Present: Community Councillors: Mrs A Schofield (Chairwoman), Mrs V Emmett (Secretary), Mr J Taylor (Treasurer), Mrs M Brown, Mrs J Morse.

Highland Councillor: Mr D Fallows.

Visitors: PC A Courts (Police Scotland), Ms C Tobin and Ms M Breen Singh (Transport Scotland).
Mr Patrick Bell, a Kingussie resident joined the meeting part way through it.

Apologies: Mrs S Rowley, Mrs F Dallas.

Dualling of the A9 Crubenmore to Kinraig – Transport Scotland team

Ms Tobin spoke about the forthcoming exhibitions in Newtonmore (5th March) and Kingussie (6th March). She was unable to reveal detail of the plans for the preferred route including maps, because they would be unveiled on the Transport Scotland website on the 5th March and at the exhibitions.

The closing date for responses is 4th May 2017.

She confirmed that the Kingussie junctions will not be significantly different from the current ones. They are still negotiating accesses to the A9 with land, estate owners and others. Nobody will be given preferential treatment.

In response to a question Ms Tobin confirmed the new road will be a digital corridor. Mrs Brown asked about proposed rest areas and whether there will be opportunities for local communities to publicise local attractions. Ms Tobin took note. It is proposed that the Brown signs will be overhauled. Mrs Brown asked if there will be a community compensation fund for disruption to local communities as it is highly likely more traffic will use the A86 through Kingussie and Newtonmore.

In conclusion Ms Tobin and Ms Breen Singh commented that Transport Scotland is still looking at the strategy for the whole route and phasing of sections. It will be at least two years before the work will start on the Crubenmore to Kinraig section.

Mrs Schofield thanked the visitors for their contribution and they left the meeting at this point.

Business Meeting

1. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 7th February 2017

Mr Taylor reported an error in the monthly February financial report: The balance in the KVCC Funds should have been shown as £4540.47 not £450.47. The mistake was corrected and then the minutes were accepted as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

Item 4. Mr Taylor questioned the reporting of part of his report about the “ownership” of part of the funds in the Railway/Station Adopters fund. He was of the opinion that part of the fund, left over from the 150th Anniversary of the Highland Mainline Railway celebrations day, was for heritage projects and could be transferred to Badenoch Heritage for the Kingussie Heritage Festival.

Other councillors disagreed. Mrs Emmett and Mrs Schofield recalled that the funds had been provided by ScotRail for the celebrations day and that part of its legacy was to be a display of photographs of old Kingussie and the Railway station to be displayed in the waiting room. The legacy element had not been completed. Mrs Brown recalled that Mr Stewart and Mr Moffett had provided some photographs and copies of old photos, but Mrs Schofield commented the quality was found not to be always high enough for further reproduction.

Another idea for the legacy that had been suggested by Mrs Schofield some time ago was the display of large framed colourful posters of local beauty spots, etc. in and around Kingussie along the railings of the platforms and that could be easily viewed by travellers on the trains. Pitlochry station was cited as a good example of such displays.

After a good discussion it was agreed that the remaining funds should still be part of the legacy for improving the displays at the railway station, and that Mrs Schofield, as secretary and Kingussie representative of the Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership, should enquire about how best to pursue the legacy element.

3. Police Matters (PC A. Courts)

PC Courts presented an oral report. During February, 22 incidents had been reported including the usual mix of road traffic incidents. During recent commercial vehicle inspections, several were found to be overweight. A male has been apprehended and will appear in Court in due course in association with break-ins and thefts from parked cars and an attempted break in at Dalwhinnie Fire Station. Two dead buzzards have been found alongside the railway line near Lynchat, presumably hit by trains. Two reports of hare coursing in fields between Newtonmore and Kingussie have been reported and enquiries are ongoing. Councillors expressed surprise at this report.

There were no questions.

Mrs Schofield thanked PC Courts for giving his time to report to the Council and he left at this point.

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

Mr Taylor presented his monthly financial report (appended).

5. **Planning Matters** (Mrs A Schofield)

- (i) Balavil Estate application. The Community Council's response made last month was now on the CNPA website. A copy of the response had been sent to the Kingussie Business Forum. Both Mrs Emmett and Mrs Schofield had received a phone call from one local business man who disagreed with the Council's response.
- (ii) **Application to raise the height of the southbound platform at Kingussie Railway Station by 30cms.** The work would be carried out at night and should be complete by the end of August. Mrs Schofield read out a draft response strongly recommending and supporting this application. Once the work is done it will be much safer for all passengers, especially the elderly and disabled, to use the trains using that platform. Councillors gave it their unanimous support. Several councillors felt there had been "an accident waiting to happen" when passengers had to dismount or board trains from the platform in its current state. Mrs Schofield proposed the Council also added a point that while the platform work was being done it would be appropriate to refurbish the foot bridge giving access to the southbound side. This was agreed.

6. **Highland Councillor's Report**

Mr Fallows reported that the Highland Council's budget had finally been agreed, but with some difficult matters emerging. The shrinking budget is going to make it difficult to manage many resources, but the Scottish Government has provided some additional money.

Council Elections: are due in early May and from the 10th March things are beginning to wind down. The final planning meeting will take place on the 11th April and he would be attending his last Council meeting on Thursday 9th March.

Mr Fallows commented that both he and Ms Douglas are standing down, but Mr Lobban and Mr Rimmell plan to stand for re-election. There will be two new councillors for the Ward.

Insurance for Community Councils and Community Groups: the Highland Council's decision not to continue the current scheme after 2017/18. Mr Taylor spoke about a letter received recently from Highland Council, Mr Fallows commented he was unaware of this matter and would pursue it.

Withdrawal of Half-Price Rail Travel. Mrs Brown commented that this decision could seriously adversely affect people with Highland Council Bus Passes, especially where bus services are poor. The current rail fare of £7.20 will jump to £14.40 within the THC area. It could affect the ability of people without access to private cars to get to Raigmore Hospital for appointments. As an example she commented that at best (with all bus connections working) they would need to **make six separate bus journeys for a return visit.** There appeared not to have been any consultation about the withdrawals of the rail concessions.

The Highland Rail Card is available on lines to the north and west of Inverness, she questioned why they were unavailable in Badenoch and Strathspey and Nairn.

Mr Fallows commented that unfortunately no changes to THC decisions can be made for six months. He has been fighting for ten years with HiTrans to introduce the Rail Card in our area, but their response is that they cannot get the rail operators to agree. He suggested this matter should be raised after the May elections with the new councillors.

Mrs Brown reported she has already contacted NHS Highland about the recent decision as it has implications for travel to the new hospital. She has also contacted the Church Authorities since they have a pastoral role, the Highland Senior Citizens' Conference and Age Scotland.

At the end of discussions, it was agreed that on behalf of the Community Council, Mrs Brown should draft a letter to send to HiTrans and the rail operators. She agreed to do this.

7. **Outcomes of the Participatory Budgeting Event for Badenoch and Strathspey** (Mrs Schofield)

Mrs Schofield reported that sadly the application for funding for renewal of some of the memorial benches had not been successful.

But this disappointment was overshadowed by a more recent serious problem. She has been informed by a Highland Council official that if the Community Council paid for new benches, they would be responsible for them:

- (i) They would need to keep a log book detailing a monthly safety audit of each bench, recording its condition and state of repair, etc.;
- (ii) If any benches were damaged they must be repaired within 14 days;
- (iii) The Council would be liable for a £250 excess fee towards the costs of any repairs;
- (iv) **Most importantly** – if the Community Council ceased for any reason, then the last three Councillors holding office i.e. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, would be **personally legally liable** for any claims for damage and injury.

Mrs Schofield was of the view that this last point was totally unacceptable. Councillors agreed.

The Highland Council and their predecessors have taken responsibility for the maintenance of the existing benches for about 50 years since they were gifted to the town. Until last year the Council removed all the benches each winter and repaired and refurbished them. The Community Council was just raising funds so that some of the benches that were nearing the end of their lives could be replaced with good quality new ones.

Mrs Schofield commented that if necessary the £1000 prize money from the Tesco's competition could be diverted to the purchase of shrubs and blooms for the Memorial Gardens; but she was in a dilemma about the gift of funds from the Canadian family for a memorial bench for one of their Kingussie relatives killed in the First World War and whose name appears on the War Memorial.

The councillors agreed with her views and after discussion it was agreed that Mrs Schofield should write to Mr Barron, Chief Executive, stressing that the proposed changes were unacceptable.

8. AOCB

(a) Correspondence

Mrs Schofield reported a request from the Kingussie Business Forum for financial support towards the cost of the floral decorations for the town. In an effort to make the High Street and neighbouring roads in the main town area more attractive the group plans to reinstate the hanging baskets. They plan to purchase 50 new hanging baskets and 12 plant troughs. Councillors agreed that every effort should be made to make the town areas more attractive, especially since the Court House is open again and more businesses are opening up on the High Street. After discussion, it was agreed to provide £400 towards the floral scheme but with one proviso: the group must ensure that the hanging baskets are properly looked after throughout the summer months. If they are not cared for properly then the Council will not provide further support in future years. The previous scheme failed miserably when inadequate provision was made for watering the plants. Mrs Schofield commented she had already raised this issue and was assured there were good plans in hand.

(b) SBSA art projects (Mrs Emmett)

Mrs Emmett commented that the Art Society had been successful at the Budget Participatory Day and was awarded £2000 for a community art project.

They propose to use the grant to run an art event “Making Art in the Park, Come and be an Artist for a Day”, with a week of art and craft workshops open to everyone living in Badenoch and Strathspey, taking place in the Iona Gallery from the 15th to 22nd July. The dates chosen are in the school holidays to enable families to take part. As a result of the grant award, all the workshops will be free.

Railway Legacy Project: If it was agreed, the SBSA is also willing to collaborate with the proposed railway legacy project. At their AGM in early April, Mrs Emmett proposes to ask members if they will take part in the project by designing and painting masters for the large posters to go along the railings at the station. Councillors welcomed this offer, but it was agreed to await the outcome of Mrs. Schofield’s enquiries. (see Item 2)

(c) Kingussie Heritage Festival (Mrs Brown)

Mrs Brown reported that the programme for the Annual Heritage Festival is well advanced. It will take place on the 28th to 30th April. The talk on the Friday evening will be provided by the Talla Nan Ròs committee with live music and song. On Saturday, during the day there is a full programme of lectures, and she outlined some of the topics. In the evening the Badenoch Chorale will give a concert in the Parish Church. A Heritage Walk along Glenfeshie is planned for the Sunday. The final detailed programme will be available shortly.

As agreed at the February meeting, the councillors confirmed to support the Festival with a donation of £250.

(d) Retiring Councillors

Mrs Schofield announced that she and Mrs Emmett plan to retire from the Council at the AGM in June. They have both served on the Council for eight years and have held office during all that time – Mrs Schofield has served as Vice Chair and now as Chairwoman and also dealt with all the planning applications; Mrs Emmett has been secretary for the whole period. Providing there are no other resignations, there will still be five councillors and the Council will still be quorate if all attend. She urged the remaining councillors however, to seek other residents to join as co-opted members.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 4th April 2017

Appendix: Treasurer's Financial Statement to end of February 2017.

Current Account Balance	£5065.64
Transactions	None
Projects	
Station Adopters	£525.17
KVCC account	£4540.47
Total	£5065.64