



Speyside Area Forum
Chairman: Mr A Henderson
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Minutes of Meeting
Held in The Fleming Hall, Aberlour, Tuesday 6th December 2011, 7.30pm

1. Welcome and Apologies:

The chairman, Sandy Henderson, opened the meeting and welcomed everybody.

Apologies were received from: Fiona Herd, Community Learning and Development Worker, Education and Social Care, Buckie Community Office; Nigel Engstrand, Rector, Speyside High School, Bill Burgess, Vice Chairman, Carron Community Association, Patricia Grant and Jenny Herschell, Kirkmichael & Tomintoul Community Association, Sergeant Sean Jones, Grampian Police; Jean Oliver, Speyside Paths Network; Cllr. Pearl Paul, The Moray Council.

Attending:

Sandy Henderson, Chairman, Hugh Fraser, Treasurer and Mabel Donald, Aberlour Community Association; Andrea Fuller and Patricia Shanks, Edinville Community Hall; Debbie Smith, Martin Sheed and Mhairi McBain, Cabrach Community Association; John Fleming, Dufftown-Mortlach Community Hall; Steve Oliver, Archiestown Village Council.

In Attendance:

PC Chris Page, Grampian Police; Cllr. Fiona Murdoch and Cllr. Michael McConnachie, The Moray Council; Eileen Fitzpatrick, Secretary, Speyside Area Forum.

2. Introduction of new Secretary

Sandy Henderson introduced and welcomed Eileen Fitzpatrick, who has been appointed Secretary. Eileen is also Secretary to the Moray Federation of Village Halls and Associations. Her email address is fitzpatrick.eileen1@gmail.com.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (25th October):

Approved: Patricia Shanks

Seconded: Hugh Fraser

Amendment to Minutes of October meeting - other issues item 5.(g) Councillor Michael McConnachie said this should read cost of delivery and not cost of postage for IV and AB postal addresses.

4. Matters Arising:

Council Plants: The necessary outlay for plants this year had been reasonably affordable, and communities generally were relieved. In response to a query about next year's plant ordering raised by John Fleming, Mabel Donald replied that she has specified particular plants with next year's order, as she is working to a theme and is hoping these will be supplied. However, she expressed disappointment that it was not possible to have a cost breakdown per tray and that there is no price list, so that price comparisons could be made. Councillor Fiona Murdoch, The Moray Council, suggested that perhaps the Plant Forum could write to The Moray Council requesting that plant prices be given and that if possible communities could collect the plants earlier than this year. There was general agreement to this suggestion. Sandy Henderson will follow this up.

Village Officers: Sandy Henderson said he was aware of complaints that villages were not being kept tidy since Village Officers were no longer funded by The Moray Council. This had become an issue following the Dufftown and Aberlour Highland Games, with litter left in The Square and bins running over with rubbish so that it was blowing about and looking unsightly. It had stayed like that until the Monday, which makes a bad impression of the town on visitors. Speyside Area Forum had written to The Moray Council expressing concern about the Council's street cleaning and

public toilet cleaning service, and Sandy Henderson read the reply from Ian Bruce, Environmental Protection Manager, The Moray Council. Mr Bruce was aware of Speyside Area Forum's specific concerns and they

“... will look to working with the organisers of these events in an effort to avoid any repeat of the problems next year. I can assure you that my Cleansing Team will be making every effort to improve service delivery from within reduced resources available and that the impact of the new service delivery is being monitored. Elected Members are also being kept aware of the concerns raised and have requested a further update to Committee, in due course.”

Following a discussion it was agreed that Speyside Area Forum needs to write to Mr Bruce again expressing the great concern felt by members at this much reduced, yet vital, service. Mobile Cleansing Squads were not an adequate replacement, as they only do the minimum required, and street cleaners have a very wide area to cover. Although the gentlemen's toilet had been cleaned, it needs to be repainted. John Fleming said that after the Dufftown New Year's Eve party in the Square, volunteers will have to clear up the mess, including broken glass, and it is a shock not to have a Village Officer. Andrea Fuller queried the Moray Council spending resources on special bins in rural areas instead of on this very important post.

Councillors Fiona Murdoch and Michael McConnachie responded by saying that Village Officers had been axed partly because it had been seen by The Moray Council to be an unfair system as not all villages had a Village Officer. The Mobile Squads will clear an accumulation of mess if requested or if they see it, and unfortunately people will probably just have to live with the new system.

5. Police Matters: The Chairman thanked PC Page for attending and as there were no Police matters to report upon, PC Page left the meeting.

6. Update from Community Groups: Martin Sheed, Cabrach Community Association advised that they have launched a new website, Cabrach.org. Approved Minutes of meetings are on the website and there are links, which have been checked, with other websites. They noticed that Speyside Area Forum website has not been updated since February.

There followed a discussion regarding who was responsible for updating the website as Speyside Area Forum has no Webmaster at present, raising the questions who could do this and who could fund this. Councillor Fiona Murdoch wondered whether members felt, as she did, that it was important that Speyside Area Forum has control of its own website. Andrea Fuller suggested her husband Bob Fuller who is now webmaster of MFCHA (Moray Federation of Community Halls and Associations). Speyside Area Forum needs a web link with it. Mrs Fuller also wondered whether funds could be accessed under the Community Access Partnership. Sandy Henderson will raise the matter with Rhona Patterson, Community Support Worker (it was greatly regretted that Council budget cuts meant that the CSU was no longer funded to attend these meetings) and report back. Andrea Fuller will email John Ferguson, Community Planning and Development Manager, The Moray Council about this.

Martin Sheed, and Debbie Smith, Cabrach Community Association reported that their Craft Fair had been very successful, and that as 18 Crafters had taken part, this may well become an annual event. The date for next year's Craft Fair, the 2nd Saturday in November, had already been booked.

John Fleming, Dufftown-Mortlach Community Association, reported that at their last meeting there were still complaints about the potentially dangerous junction in Craigellachie. Hugh Fraser said that Aberlour Community Association has taken up the matter but without result. Councillors will bring this matter up with BEAR Scotland, on behalf of Speyside Area Forum at the Moray Council annual meeting which is due to take place shortly. Sandy Henderson will also write to BEAR Scotland on this matter. Andrea Fuller mentioned the often overgrown vegetation which was a potential hazard near Bluehill Quarry and this would also be raised at the meeting with Bear Scotland. Hugh Fraser, Aberlour Community Association said that the signage for the A95 at Allahoy needs to be looked at as large vehicles following this direction were presented with a low bridge and vehicles have been known to reverse back out on to the A95, and this was potentially dangerous.

7. Treasurer's Report

Hugh Fraser, Treasurer had nothing to report at the moment to this meeting.

8. Community Issues

Speyside Community Website: Andrea Fuller had raised concerns about this and Roddy Burns, Chief Executive, The Moray Council at the October meeting had agreed to look into it. Following a general discussion, it was agreed that this important resource was underused and not at present being utilised fully to promote tourism in Speyside or even Aberlour as it could. A sub-committee could be set up to further this. In the meantime, Councillor Fiona Murdoch said she would contact the web group to ask for a copy of their Constitution. She proposed that we apply for grant funding for the website, and that she was willing to contact the Community Support Forum in the first instance. Hugh Fraser seconded this proposal. Agreed.

Other issues:

Councillor Fiona Murdoch advised the meeting that BEAR Scotland would close the A95 Craigellachie to Wester Gauldwell road for 28 days in February for road works.

She also spoke about the project to promote and market Craigellachie Bridge, (built by Thomas Telford in 1812-14) by creating a Social Enterprise. It was generally agreed to ask Moray Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Lesley Ann Parker to give a presentation on this project at the next meeting. Sandy Henderson to follow up.

In regard to the poor quality and low pressure of the water supply, Hugh Fraser said he had installed a UV filter but this did not improve matters. He had contacted the Community Support Worker for assistance but she is unable to help. Following a general discussion members asked whether this was a matter for the Community Support Worker. Councillor Fiona Murdoch queried whether this was beyond the CSU remit, but would ask again (she had tried before) for a job description. Andrea Fuller said that the CSU had helped in a similar situation at Glenallachie, Aberlour where the distillery paid for the water connection and The Moray Council also contributed. The result was that instead of having to pay £4000 they paid £1500. However, that budget has since been axed so funding will be an issue. Hugh Fraser said that he would again contact Steve Scott, Community Liaison Officer from Scottish Water.

10. Correspondence:

Speyside Kiltwalk 2012 (Sunday 13th May, this benefits children's charities in Scotland including Aberlour Child Care Trust). Andrea Fuller suggested that Speyside Area Forum promote it. Sandy Henderson who had already spoken to one of the organisers would follow up and report back.

Grass Cutting – Steve Oliver said that Archiestown Village Council were to be charged £1700 a year by The Moray Council to cut the grass in their playing field from 2012. Maybe other communities would also be similarly charged. Councillor Fiona Murdoch raised an objection and said that communities should not be asked to pay as it is a community facility and they would not have the resources to meet the cost. Mabel Donald, Aberlour Community Association, had spoken to Grant Speed, Parks Officer, The Moray Council. They are checking into the ownership of various sites to see who is responsible for paying for grass cutting. This is an important issue as there are road safety implications. It was agreed that Speyside Area Forum should write to The Moray Council. Sandy Henderson to follow up.

11. Any Other Business

Queens Diamond Jubilee Celebrations: (Sunday 3rd June 2012 – On Monday 4th June as part of the National Beacon Chain, a beacon will be lit on Ben Rinnes.) Sandy Henderson advised members present that Aberlour Community Association was arranging for a tree to be planted in Aberlour as part of the celebrations.

Date and venue of next meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 14th February, Edinville Community Hall (for members present please note this is not the date arranged at the meeting, which has had to be changed as the Chairman and Vice Chairman have previous engagements).

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