



Speyside Area Forum  
Chairman: Mr A Henderson  
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**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Held in Edinville Community Hall, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30pm**

**1. Welcome and Apologies:**

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

Apologies were received from: Jenny Herschell, Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Association; Mhairi McBain, (now retired) Cabrach Community Enterprise; Bill Burgess, Carron Community Association; Pearl Paul, The Moray Council.

**Attending:** Sandy Henderson, Chairman, Hugh Fraser, Treasurer and Mabel Donald, Aberlour Community Association; Andrea Fuller, Pat Shanks, Edinville Community Hall Council; Debbie Smith, Martin Sheed, Cabrach Community Enterprise; Councillor Fiona Murdoch, Councillor Mike McConnachie, Reni Milburn, Funding Support, The Moray Council; John Fleming, Dufftown-Mortlach Memorial Hall; Margaret Stuart, Rothes Council; Patricia Grant, Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Association; Rita Marks, Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association.

**In Attendance:**

Lesley Ann Parker, Moray Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive, Reni Milburn – The Moray Council, Group Captain JJ Johnston – RAF Kinloss, Michael Lord – The Whisky Shop, Duncan Elphick – The Highlander Inn, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Secretary, (Minutes) Speyside Area Forum. PC Chris Page, Grampian Police (present during Police Matters); Steve Oliver, Archiestown Village Council; Jean Grimshaw.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (6<sup>th</sup> December 2011):** Approved: Andrea Fuller Seconded: Pat Shank

**3. Matters Arising:**

**Re Plants/The Moray Council:** There was a general discussion about the cost of and arrangements for collecting the plants from The Moray Council following the Forum December meeting. Andrea Fuller, Edinville, raised the question of disparity between the amounts that different communities were being charged. There are also several other anomalies and Sandy Henderson had spoken about this with Rhona Patterson, Community Support Worker. Speyside should have its own Flower Committee with representatives from several villages, to deal with these matters. Rhona will contact Andrea to set up a meeting, and Andrea will follow this up.

**Speyside Area Forum Minutes on The Moray Council website:**

Andrea Fuller has spoken with Rhona Patterson and Speyside Area Forum Agendas and Minutes will be put onto The Moray Council Website. Eileen Fitzpatrick, Secretary will ensure that this is done in the future.

**Speyside Community Website Group:** Councillor Fiona Murdoch and Sandy Henderson will meet with the group with a view to offering assistance to improve and expand the extent of the current website to make it more marketable. This would include looking at professional website design, so that the content reflects the needs of visitors and tourists and promotes the area more fully. Grant funding and fund raising would be explored.

**Grass Cutting Charges – The Moray Council:** Whilst the letter from the Moray Council had mentioned general costs but had not been specific, Fiona Murdoch urged communities to complain in writing to the Moray Council so that their views would be known. There are road safety, legal and financial implications which need to be clarified and concerns which need to be expressed. Following further discussion, Sandy Henderson, Chairman will write to Grant Speed, Parks Officer, The Moray Council.

**Craigellachie Bridge (built by Thomas Telford 1812-14) and Nature Walk Project – Report from Lesley Ann**

**Parker:** “Lesley (CEO of Moray Chamber of Commerce), Rachel Annand (Admin and Events Co-ordinator at Chamber) and Ian Richards (member of the Chamber) came along to discuss the above suggested project. The cost to paint the Bridge is huge; however it is an iconic structure that needs signposting. This ambitious project would involve not only bridge restoration, but also create walks and market the bridge. The project could cost about £230,000,

however there may be 90% LEADER funding. During the discussion it was felt a Social Enterprise may be the best option to take the project forward. It was also felt that the project should be a Moray wide project, not just a Craigellachie project as the sums of money and potential liability were rather large for such a small group. Whilst this was considered a fantastic project, it needs other groups involved and someone to lead the project, with perhaps a working group being formed. It was agreed that this project be highlighted to the Speyside Forum to see if it is something that they could be involved with or could set up a working group. If no member of the Village Council is at the next Speyside Forum meeting, Councillor Murdoch to raise the matter on our behalf. Depending on the feedback from the Forum, we then need to contact the Moray Council for an update on what is happening with the Bridge in relation to the Telford Anniversary and the bridge upgrade.”

Reni Milburn, The Moray Council, gave an overview about the successful projects engendered by the Telford Centenary celebration last year. The restoration of this ancient monument to its former glory does not just involve paint as it is in quite poor condition but would require complete stripping back to the metal. This raises several issues relating not only to funding but importantly to potential pollution of the river. Some initial costings have been carried out and discussions have taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund amongst others. Reni would welcome a strong community interest expressed as partnership projects. The Moray Council would be the most appropriate body to lead the project. Informal talks with a whisky industry private sponsor have been positive. Reni explained that Speyside Community Forum and other interested groups would need to look at a number of factors including, the infrastructure, signage, perhaps to look at the provision of a coffee shop bearing in mind that it might prove to be too expensive and not sustainable. An electronic tourist information point with links to existing websites, facilities for Apps for instance. Evidence for funding would need to be backed with photographs and related aspects in the form of stories and challenges. Funders are interested in attracting a wider audience as history is less appealing to younger people particularly those in the 16 to 30s age group which is difficult to reach. Reni suggested that interested parties put their ideas together and come up with a ‘shopping list’ and then start testing out what is sustainable and feasible – bearing in mind the important question of maintenance. We will need to reassure funders about this.

Once we have got a realistic business plan, then public funders, sponsorship and Trust Funding could be applied for. The timescale for this process, if planning in partnership for 2014 will be about a year explained Group Captain J.J. Johnston. It would be good to start now and set up a meeting within the next two months for people who are interested in furthering this project. Reni said we could build on the Telford Trail Celebration experience, which included the Out of Darkness Theatre, interactive walks at the bridge, musicians wrote music, civil engineers restored a plaque at the bridge, local schools were involved and a DVD produced of a wartime plane flying over the bridge. The only limit is imagination. Reni hopes we can do something in partnership together.

There was a general discussion – There was the suggestion that the Tennis Pavilion could perhaps be used for a coffee shop and Reni advised that any ideas need to be costed to see what is do-able. A question was asked about whether the restoration project for the clock tower at Dufftown could be made part of this but Reni felt that this was a separate initiative. The Moray Council adopted a Community Asset Transfer Policy so there is the potential for Dufftown residents to develop a Trust for example and upon which Reni could give information. This was likened to the situation about the community project the Tollbooth in Forres involving the Highland Preservation Trust. As Craigellachie Bridge and the Dufftown Clock Tower are so distinctly separate it would make it very difficult to get funding for both at the same time advised Reni. Rita Marks mentioned the Ballindalloch Station Hospital restoration project and Reni said she would send her information about the Community Asset Transfer process.

Reni mentioned that there is a special training event for people interested in gaining more information about the Community Asset Transfer process, running on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Elgin Town Hall. It is a seminar about fundraising and will have Lottery Funders, (the Big Lottery and Heritage Lottery) there to give advice. Reni said that community projects could apply for funding from Awards for All and Investing in Ideas but a business plan would be necessary. Groups would really need to test out whether their project would be feasible. The turnaround usually takes about six weeks. At the fundraising seminar there will be presentations and workshops and groups could bring their projects and talk to the funders directly.

Hugh Fraser said he has attended a similar seminar with Sandy Henderson with the Big Lottery where they had been disappointed to discover the many disqualifying limitations so this should be borne in mind.

Sandy Henderson asked Forum members present what they would like to do about Craigellachie Bridge. Reni advised that the first step would be to set up a working group to look at ideas and then look at how to deliver it. She suggested that a range of events for 2014 be listed as part of funding applications and the remainder should include restoration of

the infrastructure. Once the bridge is restored it should not need more funding as it should be financed by income generated from visitors and tourists.

Councillor Fiona Murdoch asked whether it was possible to own the right to the image of Craigellachie Bridge. Reni said this is a difficult question as it is already an ancient monument. There followed a general discussion. Reni said it might be possible to do this if the bridge is registered as a trade mark. Councillor Fiona Murdoch was concerned that some 'cheapskate copycats' could undermine their efforts and marketing opportunities. Reni said she is available to meet with interested individuals or groups to look at next steps from their initial ideas. Neil Fotheringham who looks technically after the bridge could be consulted for specific information.

Group Captain J.J. Johnston said whilst it was a great idea, informed by his background in project management and programme delivery he was particularly aware that the 'clock is ticking' and to restore a bridge like this will take time. 2014 is not far away so this project needs to be off the ground by the summer. He continued to say that the environmental aspect is extremely important; to strip bridge and coat it. He disagreed with the idea that there is a long term sustainability question but realised that funders will want to see their investment would be well founded for some time to come. The project needs a Trust Group to look after its long term interests. Group Captain J.J. Johnston recommended that someone be appointed to manage the project. Reni Milburn agreed with this realising that timing is often dictated by funders' deadlines, and so she hoped to see an outline proposal within the next couple of months from interested parties. Ideally this forum already has an awareness of project management and how it can exploit projects for its members benefit. The money needed for this project will be more than can be raised locally, he continued and suggested that a Heritage Trust Group is needed.

Lesley Ann Parker thanked everyone for their contributions, and said she would be interested in the feedback from Forum members. Sandy Henderson suggested that Forum members canvass their own associations then report back to Speyside Area Forum and then we can take it from there.

**4. Police Matters:** Hugh Fraser and then Patricia Grant privately consulted PC Chris Page. In answer to concerns raised about a 'near miss' traffic incident at Craigellachie bridge, PC Page said that Grampian Police have a Speed gun at Rothes which it is hoped will encourage drivers to slow down at the bridge as 30 miles an hour was too fast.

#### **5. Update from Community Groups:**

**Cabrach Community Enterprise:** Martin Sheed (CCE) reported that they have a year's lease on the school move and all being well will move there on 24<sup>th</sup> March when they will hold a Quiz Night. The Moray Council have given them the option to buy and this will be considered. The council have agreed to restore the building to a usable condition by that date. CCE do not own the land around the school so during their opening ceremony they will plant an oak tree in a barrel and when the tree is established they will find somewhere to plant it. They are currently aiming to hold at least one public event a month and it will be in operation three days a week. They have been advised by the council that they cannot refer to it as a school as they need to change the name, and it is now called The Acorn. This has been formally accepted but CCE will have to pay to have the signs changed. Sandy Henderson said he was glad to hear that they are making headway.

**Glenlivet Public Hall:** Rita Marks raised a point about the Ballindalloch Station Hostel. As a Community Association, they were finding it very difficult to get information and procedure regarding Community Asset Transfer. Thanks to the presence of Rene Milburn at the meeting that information has now been forthcoming. Rita Marks explained that she raised the matter because it seemed to tie in with the proposals for Craigellachie Bridge and possibly the Clock Tower at Dufftown. She also mentioned the extension to Downan Graveyard. This has been full except for a couple of family lairs for several years. It is 7 years since the possibility of a new graveyard was first explored. Every site suggested (and the Crown Estate offered any ground that was required) failed to meet the various criteria regarding depth of soil, position with regard to water courses, adequate car parking and any problems with the highway. The Moray Council have been supportive throughout, and a site finally identified near Drumin Castle. It was understood by the community nearly a year ago that everything was set to go ahead, and then there was a delay because the Council decided to review all graveyards. That hurdle over, it went to planning and, as it is within the Cairngorms National Park they "called it in". They usually only do this for contentious issues so they were both surprised and dismayed. In their reasons they site cultural and heritage issues with Drumin Castle. The Community Association are making a submission to their planning board and Rita Marks hoped Councillor Fiona Murdoch was correct in thinking it may simply be a minor boundary issue.

**Tomintoul and Richmond Hall:** Patricia Grant spoke about the first draft of the Strategy Action Plan instigated by the hall committee, which was the result of a recent well attended meeting. However, she was disappointed to discover that

bearing in mind the financial outlay for the plan, even the basic information was incorrect. They had been asked to formally comment. There is another meeting shortly to set up a Development Trust on 20<sup>th</sup> where this Plan will be discussed. Some of the ideas in it are good and some are more questionable. They do not appear to have taken into consideration wild life and bird life. Councillor Fiona Murdoch said that some of the apparently 'nuttier' ideas are perhaps needed for inspiration. Patricia Grant had felt a little sceptical about the report. Rita Marks said whilst the report applies more to Tomintoul rather than Glenlivet, she had been encouraged by the good turnout to the meeting and that lots of good ideas were coming up which she hoped will be taken forward.

**Archiestown Village Hall:** Steve Oliver reported that they had finally started replacing the skylights but there was rotten wood to be dealt with. They are applying for roof insulation. but coming up with an estimate but hope by year end to get roof insulation getting funding.

Steve Oliver also spoke about a recent meeting (Sandy Henderson and Hugh Fraser had attended this on behalf of the Forum) and a report by the Save our Speyside group objecting to the proposed Biomass Plant. The proposal is to site it in woodland and one of the main issues is the height of the chimney. A balloon will be put in place to show how high this will be. Another presentation is due in March. The relevant website address is [www.saveourspeyside.co.uk](http://www.saveourspeyside.co.uk).

**6. Treasurer's Report:** Members had been sent a copy of the Financial Report for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Even though the accounts were signed off by a Chartered Accountant, it was wrong and it took Hugh some time to get the book balanced. It is now accurate. Several queries regarding expenses were raised and dealt with by Hugh Fraser. The accounts were accepted as accurate by members present.

**7. Community Issues:** There were no Community Issues to report.

**Speyside Indoor Climbing Wall:** Gareth Wignall, who is a Chemistry teacher at Speyside High School, spoke about the aims of his project, subject to funding, to construct an indoor climbing wall (to replace the old, condemned one in the gym at the school) for pupils and the local community to use. He distributed some prepared information including photographs of the type of wall he is hoping to construct.

There are a number of benefits including getting school children active and engaged. This would provide them with a sport that is not football or rugby as sport does not necessarily appeal to every pupil. Climbing trains them in teamwork, as they will need to trust the person on the end of the rope, in communication and the physical exertion will help build confidence. The only walls in the whole of Moray are on RAF bases. The solid plywood wall will be positioned over the old wall in the same location in the gym. After initial funding to get the project moving the plan is to have the wall available to Speyside High school and the community when the Community Centre is open. It will require minimal ongoing maintenance simply occasional cleaning.

Gareth Wignall was not asking for money from Speyside Area Forum as this has been applied for elsewhere. He would like support from the Forum as the voice of the community and is open to advice and suggestions. A letter on headed paper would be helpful. The cost is estimated to be around £50k and it would be 7metres high. Councillor Fiona Murdoch asked how it would be manned out of school hours. Staff will be trained and it will be run like the swimming pool. There will be someone responsible and available with a suitable qualification and training. Once members of the public have proved they can use it they can be signed off as climbers, so that it would simply need someone to be there as an onlooker.

John Fleming asked if Gareth had approached The Moray Council for funding but Gareth Wignall said has not approached the Council in view of budget cuts, but was seeking Lottery or European funding. Councillor Fiona Murdoch confirmed that this would not qualify for Council funding as it is not essential sporting equipment but £50k is not a lot to raise and it would be a fantastic project. Rita Marks asked how close they are to the funding total. Gareth is awaiting responses to funding applications including Awards for All. Gareth has list of funders he has applied to.

Hugh Fraser was concerned about to market it as at the moment the marketing of the swimming pool is appalling and The Moray Council is not good at this. Gareth Wignall is looking at this and has asked for advice from LEADER (Links between Activities Developing the Rural Economy) about marketing. A combination of paper based and website advertising. His initial suggestion is through the School and Community Centre websites, the Mountaineering Scotland national climbers and their UK connections such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. He plans to produce posters and leaflets and distribute these in various centres such as post offices and schools. He would particularly like primary schools to use it as lots of younger children do not have fear of heights. Rita Marks said 12 year old boys could use it as a birthday party venue (her grandson is this age). Gareth Wignall has talked to pupils in his class about this project and the possibility of having activity days in the summer and they all want to go climbing. If he can train people indoors on this wall then he could take them climbing in the Cairngorms.

Patricia Grant mentioned the existing climbing wall in the Cairngorms which is closed. Gareth has not used it but the Glenmore Lodge wall is very small and its use is restricted to their course participants. Gareth said climbing walls normally charge a one-off £5 membership fee, plus £5 a session, but he suggests £3 a session for this wall. Andrea Fuller felt that the wall was a great idea and that there should be enough businesses in Speyside willing to give money to help with marketing. Councillor Fiona Murdoch proposed that the Forum write a letter of support as requested. Sandy Henderson seconded this proposal and all agreed. Sandy Henderson thanked Gareth for his presentation.

## **8. Correspondence:**

**Moray Leisure Centre Future:** Sandy Henderson had received a letter from John Ferguson, The Moray Council inviting community consultation about the future of the Moray Leisure Centre and how the council should support it. Consultation meetings will be held at Elgin Town Hall on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> February from 7pm to 9pm and at the Moray Leisure Centre training room on Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> February from 1pm to 3pm. Anyone wishing to attend should book a place by calling Alison on 01343 559990. The consultation will run until 1<sup>st</sup> March, and questionnaires are available from the leisure centre, local libraries and Council access points. Alternatively they can be downloaded from [www.mlc-elgin.co.uk](http://www.mlc-elgin.co.uk). Hugh Fraser said this consultation was being brought about by a pressure group as there is major expenditure needed on the leisure centre by 2014. The freezing (for ice skating) and heating plant for the swimming pool has to be upgraded or replaced by 2014 as it is outwith EEC emission levels.

## **9. Any Other Business:**

**Olympic Torch:** Rita Marks, advised Forum members that the only place in Moray where the Olympic torch will be carried is Tomintoul. There followed a brief discussion about this and Councillor Fiona Murdoch said part of the plan was to have 300 primary school children to witness this in Tomintoul that evening.

**The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations:** (Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 – On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June as part of the National Beacon Chain, a beacon will be lit on Ben Rinnes.) Several Forum members reported that their committees have either already planted a tree in their area, or were planning to do so. Other plans to celebrate the Jubilee were still being considered and had not yet been finalised. They would report on this at a future Forum meeting.

### **Public Entertainments Licences:**

Andrea Fuller, Edinville, raised concerns about the implications of the changes and the potential impact on village halls. She had been in touch with The Moray Council and had been advised that if a hall committee holds a public entertainment licence and are a charity but that the event is not taking place to raise funds for charity then the hall is not covered by the licence. The changes come into force from October 2012. Andrea Fuller said that if more than 100 people attend an event then it needs a licence. She was told by the Council that if event was open to public then you need a public entertainment licence. This seems to mean that any event that raises money for anything other than a charity is not covered. One example of this anomaly Andrea said is that Edinville Hall has been asked to act as a venue for a touring production, but as the licence will cost £282 licence and they only charge £50 for the hall hire it is not financially viable. Councillor Fiona Murdoch will seek clarification and report back to the Forum.

**Aberlour Bicentenary Day 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012:** Brief mention was made of this and Sandy Henderson said this was a big year for Aberlour with many events taking place. The plan was on the Aberlour website and further information can be obtained by emailing [web@speysideweb.demon.co.uk](mailto:web@speysideweb.demon.co.uk).

Sandy Henderson thanked Andrea Fuller for making the Forum so welcome at Edinville Community Hall.

**Date and venue of next meeting:** 7.30pm, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March Dufftown-Mortlach Memorial Hall