

KEMNAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 29th March 2007 AT 7.30 PM

IN KEMNAY VILLAGE HALL

Present: Hazel Al-Kowarri, Bill Blackwood, David Evans, Annie Ferries, Pat Findlater, Greig Hauley, Chris Hunneyball, Neil Johnson, Dani Mackay, Janet Newberry, Susan Milton, Jim Piggins, Paul Smart, Mavis Wainman, Ian Wakley.

Attending: Cllr Alister Leitch, PC Alex Allen, Margaret Christie, Bob Leonard, MGA Christie, Naida Sneddon, Donna Fairley, Angela Allen.

Apologies: Cllr Garudeo Saluja, Alexandra Thomas.

1. Welcome.

The Chairman welcomed those present, in particular Greig Hauley and Dani Mackay who had joined the Community Council.

2. Minute of Annual General Meeting held on 30th March 2006

This was approved subject to the addition of Mrs Susan Milton to the list of those attending.

Adoption Proposed - Susan Milton Seconded - Janet Newberry

3. Chairman's Report

The attached report was read by the Chairman.

4. Election of Secretary

Mrs Margaret Christie volunteered to accept the position, and this offer was warmly accepted.

Appointment proposed - Annie Ferries Seconded - Susan Milton

5. Financial Statement

Hazel Al-Kowarri outlined the year end position and presented the accounts.

Adoption Proposed - Janet Newberry Seconded - Susan Milton

6. Appointment of Auditors

There is now no requirement from Aberdeenshire Council to have the accounts formally audited; all that is required is a signed copy. No appointment was therefore made.

7. AOCB.

8. Date of Next Annual General Meeting

Thursday 27th March 2008.

Chairman's Report

The year opened with the election of office bearers, and I would particularly like to thank Bill Blackwood for taking on the position of Vice Chairman, Neil Johnson as Secretary, David Evans as Planning Scrutiniser and Hazel Al Kowari as Treasurer.

We have continued to try and progress many of the same issues as earlier years, sometimes with a result, sometimes with less success. A good deal has been achieved in the appearance of the village, in particular the new raised beds and benches at the entrances to the village, for which we thank Bob Rose and his team. A new footpath off Station Road will also have helped keep the grass there looking tidier.

Christmas lights have been a major topic. Unfortunately little help was forthcoming when the ideas of lamp post illuminations was first broached, and so, after much discussion it was agreed to erect two trees, with lighting, on the new raised flower beds. We had some unfortunate comments as to why various people had not been asked to assist, but had to point out that the topic had been widely reported in the newsletter, and it was just not possible to canvass the whole community individually. Aberdeenshire Council assisted with finance for the lighting, and we are grateful to the Forestry Commission and Bon Accord Landscapes for the provision and erection of the trees. Unfortunately the electrical system had not been installed correctly and in the event it was possible to actually illuminate one tree. Since then there has been further comment, and expressions of interest, about a more lavish display, and so the Community Council has agreed to appoint a sub committee to look at this again.

The lack of toilet facilities at Bogbeth Park continues to concern us, but we can see no prospect of early resolution to this problem.

Thoughtless people riding mini motos along the riverside path caused concern and hazard, but we were able to establish that the police could take action if they had a formal complaint from the Council, so a contact for this has now been arranged. While mentioning the police, I would like to thank Inspector Dave Allen and PC Alec Allen for attending our meetings when circumstances have allowed.

We have been invited to contribute to consultations on the future of the airport, older people's support programme, the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils, changes to the NHS in Grampian, and the Postcomm consultation on postal collection and delivery times. Lack of notice prevented our submitting comment on the Local Transport Strategy, and although we did not contribute directly to the major consultation on how the Scottish Executive could help Community Councils, we did lead on a combined and very comprehensive response forwarded by the Garioch Area Forum of Community Councils. The reaction of the Executive to this was particularly disappointing, as our two main thrusts had concerned greater powers, and a third party right of appeal in planning matters. Neither of these suggestions was addressed in the response.

Although public transport is primarily the responsibility of the Bus Forum, we have been able to have some small local changes to routes made to avoid problems in the High Street, and took the initiative in initiating the Post Office becoming an agent for bus tickets.

Planning matters have continued to attract our attention. I would like to comment on two, first the rejection of the application to have a car sales area, and house, on the area occupied by the old chicken sheds. Despite it being supported by the Community Council and recommended for approval by the Garioch Area Committee, it was rejected by the Infrastructure Services Committee on the grounds that the existing sheds lay outside the settlement boundary by a few yards. I found it anomalous that the Committee was concerned with such a small infringement of the rules, when previously it had been deemed to be acceptable to approve the building of around a hundred houses in a Rural Service Centre.

More recently, the approval of the plans for a block of flats in Bridge Road has attracted controversy. There were over one hundred objections by residents, yet these were deemed not necessarily to reflect local opinion, and despite a valiant defence of the Community Council's position by a number of Garioch Councillors our views were rejected. It is of particular concern that the Committee was informed that this was a brownfield site which, by the definition in the glossary in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, it is not. Had the committee been given the correct definition it may have swayed one of the doubters. I would like to record my thanks to Councillors Lonchay, Leitch, Raeburn and Cameron who fully appreciated the eyesore that this structure will be.

Representatives from the Community Council were invited to visit the knackery at Cottown to view the modernisation and hear about future plans. All were encouraged by the thoroughness of the preparations, and we came away confident that the possibility of it producing unpleasant odours was remote.

The Community Council undertook, with Sculptor John Maine, to organise the opening of the Place of Origin by HRH The Duke of Kent on 30th October. We were blessed with splendid weather, and the whole ceremony went off extremely well. The Church Centre, in particular, laid on a splendid lunch. We received a number of warm letters of appreciation including one from the Palace.

Our final meeting of the year was devoted to youth issues. For some time, with the support of the Rector of Kemnay Academy, we have been trying to get a permanent representative from the younger generation to join our routine meetings, but without success. However, our February meeting, which was devoted almost entirely to matters raised from the floor, proved that there was interest in community matters, and we had a most lively and positive discussion. The success can be judged by the fact that they wanted the exercise repeated in three months time, and we also have two volunteers willing to join us.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have done so much to help us in the village. I must start with Mavis Wainman, who continues to be a tower of strength. Councillor Alister Leitch has been very supportive, and we wish him well when he stands down shortly. Neil Johnson has done a sterling job as Secretary, and I am very sorry that he has had to resign from that position. Hazel Al Kowarri has run our finances, and David Evans's knowledge of the planning system has been invaluable. And, of course, everyone, both Community Councillors, and others in the community who do so much for the village, be it running clubs or sports teams, the web site, the village hall, and so on. Thank you all.

MINUTE OF THE MEETING ON

29th MARCH 2007 AT 7.30 PM IN KEMNAY VILLAGE HALL

Present: Hazel Al-Kowarri, Bill Blackwood, David Evans, Annie Ferries, Pat Findlater, Greig Hauley, Chris Hunneyball, Neil Johnson, Dani Mackay, Janet Newberry, Susan Milton, Eric Pashley, Jim Piggins, Paul Smart, Mavis Wainman, Ian Wakley.

Attending: Cllr Alister Leitch, PC Alex Allen, Margaret Christie, Bob Leonard, MGA Christie, Naida Sneddon, Donna Fairley, Angela Allen, George Paterson.

Apologies: Cllr Garudeo Saluja, Alexandra Thomas.

1. Welcome

Chris welcomed those present, in particular saying how pleased he was that Greig Holley and Dani Mckay had agreed to join the Community Council to represent the younger generation.

2. Police Matters

PC Allen said that in March there had been only 6 reported crimes in Kemnay, compared with 24 the previous year. Hazel mentioned youths playing chicken with traffic outside the Chipper, which had very nearly resulted in an accident and had caused a driver great distress. Some youths had also laid a rope across the road which they raised when a car approached. PC Allen pointed out that there was nothing he could do now, but if there were problems the police should be informed, preferably immediately.

Annie said that skips were being left in the skateboard car park and cars then had to park obstructing the road. Ian agreed and said this was a serious problem for large agricultural vehicles. It was agreed to ask the Council to remove the skips, and if there was an obstruction the police should be informed.

3. Minute of the Meeting held on 22nd February 2007

This was approved.

Proposed by David Evans Seconded by Annie Ferries

4. Question Time - Opportunity for Members of Public to Speak

There were no points raised.

5. Matters arising from Minute

a. Younger Issues. It was agreed to postpone discussion on the non - urgent matters which arose at the last meeting until the next Youth Meeting to be held in June.

b. Youth Café Expansion. Naida Sneddon said that it was hoped that the Community Council could act as a lead body in pursuing the expansion of the Youth Café, not only because it would be good to see the community being closely involved, but also because it might enhance the chances of a grant being given. The intention was to build a multi purpose room, a proper kitchen, and some other facilities. Initial costings had indicated a figure of about £147,000.

Bob Leonard said that there were a number of issues which needed to be considered before anyone committed themselves to the project; perhaps the most significant being the matter of personal financial liability. The sort of help that was being requested would not involve the actual preparation of grant

applications, but acting as a focal point for activities, keeping financial records and looking after the bank account, and so on

The building is currently leased from the police, and before a grant could be given the minimum term would have to be extended to 15 years, although Naida hoped to get a longer lease than that.

Alister pointed out that the Community Council would not be able to comment on any planning application, but this was felt to be quite irrelevant.

Neil suggested that the organisation should be set up as a company limited by guarantee, and undertook to look at this.

Chris, Janet, Susan, Pat, Jim, Hazel, Neil, Greig and Dani volunteered to consider becoming involved. It was agreed that a meeting should be held in the near future to investigate the way ahead.

c. Glebe Path. Bob Rose had now indicated that the path would be resurfaced within the next two weeks.

6. Report from Community Learning and Development Representative

A new scale of charges had been recommended for classes, and amounted to a significant increase. What currently cost £40 for a ten week course would rise to £71. It was feared that this could put people off, particularly if they had any doubts at all as to whether they wanted to do the course. Naida said that a letter would be written to oppose these increases, although they had already been approved by the committee.

When the academy is upgraded a part of the community lounge will be lost.

7. Aberdeenshire News

Cllr Leitch said the matter of public toilets was being looked at as the cost of vandalism in current public toilets was becoming prohibitive. One solution which had worked in other areas was to pay local businesses to make theirs available.

The Academy was getting some new relocatable buildings.

8. Planning Matters and Applications

a. Bridgend Development. The Garioch Area Committee had approved this application at their meeting held on 13th March. It was noted that Cllr Leitch had tried to get the proposal rejected, and he was strongly supported by Cllr Raeburn, but in the end it was approved. This could have, in part, been because the Committee was misinformed about the nature of the site, which they were told was a brownfield site, which it is not. The discussion highlighted the problems that can arise when Community Councils are not allowed to speak.

Jim suggested that a motion expressing our dissatisfaction over the decision be recorded. Annie was not happy about this, and felt that the matter should be dealt with in private as she said that a mistake had been made before over the planning application for the skatepark when, she said, neighbour notification had not been carried out correctly. Chris said that there had been a thorough enquiry into the Community Council's involvement in all aspects of that application, and it had been proved conclusively that it had behaved entirely properly. The Community Council had not been aware of any irregularities and therefore would have had no reason to query the procedures.

There was discussion as to the number and nature of the affordable units, but no one was able to offer enlightenment.

George Paterson said that he believed that people did have the right to make representations at Committee meetings, and he intended to make a formal complaint.

It was agreed to record a motion as follows:

“This Community Council notes the comments of certain Aberdeenshire Councillors at a recent Garioch Area Committee meeting, dismissing 111 objections (including this Community Council’s) as “subjective” and “someone’s opinion” and as not representing the views of the “silent majority”. This Community Council considers such comments illogical in speculating that the views of the “silent majority” would favour the tiny number of favourable comments rather than the vast majority of objections, anti-democratic, insulting to the objectors and insulting to this Community Council in its function of representing the views of Kemnay Village.”

This was proposed by Jim Piggins, seconded by Mavis Wainman, and passed with Annie Ferries and Ian Wakley dissenting.

b. Planning Applications.

Four planning applications had been lodged since the last meeting. One was for an agricultural building at Pictillum Farm, one for an extension at 8 Boat Croft, one for a sun lounge at 12 Kirkland and one for the installation of an ATM at the Post Office. It was not considered that any comment was necessary on any of them.

9. Garioch Area Community Council Forum Meeting held on 1st March 2007

The meeting began with a short talk by Bill McGee, one of the NE Scotland members on the ASCC Executive Committee. He gave a fairly up beat assessment of the current situation, but acknowledged that it was not presently very obvious what benefit membership conferred although the new management was making changes and things should become clearer. Unease was expressed about the remoteness of the Executive Committee, and the lack of representation - the area covered by the two NE representatives extended from near Elgin down to Dundee. It was agreed that we would not seek withdrawal from the ASCC for the time being, and would wait to see how the new organisation was functioning before making recommendations.

John Sangster gave an update on the Area Partnership, which was clearly thriving. A summary of much of what he said was in the March Kemnay Newsletter.

The new Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils is being tidied up. The main complaint that we had was that the Standing Orders were far too restrictive, and seemed to be the full Council orders with the word “Community” put in front of each use of the word “Councillor”.

The Area Manager will be circulating maps showing the overlap between Community Council boundaries, and the new wards. In some cases it may be appropriate to adjust Community Council boundaries, but this will be a matter for negotiation between the people involved and will not be imposed from on high.

The Garioch Area Plan 2007 - 2010 is about to be issued, and advance copies were available at the meeting. Sharp eyed readers will note that it would appear that the plans have skipped a year; however this is not the case - the issue dates have changed to align the plans with the financial year.

It was agreed that the Scottish Executive Review “What Can We Do to Help Community Councils” had not produced anything of note, and was felt to have been of doubtful value.

The matter of paid secretarial help for Community Councils was raised, and resulted in a useful discussion. Aberdeenshire Council cannot provide minute takers, but it was felt that there could be mileage in using local paid help, although the amount paid should be in the form of an honorarium rather than a salary to

avoid employment legislation problems. One problem raised was how to deal with those councils which were being run by unpaid volunteers. In the short term it was suggested that an application for a top up grant be made, with a view to further discussion of the matter in the future.

One volunteer, Sean Wilson from Inverurie Community Council, had come forward to act as Community Council representative on the Community Planning Executive. It was agreed to endorse his application, although there has been another volunteer so an election will be necessary. Neil had since received the voting papers for four candidates, and after discussion at this Community Council meeting it was agreed that Kemnay would vote for Sean Wilson.

The next Forum meeting will be held on 7th June 2007. This will also be the AGM so a call for volunteers to stand for office was made.

10. Report from Safety Group Representative

Pat reported that there were still problems with unlit bollards in Inverurie, and that the Safety Seminar would be held in Kemnay Church Centre the following Saturday. The A96 improvement campaign was awaiting a response from MSPs. Suggested solutions to the problems of young drivers had been sent to Westminster.

11. Bus Forum

This was, as usual, a well attended meeting, with the majority of those present being from Kemnay. Mr Hall was not there, but Stagecoach was represented by the Operations Manager, Mr George Devine, with a Director, Mr Charlie Mullen, observing. Not a great deal of relevance to Kemnay came up. It was pointed out that the 1530 service from Aberdeen still went via the airport, and so took nearly one and a half hours to make the journey to Kemnay. On the old timetable, later buses had similar journey times, but had the airport stop removed on the latest edition. Stagecoach was still pressed to remove the airport from all journeys; suggestions to allow an airport service to continue included a shuttle from the industrial estate and terminal to the A96, a dedicated service, or routing some of the 307 buses via the airport (as used to be done with the 737 service). It was also noted that the 220 suffered two diversions from a direct route, serving the airport and Blairs. Another suggestion was to route it via the Gauchill roundabout to allow it to serve the new estates at Kintore.

The lack of response to complaints caused comment, and Mr Devine asked that anyone complaining and not getting a response keep the details so the matter could be investigated. Complaints should be dealt with promptly. George Paterson he had had no response to a complaint from him, and another fifty passengers, and had now approached the Bus Complaints Forum in Edinburgh.

Chris said he was looking forward to Mr Hall riding the 220 with him, which he had promised to do.

The next meeting will be held in September or October.

12. New Business

a. Christmas Lights Sub Committee. It had been reported that storage for lights would be available at the Golf Club. This news was welcomed, and overcame one of the biggest problems that had been foreseen. It was decided to form a sub committee to look at the project and progress ideas, including the extent of the display and raising the money needed. Members would be Ian (Chairman), Pat, Hazel, Greig, Dani and Eric.

Hazel asked about the electrical connection for the tree stand in Bremner Way. Chris said he had written once, but would do so again.

b. Community Councillors' Expenses. Chris said that at the last Area Forum finance had been touched on. The Area Manager said that more money was unlikely to be forthcoming because Community Councils were not spending their current grant. Chris pointed out that this was a chicken and egg situation; the grant

did not get spent because Community Councillors did not claim their expenses, but they did not do so because the budget was so small. Not many people in paid employment would be prepared to subsidise their company, and it did not seem to be right that Community Councillors should do so. He encouraged everyone to keep a record of expenses and claim for them.

c. Scarf meeting 26th March. Paul had been unable to attend, but had asked for information about the meeting.

d. Holes in Roads. A note had been received from "Bill" asking that the Community Council request that holes in Aquithie Road, Paradise Road and Kendal Road be repaired. The Council noted that workmen had recently resurfaced the worst stretch of Aquithie Road. It was said at the meeting that there were also problems in Bremner Way and Kembhill Park. These defects would be reported.

13. Unfinished Business

a. Bus Ticket Agency. This had now been set up, and certain tickets were now available from the Post Office.

b. Handrail for Boat Croft Path. Cllr Leitch said he had asked for this to be done, and would check on progress.

c. Recycling Site. Aberdeen Forward had hoped to use the land at Birley Bush for the community composting site, but had now been told that the Council had other plans for it. As this area had been disused for decades this seemed to be an odd coincidence, so it was agreed to try and find out what was planned, why it could not be used, and, if it could not be used, whether another site was available.

14. Correspondence

a. Notification of Military Activity. Neil had received a letter saying that a large scale exercise was about to take place.

b. Planning Reform and Community Engagement. A Scottish Executive booklet had been received which set out to explain the relationship between local authorities, developers and communities in the planning process.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th April 2007 at 7.30 pm.