



Grantown Initiative - Annual General Meeting

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 11 April 2017

– at Grant Arms Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey

Present:

Member Directors – Dan Cottam (in the Chair), Melanie Dick, Stewart Dick, Basil Dunlop, Jane Hope, Bill Sadler

Members – Tom Clarke, Sally Gingell, Jim Beveridge, Rebecca Reid, Duncan Mackellar, Sarah Jane Linton, Kathy Maxwell, Gavin Fenton, Katie Fenton, Neil Martin, Gordon Bulloch, David Duncan, Naomi Miles, David Gowans

Apologies: Alan Shute, Anne Maclean, Sally Dowden, Bill Steele, Keith Ballam, Karen Derrick

Quorum

1 The Quorum (15 Members / Proxies for Members, with the Members ordinarily resident in the community being in the majority) was achieved.

Welcome

2 The Chairperson welcomed all to the Meeting and thanked them very much for turning out to support Grantown Initiative.

Chairperson's Report

3 Dan Cottam, as Chairperson, reported to the Meeting

The Grantown Initiative is a Community Development Company and its board is elected by its members, of which a number are here this evening.

Having limited liability means that the Initiative is able to do things for the long-term benefit of Grantown and surrounding area: things such as access grants, employ people, make money and spend money on community-led projects in a way that is

not recommended for the Community Council. And yet the Community Council is the elected voice of the community.

The statutory remits of the Community Council are around planning and licencing, but it also plays a key role in ensuring that the community can bring issues to the attention of Highland Council as well as the Council being able to distribute key information through the CC to the community.

However, crucially, it is not a vehicle for delivering community projects.

So the GI and Grantown and Vicinity Community Council work closely together, to make sure that we are all focusing our efforts on the things the Grantown community collectively would like to get done. We have a member of the GI board who is a member of the Community Council (Bill Sadler) and we organise a regular slot for a less formal get together of the two groups to make sure we are in step and working on key areas for improvements and I will mention some of those shortly.

We know there are many different active groups around Grantown, all doing good things for Grantown. There is overlap between some of these groups; and some groups are small and find it quite onerous to provide members to do the treasurer's role, secretary's role etc. So with that in mind, the GI and the GBA have joined forces. The GBA will operate as a sub-group of the GI and retain its control over its own financial resources, this way we can work together or independently on projects for the business community but that community will still have its own voice and both the GBA and the GI will be able to support each other and work more efficiently with added strength in numbers. We hope to welcome members of the GBA onto the GI board of Directors this evening.

1. In the last 12 months or so we have delivered a number of projects:

Grantown Times. Produced quarterly, a colourful and interesting magazine which tells readers (residents and visitors) about the town and what is happening; it provides useful information you might not find elsewhere (eg list of all the community based groups, and the contact details). It is now produced free of charge, paid for through advertising. As always, a lot of effort by different people is offered voluntarily. But special thanks go to the team - Naomi Miles, Rob Clark, Katie & Gavin Fenton, Jaci Douglas, Stewart Dick, Karen Martin and Spencer Game.

2. We also produced, for the start of the 2016 summer season, a new town map, giving visitors a quick guide to the town, and where to find things. All businesses were listed free of charge– advertising spaces were taken up very quickly and have paid for the printing. We printed 11,000 copies, which are available free to anyone who wishes to display them and make them available to visitors.

3. We recently bid successfully for funds to provide a rail bus link. The funds came through the new Participatory Budgeting scheme introduced by the Highland Council, with money provided by the Council and the Scottish Government. We secured £1,000 to introduce a bus link from Broomhill station to Grantown (and back) during peak times in the season. There will be a small charge, but it will hopefully allow more visitors to come all the way from Aviemore to Grantown on the steam railway, and have a complete day out. We hope this trial will allow us to assess the level of interest so we can work out if this is something we could run as a commercial proposition for future years, possibly on a grander scale. This first year it will probably run on Saturdays only – will pick folk up from the late morning train, and take them back for the mid afternoon train. Thanks to Stewart Dick for arranging this and to Lindsay Jack and Strathspey Steam Railway Company for being the active partners. And particular thanks to Stewart Dick for having the idea and seeing it through.
4. We have worked long and hard on producing a new website for Grantown. The website subgroup consisting of Naomi Miles, Lynn Boden, Cathy Maxwell, John Bruce, Stewart Dick, Bill Sadler and Gavin Fenton have put huge effort into this. It is not an easy task and the launch has been delayed as we have wrestled with technical issues. But we are very pleased to announce the launch tonight. It is a modern website; it provides one place for the whole community - businesses, community organisations, residents and visitors.
5. For the last year or so we have had a number of ideas for projects on our list, including improving the Playpark, Building a Cemetery Wall, Improving the two roundabouts into the Town. We have had small subgroups working on each of these ideas which have been taken to the point of having scoped what is needed, and realising that in each case a lot of money and time needs to be invested to take them to fruition. At that point we asked ourselves: given that each of these is going to be so resource intensive, are we really sure these are our priorities? So with funding from the Cairngorms Small Grants Scheme (our thanks to the CNPA) we commissioned a report which brought together all the thinking, and all the ideas for helping to improve Grantown. Various groups around the town were invited to contribute to the preparation of the report, which was completed and circulated last summer.
6. It was an excellent report, which brought together in a logical way three big strands of work:
 - Protecting, enhancing and promoting Grantown's town centre;
 - Developing tourism and events in Grantown;
 - Strengthening Community action in Grantown.
7. The work on restoring and enhancing the town centre is aimed at making the most of our wonderful architecture and town layout. Many have observed that

buildings and facades in the High Street beginning to crumble and we need to act before we lose a unique and beautiful town centre. Bill Sadler with the help of the Grantown Society are taking forward the very challenging task of securing the commitment and funding needed to complete this work which is vital in the long term. A steering group has been set up and work is in progress. Both the Cairngorms National Park Authority and The Highland Council are supportive.

8. Grantown is heavily reliant on visitors for its economy. Work on developing the tourism offering will be taken forward by the newly integrated GBA under the umbrella of the GI.
9. One of the single biggest influences on our local economy comes potentially from the Railway extension to Grantown. We have been working behind the scenes to find a way of working closely with the Strathspey Steam Railway Company to make this happen, and thanks go to Basil Dunlop for his tireless work on this. We still have a long way to go, and we still have not received a clear reply from the SRC on how we can become actively involved. But this continues to be a high priority for us as it holds the key to the future prosperity of the town.
10. Grantown has a strong record on community action – many people do things for the town on a voluntary basis. But as much as we can we need to make sure we are supporting each other, and working in collaboration. So things like funding masterclasses, and training for volunteers will all help to make the most of what all these groups are doing. The volunteers Directors on the GI are all involved in other voluntary activities – the GI is the umbrella that makes sure we are working collaboratively and not tripping over each other. We always welcome more offers of help, either as a Director or as someone to sit on one of our groups taking forward a project.
11. I believe that the Grantown Initiative is a strong vehicle for community improvement and in this coming year will be strengthened further by the Grantown Business Association and working partnerships with other community groups. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Directors for their tireless effort, patience and support. I look forward to discovering what else a small force of committed and enthusiastic people can do in and for their community.

Many thanks and best wishes,

There were several points from the floor:

- There was considerable attention paid to improving transport from the south to Grantown (ie train from Aviemore), but little attention given to the very poor transport from the north ie Elgin.

- An update on progress with the Steam Railway to Grantown was sought: Basil Dunlop reported that action was still awaited by the SRC (Strathspey Railway Company) – they need to approve a minute of understanding between Transport Scotland and SCRT (The Trust) before the TAWS application can be submitted (all the TAWS work is completed). Rails to Grantown cannot begin major fund raising until the TAWS application is lodged. The option of setting up a new company remained, but it was sensible to wait to see if the SRCT/SRC would be able to move forwards in the next few months

The Meeting received with approval the Report by the Chairman.

Company's Annual Accounts, for Period to 31 July 2015

4 Dan Cottam presented the accounts. There was one question relating to the fall in membership monies compared to the previous year. The point was made that the previous year's AGM had passed a resolution to the effect that membership would be a one off £1 joining fee – collecting such a small sum annually was not efficient use of time, and would generate a small sum in relation to the amounts that were needed for the projects envisaged.

Annual Accounts were approved with full support of the AGM and would now go forward to be lodged at Companies House.

Directors of Grantown Initiative

5 Directors retiring in rotation and standing for re-election were Melanie Dick, Basil Dunlop, Jane Hope. All were re-elected with no dissention .

Karen Martin was standing down as a director – the Chair thanked her for all her hard work as Treasurer.

6. Three new directors were standing for election: David Duncan, Neil Martin, Tom Clarke. All were elected with no dissention.

Independent Examiner of Accounts

7. The Chairman explained that it was necessary for Grantown Initiative to have its Accounts subject to independent examination – particularly essential for gaining charitable status – and the General Meeting authorised the Directors to reappoint Kathy Bingham, who was thanked for her work, and generously low fee.

Any Other Competent Business

8 No points raised by Members.

Next Annual General Meeting

9. The next Annual General Meeting would be on a date to be fixed by the Directors.

10. Vote of Thanks

The Meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the Chairperson. A presentation followed as part of the launch of the new Grantownonline website.

Jane Hope
Director
14 April 2017