

GRANTOWN ON SPEY and VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Virtual Zoom Meeting held on 17th November 2020 at 19.00 hrs

Present: Linda Coe Chair (LC)
Ewan MacGregor Secretary (EM)
John Halliday (JH)
Laurie MacLeod (LM)
Bill Sadler (BS)
Declan Gallagher (DG)
Muriel Cockburn HC Councillor (MC)

Also, present Beatrice Oliphant (BO) Member of the Public
Kenny Rodgers (KR) NHS Highlands
Lucy Edmondson (LE) School Representative

Apologies: Emily Strang
Michelle Maclean

1. WELCOME:

LC welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. LC welcomed Lucy Edmondson to her first meeting.

LC moved to Co-opt Lucy Edmondson, Emily Strang and Michelle Maclean to the Community Council.

Proposed EM Seconded DG

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: No Declarations of interest were made

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 15th September 2020 were approved.

Proposed: DG Seconded BS

LC welcomed KR to give an update on the Community Hospital

KR gave an update how things were progressing with the community hospital and advised that there had been some redesign issues which had now been overcome. Healthcare management in 2020 has been very challenging due to the COVID pandemic, which took all in the health sector by surprise and as a result caused several issues. The Scottish Government agreed that the community hospital was an essential building, therefore work could continue. The final impact of COVID on the project is unknown at this stage. It is currently 12 weeks behind, but it was still hoped to have the hospital handed over in May 2021.

The new Hospital has been reviewed for any future COVID situations or pandemics, and being a modern design it is COVID ready because most are single rooms and it will also allow the implementation of zoning.

A virtual walk through has been created and is available for viewing on the website.

The Hospital transition plan is being co-ordinated and once all new systems are installed and the necessary training has been completed it is hoped that the hospital could be open at the end of July 2021.

JH asked about recruitment and short-term staff accommodation, KR advised that COVID has highlighted the wide range of posts that needed to be filled but he remained hopeful that recruitment should not be a problem.

Grantown-on Spey Health Centre is currently an area of work which was put on hold as a result of the pandemic, and amendments to the plans have had to be made. The Ian Charles Hospital will become a temporary facility for the health centre until the work has been completed on the upgrading and extension of services in the existing health centre. With reference to care at home service, which is currently being looked at, NHS Highland is looking to recruit carers from the independent sector to undertake these roles and services.

5. MATTERS ARISING:

TREES MC advised that the necessary lights had been removed from the trees by Highland Council. No date has been set for the felling of the trees.

DG advised that the PA system had also been removed in preparation for the felling of the trees.

BUS SHELTER: MC confirmed that Highland Council had removed the damaged panes of glass again but advised that this was beginning to be very expensive for the Council and if this became a regular practice, then the Bus Shelter may end up boarded up or indeed removed. BO intimated that she was very upset with the youths in Grantown who are possibly responsible for this type of damage, and the law-abiding youths of the town are having their reputation tarnished by these youths hanging about in the square. LC advised that the Strathy were running a piece this week on this unacceptable behaviour, and she was asked to contact the editor to comment on it. MC agreed that bad behaviour was unacceptable however this was a small minority and this was a particularly challenging time for young people as there was no access to their normal activities.

PUBLIC WIFI: JH reported that Strathspey Now had been setup and encouraged people to sign up for the project, we need to encourage as many people as possible to register in the next 3 months. JH also said that negotiations with the Grant Arms Hotel have begun to bring them on board as a site for the hardware. BT Openreach is to conduct a survey on the cables. JH is hoping to take part in the next farmers market to promote this new service which would mean that 1Gb speeds could be reached in the area and BS highlighted that this would be a great thing for the schools, Health Centre and businesses in the Town.

GULLY CLEANING: MC advised that Gully Cleaning is ongoing and Grantown is on the list to be done. EM asked if there was anyway possible to speed things up before the bad weather as some of the gullies in the High Street were full to the top with weeds growing out of them so would be no use for draining water. MC reiterated it was on the list.

SPEYSIDE CLOCK: BS had spoken to one of the residents and they are very concerned about the condition of the clock tower. It looks like the residents are not responsible for the upkeep of the clock tower, and they are in the process of confirming that Highland Council still owns it. A resident has checked and there is no mention of the clock tower in their title

deeds or plans. The I tower is in very poor repair and deteriorating rapidly and as a result they are pursuing the matter further. JH pointed out that this is an A listed building.

OLD SPEY BRIDGE: BS commented that a series of reports have shown that work needs to be done urgently to prevent an eventual collapse of the bridge. Highland Council owns half the bridge but does not have the funds BS is researching possible funding to get this work done.

HEDGES: JH advised that someone had cut the hedges between the Hospital and the Lodge, Highland Council is responsible for the hedges from Mossie Road to the Hospital, Seafield Estates for the hedge above the hospital. MC agreed to check regarding Highland Council's hedge cutting responsibility.

CASTLE ROAD HOUSES: MC reported it is still ongoing and discussions are also on going with the privately owned properties. The money for the repairs has been ring-fenced.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

DG reported that no major income or expenditure had occurred and the balance at today's date is £3242.49.

7 PLANNING REPORT

BS reported the building behind the old Strathspey Hotel is now in progress as the plans were amended and a compromise plan was approved by Highland Council. The second area could be made into additional car parking. BS agreed to press on with this as Highland Council appears to have no plans to build affordable housing.

The flashing signage at the Petrol station is causing concern and MC agreed to investigate the matter.

Highland Council gave a six-month period to clear up the back of the party house at the bottom of the High Street, however this has still not been done. MC and BS will follow up.

MC will check about the broken streetlight at Spey Corner which has been broken for some time.

EM reported that he was still waiting a report back on the Elephants in the Pantry site from Highland Council and councillor John Bruce.

8. HIGHLAND COUNCIL UPDATE

MC reported that there is not a great deal to report now.

EM asked about the reopening of the Grantown recycling centre on a Sunday as it is causing a lot of local grief. MC advised there was no plans for that to change at the moment, due to the skips staffing issues and the deployment of personnel at the start of the pandemic, it will remain only open on a Saturday at the moment.

.LC asked MC if she could get an agreement on what services are going to be provided by Highland Council and those that were possibly going to be cut, in order that the community could identify where volunteers were needed to provide these missing services

9.POLICE UPDATE

EM reported that the Police are continuing to patrol the area and the matter of speeding cars is still a very high priority. The issue surrounding the unruly behaviour of the youths in the Square, along with the underage drinking that was seen to have taken place on a Friday afternoon /evening is being investigated and actioned by the police. As a result of this episode a youth was removed and taken home by the local police. A local resident has also been able to provide the police of video evidence of the youths causing damage to property.

EM also understood that a group of youths had vandalised the toilet block in the High Street, resulting in 4 doors having to be replaced along with other repairs. The police have increased the number of patrols to deal with the increase in unacceptable behaviour.

10. GRANTOWN REGENERATION FUND

A further small sum of money has become available to spend on the square. Concern was expressed that the GI had not been able to start work in the Square under the first grant because of the ongoing delay by Highland Council in felling the trees. However, LC had been assured by the GI that the first Grant would be claimed before the 31 March 2021 deadline. . After a great deal of discussion, it was agreed to submit the application for the second grant as proposed by the GI.

11. GRANTOWN FORUM:

LC advised that the issues of the tidying up of the Town had been addressed and discussed at the Grantown Forum meeting. Volunteers needed to be enlisted for the tidy up before next Spring in time of the tourist season. The tidy up would include clearing the weeds which appeared no longer to be done by Highland Council.

The next meeting of the Forum is the 30th November

JH agreed to chase up the tree felling and replacement of the broken posts in the Square.

12. CORRESPONDENCE

VABS AGM on Monday 23 November 2020.

13. AOCB

JH will notify Highland Council about the condition of the turning circle at the Inverallan Cemetery.

BO asked if the minutes of the meetings could be posted on the website and Facebook page.

14. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CC will be a zoom meeting on the 19th January 2021 at 19.00

The meeting finished at 22.12