



North Kincardine Rural Community Council

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Visit our Website - www.nkrcc.org.uk

Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Monday January 17th 2011 at 7.30pm in Maryculter Community Hall

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Present:

Robin Winmill (Chairman of meeting)
Robert Keeler
Mike Birch
Ann Townsley
Susan Astell
Toby Lenehan (Secretary)
Avril Tulloch
Hazel Witte (Treasurer)
Cllr Ian Mollison
Cllr Carl Nelson
Five members of the public

Representing:

Cookney / Netherley
Cookney / Netherley
Banchory-Devenick
Banchory-Devenick
Maryculter
Maryculter
Maryculter
Maryculter
Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeenshire Council

1 Apologies:

Robin Baxter, Bob McKinney, Philip Smart

2 Police Report

A group of youths had committed a number of car break-in and joyriding crimes recently. The individuals were known to the police and most had now been apprehended. Advice from the police was that these were generally opportunistic crimes done for kicks. Advice from the police was to be vigilant and make sure cars were locked, even in country areas. Anyone witnessing a car break-in was advised not to tackle the thieves but get a description and call the police who would always investigate. The dead body of a man who had been missing for some time was discovered at Blairs on New Year's Day. There were no suspicious circumstances. A member of the public noted that an animal roaring noise had been heard on several occasions in the Banchory-Devenick area. No unusual animals had been seen. Several road accidents, particularly on the B979 Netherley Road were noted by NKRCC members and MOP.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 20th September 2010

After minor corrections HW proposed approval of the minutes of the ordinary meeting of December 13 2010, AT seconded and the minutes were duly approved. A discussion followed about whether the current practise of sending draft minutes to the general public, journalists and posting them on the website should continue. Correspondence from RB and TL was read out which expressed the opinion that this was undesirable and that only finalised minutes should be released. After some discussion it was decided to send out draft minutes to NKRCC members for internal approval, then send the checked draft minutes to the public with the agenda for the next meeting. Once approved, the finalised minutes would be distributed to journalists, the council and to MB for posting on the NKRCC website.

4 Rural Schools and South Deeside Under Fives

Nothing to report

5 Website

Nothing to report. A MOP commented that he felt the website was excellent and kept up to date.

6 Roads

MB had attended the first (of three) workshops aimed at improving the Bridge of Dee congestion problems. The first workshop had looked at various alternatives considered to date. Most of these were from previous studies, sometimes from several years ago. The second and third workshops were planned to sift through the various existing options and choose an appropriate plan to implement in the future. The next workshop was planned for 26 January and RW agreed to attend on behalf of NKRCC.

The AWPR judicial review would take place in February 2011. Roadsense had been granted a protected expenses order, capping their legal cost exposure. It was noted that £108 million had been spent on the AWPR to October 2010, including £51 million for the new International School. The leasing of the old school and some compulsorily purchased houses in Milltimber combined with some recent newspaper reports, prompted some speculation about the future of the project.

7 Other matters arising

RW reported back from the Aberdeenshire Council budget briefing held at Lairhillock School in December 2010. The Council was facing a revenue funding gap of £31 million in 2011-2012 and £58 million over the period 2011-2013 (approximately in the middle of expectations). Most of this had been met through cost saving measures to date or agreed by the Council for the future. There was still a funding gap of £4.2 million for the 2011-2012 period. No specifics of what services would be affected in closing the gap were presented. Several budget briefing papers outlining the figures in detail had been sent by the Council and would be posted on the NKRCC website. IM noted that Aberdeenshire was the third worst funded council in Scotland. CN concurred and added that the Council had been underfunded for years.

A MOP raised the matter of the delay to the Banchory-Devenick Church cemetery extension and new car park. A plot had been identified and agreed in 2002-2004 but the matter had become mired in the Council's Landscape Services department at Inverurie. The MOP asked those present whether they had any information on the status of the plans or could help move the matter along. CN questioned why the matter was being dealt with by Inverurie rather than Stonehaven. IM and CN agreed to investigate the current status and report back.

8 Planning

8.1 Recent Planning Applications

None received.

8.2 Correspondence from Bancon regarding mixed use development adjacent to Lairhillock School

An email from Bancon Developments responding to NKRCC remarks about the planning application for 70 units adjacent to Lairhillock School was read out. The email strongly refuted minuted comments made by NKRCC in the past questioning the validity of the public consultation on the proposals. The email went on at some length about how important consultation was to Bancon and the various ways in which this had been conducted. It requested that NKRCC amend the minutes of the meeting in question. The email was discussed by NKRCC members present. All agreed that the finalised minute of the meeting was a fair summary of NKRCC's discussion and position on the matter. Members did not feel it was within Bancon's (or any developer's) remit to request changes to minutes of meetings that they were not present at. The issue of an appropriate response was discussed. It was noted that NKRCC had set out its position on the consultation over this planning proposal in a letter to Robert Gray at Aberdeenshire Council. The Council had sent a holding letter by reply saying they were investigating. Bancon had set out their position in their email, which was copied to Councillors and Council workers. Consequently it was agreed that no response was necessary and that the matter could be decided by the Council.

8.3 Meikle Carewe

It had been announced that there would be no examination in public of the appeal against refusal of planning permission for the Meikle Carewe windfarm. Instead the matter would be decided based on the written submissions which had been received during the appeal period.

8.4 Consultation on changes to planning system

RW discussed the consultation on changes to the planning system. He felt that NKRCC should make a consultation response. He was drafting a response on behalf of NKRCC and would circulate this to members requesting comments and feedback. It was noted that the consultation ended on January 28th.

8.5 New access road into Badentoy Industrial Estate

The planning application for a new access road into Badentoy Industrial Estate was discussed. Those present were shown a map illustrating where the proposed new access road would enter Badentoy and how this would be linked to the existing minor back road network towards Banchory-Devenick. The fear was that the road would be used as a rat-run by commuters and HGVs to avoid traffic on the A90 during peak hours. NKRCC had written to the Council requesting a meeting between residents, Council planners and the developer to understand fully and discuss these proposals. No response had been received. IM had also received no response on the matter. TL would write again, reiterating the request for a meeting.

9 Finance

At 17 January 2011 NKRCC had a cash balance of £1761.

10 Correspondence

Hardcopy and electronic newsletters had been received from various organisations and were presented and made available to those present. These included Aberdeenshire Citizens Panel (Viewpoint); Aberdeenshire Sports Council including nominations for various categories of local sports personality of the year; Scottish Natural Heritage; the Aberdeenshire Council Public Performance Report; Association of Scottish Community Councillors; and SEPA View.

Ian Parkinson, a MOP, raised awareness of the David and June Gordon Memorial Trust. This made cash grants to local music, ecumenical services, drama, arts and community youth groups. For those interested in applying, further information was available through Mr Parkinson.

The next Kincardine and Mearns Community Council Forum meeting was on 27th January and volunteers to attend were requested.

Cllr Paul Melling was investigating traveller community and halting site issues and requested information from NKRCC on community attitudes towards travellers and incidences of unauthorised halting sites. The matter was discussed. Those present generally felt that the main problem with traveller halting sites was the mess that tended to be left behind when the travellers moved on. One suggestion was for a cash deposit to be collected on arrival, to be returned when the site was left clear. Two incidences of unauthorised encampments in Tollohill Woods in the last year were noted. In both cases the travellers had moved on quickly and it was noted that this was down to swift action by the landowner. It was also noted that the local police policy towards unauthorised encampments had recently changed from moving them on after a week to as soon as possible. These comments would be included in a reply to Cllr Melling.

NKRCC had been offered the opportunity to take part in Aberdeenshire Council's public consultation on proposals to increase parking charges in the Shire's car parks. It was noted that the intent of the increased parking charges was to discourage long term parking in town and village centres, freeing up spaces for 'pop-in' visitors who were often the lifeblood of local shops and services. It was noted that the increases in short duration charges were a similar or higher percentage than those for long stayers. NKRCC would respond pointing out that the objective may be better achieved by a larger increase for long stays.

The Kincardine and Mearns Community Planning Group at Aberdeenshire Council were currently accepting applications for their Small Grants Scheme which offered cash grants for groups promoting community engagement and community capacity building. Several local groups who may be eligible were identified including the Maryculter and Cookney community halls and the Maryculter Youth Cafe and details would be forwarded to them.

The Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations were holding several workshops on voluntary sector fundraising and business planning and these were publicised.

The NHS G-Med out of hours GP service public meeting had been rescheduled for Thursday 17th February and volunteers to attend were sought.

Voluntary Services Aberdeen had been forced to cancel their planned presentation to NKRCC of their mental health care services.

10.1 Licence Applications

None received.

11 AOCB

NKRCC had been in correspondence with Elswick Development Company about various issues on the Elswick development and Lord Southesk had offered to attend a NKRCC meeting to update the public on progress since the charette. It was agreed that the March NKRCC meeting would be a suitable time for this.

George Masson, a MOP, asked whether there had been any progress on his suggestion for the introduction of a 40mph speed limit on the South Deeside Road. It was noted that Cllr Melling had been investigating the matter and, as he was not present, the discussion would be deferred to a later date.

HW noted that the NKRCC contact telephone number on the Abdeenshire Council website was incorrect. TL would contact the council to have it corrected.

RW noted that the next NKRCC ordinary meeting would be on Monday 21st February at 7.30pm. There being no other business the meeting was closed at 9.50pm.

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