

# **STONEHAVEN AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the 347<sup>th</sup> Business meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009 in the Cowie lounge of the Invercarron Resource centre**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Notes.</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies and declaration of interest</b></p> <p><b>Present:</b> Ian Balgowan, David Fleming, Michael Innes, Lenny Lawrence, Alistair Lawrie, Billy Mackenzie, Robert Michie, Allan Sutherland, David Wood, Raymond Christie (arrived late)</p> <p><b>Kincardine and Mearns councillors:</b> Cllrs. Wendy Agnew, Peter Bellarby, Graeme Clark, Mike Sullivan, Paul Melling(Area Chairman),</p> <p><b>In Attendance: SEPA;</b> Richard Brown (National Hydrology Manager), David Ogilvie, Alistair McWillie.</p> <p>David Innes (Curriculum for Excellence Officer, Education Learning &amp; Leisure,); Willie Munro (Area Manager,), Stephen McFarland (Principal Flooding Engineer), Paul McKay (Head of Roads and Infrastructure); all of Aberdeenshire Council</p> <p><b>Absent :</b>, James Cleves,</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Ian Hunter</p> <p><b>Declarations of interest: None</b></p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting (10<sup>th</sup> November)</b></p> <p>Their approval was proposed by Ian Balgowan, seconded by Alistair Lawrie, and approved unanimously.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Crime report</b></p> <p>The crime report was e-mailed shortly after the meeting started (and a copy is attached). As there was also no Police representative present, no discussion ensued.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Presentation about the Proposed Aberdeen College facility on Mackie Academy Campus</b></p> <p>David Innes gave an outline of the Curriculum For Excellence. Issues discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased work experience</li><li>• Developing skills for work and vocational provision</li></ul> <p>He related the achievements of the Aberdeen College in outreach, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 600 pupils engaged in college courses</li><li>• 550 school enrolments from 9 academies</li><li>• Opening a centre in Inverurie, and others planned</li></ul> <p>He described the proposed plans to build a learning centre on the Mackie Academy site and described some of the constraints. The proposal was discussed at the Area Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009, as part of a wider plan for the dispersal of</p>	

facilities. This not only integrated vocational studies more easily with the secondary education system, but also was much easier for the travel arrangements of students. He said a project team had started and that it would be conducting surveys to assess requirements. As yet, there was no firm proposal from the college.

David Fleming welcomed this consultation, and that the proposal was raising the value of vocational education. He felt strongly that purely academic qualifications had had too much prominence in the recent past.

Ian Balgowan was concerned to continue to improve the literacy of all levels of students. A member of the public asked about provisions for adults as well, and Mr Innes replied that the interface with Adult Education was important. Another member of the public stressed the need to continue to support the technical department in the existing school, rather than take funds to create just the new Campus facilities.

Mr Innes passed round some explanatory material. The Chairman thanked Mr Innes for taking the trouble to attend the meeting, and hoped that the dialogue would continue and always seek to involve the whole community.

## **5. Public Issues**

### **5.1 Severe Flooding in Stonehaven on 1<sup>st</sup> November**

David Fleming said that, as agreed at the Agenda Meeting, he had asked for a verbal or written update from all agencies concerned and these were:

- Grampian Fire & Rescue Service
- Scottish Water
- SEPA
- Grampian Police
- Aberdeenshire Council

He read out written reports from the first 3 above. No report had been received from the Police.

For Aberdeenshire Council, Willie Munro stated that a multi-agency de-brief particularly about Stonehaven had taken place on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November, and notes of that meeting would be issued shortly. All the questions raised at the last Community Council meeting had been collated and sent to the agencies, and their responses were being collated. In addition, there had been a number of Aberdeenshire-wide debriefs, which may well inform the local action plans.

He commented that the response from the public to set up a rest centre was good, and they were looking at changing their current plans as a result.

There is a flood support centre fully established and running in the MRI offices with a weekly bulletin and a rota of volunteers. This included a very successful Bring and Give store in Cowie Lane for furniture.

Stephen McFarland said that he has been directing emergency work replacing damaged river banks at the Carron mouth and other works, and is seeking for more help from the public. Further emergency work is contemplated, and some is awaiting suitable water conditions. These include removing trees near the river bank, removing the “duck island” upstream of the green bridge, looking at service

records, and reviewing the whole catchment area. He proposed to talk to the public to get more information, to establish exactly what happened, and ensure that remedial work is soundly based. He asked for anyone with information (e.g. pictures, notes) to get in touch with him. They often prove very helpful in his investigations. The Chairman thanked Mr McFarland.

A member of the public stated that there was no good maintenance around the green bridge, and that this was the source of the main problem. He asked what is the routine to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

Another member of the public expected that the flood emergency plans should be updated, and made public, and that provision of sandbags needed to be properly managed.

A further member of the public reported that road drainage outside Michie the Chemist was now seen to be very poorly designed and constructed, and wished that all the road drains be fully inspected to see if any others were similarly dysfunctional.

The Chairman said that these points needed to be added to the list generated at the previous meeting.

## **5.2 Report of meeting with Roseanna Cunningham, Minister of the Environment**

The Chairman, accompanied by Michael Innes and Alistair Lawrie, had met briefly with the Minister on her visit to Stonehaven the previous day.

The Minister was clearly convinced that a full Public Local Inquiry was not appropriate, and this was agreed. She also felt a local inquiry now was premature. However, she left open the possibility of some form of independent review once the multi-agency de-brief had been completed.

## **5.3 The gathering of evidence**

The Chairman re-iterated and supported the call by Mr McFarland for the public to pass over information. This applied to any eyewitnesses of the evening and people who had documentary evidence of how the river Carron had looked in the past.

## **5.4 Local Independent Inquiry**

The Chairman asked the Council if they continued to support the request for a local independent inquiry. The vote was unanimous.

Allan Sutherland asked if the Council felt that things are moving in the right direction. The general sentiment was that this was the case, but the public were anxious to see the results of current investigations.

It was noted that, in the Aberdeenshire Council Emergency plan document, it was stated that, during the crisis, the Police will be in control, whilst either side of the crisis time, Aberdeenshire Council was in control.

# **6 Planning applications**

## **6.1 No discussion.**

## **6.2. Publicity surrounding MIR bids**

Allan Sutherland asked whether, in view of the recent publicity surrounding major bids for thousands of houses in areas round Stonehaven, the figure of 430 houses that has been designated in Stonehaven still stood. It seems likely that the Aberdeenshire Councillors are going to be lobbied intensively by builders. These press reports create a considerable fear factor.

The Aberdeenshire Councillors each replied in the vein that these promotions were just that – developers trying to promote their own ideas, but the Councillors were very aware of the public sentiment on the issues. They would be conducting site visits shortly prior to intensive discussions on the drafting of the Local Plan in the New Year. Allan Sutherland thanked them for their reassurances that local views would be considered properly.

## **7 Speed Limits**

The draft orders for a number of reduced speed limits throughout the Town was discussed.

Ian Hunter expressed the view that to have both mandatory and advisory 20mph speed limits was confusing. The speed limit should be enforced at 20 mph in the residential areas. In reply, Paul McKay explained that, if the surveyed speed on a road was too high, they were not legally allowed to impose a 20 mph limit without installing traffic calming measures, which would obviously increase the cost of the change considerably. In those cases, an advisory 20 mph was proposed.

Bob Michie felt that the proposed 40 mph limit on the Den of Logie road was unnecessary, and was concerned about whether it could be enforced.

The council noted the draft orders.

## **Business Matters**

### **8. Hannah Dyson Award**

Alistair Lawrie reported that the committee had considered a number of nominations but it was clear that the most appropriate candidate was Emily Blake, primarily for her archery prowess. The council approved the award. Alistair Lawrie asked for a press embargo until the candidate had been informed, but promised that he would publically confirm the award shortly.

### **9. Heritage Fair**

David Fleming wished to record the council's appreciation for the success of the Heritage Fair. Many people had contributed to show many interesting facets of Stonehaven's history. He suggested that this should be repeated next year. The council supported this unanimously.

### **10. Report back from Community Council Forum: 'An Invitation to Meet the Aberdeenshire Council Leader and Chief Executive 2009 – Shaping Aberdeenshire' – 30th November, Aboyne**

Ian Hunter, Allan Sutherland and David Fleming attended this event.

David Fleming forcibly expressed the view that the format of this event was very inappropriate, and was unlikely to achieve its aim of involving the community in the "hard decisions" that Aberdeenshire Council faced. He was supported by Ian

and Allan. Allan Sutherland said that the style used was, in his experience, very outdated. Their views would be reported to the Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council. A further event in the Kincardine & Mearns Area was planned for the New Year.

William Munro (who was also there) appreciated their feedback, and expected that Aberdeenshire Council would look other ways of consulting about decisions and how to provide information that people in the community needed to consider. The budget for 2010/2011 was still being worked on.

**11 Representative on Invercarron Resource Centre Committee**

A request from Invercarron Resource Centre Committee for a representative to be appointed had been received. Michael Innes agreed to volunteer.

**12 Christmas Lights**

Questions were raised as to whether the council should organise the Christmas Lights competition this year, especially as a number of previously winning businesses had been affected by the flooding. It was decided that no competition should be held this year.

A member of the public commented on the Christmas tree, and the comments were noted for action next year.

**13. A. O. C. B.**

None.

**14. Dates and times of next Business Meeting**

There will be an Officers' meeting at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 5th January 2010 in the Invercarron Resource Centre followed by a Planning Committee at 7.30 pm, and then the Agenda Meeting at 8.00 pm

Next business meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th January 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Cowie Lounge of the Invercarron Resource Centre.