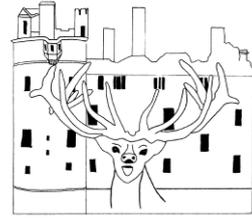




HUNTLY COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Minutes of the March 2014 meeting of Huntly Community Council held in the Council Chamber, the Stewart's Hall, Huntly on Thursday 20th March 2014 at 7.30 pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Hilda Lumsden-Gill (Chair); Tony Gill (Vice Chair); Hazel McIntosh (Treasurer); Freda McRae; Rev Norma Milne; Bronwyn Gall; Mary Burgerhout (Secretary)

Others: Pat Scott (Huntly Express); PC Christina Sutemire; PC Craig Robertson

Apologies: Bob Ness; Cllr Moira Ingleby

Hilda welcomed members, Pat Scott and PCs Sutemire and Robertson to the meeting.

A list of correspondence received since the February meeting had been circulated prior to tonight's meeting (including several items from members of the public), some items which would be referred to during the meeting and some which were put on the table.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting The February minutes were proposed for acceptance by Hazel McIntosh and seconded by Norma Milne.

3. Matters Arising

A. Police Issues Hilda welcomed PC Sutemire who reported that in the period 20.02.14 – 20.3.14 there were 30 crimes/offences recorded within Huntly for a variety of petty assaults, minor thefts, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. 14 of these have been detected, some of which have positive lines of enquiry. Although there were no incidents of note during this period, there have been 9 minor vandalism incidents in the Huntly area and 6 instances of shoplifting. High visibility road safety signs can be seen at various locations throughout Huntly including areas known for minor road traffic offences. They relate to Operation Collinsville which has been put in place to positively educate motorists re road safety issues and any Road Traffic Offences that come to light. The results will be highly publicised on a weekly basis in local newspapers and Police Scotland social media sites. The Twitter page @ShireSouthPol has up-to-date information on the campaign.

PC Robertson advised there have been several "sneak-in" thefts in rural areas with opportunists gaining access through unlocked front and garage doors. There is a prevalence of 14-16 year olds carrying out vehicle thefts and the police have 80 "persons of interest" logged, these individuals coming from Aberdeen and carrying out thefts in places like Oldmeldrum, Banchory and Ballater. The public are reminded to keep their doors locked and not leave car/house keys where they can be accessed through a letterbox.

Hilda noted the incidence of car engines being left running in Duke Street while their owners nip into a shop, this being an open invitation to any would-be thief. PC Sutemire will raise this with colleagues. Hazel noted that one of the storage containers in the East Park Street car park, which is believed to house new windows for Callum Court renovations, appeared to have someone inside it operating a generator which was creating a lot of noise, and asked about the legality of this. PC Robertson advised that if the person was a security guard who was there only while these works were in place, there is dispensation to allow such occupancy. There have been no complaints about the generator noise.

Freda, as noted at the February meeting, had concerns about roller skiers using the roads in the dark without any reflective clothing or markings on their poles. PC Robertson advised the Careless Cycling

legislation does not apply to them since they are not using a propelled vehicle but that local police officers will be asked to speak to them. Freda also noted that youngsters are again using "mini" motorbikes in the Plantation area; PC Sutmire advised that this issue will be looked at again. Hilda referred to Operation Collinsville and noted that posters have been prominently posted around the town. PC Robertson advised the initiative will last for around a month, following which Operation Zenith, targeted at motorcyclists, will resume.

PCs Sutmire and Robertson left the meeting at 7.55 pm; Hilda thanked them for their presence.

B) Huntly Topics

i) Current Issues

- a) Bus Information Stand Mary had contacted the Planning Department about the installation of the Stand in the Square directly outside the Linden Tree, and been advised by Aude Chaiban that the Council department concerned has been asked to submit a planning application, which will be considered on its own merits and a decision determined by Committee. Ms Chaiban had requested a photo of the original stand, which was provided.
- b) Parking at Cemetery Hilda read the response from Sandy Grant to our email about lorries parking and starting up their engines near the Cemetery. Our concerns have been noted although Sandy has pointed out that there is a car park a little further down which is for everyone's use.
- c) Grass Verges at the Old Cemetery Further to the email from a concerned visitor to the cemetery, and our email to Sandy Grant last month, Hilda had seen Council workmen carrying out remedial works including the straightening of edges.
- d) Town Barriers Tony had been unable to get into the Council yard to count these, but having done a rough count from outside, believed there were about 80 barriers, including some at the King Street yard, as well as the crate containing "feet" for the barriers. The Farmers' Market committee have some on permanent loan, so it is felt that there are very few, if any, missing, but Tony will use the key we have to the yard gate to enter the yard and do a full count. Hazel suggested that the barriers be numbered to ensure better control. Mary to contact Ralph Singleton again to ask that they be stored indoors now that the winter is almost over.
- e) Cycle Plaque Hilda read an email from a cyclist who is keen that the cast-iron plaque (the "winged wheel" which establishments offering facilities to cyclists historically displayed) on the wall of the Huntly Hotel is registered with the appropriate body and preserved/maintained. The plaque, which would originally have been black and white, has at some point been painted over in the same colour as the stonework. Hazel had some knowledge of these plaques and was in full agreement with the sentiments expressed, as were members. Mary to contact Helen Chavez of Aberdeenshire Council's Museum Services for advice, although all present were keen for an assurance that the plaque would remain in Huntly.
- f) Email from concerned resident Hilda read an email from a resident who made several points about litter, dogfouling, flytipping etc. Hilda had provided a response to the effect that most if not all of these issues had been discussed at one time or another at CC meetings and that we had had a measure of success in resolving some. The individual had responded with further points. Hilda asked Bronwyn if the school attempted to make pupils more litter-aware; Bronwyn advised that the janitors and senior management do so, but that it seems to fall on deaf ears. Norma has seen shopping trolleys collected by supermarket staff. It is possible to ask the Council to send a hit squad to tackle particularly problematic litter issues. Hilda suggested that The Gordon Schools could organise a litter-pick in time for the Homecoming, and Hazel advised that some of the Primary School classes could assist with this. Pat said that National Spring Cleaning Week was coming up, for which the Council will provide bags, gloves etc. Mary to respond further to the resident on behalf of the CC and where appropriate make contact with some of the organisations mentioned in an effort to have some of the issues resolved.
- g) Discriminatory Shop Practices Re the request from the Scottish Youth Parliament/Aberdeenshire Youth Forum carried forward from the February meeting, Bronwyn confirmed that the practice of making schoolchildren queue separately or banning them from shops at lunchtimes does not occur in Huntly. Mary to confirm this to the SYP/AYF representative.
- h) New "Recycling on the Go" facility Hilda advised that new containers, with one each for plastic bottles, cans and litter, have been installed at the Linden Centre/Swimming Pool, the intention being to help people recycle more when they are out and about.

ii) Road Issues

- a) Pay and Display Car Parks – Proposed Off-Street Parking As a CC we were involved in the discussions about this in 2013. The consultation is still open for comment with the proposals (of which we are already aware) being that there is no change to Pay and Display in the Square but that it will be removed from both Nelson Street and Gordon Street (in the latter it has never been operational despite being listed as such).
- b) Neon Sign at Approach to Market Muir Junction This sign is welcomed with Norma having noted that many motorists are slowing down/applying their brakes as they approach the sign. Mary to write to the Council to thank them for installing the sign, although Hazel felt it should have referred to metres and not yards. We will continue to monitor the sign's effectiveness.
- c) Parking on Ogilvie Avenue The situation appears to have improved following discussion of this issue at the February meeting and the subsequent coverage in the Huntly Express, for which thanks have been received from the individual who raised the matter. Some cars are now being parked in the picnic area opposite the Market Muir. However, following informal enquiries, Mary will now write to the Dental Centre Manager and the NHS Area Manager based in Huntly, to highlight the issue.
- d) Duke Street Parking at the top of Duke Street continues to be a problem (refer Police issues).
- e) Traffic Wardens A traffic warden has recently been seen in the Square issuing tickets and it is hoped their presence will extend to Duke Street.
- f) Letter from Hanover Housing Resident Hilda had received a copy of a letter, the original having been sent to Les Allan, Marr Area Manager, from a Hanover Housing resident who has listed the problems encountered by residents due to irresponsible parking by others, which she feels will be exacerbated when the new Granary Street flats are occupied. The resident is aware that the CC have expressed their own concerns about this issue and we anticipate that she will let us know of the response she receives from Mr Allan.

iii) Clashindarroch Community Fund The consultation event covering the Huntly/Strathbogie CC areas was held on 15th March in the Stewart's Hall, with Foundation Scotland being very pleased with the turnout. Similar events were held at the Cabrach and Rhynie on the 13th and 14th. The results will now be collated by FS and the results analysed/discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group on 20th May at the Grouse Inn, Cabrach.
TCI Renewables, who are progressing the Shanquhar windfarm development, held Public Exhibitions at Gartly and Huntly on 18th and 19th March respectively, and have sent newsletters to all households in the area.

iv) Entertainment Events in 2014 Arrangements are now in place for the war-themed Window Competition, being organised by the CC as part of TGS' 175th Anniversary celebrations, with representatives of both groups meeting up on 22nd March to judge the entries. Hilda read out the proposed route/timings of the Parade on the 29th and invited CC members to join it as it starts from the Castle and makes its way up to the Square. Hilda and Tony will join the Parade at the Castle, with Freda and Norma (and possibly Bob) joining it at the War Memorial. The town flag will be carried by the Air Cadets. Hilda will attend the pre-Parade reception.

v) Town Flag/Coat of Arms Logo Thanks were again expressed to the Marr Area Committee for funding the purchase of the flag accessories and to Sqdn Ldr Neil McAdam for his advice re sourcing these. They were modelled on 13th March by one of Neil's cadets with Hilda and Mary present, and a photograph taken by the Huntly Express, and have since been borrowed by Neil so that he and his cadets can practice for the Parade. Protocol does not allow the cadet carrying the flag to wear the gauntlets so he will wear white cotton gloves instead. We anticipate however that the gauntlets will be worn in the future by other flag-carriers. This will be the first time the flag has been paraded in public since it was handed over to the CC as custodian of the town's Coat of Arms.

Bronwyn left the meeting at 9.10 pm.

vi) Planning Applications There was one application for the period 21st February to 20th March which drew no significant comment. There are changes to planning application submissions effective 3rd March which will modernize and streamline the current process, with an E-planning team being set up and only one full set of plans required for paper submissions in future.

It was noted that the Duke Street kebab shop has erected a sign some 15 feet up on the wall. We are unaware of planning permission having been requested for its erection. Hilda noted that the granting of the planning applications for the Gordon Street takeaway and the Granary Street flats has caused a lot of concern locally, as does the fact that objectors have no right of appeal once an application has been approved. This makes it imperative that people raise objections during the consultation phase. It was felt that the Granary Street area is becoming over-congested given the concentration of so many residences and the resulting requirement for additional car-parking wheelie bins etc, all taking up road and pavement space.

vii) AOCB

May 2014 CC Elections As at today's date we have five vacancies on the CC and so we must look for ways to encourage residents and business owners to join the CC. Bob Ness is due for re-election in May, and we will also be looking for a new Youth Member following Bronwyn (who was co-opted for a year)'s move abroad.

Pat Scott left the meeting at 9.20 pm.

4. **Treasurer's Report** Hazel reported that the General Account holds £78.48, the Gordon Highlanders Account £3,712.74 and the EIS Account £496.31. The invoices for the flag accessories have been sent to the Council and we expect reimbursement imminently. Hazel will get up to date bank statements from the Clydesdale Bank in preparation for Bernard Henderson's audit of the accounts. Our annual insurance certificate has been received from Highland Council who now manage our insurance as part of a Shared Service Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council. In the absence of the CC running a mini "Entertainment in the Square" in 2014, Mary suggested that a donation be made from the EIS account to the Pipe Band for the Homecoming Pipes in the Park event, but this was rejected by members on the grounds that we have not been asked for a donation, that we may hold another EIS in future years, and that if not it has always been understood any monies remaining in the fund would go to local charities. It was agreed to revisit this decision if we are in fact asked for a donation.
5. **Correspondence** Items highlighted:
- a) Aberdeenshire Council
 - Marr Area Bus Forum Hilda read out three items relating to Huntly, namely the MacDuff-Huntly, Huntly-Aberdeen and Huntly-Alford services.
 - School Holidays A consultation document had been circulated by Mary. Hazel outlined the proposals and the associated disadvantages which were endorsed by members. She agreed to respond to the consultation on behalf of the CC.
 - b) Community Planning Hilda and Tony had attended the March Community Ward Forum which had been a useful event, covering fundraising and associated good practices. The Marr Area Partnership are advertising for a Development Officer.
 - c) Other Freda and Mary had attended a meeting in February on how European Funds should be spent in Aberdeenshire. Hilda had, along with others, turned up for the meeting in the Brander building arranged by Deveron Arts where a representative from the Council's Cultural Services department was to talk about Public Entertainment Licensing legislation, but the meeting was cancelled at the last minute due to the Council officer's ill-health. It is to be rescheduled.
6. **AOCB** Hilda had been approached by Bronwyn's mother asking her to consider nominating Bronwyn for The Gordon Schools' new Pupil Citizenship Award. Her request was discussed and after much deliberation members felt that they did not know Bronwyn sufficiently well, nor were able to comment on any activities she is involved in outwith the Community Council, and thus regrettably were not able to complete the nomination. Hilda will advise Mrs Gall accordingly.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.

7. **Date of Next Meeting** – Thursday 17th April 2014.