

Nairn West & Suburban Community Council

Ordinary Meeting: Monday 31 October in Nairn Community & Arts Centre

DRAFT Minutes

Present:

NWSCC Members: Alastair Noble (AN, Chair), Alan Hampson (AH), Dick Youngson (DY), Joan Noble (JN), Kevin Reid (KR), Phill Stuart (Treasurer, PS), Graham Stuart (GS, Minutes)

Ex-Officio: Cllr Babs Jarvie, Cllr Paul Oldham

Others: Hamish Bain (NRCC)

Apologies: Cllr Michael Green, Lorraine Mallinson, Brian Stewart

1. Welcome/Introduction

1.1. The Chair welcomed all those attending and noted apologies. There was one Declaration of Interest from the Chair on the Planning Item Links Phase 2.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (29 August 2022)

2.1. The draft minutes (previously circulated by email) were approved – proposed by KM, seconded by JN.

3. Matters arising (not otherwise listed as separate items)

3.1. GS listed the following items not on the present agenda: Nairn Bypass; Regeneration/Development of Harbour/Seafront/Links; Tourism Strategy; Flood Prevention; and High Life Highland (HLH) Fees and ‘Fair Shares’.

4. Financial report

4.1. The Treasurer reported that BS had been granted signatory rights over the bank account and would grant rights to the Treasurer. A full report of the NWSCC finances expected at next meeting.

5. Planning matters

5.1. Status of LPP Creation and Implications of IMFLDP

5.1.1. There was an extensive discussion of the statuses of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) and Nairn Local Place Plan (LPP) and the policy status of an IMFLDP (if issued) versus the LPP.

5.1.2. Chair reported that there has been much progress in getting an LPP started, including support from Scott Dalgarno from Highland Council (HC). There has been correspondence with [www.pas.org.uk](http://www.pas.org.uk) (PAS) for support and a Public Meeting will be held on 10 November to start the public engagement on a vision for Nairn. Chair emphasised that the LPP must optimistically push for infrastructure and jobs creation but also financially realistic in the present climate. Chair acknowledged that an LPP

may take up to two years to be finalised and in the meantime planning decisions would be made under the existing Local Development Plan (LDP) or a new IMFLDP.

- 5.1.3. A recent meeting took place between local business (Grigorhill Group), HC officials, Community and Local Councillors which emphasised the critical need for land to be available for business expansion at Nairn East and the how the IMFLDP plans for housing at Nairn East adjacent to existing businesses would negatively impact growth and job opportunities for Nairn.
- 5.1.4. HB believed that the IMFLDP if issued would be planning policy for the next 10 years and believed that there would be limited opportunity for a later produced LPP to make changes. PO said that he understands that under new planning regulations LPPs could change existing planning policy. There was a discussion about the LPP guidance term 'provoke a review' which was certainly open to interpretation.
- 5.1.5. GS noted that the IMFLDP involved a public consultation and the people of Nairn deserved to see what the outcomes were from the responses. JN responded that public comments on the IMFLDP consultation are available online and HB expressed concern that the comments had not been summarised and may not be properly presented to Councillors (one item had 68 comments and 67 were against).
- 5.1.6. Chair and NRCC have urged the local Councillors to support rejection of the IMFLDP so that the LPP has widest scope to shape the future vision for Nairn.
- 5.1.7. PO explained that a proposal for adoption of an IMFLDP would first be taken to Area Committees, which he mentioned also had strong reservations about aspects of the proposals, then to Infrastructure Committees and then to the Reporter. PO was wary of rejecting the new draft IMFLDP since the prior LDP may remain as policy with certain unpalatable developments. HB pointed out that both the existing and proposed LDPs had developments that have strong opposition (Delnies and Nairn reads better if you number the points?East).
- 5.1.8. PS asked how we could demand enhanced infrastructure without commitment to more housing. Chair responded that investment is overdue for Nairn in its current form to improve e.g. job opportunities, roads, sewage and flood prevention, and the issues must be addressed before there is any more investment in large scale housing. HB introduced the terms 'Soft' and 'Hard' infrastructure, the former being doctors, nurses, teachers etc., the latter being roads, sewage etc, and he said that both were critical to address.
- 5.1.9. JN commented on the number of houses projected to be required in Nairn being based:
1. on rather overly optimistic population growth figures, when actually the population is expected to level off and decline from 2028;
  2. on calculations of housing needs including applicants who come off the list; and
  3. an apparent inflated estimate of second homes in the town (30% estimation against current 5% inactive housing).

- 5.1.10. JN also mentioned that prior projected requirements in 2010 of 180 new houses pa had been nowhere near met or required.
- 5.2. Allocation of Developer Contributions
- 5.2.1. JN reported that seven other CCs had made a representation to HC that Developer Contributions should be allotted to the locality of the development, rather than handed to HLH with discretion to spend on/at facilities some distance from the communities where the original development. A response from Malcolm McLeod (MM) of HC suggested that CCs can influence how funds are apportioned at different stages of the process, including at planning application stage, though noted by JN that this may be too late since funds may be already allocated. MM mentioned that feedback could be given in the IMFLDP, though JN noted that comments were submitted but are not visible on the portal. HB said that MM has previously said all future developer contributions will go direct to HLH so is doubtful if there is scope to reallocate. JN noted that Moray council accepts applications from local community groups for project funding from developer contributions. JN will continue to follow up with other CCs and HC.
- 5.3. Links phase 2 / Team Hamish
- 5.3.1. The previously circulated planning application for the new seating and amphitheatre at the Putting Green was discussed and the local objections acknowledged. It was noted that some of the concerns may be addressed by planning conditions on opening hours etc. BJ commented that planned events would need formal approval as per current regulations, HB mentioned that the curfew of 10.30pm applied for the 'Showies' would likely also apply and JN was assured that there is no loss of public car park spaces expected. Overall, the application was supported. Chair received an extension to the deadline and a response will be sent to the planning officer. (**Action:** AN or delegate to send letter to express support for Links Development on behalf of CC)
- 5.4. Request to HC for Permanent Consultation Status
- 5.4.1. The Moss-side planning consultation identified some peculiarities with the status of the CC as a statutory consultee. It was approved for a letter to be sent to Planning Department requesting permanent consultation status (**Action:** JN to send letter to Planning Department)
- 5.5. CAB Building - Access Panel Concerns
- 5.5.1. Chair summarised the access issues that were reported for the new CAB building. All were in agreement that these issues need to be addressed and Councillors will take this up.
- 5.6. Enforcing Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- 5.6.1. On behalf of a concerned constituent Chair will write to Planning Department and Forestry to remind them of the importance of enforcing TPOs locally. (**Action:** AN to send letter)

## 6. Common Good Management Group

- 6.1. PO reported that formation of Common Group Management Groups will be officer-led since it will be applied to all CGs in the region and proposals may need to go before the full Council. An update will be given at the Ward Meeting on Wednesday and an update will be given to CC at next meeting.
7. Public Toilets
  - 7.1. Chair described public toilets as an essential necessity, it has been minuted previously that provisions are lacking in the town and made more acute by recent reports of vandalism.
  - 7.2. A discussion took place on the merits of the so-called 'Comfort Scheme' whereby local business are paid to make their facilities available to the public. HB mentioned that there are already such schemes funded by HC but none has been considered to date for Nairn. Councillors (PO) will follow-up with HC on how to implement the scheme in Nairn.
8. Parking Schemes
  - 8.1. In response to a request for an update from Councillors, PO said that a paper was being presented to the Area Committee on November 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - 8.2. JN mentioned that the original building planning proposal for CAB and flats indicated a nett loss of just six spaces in the town centre car parks, but there is no indication that new parking bay layouts were planned *or reach* that target and prior proposals seemed unworkable. [PMN: 1-Nov- Response received from Area Planning Manager that it was planned to undertake car park white lining soon, JN seeking clarification if the target numbers would be met.
9. Visitor Management Scheme – Update on Timetable and Action Plan
  - 9.1. JN commented that the CC had requested a meeting with Colin Simpson but has left HC. Councillors were asked to help identify the appropriate replacement for tourism matters. Councillors to follow up.
10. New Academy and Relocation of Library
  - 10.1. GS reported on a positive public presentation of the new Academy, architect was able to address all comments from the floor, e.g. site access and neighbour disturbance. The design is modern with improved facilities, many environmental considerations and maximising the footprint of the site. The future capacity concern is addressed by the provision of flexible building at the entrance to the site, not an ideal location, somewhat distant from the main building.
  - 10.2. The CC is strongly against the relocation of Nairn Library to the Academy, there is support of this position from local Councillors but still no indication of how and when the proposed relocation will be brought to a decision. JN wondered if the lease on the existing site was safe since the freeholder has passed away. The meeting was reminded as previously minuted that other sites in the town may be more suitable. Councillors to report on any updates next time.
  - 10.3. The CC is very keen that the new school project goes forward without unnecessary delay to achieve the central funding reimbursement at end 2025. The school budget has not

been formally approved and concerns were expressed on potentially competing requests for funding for other schools in the region as reported in the Inverness Courier.

## 11. Support for Local Events and Event Planning

- 11.1. GS reported some research and conversations on the topic of funding and reducing bureaucracy for important Nairn events. The Nairn Games Committee expects to have to fund future Traffic Management of the Pipe Bands Parade down King Street, some discretion was applied in previous years but finance and resource constraints are biting. The Committee is concerned about further loss of funding and resources from HC and would welcome the license process being more timely. A major concern is the lack of volunteers for committee and on Games Day which may also put the future viability of the Games at risk. Dialogue was due to continue between Ward Manager and Games Committee to address on-going issues.
- 11.2. PO and BJ shared concerns about reduced funding, the Discretionary Ward Fund has been reduced to £16k and is not allowed to fund recurring events. They reported that Common Good Funds have been approved to support Nairn Book and Arts and Christmas lights and could be extended. AN commented that events funding should come from leisure/recreation budget for which Nairn has an allocation. KM commented on taking the initiative of self-funding and highlighted the successful year-long fund-raising activities undertaken for the Ardersier Games.
- 11.3. There was an interactive discussion on energising volunteers, how to publicise and help organisations with needs to attract new blood. Social media is not necessarily the best way to reach the public for support. The prior Nairn Events Manager role and a volunteer coordination programme (VANG (Voluntary Association of Nairn Groups), Signpost) run out of the Centre were mentioned as prior resources to help organisations.

## 12. Healthcare Matters

- 12.1. Vaccination update
- 12.2. Chair mentioned that extra vaccination dates have been added to Nairn in December. Local MP and MSPs are advocating for a more localised approach with healthcare managers.
- 12.3. Chiropody provision
  - 12.3.1. Chair raised the need for the private chiropodist with over 1000 patient list to find new premises, Nairn Healthcare space not available, will need to look elsewhere for premises.

## 13. Update from Councillors on Any Other Matters

- 13.1. PO reinforced the severe budget and resource challenges for HC for 2023, there is a £40M gap in budget to cover public worker pay, services and increased energy costs. Care homes and venues needing support.

## 14. Questions/Comments from the Public

- 14.1. No further matters raised

15. AOCB

15.1. Tradespark Orchard Proposal

15.1.1. Concerns were expressed for various reasons about locating an orchard at the Tradespark sports ground and other options seemed to be more sensible. Chair agreed to write to Tenant Participation Officer. [PMN: 1-Nov -Response from Tenant Participation Officer that there was no longer a plan to site an orchard at the park]

15.2. Community Centre Asset Transfer <https://www.nwscc.org.uk/news/community-and-arts-centre-community-asset-transfer-26-oct-2022> JN summarised plan to take over the Community Centre building, 20 members required and invited from local organisation users, each would have a liability of £1. PO supported local organisations becoming members to have a say on the future of the Centre.

15.3. Cost of Living Grants (<https://www.nwscc.org.uk/news/highland-cost-of-living-fund-grants-available-26-oct-2022>) GS drew attention to grants available to organisations to extend services to help those in need in the current crisis. PO commented that one request has been received already from a Nairn organisation.