

**Nairn West & Suburban Community Council**  
**Ordinary Meeting: Mon 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Nairn Community & Arts Centre**

**MINUTES**

In attendance:

Alastair Noble (Chair) (AN)  
Joan Noble (JN)  
Kevin Reid (KR)  
Brian Stewart (BS)  
Graham Stuart (Minutes) (GS)  
Phillip Stuart (Treasurer) (PS)

Members of public in attendance:

Hamish Bain (HB)  
Mandy Lawson (ML)  
Murray McRae (MM)

Ex-officio members in attendance:

Cllr Michael Green (MG)  
Cllr Barbara Jarvie (BJ)

**1. Apologies**

- Apologies received from Paul Oldham, Alan Hampson, Lorraine Mallinson, Dick Youngson

**2. Declaration of Interests**

- AN declared a personal interest in the Aurora Hotel planning application

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, for Approval** (link [here](#))

- Minutes approved by JN and seconded by BS

**4. Accounts and Admin**

- PS summarized the bank account, current balance after payment due to Community Centre for room hire will be £2943.66. No further payments due before end of CC term. Agreed to wait to make any additions to the signatory list until new CC in place.

**5. Planning Applications Submitted in Previous Month for Review**

- 51 Seabank Road - plans for extension, gym/yoga studio garden room, storage shed and pergola with hot-tub
  - No reservations expressed on this back garden further development
- Sanhame, Thurlow Road – plans for an extension at the ‘front’ of the house
  - No reservations expressed on this application
- Aurora Hotel – Plans for restaurant extension to side and front of the property
  - Whilst the CC is supportive of business growth, there are concerns that the proposed L-shaped extension protrudes into the front of the property and would impact the sightline along the parade of neighbouring traditional-build houses. Whilst it is expected the planning officials will consider and decide upon the proposed layout in due process, it was agreed that **Action: JN** to draft a letter drawing attention to aesthetic concerns of the proposal.

*Important Meetings Attended by NWSCC Members*

**6. Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP)**

- AN summarized the day-long meeting involving NWSCC and Nairn River CC with the Reporter and various developers discussing the IMFLDP estimated future housing needs and development. JN research shows that over the period of a 1% rise in the Highland population there had been a 9% increase in housing, a reasonable conclusion is that new housing stock was being utilized for second homes or letting. There are a number of outstanding questions to be addressed and the process is not likely to be completed before early 2024. The status of a completed IMFLDP was considered in light of a new proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Highlands and the preparation of Nairn's Local Place Plan (LPP). HB from the floor pointed out that the LPP may not align with the IMFLDP and that the National Planning framework 4 (NPF4) requires the drafters of the LDP to take LPPs into account.
- For Ref - NWSCC letters to Reporter on IMFLDP2 (link [here](#) and [here](#))

## 7. Local Place Planning

- AN summarized the meeting with Black Isle LPP representatives and the status and process being followed by that initiative. The Black Isle plan addresses expressed local anxiety at not being listened to and there are a number of iterations of public consultation planned to best ensure that the final plan represents a consensus view.
- Nairn's LPP engagement questionnaire was delivered to all homes in the community and responses are currently being logged. The initiative is already considered to be a success in identifying priorities for the community. ML from the floor commented that many respondents to the questionnaire also expressed frustration that the Nairn community has been ignored over a number of years.

## *Collaboration Working Topics Updates*

## 8. Common Good Engagement Group (CGEG)

- JN summarized the letter sent to Lewis Hannah (link [here](#)) with suggestions for the CGEG. The CC has been frustrated at the delay of the creation of this group, whose purpose is to enhance and contribute to decision-making on Nairn Common Good matters, and has taken this initiative to encourage the Councillors to bring the group into operation as soon as possible.

## 9. Nairn Academy

- AN expressed cautious optimism that the Nairn Academy new-build funding was approved in the THC Capital Programme, though the project is still dependent on LEIP funding approval from the Scottish Government. JN noted with surprise that the proposal had not yet reached the planning application stage. BJ remarked that the last Academy PTA meeting focus was on the RAAC remediation actions, which were necessary but unfortunate costs for a building with only a short future lifespan.

## 10. Fort Reay Planning (AN)

- NWSCC and the Fort Reay developer are proposing that Developer Contribution funds may be used for creation of a path alongside the A96 and allotments to address safety concerns for that stretch of road. The proposed path route aerial photo link [here](#). The plan requires use of Common Good Land and approval from Trustees.
- During discussion on item 11, it was agreed for **Action: JN** to send letter to the

Development Contributions Officer and Planning Dept (Christine MacLeod) to formally record the CC's proposal for use of Developer Contributions for creation of the footpath and request clarity on the process.

#### **11. Developer Contributions (DCs)**

- JN referred to the new process enabling Community Organisations to submit proposals for use of DCs and for Local Area Committees to decide on how the money should be spent (in line with local priorities). The detail on how this would work in practice is not clear. **Action: MG** took to follow-up with Developer Contribution Action Group representative to get more information on how the process for requesting and receiving proposals will work in practice.
- MG commented that he had had discussions on the existing Developer Contributions funds in Nairn, which are quite 'substantial', feedback is that re-purposing is possible but is complicated by needing to be approved by the Developers. Following the CC's expressed concerns with THC stated plan for DCs being continued to be allocated to a dance studio at the Nairn Leisure Centre when the money would be better spent on more relevant projects, e.g. the putting green or toilets, **Action: MG** agreed to seek to re-purpose the DCs allocated to the dance studio to funding new toilets. Reservations were expressed by BJ that there needs to be more discussion and thinking on re-purposing existing funds before commitments could be made.

#### **12. War memorial Lights (BS)**

- The CC acknowledged the Councillors' undertaking in recent email correspondence that lights will be repaired by Remembrance Day, confirmed at the meeting by MG.

#### **13. Putting Green Play Equipment (BS)**

- The CC acknowledged the Councillors' undertaking that the play equipment will be refreshed and maintained, confirmed on the night by MG. Funds have been identified to refresh the equipment. MM from the floor indicated that the Men's Shed had expressed an interest in helping to undertake the work.
- MG commented that the Putting Green and surrounding area was under general review and that a walk-around was planned as part of the next Ward Meeting. Upon request, **Action: MG** agreed to invitations being extended to the CCs to participate in the walk around.

#### *Collaboration on Matters Involving External Agencies*

#### **14. Speed Limits in Nairn / Road Access and Safety Issues (A96 at Altonsyde) (BS)**

- BS summarized the correspondence with Transport Scotland ([link](#) and [link](#)). Although the road through the centre of Nairn was ear-marked as a 20mph zone, there are no plans to reduce the speed limit at the town entry points, including at the A96 -Tradespark Road junction near Altonsyde, from 40mph. Councillors were encouraged to continue to lobby for reducing the speed limits at the town entry points.
- BJ pointed to extracts from the letters that incorrectly stated Councillors' positions and requested that any external letters quoting Councillors or stating any of the Councillors' positions should be approved in advance, which was acknowledged. BS stated that LF's agreement for the CC to send a letter was considered to be on behalf of all the Councillors. BJ and MG responded that no Councilor normally

speaks for the others.

#### **15. Flood Prevention**

- There was round the table disappointment expressed at the loss of THC Capital budget for flood prevention plans in Nairn.

#### **16. Vaccination policy**

- AN referred to a paper sent from Boyd Peters of NHS Highland ([link](#)) which is a highly critical summary of the centralized vaccination provision in the Highlands. The issue has been highlighted in local news and escalated to the very top of Scottish Government.

#### *Collaboration Working Topics Requiring Councillor Inputs*

#### **17. Parking Scheme (GS)**

- MG expressed continued disappointment that even after being given assurance some months ago there still had been no response to the CC letter of 21 March 2023 ([link](#)) to Stewart Fraser, Head of Legal, on the marking of a public road at the harbour for permit parking. This amounts to a breakdown in governance at a councillor-official and CC-council level to what the CC indicated in the letter may be a criminal matter. **Action: MG** agreed to urgently follow-up with Stewart Fraser and it was agreed that if no response was received by the end of the week, the CC would plan to escalate the matter to the local constabulary and/or Law Society.

#### **18. Delnies Development Site**

- **Action: MG** agreed to follow-up and request Scott Dalgarno to reply to the CC letter ([link](#)) on the Delnies development.

#### **19. Common Good Charges (JN)**

- MG and BJ were not in a position to comment on the lack of reply to the letter of Jan 2023 to Laurie Fraser on charging Common Good ([link](#)).
- JN raised that a £25k charge to Common Good had previously been acknowledged as a project contribution from THC and was to be removed from the Common Good Accounts. Unfortunately, on the latest accounts the expenditure has been reinstated. **Action: MG** agreed to review and follow-up on the £25k project contribution being debited to Common Good expenditure.

#### **20. East Beach Car Park Signage (JN)**

- There was a short discussion on signage generally where BJ indicated that there was a large list of signs waiting to be introduced. MG agreed that there should be signage from the Maggot car park indicating further parking and toilets at the East Beach and **Action: MG** agreed to follow-up on the installation of signage at the Maggot Car Park toward the East Beach.

#### **21. Spindrift Caravan Site Planning (JN)**

- **Action: MG** agreed to follow up with Malcolm McLeod for response to the letter of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 on Spindrift Planning. JN remarked that new building was underway.

## **22. Community Regeneration Funds (BS)**

- BJ said that no response had been received from Lewis Hannah to her request for an explanation of the methodology used to allocate Community Regeneration Funds (details linked [here](#)). **Action: MG** agreed to follow-up with Lewis Hannah.

## **23. Harbour Street Feasibility Study / Toilets**

- MG commented that funds have been found and allocated to Common Good projects, that plans are in place for a new toilet facility at the harbor with anti-vandalism contactless card access and that there are plans for a new retail unit on the site. PS commented that timelines for measures such as this would be helpful and it was agreed that it was desirable to have the toilets operational for next season.

## **24. Library Relocation Update**

- MG commented that there are no current plans to move the library. AN agreed with MG that the car parking attached to the library lease was an important consideration to ensure the footfall for the town centre. From the floor ML mentioned that the librarians commented that some plans were considered in the past to convert the Italicente school to a library and the librarians had visited the site. It was commented that the refurbishment costs were considered too high at the time. (PMN – Paul Oldham blog dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct reference to the proposed THC divestment of the Italicente building, with the potential for a Community buy-out, and a comment that the building was considered unsuitable for a library, ([link here](#)))

### *Other Matters*

## **25. AOCB**

- **Seamen's Hall Common Good Divestment (JN)**
  - JN summarized the CC's disappointment at its treatment by and the attitude of THC, that Sara Murdoch's decision that the strip of land was alienable without proper consideration and that Stewart Fraser had considered the CC's request to discuss the status of the land as a complaint.
    - 20230823\_Email correspondence between JN and Sara Murdoch ([link](#))
    - 20230913\_Email from Stewart Fraser re Common Good Correspondence ([link](#))

## **26. For Reference - Communications from/to NWSCC in Past Month**

- 20230821 NWSCC letter to Transport Scotland re A96 speed limits ([link](#))
- 20230913\_Response Letter from Transport Scotland ([link](#))
- 20230823\_Email correspondence between JN and Sara Murdoch ([link](#))
- 20230913\_Email from Stewart Fraser re Common Good Correspondence ([link](#))