



**STONEHAVEN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**
19:00– 21:30 Tuesday 12 December 2023
Meeting held in the Sheriff Court Buildings, Stonehaven

Present		
Community Council Members: Alistair Lawrie, <i>Secretary</i> (AL) via Zoom , David Lawman, <i>Chairman</i> (DL,) Denise Bannerman (DB), Caroline Duguid (DG), Ian Hunter (IH), James Stephen (JS), Julie Lindeman (JL), Michael Ogden (MO) <i>Treasurer</i> , Norman McKay (NMckK), Raymond Christie (RC), <i>Vice Chairman</i> , Steve McQueen (SMcQ), William Gibson (WG), Fiona Tavindale (FT).		
Aberdeenshire Council Elected Members: Alan Turner (Cllr T), Wendy Agnew (Cllr A) via Zoom , Sarah Dickinson (Cllr D) via Zoom		
In Attendance -		
Jane Cruickshank (JC), The Bellman , Claire Wilson via Zoom , Fiona Malcolm, <i>Minutes Secretary</i>		
1 & 2	Chairperson’s Welcome and Rollcall	Action
	DL welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those who were attending via Zoom.	
3	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies received from Pauline Brindley (PB), Daniel Veltman (DV), and Dawn Black (Cllr B)	
4	Police Report	
	<p>The Police Scotland monthly report was circulated to all members prior to the meeting. DL said DC was keen to work with SDCC, however time constraints and other Police Scotland priorities made this difficult.</p> <p>Cllr D noted that DC had involved Arduthie Primary School pupils in an exercise to raise awareness of road safety, traffic and parking at the school. This had been raised as a concern, Police Scotland responded promptly, and will repeat the exercise with other schools in Stonehaven.</p> <p>SMcQ asked if the additional Police Scotland patrols planned for the Festive Season might be extended throughout the year?</p>	

5	Community Storage	
	<p>JS confirmed that SDCC will act as a co-ordinating body on behalf of all local groups seeking storage for equipment. Each group has different needs, and are keen for SDDC's support. DL and JS will work together on this, and groups will be invited to advise on their individual storage needs in the new year.</p>	JS and DL
6	Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	
	<p>a) Storm Babet</p> <p>DL had received a letter from TS (Aberdeenshire Council Area Manager) responding to concerns raised by SDCC, this had been circulated to members.</p> <p>MO felt it was a fair response, although more clarity on timings would be helpful.</p> <p>Cllr T said timings should become clearer in a couple of months.</p> <p>Cllr D advised the next Ward Meeting is on 16 January, Councillors will press for a progress update and concrete dates.</p> <p>Cllr T is seeking clarification on 'shingle management'.</p> <p>DL asked if the underwater structures around the harbour are checked?</p> <p>Cllr T understood that unless in need of immediate remedial work, they are not checked.</p> <p>DL reflected that acting now would be preventative and save money in future.</p> <p>Cllr T said there are other priorities requiring urgent attention elsewhere, however TS was keen to find ways to have dialogue (with SDCC).</p> <p>JS noted that Aberdeenshire Council workers had done a good job restoring the boardwalk path.</p> <p>b) Archeres & Stonehaven Twinning Partnership</p> <p>DL proposed setting up a sub-committee for this. SDCC wishes to stay with this Town Twinning arrangement, and not become involved with any others. He suggested the sub-committee should meet in January.</p> <p>IH noted that SDCC is officially twinned with Archeres.</p> <p>JL asked about other groups who wish to 'twin', how should SDCC ensure others understand that this is an official arrangement?</p> <p>IH felt that if it is in the name of the town, it should have the backing of the Area Committee or SDCC, the statement needs to be made clear.</p> <p>JS thought that as 'twinning' is between towns, if other groups wish to become involved, it is up to them, SDCC's role is to facilitate.</p> <p>SMcQ suggested a crystal-clear communication with the town on SDCC's position.</p> <p>MO noted that authority is devolved from the Local Authority to SDCC.</p> <p>DL confirmed that Aberdeenshire Council no longer takes the role of lead body for town 'twinning'. He proposed the sub-committee meets at the end of January to think about suggestions for the</p>	

	<p>communication statement, this to be taken to the SDCC February meeting. He will update Acheres, and hopes to have many CCs involved in taking this forward.</p> <p>Cllr T suggested posting a statement, making it clear that SDCC is the point of contact for any ‘twinning’ requests, on the SDCC website. DL reiterated the sub-committee is responsible for drafting a statement, deciding on how to communicate this, and taking recommendations to the February SDCC Business Meeting.</p> <p>c) CCTV – Update DL advised there will be a meeting in the Sheriff Court Building on 10 January.</p> <p>d) Stonehaven Medical Centre – Link with Patient Participation Group (PPG) RC reported there had been a meeting on 11 December with local pharmacies (Boots, Michies and Medical Centre), the first since before Covid. DL asked if a summary, including a list of which services are provided by pharmacies, would be made available for people? This would be helpful. IH explained that some services previously delivered by NHS are now contracted out, at a cost, to private sector pharmacies. He noted that pharmacists will refer someone to the GP if necessary. Cllr D explained there had been a meeting of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) earlier in the day, where it was agreed that the community needs to know what to expect relating to Primary Care. Co-production between AHSCP and NHS will seek to do more to advise the community. RC reminded the meeting that the PPG was open to anyone registered at the Stonehaven Surgery. DL asked Cllr D to keep SDCC updated.</p> <p>e) Nippy Dip – 1 January 2024 DL thanked all those who have offered to help at the event, he will send out an e-mail with all the details. Tickets have already been sold on-line. He asked all volunteers to confirm their availability ASAP, as a sufficient number of stewards is required for the event to go ahead. A mobile phone app will be used for registering participants. JS reminded the meeting that three local charities will benefit from donations raised at the event. SMcQ reflected that everyone needs to be properly briefed. DL confirmed that participants must be aged 12 or over, for safety reasons, and noted the beneficiaries are the Defibrillator Fund, Exercise After Stroke, and Friends of Kincardine Community Hospital.</p> <p>f) Swim the Bay JS advised that planning for this event is in hand.</p>	<p>DL</p> <p>Cllr D</p> <p>DL</p>
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	<p>g) Royal Mail Building IH asked if there had been a response to the letter sent to Royal Mail, AL confirmed this was also in hand.</p> <p>h) SSEN Kintore-Fiddes-Tealing East Coast OHL & 400kV Substations – Update DL advised there was a suggestion from Crathes, Drumoak and Durriss Community Council that Community Councils work together on this. The original proposed route has been changed. Infrastructure is needed to transfer energy generated by windfarms to the National Grid. He asked for 2-3 volunteers to meet with other Community Councils. IH, DB and MO all agreed to volunteer. IH noted that SSEN had listened to the concerns of the community. MO said the use of pylons is unsustainable, and SDCC should push Aberdeenshire Council to push SSEN to invest in underground cabling instead.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Town Centre Parking/Pavement Parking/Oversized Vehicles Parking</p>	
	<p>DL asked how the new Scottish Government (SG) legislation is going to be policed? (Legislation banning motorists from parking on pavements.) SMcQ said that the current 45-minute waiting time (in the town centre) is not monitored, this is a Police Scotland responsibility, but is not a priority. MO had seen motorists parking in the middle of the road before going into shops. CD asked if ticket machines could be used? JL noted that some local business owners park in the 45-minute restricted areas all day. DL understood that the decriminalisation (of parking?) moves responsibility (for monitoring) from Police Scotland to Local Authorities. Aberdeenshire Council had looked at this pre-Covid, he asked what their position is now? Cllr D said that decriminalisation is an expensive process, and other priorities have come up. Wardens (employed by Aberdeenshire Council) regularly check paid parking (for example, the Market Square), Areas where pavement parking is a problem will be prioritised, with a view to educating, rather than penalising, motorists initially. She suggested it would be beneficial if wardens could monitor parking in the peripheral areas (of paid parking). Cllr T reiterated the Council's policy of education before enforcement. However, the implementing the legislation is an additional responsibility for the Council, with no additional ongoing budget allocation. The Council is losing money from car parks, there are no easy answers. De-criminalisation is being looked at, but there are budget challenges. SMcQ felt there will be a huge cost to the town if the situation is left as it is. Police Scotland seems reluctant to issue fines, however had</p>	

	<p>responded promptly when members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community had parked (illegally?)</p> <p>RC was aware of large vehicles taking up more than one space when parking at the Square, and felt there should be restriction on the size of vehicles allowed to use the car park.</p> <p>IH suggested charging people who park overnight at the Station.</p> <p>Cllr D noted that the decriminalisation of parking meant that, in theory, wardens can monitor other parking, which would be good, but decriminalisation has stalled.</p> <p>CD suggested emphasising the other places where it is possible to park.</p> <p>JS noted Cllr D had made some valid points. But Stonehaven gets a lot of visitors, so should be looked at differently (from other parts of Aberdeenshire ?) He felt that nothing gets done for Stonehaven, Councillors do nothing for the town, even though it generates lots of income for Aberdeenshire. He said, 'You can't get money to fill potholes, you can't get a coachload of visitors into the town. Councillors need to listen to people and businesses, there needs to be commonsense'.</p> <p>DL noted these comments highlighted the frustrations of the community.</p> <p>IH said that local decisions cannot be made as 'the policy' does not allow it.</p> <p>JL asked what had happened to (Aberdeenshire Council's) Strategic Tourism Plan?</p> <p>Cllr T explained the plan has been referred (to officers) for further development. Views on parking vary greatly across the different areas of Aberdeenshire. The Council needs to balance its budget, when asked the majority of the public do not want cuts to Roads or Education. Elected Members try to set priorities within the available budget.</p> <p>JS said that although Stonehaven has a high footfall of visitors, it is not possible to charge a fee for using public toilets, he suggested independence is needed.</p> <p>SMcQ thought there must be a plan for decriminalisation, and therefore this should be followed through?</p> <p>DL reflected there is a need to look at doing things differently.</p> <p>JS suggested Aberdeenshire Council needs to open dialogue with businesses and residents. He asked if it were possible to learn from Ballater? The Square could be used as a drop-off point (for coaches?), then parking could be made available at Baird Park.</p> <p>DL reflected the three Councillors attending the meeting would have picked up on the frustrations expressed by CCs.</p> <p>SMcQ wanted a solution.</p> <p>JS proposed setting up a sub-group to take this forward.</p> <p>DL suggested putting pressure on Elected Members to take forward.</p> <p>IH suggested talking to other Community Councils about decentralising decision-making.</p>	
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	<p>DL proposed putting this forward as an agenda item at the Community Council Forum. He asked if Aberdeenshire Council could change the policy (for decriminalisation and decision making)? Cllr D clarified that the Local Authority decriminalisation policy will apply across the whole of Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>DL reflected that other towns may have different views, therefore the Community Council Forum could be used to find out.</p> <p>SMcQ suggested making Stonehaven a trial/pilot (to test the decriminalisation policy).</p> <p>Cllr D explained implementing decriminalisation will take time to achieve, and will incur significant costs. Local Authorities cannot 'localise', it is their responsibility to serve the whole area. There are already huge budgetary constraints to providing essential services.</p> <p>DL summarised the frustrations and concerns that nothing happens, he felt the current model is not working, and policy changes (regarding local decision-making) may have to come from the Scottish or UK Governments. The Community Council can tell Local Councillors that towns all have different needs and priorities.</p> <p>Cllr T acknowledged the frustrations expressed, but said there are no easy solutions, and changes take time.</p> <p>IH commented that 'Necessity is the mother of invention'.</p>	
8	Approval of Previous Minutes 14 November 2023	
	The Minutes were approved by IH and seconded by DB.	
9	Planning Report	
	DL noted there were no significant new proposals. The Megray Fuel Station plans had been approved earlier that day.	
10	SDDC Committees/Subgroups	
	<p>a) Local Development Plan/Local Place Plan</p> <p>MO reported there had been two good consultation events, and over 900 responses to date. He encouraged all CC members to complete the questionnaire (which is available on-line).</p> <p>DL agreed this had been a positive experience and an informative process.</p> <p>b) Invercarron Resource Centre/Older People's Services – Participation Request</p> <p>IH was generally pleased with the work that has been happening for Older People's Services. The Mearns Healthy Living Network had recruited 90 volunteers to drive older patients to medical appointments. He noted the Stonehaven Men's Shed had won a King's Award. Tom Hannan had spoken at this year's Feein' Market to raise the profile of the Men's Shed. It is totally self-supporting, as this (business) model works, he wondered if a similar approach could work for the Resource Centre? He felt the centralised (political? decision-making?) system is causing the problem. Some paintings and a tapestry that were formally displayed at the Resource Centre have been moved to Forest View Centre, Karen Snell is the contact.</p>	

	<p>JL suggested these could be moved to the Sherriff Court Building, however the (Aberdeenshire Council) Area Manager said ownership had to be established first. RC noted the Aberdeen Vaccination Centre is used to provide other services, including a Welfare Centre. DL knew of a similar project in Inverurie. Cllr D confirmed a Community Hub is being trialled at Inverurie, this is at an early stage, she will keep an eye on how it is progressing.</p> <p>c) Community Resilience Plan – MO voiced his frustration at the lack of replies he had received (from businesses/individuals who have offered to lend generators). There are eight members of a WhatsApp group. He felt there is a need to enhance communications, and suggested posting the Community Resilience Plan on the SDCC website and Facebook page. JS suggested referring this back to Aberdeenshire Council. MO clarified that Aberdeenshire Council is only responsible as the lead body in the event of a Red Alert Weather Warning. Cllr D noted that a recent power close to where she lives had not lasted for long. JS suggested asking Aberdeenshire Council for a container so that SDCC could buy two or three generators to be available as required. He felt it was not ideal to rely on individuals to lend their generators. DL recalled there had been a previous agreement/decision to access existing, available generators, but recognised MO was struggling to get feedback from people who had offered these. JL suggested MO should be at the top of the list of contacts in the event of a storm. MO clarified he needs to know about the range of available generators in order for his electrician to check them. SMcQ suggested if SDCC owned its own generators, these could be used by other community groups. MO said there are four potential community hubs across different areas of Stonehaven. Power cuts do not always affect the whole town, this means if power goes off in a local area, those affected can access a community hub nearby which has not been affected. DL proposed a follow-up meeting with the Resilience Group, and asked JS to participate in this.</p> <p>d) SDCC Communications Nothing to report.</p>	<p>Cllr D</p> <p>DL/MO/JS</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Outside Bodies/Committees</p>	
	<p>a) Transport Action Kincardineshire (TRAK) IH reported the on-line Bus Forum trial had been a disaster. Cllr T clarified he had opened the meeting, but had not chaired it, this was done by Aberdeenshire Council officials. He invited IH to send him his queries, and promised he would ensure these were answered. He appreciated the feedback (from IH), and explained the</p>	<p>IH/Cllr T</p>

	<p>on-line trial was to test different approaches (to meetings, and community engagement). Cllr D agreed there had been many issues (with the on-line meeting). This approach had been taken in response to members of the public who were able to attend on-line but not in person, for example residents of Johnshaven. (Where there is limited public transport available?) Cllr T said the platform used (for the meeting) was Teams Webinar, this allows the meeting hosts to control participants' contributions. He offered to push for a hybrid approach for future.</p> <p>b) KDP – Wind Farm Grant Application Reviews SMcQ had participated in the decision-making process, this had been difficult but enjoyable.</p> <p>c) Town Centre Improvement Group AL had circulated the last minutes, the next meeting is on 16 January 2024.</p> <p>d) Kincardine and Mearns Community Council Forum RC said there had been a presentation from the Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP). IH explained their constitution had changed, removing the direct link to Community Councils, and proposed KDP feedback to the K&M Community Council Forum.</p> <p>e) Kincardine and Mearns Community Planning Group IH had not attended the most recent meeting.</p>	<p>Cllr T</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Treasurer's Report</p>	
	<p>This was circulated to all members prior to the meeting.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Correspondence</p>	
	<p>None.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<p>AOCB</p>	
	<p>a) DL had noted comments on social media about people slipping and falling on the White Bridge. Cllr D confirmed someone had fallen on the north side two weeks ago, and someone else had slipped on the other side this week. The contractor was supposed to instal handrails on both sides of the bridge, officials are looking into this. The structure is 'listed' so this needs to be considered when adding 'nosing'. SSEN are commissioning additional lights at the White Bridge on 20 December, as poor lighting is an issue. Cllr T had also queried footing, he had noted some loose aluminium plating underfoot.</p>	

	<p>b) SMCQ expressed concern that a recording of a recent Area Committee meeting had been edited, with 10 minutes being removed, on the recommendation of Aberdeenshire Council's Legal Department. He felt this highlighted the need to attend these meetings in person.</p> <p>DL thought that, in special circumstances, it may be appropriate to edit recordings?</p> <p>IH suggested this would not happen with Hansard.</p> <p>MO clarified Hansard rarely records verbatim, but provides a transcript of (Parliamentary) proceedings.</p> <p>JL commented that Aberdeenshire Council is not required to record meetings and make these available, but chooses to do so.</p> <p>Cllr D noted that Garioch (Area Committee) uses live recording as it is not possible for members of the public to attend in person due to limited room. She suggested SDCC writes to the Area Manager to express concern.</p> <p>SMcQ had already written to the Area Manager, and had attended today's meeting in person.</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>Dates of Next Meetings</p>	
	<p>DL thanked everyone for their input over the past year, and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.</p> <p>Agenda Discussion and Planning Meeting – Due to the Christmas holiday period, there will be no meeting, members are invited to e-mail any agenda items to the Secretary – secretary@stonehavencc.org.uk</p> <p>Next SDDC Business Meeting – Tuesday 9 January 19:00</p>	