

Speyside Area Forum

Speyside High School Library, Aberlour

Thursday, December 10th, 2009 at 7.30pm



MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies

Attending:

<u>Chair:</u> Bill Burgess	Carron Community Association
Hugh Fraser	Aberlour Community Association
Jim Hart	Archiestown Village Council
Jean Oliver	Dufftown
Andrea Fuller	Edinvillie Community Hall Council
Pat Shanks	Edinvillie Community Hall Council
Rita Marks	Glenlivet & Inveravon Community Association
Patricia Grant	Kirkmichael & Tomintoul Community Association
Jenny Herschell	Kirkmichael & Tomintoul Community Association
Derek Clark	Glenrinnes Community Centre
Jim Anderson	Roths Council
Margaret Stuart	Roths Council
Councillor Fiona Murdoch	Moray Council
Councillor Michael McConnachie	Moray Council

In attendance:

Linda Adam	Community Support Worker
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Apologies:

Sandy Henderson	Aberlour Community Association
John Fleming	Dufftown
Janice Smith	Dufftown
James Gray	Knockando Community Association
Councillor Pearl Paul	Moray Council

2. Minutes of previous meeting - November 17th, 2009

An amendment was introduced to Item 4. Change in licensing laws for trading.

Aberlour Community Association has written to all MSPs.

With that amendment, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed by Derek Clark; Seconded by Rita Marks

3. Matters Arising

4. Update community/action groups:

- Craigellachie playpark funding has been approved through the Peoples Lottery.
- Midnight football has received donations from the following groups
 - SFA £1,000
 - Carntyne Transport £ 200
 - Walkers Shortbread £ 250
 - Alice Littler Foundation £ 750
 - Speyside High School £ 200
 - Lottery – Commonwealth Games 2014 Fund £1,000 (provisional)

It was questioned if £5,500 for transportation represented realistic costs for this project. Revised quotes from 3 other companies are expected to result in lower costs. Use of Council vehicles and drivers would result in drivers exceeding safe driving durations, and are consequently not available for this project.

Inquiries to local schools have identified 21 individuals interested in participating. Additional advertising will be put out in the near future.

- Archiestown have been awarded £21,692 from the LEADER programme in respect of their 250th Commemoration project

6. Position of secretary

Jim Hart (Archiestown Village Council) has agreed to undertake the role of secretary.

7. Leader funding

Details of representatives Hugh Fraser and Jim Hart have been forwarded to David Watson, manager of the LEADER programme in Moray.

8.1 Community issues – Car Share Scheme

The 2-person journey to Aberdeen was originally 2 separate bookings, subsequently combined for convenience and driver availability. It was necessary to charge 2 individual full fares for the 120 mile round trip due to the requirement to record and claim for each user for the trips which are heavily subsidised. An exception will be if a carer travels with a patient in which case their travel will be free.

Some or all of the costs – depending on individual circumstances – can be reclaimed on the spot at the clinic.

11.1 Any other competent business

A separate bank account will be established to accept the monies awarded from “Cash Back for Communities” for funding a Movin4ward group in Speyside

4. Moray Council Budget Consultation

a) Feedback from Consultation meeting

- A copy of the feedback document from November 23rd, Speyside consultation meeting was provided
- Linda Adam briefly described the process to compile the consultation responses.
- Good agreement that feedback from Speyside consultation captured the mood of the Area Forum
- Perception that the proposed cuts yet again disadvantaged the Rural in favour of the Urban communities, failing to recognise the difficulties and dependency upon transport and other infrastructure simply due to location
 - Reductions in rural areas impact the whole community not just the few.
- Perception that there are too many middle and senior managers within the Council
 - It was recognised that middle and senior management will not be impacted by this budget reduction
- Items on the Reserve List should be accelerated for budget cut consideration

b) Educational Services

- Consensus that cuts to education are short-sighted with potential medium and long term detrimental impact upon economy, families and delinquency
 - Significant resistance to cuts in Additional Support Services
 - Reduction in this area will have incremental impact on budgets in other support functions – false economy with negative social impact
- Dissatisfaction that one school with 4 pupils at a cost of £100,000 is maintained while many schools and pupils will be impacted by wide ranging cuts aggregating to a similar amount.
 - What are transport costs from Cabrach to Dufftown?
 - Peripatetic teachers are used already
- Support the concept of community schools
- Quality Improvement Officers
 - Perception is that there are too many for the benefit that’s achieved

- Seem to be as many in Moray, with smaller population, as there are in Aberdeen
 - Should be accelerated from the Reserve List of Budget options
- Proposed construction of the Moray Sports Facility in Elgin should be delayed
- Mobile library service should be maintained with one vehicle dedicated to Speyside for rural areas
- Cutting up school fruit can be stopped
- An attempt should be made to synchronise school bus departure times to optimise use of school transportation
 - Reduce number of school runs by keeping children at school longer
 - Need to balance savings with any additional supervisory costs
 - Side benefit of reducing carbon footprint

c) Community Services

- Forum opposes the reduction of the Luncheon club subsidies as this function represents a physical and social lifeline for many vulnerable residents
- There is a question about the level of subsidy and costs for this service - £5/meal seemed high.
- In Speyside High School the use of “the menu of the day” would suffice
- A letter was received from John Orr, Chairperson of the Moray Local Awards Committee (MLAC). His letter expressed concern about the impact of cuts will have to the Community Learning and Development (youth Team) (CLD) budget and the associated support to the Duke of Edinburgh’s award (DoE). CLD also provides support to uniformed organisations, voluntary organisations, secondary schools and youth clubs.
- A petition from 48 residents was received.
“We don’t want the Speyside Youth Work Team to be cut. This will have an impact on our Arts Awards, Youth Achievements Awards and our activities we do away from school.”
- A petition from 26 residents was received.
“We the undersigned concerned residents of Speyside are concerned about the steady reduction in the provision of youth work in Speyside which we understand is due to the budget cuts. It is time for the Councillors to see that the cuts are not in the best interests of Speyside young residents. We’ve been affected time and time again so we oppose the proposal.”

Environmental Services

- Agreed with reduction in use of weed killer in churchyard maintenance
- Forum is supportive of the proposal to move Speyside Rangers to Moray Rangers
 - Visitor centre in Aberlour is a tourist attraction with income benefits
 - Use of additional volunteers to keep the centre open should be tried
 - Dufftown spur is one of the busiest sections of the Speyside Way generating tourist income
 - It is recognised that some discussions are ongoing to retain this capability
- Reduction of Play Area inspection/repairs is a false economy
 - Reduction will impose periods when there is no inspection/repair
 - Resultant injuries could lead to personal injury claims

d) Other Services

- Mandatory instruction should be issued to all Council buildings that all discretionary electrical equipment should be switched off at night
- Councillors meal expenses for continuous attendance of >5 hours should be stopped
- The number of Consultation exercises should be reduced
 - Perception is held that there may be an obligation to conduct the consultation, but not to implement the findings – so why do them?
- Too much is spent on the production of “Glossy” Information Brochures
 - Content is often good quality – presentation is excessive.
- Significant concern expressed about the efficiency and effectiveness of the thematic groups in the Community Planning Partnership

- Likelihood of duplication with other council groups
- Continued purpose and value not understood
- Opportunities should be taken to investigate overlap, duplication and redundancy
- Improved coordination should be able to identify savings
- Question about how much do other agencies contribute to the process
 - Seems as if agencies contribution is varied and inconsistent
 - Agencies don't participate equally due to conflicting and established agency processes and priorities
- Cross departmental Council transportation optimisation
 - Use a single vehicle for multiple departmental projects
 - Reduce redundant vehicle time
 - Reduce number of required vehicles
 - Reduce road tax, insurance, fuel costs
 - Optimisation will improve project efficiency
 - Improve carbon footprint
- Re-examine the use of external consultants (esp. Finance) versus internal staffing
 - "Right people in the right job performing the right function for the right price"
 - Investigate sharing specialist services with neighbouring administrative Councils rather than services unique to Moray.
- Greater effort should be deployed to seeking income generation opportunities – to offset budget efficiencies
 - Infrastructure should be emplaced to encourage SMEs
 - Don't sell council fisheries – lease them
 - Re-charge estate owners for hedge and grass cutting services undertaken
 - Issue a nominal charge when issuing disabled badges
 - Levy a £10 fee for each "free" bus pass
 - Issue a charge to Council employees for car parking in facility adjacent to Council HQ
 - Charge equivalent to deemed tax benefit for earners over £7,500
 - Businesses to be charged a fee for employee parking

5. Suggestion Sheet

A suggestion sheet was made available to comment upon the pros and cons of the consultation exercise

6. Date & Time of next meeting

The next meeting was set for February 16th, 2010 at Speyside High School Library

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