



Speyside Area Forum
Chairman: Mr A Henderson
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Minutes , Dufftown Mortlach Memorial Hall, Tuesday 27th March, 7.30pm

1. Welcome and Apologies: In the absence of Sandy Henderson, Chairman, William Burgess, Carron Community Association welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Sandy Henderson, Chairman; Margaret Stuart, Rothes Council; Deborah Smith and Martin Sheed, Cabrach Community Enterprise. **Attending:** Hugh Fraser, Treasurer, John Fleming, Dufftown Mortlach Memorial Hall; William Burgess, Carron Community Association; Cllrs Fiona Murdoch, Mike McConnachie and Pearl Paul, The Moray Council, William Bourne, John Fleming Dufftown and District Community Association; Mabel Donald, Aberlour Community Association; Andrea Fuller, and Patricia Shanks, Edinville Community Hall Association; Patricia Grant and Jenny Herschell, Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Association; Jean Grimshaw, Rothes Council; Rita Marks, Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association; Jean Oliver, Speyside Paths Network Group; Steve Oliver, Archiestown Village Council; Eileen Fitzpatrick, Secretary.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (14th February 2012, Edinville Community Hall): Corrections: 5. Update from Community Groups, Tomintoul and Richmond Hall the first sentence should read "Patricia Grant spoke about the first draft of the Strategy Action Plan instigated by the communities and the park, which was the result of a recent well attended meeting." The Olympic Torch Relay will pass through Tomintoul on 11th June. [The torch will have travelled from Shetland, through the Highlands to Grantown on Spey before passing through Moray at Tomintoul at approximately 1.30pm on June 11. From Tomintoul the torch will travel to Aberdeenshire via the Lecht.] Reni Milburn had been added twice in attendance and attending. As had Steve Oliver. Approved: Patricia Grant Seconded: Andrea Fuller.

3. Matters Arising:

Plants - The Moray Council: Following the discussion at the last meeting about the cost of and arrangements for collecting the plants from The Moray Council, Andrea Fuller had spoken to Rhona Patterson who will report back to the Forum.

Olympic Torch: Patricia Grant led a discussion about the suggested arrangements for when the Olympic Torch goes through Tomintoul. Cllr Paul, Patricia Grant and Cllr Fiona Murdoch discussed funding for the special choir created for this event. They wondered whether the money for the choir was being used for the Summer of Song. [Creative Scotland and local authorities are backing Summer of Song with investment of £200,000.] Cllr Murdoch said arrangements will be happening within the music network; small choirs who will come together on the day. Rita Marks mentioned that the Glenlivet Choir did not seem to be involved. Cllr Murdoch advised members that as the organisers were only appointing a leader today nobody will have been contacted yet, but they will use existing choirs. Nick Fearne, Arts Officer is the co-ordinator. The school choirs will be excellent said Cllr Paul. Cllr Murdoch said that one of the conditions the main sponsors had made was that only their company logos would appear on any clothing worn by participants. Moray Council will provide plain white t- shirts for those who have, for instance 'Nike' on their clothing. The reason why not much information has been released yet is to do with the Official Secrets Act, and the main sponsors. Large crowds are expected and it is anticipated that the queue of traffic will be something like three miles long. There followed further discussion about this event and that fact that it is not simply a local but is a national event.

Speyside Community Website Group: Cllr Murdoch and Chairman, Sandy Henderson met with the group with a view to offering assistance to improve and expand the extent of the current website to make it more marketable. Cllr Murdoch reported on this. At present the group consists in three people who meet every Tuesday evening to update the Aberlour pages of what was once a Speyside wide website. This is why the website is badly organised, is out of date and is so poor that we have to do something as a matter of urgency. Two of the three people were more than happy to co operate with Speyside Area Forum to make a website for the whole area. She suggested that the format could be: Speyside information should be upfront on the first page of the website and then from there links to each village website. It would be a good idea if each Speyside Village Community Association might like to create their own website if they do not already have one. Cllr Murdoch was very concerned that Archiestown, Tomintoul and

Glenlivet are not even on the website at all. Cllr Murdoch said at present they treat Craigellachie and Edinville as suburbs of Aberlour. Also, the current website does not provide visitors to the area with easy access to information on holiday accommodation (B&BS, Guest Houses and Hotels) and where to eat (cafes and restaurants), Visitor Attractions and events. It is dire, and therefore needs immediate radical attention. The recommendation is that as the Forum has funds available, and that as it will benefit everybody in Speyside it should pay someone to redesign the website. In the meantime we could investigate to see if we can attract some serious funding so that the website looks like it is in the 21st century instead of the 1980s. Cllr Murdoch said the website must be Speyside-wide and cover the same area as Speyside Area Forum. We need to make a decision about this as a matter of urgency.

William Burgess asked for volunteers to assist Cllr Murdoch who said that the Forum could put forward two or three people to help and join the present group.

It was unfortunate that the website group could not find their Constitution, however Cllr Paul offered to find the Constitution as she remembered when the group began. Cllr Paul said she would contact various organisations in the community encouraging them to take responsibility to get organised and put their information on the website. This should be run by someone professional and cover not just Speyside but the whole of Moray. Cllr Paul spoke about some community websites which carry very good information. She will endeavour to get funding for this. William Burgess said the main point of the website is to encourage tourism. Andrea Fuller said at present there is no marketing of Speyside. There followed further discussion by several members including Cllrs Paul and Murdoch, Jean Oliver and Andrea Fuller. Mention was made of the new MFCHA website designed by Bob Fuller. Cllr Murdoch stressed the need for emergency action before Easter. Now that we know about this situation, we need to act. We need to agree a budget for someone to do an emergency job now so that by next season it will be up and running.

Andrea Fuller said that [her husband] Bob had looked at the website it and was shocked. He thinks that Speyside needs a home page - Speyside Community Web then a separate page with links to communities. Cllr Murdoch said it is the first page that needs to be worked on immediately. Andrea Fuller said it was very important that the Visitor Attractions and where people can eat or stay within Speyside be on it. The website should be self financing said Cllr Murdoch, and it should carry complete information for visitors and so could offer for a paid amount a more 'glam' advert to businesses for a small rate to bring in enough money for a professional web designer to maintain the site.

Cllr Pearl Paul said businesses would not pay to go on a poor website. She would like to promote the whole of Moray. Jean Oliver mentioned the name of a web designer. William Burgess wondered whether one or both of them [including Bob Fuller] could look at the website and report back to the Forum. Hugh Fraser spoke about said Bob Fuller's good redesign of the MFCHA website, but said that it is of course only as good as the information given to the Webmaster. Hugh Fraser therefore suggested we give this to Bob Fuller and asked Andrea Fuller what the approximate cost would be. She replied that ideally Bob would need the text to be put together as at present there is nothing on the website. Bob could put together an accommodation page with links to community associations, and a promotion page, and pull it all together - initially a five page website redesign for approximately £350-£355. Cllr Murdoch offered to write the text for it. Andrea Fuller said Community Associations all have information already including pictures which could be made available for the redesigned website. Cllr Murdoch asked the Forum for a go-ahead for the initial cost and two volunteers to visit Speyside community web members with her. Following approval by the members, including Andrea Fuller and Cllr Paul, a sub group of the Speyside Area Forum, Andrea Fuller, Rita Marks and Cllr Paul was formed to progress this. £500 was the amount agreed upon initially for Webmaster Bob Fuller. Cllr Murdoch arranged with the sub-group to organise a meeting to see the existing Web group in Aberlour Library at 7pm Tuesday 3rd April. They could then decide upon how they will carry out the co-operative venture.

Grass Cutting Charges: The Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee have unanimously agreed not to charge. Cllr Paul led a general discussion mentioning the Council's decision making process and making reference to the Crown Estate.

Craigellachie Bridge (built by Thomas Telford 1812-14) and Nature Walk Project – Report at February meeting from Moray Chamber of Commerce, Chief Executive, Lesley Ann Parker: Cllr Murdoch asked if there was anyone wanting to take this on. However, it appeared that no one has the time or the energy at present. Rita Marks said their Community Association approved of the project but have too much on at the moment. She suggested that one way forward might be to set up a Trust which could attract the large amount (several millions of pounds) of funding necessary for a project of this size, and she wondered if perhaps the Telford Appreciation Society might be interested. Cllr Murdoch said the bridge needs major renovation as flakes of paint from it are falling off with the possibility of polluting the river. The focus for this project is the year 2014, which is the bridge's 200th anniversary. So far they had approached at least one distillery and had received a positive response.

Cllr Paul gave the example of Grant House, Elgin. A project of this size needs time in order to get the money together. She believed that this was something that the Forum should take on, initially by seeking advice and publicising it as you never knew who might come forward with advice, assistance and funding. Jim Gray said that a high powered engineer would need to be onboard. A start could be made with a lot more notices publicising this which would not cost so much. Cllr Paul said there could be money from the regiments – Jim Gray said they are all amalgamated now. However, we have one regiment of the engineers moving into Kinloss RAF base this summer. Cllr Paul said we should ‘keep chipping away’. William Burgess said that the Knockando Woollen Mill was a good example of a successful project. This is where a website would be a great help. We should not get downhearted said Cllr Paul. People in this meeting are very involved in their own communities and arrangements for marking The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee meetings are taking place, so we should keep mentioning it as word of mouth was effective. Andrea Fuller said the people discussing it did not have a game plan so it is hard to get involved. Cllr Murdoch said the chances of getting something done by 2014 if it does not start this year are slim. Cllr Mike McConnachie said that 90% of the money is there and Cllr Murdoch said LEADER money is available as well but it is people that are needed.

Glenlivet Hall: Rita Marks reported that the Moray Council has sold Ballindalloch Station and it will be made into a hostel. The Hall Committee Community Asset Transfer process was a useful experience which they could perhaps draw upon in the future. Cllr Murdoch spoke about this sale which is conditional. It is only to be sold for this purpose [to be made into a hostel] otherwise it will revert to the community.

Public Entertainments Licences: A discussion on this subject took place including contributions from Patricia Grant, Cllr Murdoch and Andrea Fuller. It is such a complicated and controversial issue that the Moray Council are creating a ‘Decision Tree’. Cllr Murdoch will arrange to send Speyside Area Forum members a copy of this. Patricia Grant said that at a Highland Games Meeting the previous Sunday she had been encouraged by what was said by Owen Nicholson. He works with Shona Robertson and the entertainment licence for the Highland Games came up. There were people from all over Scotland at this meeting. Owen Nicholson suggested that he would try to arrange for one licence to cover everything.

Patricia Grant thought this change in licensing arrangements had come into being because of government legislation policy. She was hopeful that something might come out of this and if trying to get one overall licence works for one organisation maybe it could work for others. Cllr Murdoch wondered whether halls could be covered by the MFCHA licence and would enquire. Cllr Mike McConnachie gave the history of this in relation to distilleries changing their working practices which meant less revenue for the Moray Council hence the need to apply licensing rules more stringently to maintain income from this source. Further discussion took place and Cllr Paul said we need it in plain English and not legal jargon. It is full of anomalies at present and contradicts itself said William Burgess. Cllr Murdoch would email the explanatory notes to those who requested this.

Steve Oliver said we should question the need for a licence in the first place. In the past The Moray Council has not enforced this and have ignored it. We could rebel said Steve Oliver. William Burgess said it is up to individual halls. John Fleming said we cannot blame The Moray Council as it comes back to the Scottish Government’s wording of the Act which affects the way it is being applied. It is possible to have different but similar events some of which need a licence and some do not. John Fleming has appealed to his MP to do something about this. Cllr Paul seemed more hopeful about getting results after speaking to Owen Nicholson. Andrea Fuller expressed her frustration and said that every time she had asked the Moray Council about this she got either no answer or a different answer. Hugh Fraser said that the Highland Games is a major worldwide attraction for tourists. Cllr Paul spoke about The Braemar Games. They paid once every three years and Helensborough paid once a year. This is for the same sort of event. John Fleming said MFCHA should be lobbying on our behalf.

Jim Gray wondered whether anyone had been convicted for non-compliance. Cllr Paul said it is not coming into effect until 21st October so there is still some time to go. Cllrs Murdoch and McConnachie believed it was approved two Licencing Committee meetings ago. The consultation was carried out last year with MFCHA. Cllr Murdoch had then written to the Chair and the Clerk asking for it to be simplified. William Burgess said we will wait for clarification. It is important to know what your liabilities are likely to be. Further discussions took place. Cllr Murdoch said that whilst The Moray Council has ‘blanket covered’ some premises such as schools and town halls it was still not good enough.

Renewable Energy: Steve Oliver advised members present that Estover Ltd will have exhibitions of their planned bio-mass CHP plant for Craigellachie Wood to supply heat for Macallan Distillery and electricity for the grid on 16th May at Archiestown Hall and 17th May at Craigellachie Hall. DECC have produced a Press Release about the second phase of the Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme, which gives money off renewable

technologies such as biomass boilers, air and ground source heat pumps and solar thermal panels. This will be launched on 2nd April 2012 and will be worth £10m more than the existing scheme. It is hoped that the new money will help the RHPP go further. This includes an £8m competition for communities to apply for grants to encourage community groups to install heating from renewable sources. For further information please go to website: http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/premium_pay/factsheet/factsheet.aspx

4. Police Matters: No policeman was present. [Cllr Murdoch later emailed the Secretary with the contact details of the newly appointed Police representative, Michael Mulloy.]

5. Update from Community Groups:

Roths: Cllr Paul reported that Roths have got through the first stage with applying to the Lottery to upgrade the Grant Hall facilities. They have been filling out forms in relation to matters concerning the architects and by October it will go to the final stage. They will know by February if has been successful. A Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations committee has been set up. On 2nd June there will be a Street Party and hopefully an event in Glen Grant Gardens, as well as various other events. They are trying to raise money so that every child will have a memento [probably a mug]. Cllr Paul said they are organising a Tattie-bogle event in Roths. Their Golf tournament and tasting sessions of whisky are fully booked. Roof insulation for the Visitors Centre has been completed, and a website for this is being created which is a good way to pass on information for the Speyside Area Forum. [Cllr Paul helpfully gave the Secretary, Eileen Fitzpatrick, a copy of 'The Rothesian' so that she could be better informed.]

Glenlivet: Rita Marks spoke about Blairfindy Castle. They are looking at this project following the collapse of their interest in Ballindalloch Station but not as a Community Asset Transfer because it does not belong to Moray Council. They might try and register an interest with the landlords, the Crown Estate. The Village Hall managed to get a grant to plant three trees to mark the Jubilee and another one is being planted this Sunday.

Dufftown: John Fleming asked where the Blood Transfusion people are operating as they have not come up to Dufftown this year. The Chairman will write to blood transfusion people to find out if and when they are coming to Speyside. The hall has recently installed solar panels [helped by REAP and launched at an event attended by MSP Richard Lochhead].

Edinville: Andrea Fuller said that their hall also now has solar panels and they are selling electricity back to the Grid. She said that it was fantastic as a local resident had loaned the money for this. Cllr Paul has information on a REAP scheme which she will bring to next meeting. REAP are applying to the government for more funding.

Aberlour: Hugh Fraser reported that this was a busy year for them as in September they would be celebrating their bicentenary [in 1812 by Charles Grant of Elchies, headmaster at Aberlour School from 1844 to 1874]. Events to mark this included Scottish country and old time dancing, a concert to be given by pupils from Speyside High school and Aberlour Primary School, a concert on Friday 14th September by Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham the tickets for which are selling well. On the Saturday night there is planned a Family Fun night with two magicians and another band. On the Sunday there will be an Ecumenical Songs of Praise. Aberlour Primary School will create a mosaic of the Aberlour Coat of Arms, Fiona Herd is looking for funding for a Pageant for the High School and there will be a wealth of other events. Aberlour have their own Bicentenary Tartan designed by Knockando Mill and Aberlour Distillery has produced a special 12 years old, Highland Single Malt whisky (£90 discounted to villagers at £40). There will be an Orphanage reunion and pupils of Aberlour High School reunion on the Saturday. Former residents at the orphanage are travelling from as far afield as Australia and Canada and possibly New Zealand for this reunion. Cllr Paul said she knew two SNP Councillors who were orphans from Aberlour. Hugh said that the main beneficiary of the Aly Bain and Phil Cunningham concert would be the Aberlour Child Care Trust.

Car Share Schemes: Rita Marks was pleased that the regulations for Car Share schemes had been eased as this would encourage more people to use the scheme. Cllr Paul said Councillors have been told that they will be getting some funding for this through the Change Fund. At present they get some money from The Moray Council. She said they received more funding than they needed the year before. The Forum could consider giving money to the Speyside Car Share Scheme and we should perhaps keep this under review. There followed a general discussion. Cllr Fiona Murdoch said it would help the profile of the Forum if we could contribute something.

Speyside Path Network: Jean Oliver made a plea for Speyside paths. She spoke about The Rural Skills Department. Roths has revived their group and Cabrach hopefully will. If the Wind Farm is created it should help Knockando and they will hopefully be putting in a path from the top to the Mill. Progress was slow as planning paths takes years to come to fruition. Cllr Murdoch said that local access is important. She advised Jean Oliver to put a package together for potential funding and bring it to the next Speyside Area Forum meeting.

Cllr Paul raised the question of what Speyside Area Forum is allowed to spend money on as there may be rules we need to consult. This needs clarification so she will find out and report to the next meeting.

6. Treasurer's Report: Hugh Fraser reported that the total spend has been £1200. This meant that there were funds available at present. Cllr Murdoch encouraged Forum members to think about what projects we could best spend this on to invest in Speyside. Patricia Grant agreed the report and Rita seconded it.

7. Community Issues: Cold Weather Payments and Weather Temperature Measurement: William Burgess and John Fleming expressed concerned about the measurement of the outside temperature [in relation to Cold Weather Payments] which was taken at Kinloss RAF Base; a more temperate area than Speyside. The result of this is a potential loss of Cold Weather Payments. This is an anomaly which should be addressed. Rita Marks agreed and reported eligible Glenlivet residents receive Cold Weather Payments when others do not as their temperature readings are made in Braemar.

Ski-ing Areas – Poor Season: Patricia Grant said businesses in the ski-ing area have had a dire season and those in the Lecht are really struggling to survive. The Cairngorms area is also experiencing financial difficulties but less so as it receives Government funding as it is a National Park.

8. Correspondence: There had been no matters arising from correspondence received by post to report. [Most communication is now is carried out by email].

9. Any Other Business: There was no other business.

Members of Speyside Area Forum appreciated the use of Dufftown Mortlach Memorial Hall for their meeting.

Date and venue of next meeting: 7.30pm, Tuesday 22nd May, Kirkmichael and Tomintoul Community Hall

Eileen Fitzpatrick

Secretary

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