

ABERFELDY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

In the Lesser Hall, Aberfeldy Town Hall, and by ZOOM.

Tuesday 5th April 2022 at 7.30pm

MINUTES

Welcome

Present: Victor Clements (Chair), Lorraine Reed (Vice Chair), Elaine Fraser Murdoch (Secretary), Val Ferguson, Karen Mackay.

In Attendance: Cllrs John Duff & Xander McDade, council candidates Sally Murray and Mary MacDougall, Alistair Smith (Heartland Radio), Mike Stead (Highland Perthshire Cycling), Road Safety rep Pat Spicer and 26 X members of the public.

Apologies

Norma Carr (Community warden), and Jean Duff.

Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes taken as read, proposed by LR and seconded by VF.

Matters Arising

VC to write draft letter re trees at Moness and forward to EFM.

JoD to hear back from PKC re dog waste bins outside caravan park.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety

There had been some issues at school, potentially involving drugs, which community warden was looking in to. Community warden also patrolling the Birks at lunchtime after reports of a tourist being verbally abused.

Police also had some leads on graffiti/ vandalism which had happened a few weeks previously and which had been mentioned in the Press.

There was an ongoing issue with serious dog fouling on the rugby pitch at Wade's field. Community warden to investigate.

Also, some graffiti was reported in window at back of Thrift Shop.

Planning

Cottage Hospital

Almost 30 X people came online at the meeting to express their discontent about the application to convert the Cottage Hospital site in to holiday lets. All were opposed, with no support evident for the current application.

Points were made that the demand in Aberfeldy was for affordable housing, not holiday lets of which we already had a high supply. Local housing was now almost impossible to attain, with increasing demand and therefore prices, whether for rent or sale. Lockdown had exacerbated the situation, making places like Aberfeldy very much more attractive. There was a particular problem

with key workers being unable to find accommodation, to the extent that local services such as Pitlochry Hospital have had to close.

There was a demand for a community initiative to buy and develop the site. The PKC situation was compared to other areas such as the Cairngorms national Park in which 45% of new houses had to be affordable.

PKC had drawn up some plans for accommodation in 2018, but the NHS had priced the site at £200,000, and that was not deemed to be best value. It is believed the cost of development of the site would be high, and that this was putting off developers.

Reference was made to the wider housing situation, both at Highland Perthshire and PKC levels, and it is clear that the housing crisis exists throughout. There appears to be sufficient people across the HP area who would be interested in setting up some sort of community housing trust or similar. It is understood that 38% of houses in HP are second homes or holiday lets, and there is a strong feeling that this is now unsustainable.

The community council voted unanimously to object to the application, and VC would write to Development Management expressing this view. Anyone wishing to respond to the application needed to do so via the planning portal before 15th April.

E- bike consultation

Highland Perthshire cycling were exploring a proposal to establish e-bike charging points in the town, and the community council were being encouraged to respond to current consultation on this. The Square was the ideal location, but there are already a number of other functions being delivered there, and additional infra structure might make the area appear cluttered. Facilities for supporting cyclists and other visitors are being developed on the outside of town, and that would be the logical place to put this as well, but that was quite a distance from the town centre.

There appeared to be few other alternatives.

Focus Topics:

Coronavirus

Local cases were very high at the moment, with many people either having had the virus, or knowing some-one who had. The town however remains open, and people seem to be adjusting to opening up.

Schiehallion Hotel initiative re Ukranian refugee families

Aberfeldy had gained a national profile in our efforts to help to facilitate people coming here. It is believed that the first visas had just been received, and things would hopefully start to move now. A lot of individuals and businesses locally were looking to take people in, and those involved had good links to the Ukraine and to people who were able to help and advise.

A dedicated bank account has now been set up, so the work will not need community council banking support.

Graveyard

Nothing additional to report.

Housing

Discussion incorporated in to item on Cottage Hospital, above.

Resilience Plan

VC to draft leaflet for distribution around the town. JoD to follow up situation re generator at Dalweem, and VF to follow up some point re Co-op and their support.

No Mow/ No Spray

Nothing additional to report. Trials taking place in 2022 along lines previously agreed.

Road Safety

Nothing additional to report. Pop-up policemen have been installed temporarily at Little Ballinluig to help deal with some speeding problems there.

Griffin Community Benefit Panel

Micro grants

One application to be assessed after the meeting.

Main Fund

Endowment Fund is progressing slowly.

Reports

Chair

We had received a management plan for the Birks from PKC, which seems to be practical and realistic, and which slows down and constrains the removal of any beech trees, which addresses an important local concern. There is now a users group for the Birks which is fully engaged.

Secretary

Nothing additional to report

Treasurer

No report

Cllrs Reports

JoD reported that there was to be a Platinum Jubilee beacon lit near the Black Watch memorial on 2nd June.

Cycling without Age had ran an event in Aberfeldy with electric tri- shaws, which were a kind of bicycle suitable for older people to get around. It was deemed to be very successful.

XM reported that PKC were looking to bring the Great British Railway HQ to Perth.

He had lodged a motion with PKC to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee, and also to look at a twinning exercise with a suitable Ukrainian town.

Pitlochry Hospital was now closed.

There was very little in the PKC budget to deal with the cost of living crisis.

AOCB

No other competent business.

Date of Next Meeting Tues 3rd May 2022