ABERFELDY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Aberfeldy Town Hall.

Tuesday 6th October 2026 at 7.00pm

MINUTES

Present

Victor Clements (Chair), Lorraine Reed (Vice Chair), Susan Craik, Rob Stubbs, Val Ferguson

In Attendance: Provost McDade, Cllr John Duff, Andy Ferguson (in relation to cemetery headstones) and three members of the public.

Apologies

Jean Duff, Nancy Warren, Elaine Fraser Murdoch

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were taken as a true record of the previous meeting, but subject to two amendments:

1 There were 260-280 headstones affected in the cemetery, not 400 as stated

2 There had been an economic assessment carried out in relation to the visitor levy, but with money potentially being raised by the council being greatly outweighed by costs to businesses, or loss of income to businesses.

Proposed by RS, seconded by SC.

Matters Arising

There were a number of significant matters arising.

Andy Ferguson & Val had done some good work locating information on burial plots within the cemetery, recording which had been marked yellow and which red, and the names and details associated with these. One of the problems at present is that many owners were unaware of the current condition of their family headstones, and it came as a shock to them. The objective will be to inform the owners of plots what the current situation is, but there are copyright and sensitivity issues to be negotiated before the best can be made of the information available. This is a work in progress at present.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety

Nothing to report.

Focus Topics:

Aberfeldy twinning discussion

Subsequent to the meeting in September, a poll had been posted on the Aberfeldy Community Board, inviting feedback on a range of criteria which could be used to judge potential candidates for twinning. It had been felt that this was necessary to give some structure to our considerations around this. People could choose more than one option.

Of the eight criteria listed, the most supported were those relating to cultural and historic/ military links, with both music and environmental issues also featuring well. Very few people listed distance or the ability to learn new languages as key concerns, and neither were people interested in business links nor in resilience planning for the future.

Provost McDade then made the meeting aware that PKC had been contacted by a small town called Salado in central Texas keen to twin with Aberfeldy. A representative of the town had been in contact with PKC. They had been looking at several towns in Scotland to twin with, and more than half of people sampled there chose Aberfeldy as their preferred candidate, because of the historic linkages.

It was similar in size to Aberfeldy with a population of around 2500, and was formed around a bridge over a river as Aberfeldy is. The town was established by a man called Robertson, who had ancestors from Highland Perthshire and from Dull in particular. This Scottish link was very important to the people of Salado, and it transpired that they were regarded as being "the Scottish capital of Texas", with annual Highland Games and gatherings for the past 65 years. They were located on the historic Chisholm trail, which has parallels with the historic drove roads in Highland Perthshire. They prided themselves on education and the arts. Salado lies 50 miles to the north of Austin, which was the state capital.

On discussion, it became apparent that the similarities between the two towns were very strong indeed, and Salado aligned very closely with the information gathered from our poll. Although we had discussed other towns in previous meetings, none were felt to be as strong as this one. Distance had previously been an issue, but that did not feature highly in our poll, and both Dunkeld and Dull had successful twinning arrangements with towns or cities in the USA. They were extremely keen to twin with us, and in such a process, a willing partner was hugely important.

Community councillors present discussed whether we should ask the Provost to take things forward, and we voted by a majority of 4:1 to do so, the dissenting vote being concerned with the distance to travel.

Salado hoped that the twinning agreement could be igned at their 65th annual Highland Ganes which would take place in mid November. The arrangements for that had still to be clarified and Provost McDade offered the support of his office to liaise with the representatives of Salado in order to clarify the details. Only one community councillor present was potentially available.

It was agreed that VC would put up a post that evening to see what the response to such an arrangement might be.

<u>Local Groups open day</u>

There were currently a significant number of community groups in the town who were experiencing difficulties in recruiting sufficient personnel to make their committees work. It was noted that across a wide range of types of groups and geographic locations that people were interested in doing things, but they were not interested in joining committees. This was understood, but it raised the question about how initiatives could actually be developed and administered.

The groups in Aberfeldy that have brought up this issue have been Locus Breadalbane Ltd, ASBA (Aberfeldy Small Business Association), Feldy in Flower, the Repair café and potentially the Rotary Club. It was also understood that the inner Wheel had been debating their future. The SFRS has been struggling to maintain numbers of retained firefighters as well. After some discussion it was resolved to set up a recruitment fair in the New Year, potentially the third weekend of January,

but TBC. The CC would cover hall hire, and the objective would be to introduce new people in the area to groups that could use their skills and expertise.

Resilience/ insurance

Our PKC contact had been off ill, so matters relating to this would be postponed to the next meeting.

Griffin Community Benefit Panel

Micro grants

There were 2 X micro grants to be decided at the end of the meeting.

Main Fund

The SSE consultation over how the fund might evolve was still ongoing.

Reports

Chair

The Chair would be away working in Morvern at the November meeting, so LR would chair that meeting, which was the AGM. VC would provide a Chairman's report.

Secretary

No additional report.

Treasurer

The treasurer was not present, but the accounts were made up to 31st August, and would be presented at the November meeting. This AGM was put back a month because the Treasurer was away during this October meeting.

Housing/Planning

Concern had been expressed about a development application at the back of Fisher's Way. The application was for the siting of five shipping containers, but it was not apparent what they were for or how they might be used. Two members of the public spoke to the meeting about their concerns. The community council voted 5-0 to object to the plans, and VC would write to development management to provide our reason for this, which was in line with the concerns of neighbours to the site.

Cllr Reports

There was potential for very widespread and significant local authority reform in Scotland, with changes appearing to be consulted on imminently. The model proposed was to have 6-10 large strategic regional councils, and c 160 smaller local council areas in a tier below this. The strategic councils would be much larger than just Tayside. There was a great deal of concern about the scope for significant disruption as a majority of local services were delivered at the local authority level.

There were similar issues being discussed around NHS structures, and how these might change going forwards.

Libraries were under pressure as well. An initiative was being held on Thursday coming, aimed at getting 1000 people to visit to highlight the importance of the facility in the town and to the wider area.

AOCB

The community council were looking to co-opt two more members, and all to consider who might be willing to come forward, and encourage them to submit nomination forms.

Date of Next Meeting Tues 3rd November 2026