

MINUTES OF THE DINGWALL COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN DINGWALL ON MONDAY 14th August 2017

PRESENT: Nigel Greenwood (Chairman) (NG), Sara-Lynn Thain (Secretary) (ST), George Murray (Co-Secretary) (GM), Andrew Foley (Treasurer) (AF), Fred Lees (FL), Mary Foley (MF), Jack Shepherd (JS), David Lockett (DL), Murray Mackay (MM), Peter Jamieson (PJ), Cllr. G. Mackenzie, Cllr. A. MacLean

APOLOGIES: Brian Simpson, Andrew Henderson, Mackenzie, Cllr. A. MacKinnon, Cllr. M. Paterson

1.1 POLICE REPORT:

ST read the Police report out as Sgt. Alasdair Goskirk could not attend the meeting. See the attached document.

2. MINUTES OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING OF 10TH JULY 2017

2.1 ST to correct 4.7 which should read 'Mart Road' not Newton Road. ST to also add in additional points to correct figures from last month's meeting in the Ferry Point benches and Treasurer Report.

2.2 The minutes were accepted on a motion proposed by DL and seconded by JS.

3. CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS:

3.1 None

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

4.1 New CC notice board/replacement of screens

Ongoing - No further forward with replacement screens.

Update - Southside car park notice board is complete. All thanked DL, NG and others involved as it looks great. NG to contact Ross-shire Journal.

Ongoing - Planning permission is necessary, GM has attempted on several occasions to contact Julie Ferguson (JF) but has never had a reply or been able to see her. GM expressed his frustration with the lack of progress here.

Action: Cllr. Mackenzie to arrange a meeting with JF and GM.

4.2 Hector MacDonald monument

Update - NG and JS completed survey, NG is currently writing their findings in a report but it is not completed yet. JS completed risk assessment and both concluded that with supervision they don't see why the public can't be allowed access like before. JS also visited Fire Station and spoke with the Senior Fire Person who will visit the monument and view it to consider removal of a potential casualty. JS to arrange with Cllr. Mackenzie for a future Wednesday evening.

4.3 Ferry point seating

Ongoing- see corrections in last month's minutes. The new estimate of concrete plinths £3,942 (ex VAT) is made up of joinery and builder costs and project management (£3,057 ex VAT), the direct purchase of bulk concrete by DCC (£745 ex VAT) and the hire of machinery (£140 ex VAT). The difference between this and the previous quotation is largely due to the reduction of concrete thickness from 150 mm to 100mm, to be compensated by adding steel re-enforcement over a compacted aggregate layer. Members discussed the new estimate and AF application to make up short fall of £5,737 (incl VAT) in funding for the entire project. Both elected members explained that ward members had met today and agreed to award £2500 at the moment to the project. Elected members explained that due to recent vandalism in the area and other expenditure from the CGF, this sum is what they are willing to award in this financial year. Discussion was had around splitting the work, to do some concrete plinths and benches now and then more the following year. All agreed that this would be more costly, agreed to possibly look at doing all the plinths in one go. Elected members encouraged the CC to consider applying again after 31st March 2018 and the end of the financial year.

4.4 Funding for Christmas Lights

MM noted there was no update.

4.5 Poor state of Dingwall Academy grounds

Update: NG noted that he had e-mailed Mark Whiteman to follow up action after a site visit. NG reported that no further planning was to take place as staff noted that the gaps in trees were deliberate. A member of the public stated his frustration with the lack of progress with this item and requested that it is removed from the agenda. The member of the public will take up this item independently of the CC.

4.6 Grey box at flower bed

Update - wrapping of the grey box complete. Thanks to GM for his efforts. It was noted that the lamp post at the flower bed is to be fixed by the Highland Council.

4.7 Signage around the town

Update - ST noted that on 10th August she met with Laura Macalister (LM), Cllr. Mackenzie and another member of staff from the roads department to discuss signage in the south side car park. This meeting was initiated by an e-mail from a member of public via the website with regards to poor signage in the car park. It has been agreed to remove several of the black signs and relocate within the car park so they can be clearly seen upon entrance. Two grey poles outside the public toilets are to be removed, a clearer toilet sign to be put on the toilet doors and some old signage from Nicol's Court is to be removed. Discussion had about redundant grey poles in the town. ST noted that in May several had been removed from Tulloch Street as picture had been e-mailed to LM. A member of the public noted that there are still a lot of grey poles throughout the town.

FL noted the need for better signage when turning into Mart Road. FL to continue to liaise with relevant department and update CC accordingly.

4.8 Royal Hotel bus stop

Ongoing - no further forward. All agreed to raise this item in approximately three years when the Stagecoach contract is to be revised with Highland Council (HC). Item will be removed from the agenda.

4.9 Pefferside Park and pond

Issue of placing two wheelie bins in the park is ongoing. Street cleaning department are waiting for the arrival of the metal stands to hold the bins down. NG updated regarding the pond and had a copy of the 2013 report and recommendations for the pond. ST read through an e-mail from Di Agnew (Ward Manager) (DA) and confirmed that there is a pump in place. DA also confirmed that previous works were undertaken by Pat Munro Alness, John Dawson was the contractor and the main consultant was Halcrow, Jonathan Appleby. DA also noted in e-mail that Councillors and Community Services have been working towards Phase II improvements to the Senior Play Area. DA will forward full details and plans of Phase II following a meeting in August. Path-works

are also to be completed. Dingwall Wheeled Group has requested that they put forward a proposal for a wheeled area in the Park. Following a meeting in August (when Members receive a presentation from the Group's leader), DA will update the CC on their proposals.

Action: NG to contact SEPA and speak to John Dawson with regards to improving the condition/testing of the pump in the pond.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT:

5.1 General Account

The general account balance is currently standing at £5299.97.

5.2 Christmas Lights Account

The lights account balance remains at £1874.13.

6. CORRESPONDENCE:

6.1 'End Polio now' campaigns

MF detailed the campaign and her involvement. Any donations were welcome and a whole CC group photo was taken to support movement.

6.2 E-mail from member of the public

E-mail to raise awareness of the need to take care of the footpath through Craig Wood which is heavily used. Concerns over garden waste being dumped in this area and general rubbish. Member of public asks if a more coordinated tidy up could be complete.

Action: ST to make contact.

7. DINGWALL ACADEMY PUPIL REPRESENTATIVES

ST used the projector to show paperwork including pupil representative guidelines, CC general information and posters previously distributed to the school to encourage pupil involvement.

Action: ST to update paperwork and forward to NG for Wendy Harrison (Deputy Rector).

8. A.O.C.B.

8.1 Dingwall Volunteers

Update from DL noting continuing work in the park and other areas around the town including Cromarty car park. A member of the public (member of Dings Vols) noted that they were keen to create a wild garden area in the Cromarty car park around the obelisk and had spoken to the Earl of Cromartie, who gave permission. A plea for HC staff not to cut the grass in this area was made and for all to be patient to allow the flowers to grow next spring.

8.2 Grass cutting / weeds around the town

All members noted that they felt Dingwall was a 'forgotten town' and that to a significant number of people, Dingwall appeared to be in the worst condition of all towns throughout the ward and of towns in other wards. Problems including weeds blocking a number of drains at the side of the road, High Street drains etc. and ongoing issues of grass cutting all made the town look uncared for. All did agree that the quality of the grass cutting has improved but could improve further (Kinnairdie Brae was mentioned). Elected members were asked to find out the last time the gully machine was in Dingwall and when the spraying/removal of weeds would be done. A member of the public expressed concerns about previous flooding and the danger of blocked drains, spraying would not be sufficient action.

8.3 Cruickshank Court

All discussed the issue of rats in this area and the Ross-shire Journal (RJ) article. ST noted that her comment in the RJ had been taken from the RJ Facebook page and was a personal comment, not one made on behalf of the CC. ST did note that there are a number of buildings throughout the town (the old Ferintosh Business Centre was mentioned) where their condition is less than acceptable. Elected members were asked to find out what can be done to encourage/force owners to clean these up as a letter from the CC would not carry enough weight. Cllr. Mackenzie to report back next month. Elected members noted that the problem of rats had been dealt with by the owner in time to meet the HC deadline of 4th August.

Action: Cllr. Mackenzie to enquire about planning/environmental health guidelines in order to request owners to tidy up land/buildings.

8.4 Footbridge at canal

Cllr. Mackenzie noted that the bridge had been closed as a result of an inspection by HC staff after a note of concern from a member of the public. HC have said the bridge is not cost effective to repair so it will need replaced costing approximately £125,000. NG asked to see the survey completed by HC.

9. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 11th September 2017 at 19.00 in Room 11, Dingwall Academy.

10. PLANNING / LICENSING

10.1 Robertson House

This planning application decision had been appealed but has now been declined.