



**Elgin North Area Forum
Tuesday 1st February 2011
Elgin Community Centre**

Present: Kieron Green (Chair), Donald MacKay (Vice Chair), Malcolm Stewart (Secretary), Keith Mitchell, Ronnie Sim, Harry Torry, Ed Brumby, Sheila Hollis, Vera Gaskell, Louise Summers (Elgin Academy School Council), May McGarrie (High Spirits), A B Loveland (Bishopmill United Junior Football Club), Alex MacMillan (City and Royal Borough of Elgin Community Council), Alastair Kennedy (City and Royal borough of Elgin Community Council / Joint Community Council).

In Attendance: Cllr Jarvis, Cllr Russell, Cllr Shand, Denise Gormley (The Moray Council – Community Support Unit).

Apologies: Alistair Fulton (Treasurer), Heather Park, Cllr Divers, Cllr Leadbitter

1. Welcome

Kieron welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7pm.

2. Minutes from 4th January 2011

There were no issues raised about this set of minutes. The minutes were proposed as an accurate account by Keith and seconded by Alastair.

3. Matters Arising

i) Elgin Flood Alleviation Scheme update - Cllr Russell said that although the Moray Council had received some assurances from the Scottish Government on funding for the scheme, there is still a £19 million shortfall approximately. Until this is resolved there is still uncertainty over the scheme.

ii) Elgin Academy Litter - Harry said that the mess in the area around the school had improved since a picture and article had appeared in the Press and Journal. Louise said that it may be more due to the fact that half the pupils are on study leave. She added that she had raised the issue at the School Council, but due to exam prelims, she thought it would be a while before there was much action. Keith said it will have to be an ongoing process and confirmed he was willing to get involved.

Denise had said previously that we need to try to involve the Student Council, Police, Moray Council and the Forum to tackle the litter problem.

Action; Denise to arrange interaction with concerned bodies.

iii) New Academy Building Issues – Keith and Kieron had drawn up a leaflet for the Forum to distribute to residents in the school area. Copies of this leaflet were

passed around the meeting. Kieron asked for volunteers to help distribute the leaflets. Keith, Kieron and Malcolm said they would do this.

Action; Leaflets to be produced and distributed.

iv) Police Information – Malcolm said he had written to Inspector Mowat thanking the Police for attending Forum meetings and asking for some crime statistics for 2010, but had not received a response yet.

v) Morriston Road Traffic Management – Kieron said that there will be no parking allowed on Morriston Road outside the new Academy when it is completed. Cllr Russell had asked Andy Oliver about any plans to introduce a pedestrian crossing at the Academy. He had been told that there had not been but he was waiting for a more detailed response.

vi) Traffic Plans – Kieron asked for any views/a Forum response on the proposed Western distributor road traffic plans. Harry said he thought it would help Edgar Road issues, but not have much effect on the centre. Donald said that as there were no residents present from Wittet Drive, the Forum should possibly distribute leaflets in that area due to the potential impact. Harry said that the consultation ends on 4th February, but he felt that residents in the area would be very aware of the plans. Alastair said the Community Council had agreed to inform the forums on the plans, but then separate consultations had been held and he wondered why. Kieron replied that the Council wanted smaller groups for the consultations and felt if the forums had joined with the Community Council the group(s) would be too big.

vii) Road Damage – Keith raised the issue of the many pot holes on the roads. He asked if the Forum could do something to promote some action. Cllr Russell said that Moray Council had been allocated approximately £330,000, but this would only allow a limited response until more funding was available. He encouraged people to report road damage via the Council website and not to leave it to someone else. Alex said he had phoned to report a road issue at Hamilton Gardens and the Council had carried out repairs very quickly.

viii) Parked Trailers – Cllr Jarvis said he had approached the Housing Dept about a number of commercial trailers being left parked in South Lesmurdie (Woodside Terrace) and he reported that the situation was now being monitored. Ronnie said that one trailer had been parked up for about six months and it was causing an obstruction. He asked if the Cllrs could push the point to the Housing Officer and ensure he is carrying out his job. Alex asked if causing an obstruction wasn't a police matter. Ronnie was of the opinion that it should be directed through the Housing Officer. Cllr Jarvis agreed to approach the Housing Dept again about this issue.

Action; Cllr Jarvis to approach Housing Dept again about getting trailers removed.

v) Ivy on Trees – Kieron said that the Council would only become involved with this issue if there were safety concerns. Cllr Russell said there is no policy or any guidelines on the subject and it has been argued that ivy can be good for biodiversity in some cases. Ed added that BBC Spring/Autumn Watch had said that ivy does not kill trees and is beneficial to wildlife. Keith insisted that ivy will kill the trees. Harry added that ivy was smothering a dry stane dyke at Morriston Road and there was

also an area of ivy ground cover at Braemorrison which was preventing any other plant growth. Ronnie said the Forum should invite Ken Kennedy, Moray Council Lands & Parks Officer or his deputy Grant Speed to a meeting. There was general agreement to this. Cllr Russell suggested the Forum ask the Quarrelwood Association for their opinion on the matter before campaigning on the issue. Keith said he was willing to write to the Northern Scot.

**Action; Keith to write to Northern Scot to raise the issue.
Denise to contact Moray Council Land & Parks Department.**

4. Community Issues

i) Bishopmill Hall – Vera said that a raffle/lottery was being organised to raise funds to carry out improvements to the toilet facilities in the hall.

ii) Dog Dirt Bins – Ed said that there was a requirement for dog dirt bins around the Morrison playing fields area as people were leaving waste bags behind. Harry said that the Council will only install bins where there is vehicular access. Alex added that there was no longer a requirement to use separate bins as any general litter bins could be used.

iii) Parking – May said cars parking on the kerb was a common problem and asked if it was an offence. Cllr Russell replied that the law was unclear, but there was currently a private members bill in progress.

May also asked if anyone could put up a “no parking” sign outside their property. Several members present said that yes they can, however it has no legal power and can therefore be ignored.

iv) New Academy Building Issues – Keith said that he thought the framework for the new building appeared to be very high to be two stories tall. Harry replied that during the presentation from the developers during the tender process it appeared to be reasonable. Kieron said he would approach Andy Oliver about the issue. Keith also said that one of his neighbours was unable to receive one TV channel since the frame had gone up. Vera said she had experienced problems with reception as well. It was suggested that the large cranes being used on site may be to blame.

Action; Kieron to approach Andy Oliver about height of the new build.

v) Parking Issues at Cooper Park – Harry said there was a problem with parking at Cooper Park and the Library since the introduction of charges at Lossie Green, as there were no spaces available due to workers parking there all day. Ed added that it will get worse in the summer as the Tourist Office is located in the Library. May said there was a similar issue at Boroughbriggs with cars parking on kerbs. Harry asked if the Cllrs could address this issue. Kieron agreed to write a letter to Gordon Holland at Transport Moray and send a copy to Murray Ross at the Community Council.

Action; Kieron to write a letter to Gordon Holland.

5. Community Group Updates

i) Community Council –The Community Council continues to lobby for improved transport links for Elgin. Alastair said that there was nothing further on the possibility of scrapping of Straight-through trains from Inverness to London, but there have been proposals for new railway rolling stock and possible electrification. Amendments to the Elgin Traffic Plans have been agreed. Air gun legislation has

also been debated.

ii) Elgin Ear – The Elgin Ear Listening Post that was located at CJ's Place has been relocated to NEON (New Elgin Primary Annex).

iii) NHS Transport Group – This group last met on 8th November and the next meeting is on 8th February. Donald said that the proposed Western Distributor Road may impact on parking around Wittet Drive and Dr Gray's hospital. He asked if anyone had any issues they would like him to raise at the next meeting, but there were none.

iv) Urban Freedom Initiative – There has not been a meeting of this group since the last Forum meeting.

v) Older Peoples' Strategy Group – There was no update as awaiting a date for the next meeting of this group.

vi) Moray Forum – Kieron said that the Forum has been discussing a constitution to formalize its existence. The next meeting is on 28th February.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer was not present but he had provided the account balance for the end of January which was £3,956.61. Kieron said that some money will be used to produce leaflets and also possibly on information boards.

7. Correspondence

Kieron had received two letters from the Council on new traffic orders. Malcolm had received information on a change of name for the Moray Sensory Service provided by Grampian Society for the Blind, which is now called North East Sensory Services (N.E.S.S.). This name change is to reflect the fact that they now also provide support to people who are deaf or have hearing impairment.

8. A.O.C.B.

Cllr Russell informed the meeting that the Moray Council budget day would be on 10th February.

Brian asked if the Moray Forum could contact BT and arrange for Elgin to get Infinity superfast fibre optic broadband. Alastair said the subject had been raised with the Moray Task Force and that Moray is to be tagged onto a pilot scheme. Elgin may have this service within a year.

Harry said the Council was considering getting rid of one of the mobile library vans. He urged people to support the service and "use it or lose it".

9. Date/Time/Venue for next meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 1st March at 7pm in Elgin Academy.

With there being no other business to discuss Kieron thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.20pm.