



**Elgin North Area Forum
Tuesday 7th December 2010
Elgin Academy**

Present: Kieron Green (Chair), Malcolm Stewart (Secretary), Alistair Fulton (Treasurer), Sheila Hollis, Harry Torry, Ed Brumby, Heather Park, Louise Summers (Elgin Academy School Council), Keith Mitchell, May McGarrie (High Spirits), A B Loveland (Bishopmill United Junior Football Club), Alex MacMillan (City and Royal Borough of Elgin Community Council), Alistair Kennedy (City and Royal borough of Elgin Community Council / Joint Community Council).

In Attendance: Cllr Jarvis, Cllr Russell, Dave Gowans (Flood Alleviation Scheme), Trisha Dempsey (Elgin Academy), Denise Gormley (The Moray Council – Community Support Unit).

Apologies: Margaret Cowie, Donald MacKay (Vice Chair), Beth Simpson, Cllr Divers, Cllr Sharp, Cllr Leadbitter, Cllr Shand.

1. Welcome

Kieron welcomed everyone to the meeting at 7:30pm.

- 2. Guest Speaker** – Dave Gowans gave an informative presentation on the Flood Alleviation Scheme for Elgin. He said previous schemes at Llanbryde and Forres had paid for themselves in damage cost avoidance. The scheme is due to commence in April 2011 and will be phased over 4 years. Work will include lowering the floodplain downstream of Elgin, demolishing some properties and a disused railway bridge over the river, replacing the Pansport Bridge, adding relief channels and building embankments up to 3 metres high. Most of the properties to be demolished are industrial/commercial and have already been purchased.

Alex asked if the spoil being removed from the works would be enough to recover the Deanshaugh football pitch correctly. Dave said it would be. It was asked if any historical artifacts might be disturbed during the work, such as ground excavated in the 19th century from the cathedral and put in “the Witches Hole”. Archeology has to be considered as part of any scheme such as this, but Dave was not aware of any specific areas. Harry asked if the river would be lowered at Old Mills and if the willow trees would be cleared from the banks. There is nothing in the plans to do this. Harry was concerned that the new Academy sports field could be liable to flooding, but Dave said there should not be a problem. Alistair asked about funding for the scheme in the

present financial climate. Dave said the price is known and has been budgeted for. Cllr Russell added that the Moray Council has been assured by the Government that the funding is secured. It was asked if the scheme was re-assessed in light of such things as the proposed supermarket development at the auction mart site on Linkwood Road. Dave said that developments such as this were considered overall under planning applications and not specifically in relation to the scheme. The risk of the Tyock Burn flooding was classed as low. May asked about traffic disruption and Dave said that although there would undoubtedly be a degree of disruption, it was not thought it would be particularly bad. Members asked if information on the scheme was available and were told that work was in progress to improve this. Kieron thanked Dave for his presentation.

3. Minutes from 7th November 2010

There were some amendments to this set of minutes. It was Keith Mitchell, not Ruth Mitchell present. It was Keith Mitchell, not A B Loveland in paragraphs 5 and 9(iv). It wasn't Ed Brumby in paragraph 5(ii), it was A B Loveland. After these corrections these were proposed as an accurate account by Harry and seconded by Ed.

4. Matters Arising

i) Letter to Margaret Cowie – A letter had been sent to the Elgin Academy Rector voicing the Forum's concerns with the state of the grounds surrounding the school. Although Margaret Cowie was unable to attend the meeting, one of the deputy heads, Trisha Dempsey, did attend. She said that the school did try its best, but that it was difficult with around 1000 pupils and also the mess created by people out of hours. The school does self-police, with the more senior pupils taking an active role, but with turnover of pupils this had maybe not been maintained at previous levels. Keith asked about prefects, but was told that they no longer exist. However, there is a leadership program with senior pupils mentoring younger ones and organizing fund raising and community assistance. Although pupils can be asked to take part in litter picks, etc, they cannot be told to do so. The teachers do look at the issue, but are restricted in what they can do.

Keith said that the mess in the area around the Bailey bridge to Tesco was a disgrace. Louise said that previously the Community Warden was frequently present and that had made a difference. The Police said that they would look into carrying out a litter initiative. May asked what the penalty was for dropping litter. It is £40. Alex said that littering is an offence and people should be prosecuted for it and it should be publicised. Harry agreed and said he felt there was a reluctance to prosecute in case defendants contested the offence and took up court time on "minor" matters. He also stated that there was no litter at Bishopmill Primary School. Louise said access out of hours was a problem at the Academy. Harry replied that there is no right of way through the Academy grounds, but that it was not enforced.

Denise said that litter picks work in the short term and that we need to try to involve the Student Council, Police, Moray Council and the Forum to tackle the problem.

Action; Denise to arrange interaction with concerned bodies.

Given the positive feedback from those present, Alex asked if Patricia and

Louise could return for the next Forum meeting. Kieron thanked them for their input and invited them to return.

ii) Council Spending Consultation – Kieron had attended the consultation meeting and reported that he thought it had gone quite well, but that the way in which attendees was organized could have been better.

iii) New Academy Building Issues – Kieron informed the Forum that the latest planned meeting with the contractors was cancelled due to the weather. Keith said he had informed his house insurance company and Moray Council about the building work issues such as vibration possibly affecting his house and he had received responses.

5. Community Issues

i) Louise said that crossing Morriston Road was an issue for school children due to the amount of traffic and the speed at which it travelled. There is an ongoing issue with drivers ignoring the 20mph speed limit. The Police can carry out speed enforcement activities, but a traffic management review is not planned until after the new school is completed. Cllr Russell said he would look at the plans for this. Ed suggested that the school send leaflets to parents highlighting the traffic issue.

Action; Cllr Russell to look at traffic management plan.

6. Community Group Updates

i) Community Council – The Community Council have been involved with the various traffic amendments taking place in the city centre (as commented on at our previous meeting). Alex informed everyone that as part of the changes, the speed limit on Alexandra Road was now reduced from 40mph to 30mph. It was agreed to add the Community Council to the standing complaint about skateboarding on the Plainstones in the High Street. Although much improved since the skate park opened in Cooper Park, it continues to be an issue. Representatives had laid wreaths for Remembrance Day and in future representatives of the Forum may be asked to take part as well.

ii) Elgin Academy Building – The framework for the games hall and PE area are completed, with progress on other areas as well. The weather has stopped work on site at present. Contractors have reminded their workers to use the off-road parking on site. The site will be closed from 23rd December 2010 until 4th January 2011.

iii) Elgin Ear – The Elgin Ear has resolved several reports and is dealing with others including; Overflowing bins at the cemetery and a suggestion of separating age groups at the Elgin Youth Café (eg, over 15 year olds and under 15 year olds). Suggestions of a notice board for Cooper Park, stopping the monthly newsletter for Moray Council employees and stopping translation of benefits documents have been referred to the Community Council for further consideration.

iv) Elgin South Area Forum – The South Forum are looking at how to better

publicise their meetings. They have themed meetings every second month with Community Planning Partners, with January's being with the Director of Education. There was a successful appeal for a pharmacy licence for Boots chemist in Edgar Road. The next meeting of this group will be 18th January 2011.

v) Older Peoples' Strategy Group –The next meeting of this group is on 13th December 2010.

7. Treasurer's Report

As of the end of November the balance of the account was £4,028.43, which includes £750 received from the Moray Council.

8. Correspondence

There had been no correspondence.

9. A.O.C.B.

i) Alistair informed the meeting that there was a new bus service from the Springfield area to the centre of Elgin. He also stated that the new STV website was now live and that it contained a lot of local information that could be useful.

ii) Cllr Russell asked if any thought had been given to returning meeting start times to 7pm, as it seemed to be a bit of a rush to conclude the meetings at a reasonable hour with a 7.30pm start. Kieron said that the 7.30pm start had originally been due to Elgin Ear meetings being on at 7pm on the same evenings. He asked those present what they thought and it was agreed to start future meetings at 7pm.

iii) Alistair thanked Louise for attending the meeting and for her input from the Academy School Council.

10. Date/Time/Venue for next meeting.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 4th January at 7pm in Pinetree Church.

With there being no other business to discuss Kieron thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9.05pm.