

Minutes of The Moray Area Forum held on the 18 April 2011

Present:

Alan Beresford, Chair, Buckie
Anita Milne, Vice Chair
Bill Burgess, Speyside
Carin Schwartz, Forres
John Bremner, Forres
Aileen Marshall, Elgin South
Barry Taylor, Buckie
Steven Christie, Elgin South
Alistair Kennedy, Moray Joint Community Council

In attendance: John Ferguson & Ian Todd, Moray Council

1. Welcome

Alan Beresford, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Kieran Green -Elgin North
Sandy Henderson-Speyside
Peter Bush-Milnes

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 28 February. Steven Christie pointed out that he was omitted from the list of those present and that John was the Treasurer and not the "treasure". Aileen Marshall proposed the minute as a true record of the meeting and this was seconded by Bill Burgess

4. Matters arising

Budget Consultation

A Beresford has sent a letter to Alastair Keddie with a summary of the key points raised by the Moray Forum and to date he has had 3 responses from the vice convenor, Cllr Creswell and Councillor Ross although the Chief Executive has not responded to date. Alan Wright has suggested that some form of additional public meeting could be organised locally by community groups in tandem with any council consultation in the future.

There was a discussion on the Post it Notes. Ian explained that the information contained in the post it notes was incorporated in the response. Ian has agreed to send the Forum the information as contained in the notes.

Area Forum Grants

There was a discussion on the memorandum of agreement draft which John sent out which Alan felt did not give the clarity required for the forums over what was termed administration grant. John explained that the normal running costs of the forum were acceptable. The forum could also use this money to assist other groups with their administration, however projects were not supportable if they were to use the finance for purchasing equipment, unless that equipment could be seen as administrative. An example would be a laptop to take minutes, or providing assistance in renting accommodation for meetings or expenses or postage, telephone, etc.

5. Area Forum Code of Conduct

There was a discussion on the Area Forum draft code of conduct. Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that forum members would consider the content further with their local forum members. John would provide a framework for members to build on.

6. Budget Consultation

Report was submitted to the Council's P&R committee on the 15th March along with the outcomes of the evaluation of the Council's budget proposals. There may be an opportunity to input on the process of any future consultations.

7. Better Community Engagement Update

The Moray report has been produced and circulated widely. The report has been submitted to the CPP Board. The content contains a synopsis of the work carried out over the last 2 ½ years, the key aim of which was to produce a toolkit for community engagement that will contribute to a National Scottish toolkit. The draft toolkit will be ready for comment by the BCE members over the next few weeks.

There was a discussion on the role of the CEG and that of the BCE working group. John explained that the CEG was a strategic body and that the work of the BCE was an operational development. The outcomes of the BCE Project will complement the future development of the CEG.

8. CSU update

Ian gave a report on the current position of the CSU:

- ESOL- the West project has been extended from August 2011 to June 2012. The NEWS project in East Moray finishes June 2011. This will have staffing implications. It has been announced that the Scottish Government would give £18,000 to further develop ESOL learning opportunities in 2011.
- Essential Skills-There is currently 120 students being supported along with 50 volunteers. The support is predominantly one to one provision. As a result of cuts, the CSU have lost Althea Forbes who supported the Moray Adult Literacy Partnership.
- The CSU are currently looking at the implications of losing 4 FTEs staff which is a 50% reduction in staff terms. Staff are currently engaged in a Change Management Plan consultation. A team plan is being produced and should be ready by the end of the April / beginning of May. There may

be some movement of staff geographically to ensure best support to community groups.

Concern was expressed regarding continued support for community groups. A number of issues were raised and addressed by Ian Todd. Ian reminded those present that the most significant cut to the CSU was aimed at those staff supporting Area Forums and Community Councils. Given the level of cut, support previously given, would now no longer be available to the same level as before. All future support is being reviewed, including support to the Area Forum, to ensure the impact of the cut is kept to a minimal. It is anticipated the use of the CSU Community Guides will form a key part of support to local groups.

9. Bank Account

There was a brief discussion on the arrangements for setting up a Bank account and it was agreed that an arrangement in Forres with Carin and the Treasurer would be the short term ideal solution to get the account up and running with signatories being changed if required at future meetings

10. Community Issues

Redco- Milne development

Carin raised the issue of this development in Forres, pointing out that despite over 70% of local people against the initiative, new information has come to light that suggests that the Council seems to be ignoring community wishes on this issue. Carin will send details of this to Alan Beresford with the view of corresponding with the appropriate department.

Moray Economic Strategy.

Concerns were expressed over the consultation, the tight timescales and the linking of the Town regional strategy with the overall Moray Economic Strategy. There were a number of issues over the location of enterprise zones. Alan Beresford will pull together a response to the economic plan

Car Sharing Scheme – Forres

Carin distributed details of Car Sharing Scheme being tried through transition Town Forres

Theatre licensing

Aileen Marshall raised the issue and it would appear that the legislation, if implemented, could mean small community groups having to pay the exorbitant theatre fees. Alan will write to Sean Hoath

Road Sign Consultation

Contact is Andy Duff Senior road Engineer to obtain consultation details.

Date of next meeting is the 6th of June 2011 at NEON in New Elgin

