



Your Moray

Minute of Moray Area Forum held 22 February 2010 in NEON (New Elgin Primary School Annexe)

Present

Alan Beresford, Buckie Area Forum
 Keiron Green, Elgin North Area Forum
 Aileen Marshall, Elgin South Area Forum
 Carin Schwartz, Forres Area Forum
 John Bremner, Forres Area Forum
 Anita Milne, Milne's Neighbourhood Forum
 Bill Burgess, Speyside Area Forum

Apologies

Barry Taylor, Buckie Area Forum
 Louise Ellerby, Elgin South Area Forum
 Alastair Kennedy, Moray Joint Community Council

In attendance

Cllr Douglas Ross, The Moray Council
 John Ferguson, Community Planning and Development Manager
 Ian Todd, Community Support Unit Manager
 Fiona Rolt, Community Support Officer

Item		Action
1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made round the table</p>	
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received as noted above</p>	
3	<p>Formation of a Moray ME Support Group</p> <p>Councillor Ross explained that Mary Scanlon, MSP had, through her regular surgeries, met with people suffering from ME and it had become apparent that there was no specific support group for sufferers in Moray.</p> <p>She believed that local services were important e.g. Fife has had a support group for some years and patients believe that they have benefitted from this higher profile. Highland sufferers have access to complementary therapies and meeting together and sharing with others has proved beneficial. A small group of sufferers from Moray used to travel to Inverness to participate in their group.</p> <p>There has been a reasonable response to press articles and a number of people have expressed an interest. It is thought that a group made up of patients may have more success in improving services for sufferers and influencing the NHS. The group would be open to partners of sufferers too.</p> <p>Mrs Scanlon is willing to setup an initial meeting in Elgin, but Cllr Ross was asking Forums to raise the profile in their own areas. It is expected that once</p>	

	<p>the group starts up more sufferers would want to be involved.</p> <p>Anita thought it would be a really valuable group for Moray.</p> <p>Alan urged Chairs to push though their own Forums and wished Mrs Scanlon and Cllr Ross all the best with this initiative.</p>	All Chairs
4	<p>Gritting and Snow Clearance Provision in Moray</p> <p>Cllr Ross informed the Forum that this issue has come to a head when he was contacted on Hogmanay by a number of people from the Elgin and Forres areas complaining about the poor state of the roads and pavements due to lack of snow clearing. Cllr Ross's concern was that the Council was adhering to a policy which was drawn up in 2004 and clearly did not meet the needs of Moray in this, the worst winter for 30 years. A report is to be presented to a meeting of Councillors tomorrow and this will be an opportunity to raise the issues which have arisen and review the policy in light of extreme weather conditions. Cllr Ross asked for comments from the meeting.</p> <p>Bill Burgess expressed the opinion that the roads in the Speyside area were well cleared and that the gritter drivers were doing a good job given that they were limited by the number of hours they can work in any one shift. However, the pavements were an issue.</p> <p>Aileen asked for clear guidance about the clearing of pavements – should we clear or not clear? She felt that if everyone pulled together the pavements would be cleared before they got to the solid ice stage.</p> <p>Cllr Ross informed the meeting that the Chief Executive had given assurances that no one would be prosecuted if they had cleared their pavement and someone slipped. Cllr Ross also mentioned that cars parked at the road-side caused a problem for the snow clearing. He followed on to say that drainage will become an issue as drains get blocked up by sand as due to the shortage of salt the ratio of sand to salt was increased.</p> <p>Alan agreed that the whole issue required to be investigated as, if the side roads are not cleared, it makes it difficult for key workers to actually get to work.</p> <p>Cllr Ross stated that because the roads were left so long before being cleared it meant that when the gritters did get round to them, the roads were unsafe and three gritters crashed.</p> <p>Alan stated that the Council need to be a bit more inventive in their thinking about how to deal with this. He encouraged members to feed back to Cllr Ross any points they wished to make about the snow and pavement clearing.</p> <p>Cllr Ross thanked members for allowing him the opportunity to address the meeting and then left the meeting. (7.30pm)</p>	All members
8	<p>As John F and Ian had to go to another meeting, it was agreed that items 8 and 9 be taken next.</p> <p>CSU update including Mapping Exercise and Funding proposals for Area Forums and Community Councils</p> <p>John F reminded the meeting that it had been agreed by the Council to consult with regard to the Financial allocation to both Forums and Community Councils. The original deadline passed with a number of Community Councils and Forums stating that they were unable to discuss the Financial allocation without knowing the level of support from the Community Support Unit, given that roles and responsibilities of the staff in the unit had changed. In addition, questions had been raised about the figures – they did not seem to add up. These figures have now been corrected; however, the three proposals are basically the same. John is willing to look at any other proposal the Forum may wish to put forward. John Bremner thought that the status</p>	

	<p>quo should have been in the document as an option.</p> <p>John F wishes to know what the most appropriate way of ensuring feedback from the Forums.</p> <p>It was agreed to go back to individual Forums within the next few weeks and then discuss further at a future meeting of the Moray Area Forum.</p> <p>Keiron asked that all the options be costed to reach the same total amount i.e. £25,000 as this would then make it easier to compare. John agreed to investigate if this could be done, although he was mindful of the financial circumstances of the Council which may mean that savings had to be made.</p> <p>CSU Update</p> <p>Ian presented the CSU Team Activity sheet to members. He informed the meeting that 78 interviews with community groups/ organisations had been completed and support had been requested with 244 issues/ areas.</p> <p>Ian's aim was to ensure the maximum support to Area Forums, but also to be inclusive of other organisations in the area.</p> <p>Community Support Agreements had been drawn up to protect the level of support offered to groups/ organisations – so that staff could not be removed from that work without recourse to the group/ organisation.</p> <p>Ian Informed the meeting that the Team Activity had been separated into strategic and operational areas of work. There were 4 operational areas of work namely:- support to Community Councils; Area Forums; Village Hall Committees/ Community Associations; Wider Community based groups.</p> <p>The strategic areas of work, which met the identified needs of community groups and organisations, will leave a lasting legacy of information and training opportunities which will build the capacity of groups in Moray. This work includes developing an Area Forum Handbook, similar to the handbook developed for the Community Councils for their new term of office.</p>	<p>All members</p> <p>John F.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Better Community Engagement Update</p> <p>The Better Community Engagement Development Project will be launched on 1st March. Ian will be asking groups/ organisations/ agencies to put forward projects for support through the Demonstration Project. Ian is expecting between 10 and 12 applications which the Steering Group will have to prioritise. A member of the CSU Team will be attached to each project along with a couple of members of the Steering Group.</p> <p>Ian informed the meeting that Moray is the only Demonstration Project in Scotland – of which there are only 10 in total – which has a community based Steering Group. This has generated a great deal of interest from across Scotland.</p> <p>Aileen thought that this whole project was fantastic and very ambitious – but very good to see. However, she was concerned about what may happen to it if the CSU suffers budget cuts. Ian felt that it was not really possible to answer this, but hoped that much of the work would still go ahead through the support of the Steering Group.</p> <p>Carin commented that this looked very good and if it comes off will be tremendously useful.</p> <p>Ian and John thanked the members and left the meeting. (7.55pm)</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held 16 November 2009</p> <p>These were noted and approved. Proposed: Bill Burgess. Seconded: Keiron Green.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>6.1 Quarriers</p> <p>Alan and Anita had put forward a number of points on the paper which went to Committee as it had been thought that several of the issues arising around the support to young carers had not been addressed.</p> <p>Susan Leonard who is the newly appointed Project Manager for Quarries in Moray had agreed to attend a Milne’s Forum meeting to discuss these issues further.</p> <p>6.2 Criminal Justice Bill</p> <p>Alan pursued this through both Richard Lochhead and Mary Scanlon. Thankfully the Committee at which it was being discussed saw sense and the clause has now been removed – common sense has prevailed. This outcome can be shared with our communities.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Budget Consultation Feedback and Ramifications of the 2010 – 2011 Budget</p> <p>The Chair asked for comments/ feedback from members with regard to the recent Budget Consultation.</p> <p>Anita thought it was worthwhile.</p> <p>Bill thought that a lot more folk were paying attention to what was being proposed and thought that Councillors had listened to what was being said.</p> <p>Aileen thought it worthwhile and diffused what could have been a lot of aggro.</p> <p>John thought that the whole budget proposal had been gone about in the wrong way. He believed that Councils had been instructed not to cut frontline services.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that participation, in the future, would be something to push for.</p> <p>Alan thanked all the Forums who participated. He thought that it put Forums into the forefront and well done everyone.</p> <p>Anita also thought that the CSU staff did very well at such short notice to pull everything together.</p> <p>Alan thought that for future consultations the timescales should be longer.</p> <p>Carin was impressed with the number of senior officers who came – it was seen as very positive.</p> <p>Alan was disappointed that administration Councillors did not participate in the meetings and felt that they should have been prepared to answer to their budget proposals.</p> <p>Anita informed the meeting that the planning group had discussed this and it was thought that Councillors should be encouraged to attend but in a listening brief only.</p> <p>Aileen thought the meetings were designed in such a way to be information giving and sharing.</p> <p>Bill thought it was a good idea to have the tables for small group discussions and officers joining the table to answer particular questions.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Community Engagement Group Report</p> <p>Carin reported on this item. The Community Engagement Group met last week. Both Councillors and Community Planning Partners attend these meetings and they are moving towards more efficient working in these</p>	

	<p>meetings as to date they have lacked overall strategy. A presentation on the result of a survey of Community Planning Partners was given by Martine Scott, Project Development Officer. However, only 10 out of the 20 partners had responded and it was agreed to do it again now that everyone is aware of the purpose and importance of the survey. It had been agreed that Community Engagement is here to stay and when the survey is re-done it should mean that the structures will gel and everything become clearer. Hopefully Councillors will also begin to participate more fully in the Community Engagement process.</p> <p>The meeting noted that Rebecca has now resigned from the Moray Area Forum – she used to be an alternative representative to the Community Engagement Group. Carin thought that it would be very useful to have an alternate rep in case she is unable to make meetings. Aileen Marshall agreed to be that alternate rep. Alan will let John know.</p>	Alan
11	<p>Famers Markets</p> <p>Alan McBeth is proposing to apply for Moray wide planning permission to hold Farmers Markets. Carin is concerned about this proposal and is not sure if it is feasible. Forres has only just received their planning permission for Bogton Road. However, there is a caveat with regards to the access road which requires them to widen the existing road off the A96 and to no longer use the track to the rear of the gardens. TTF have also applied for permission to hold Farmer’s Markets in the playground of Anderson’s Primary School and they are awaiting a response to this. Carin thought that there were so many different requirements that she could not see how a Moray wide permission could be achieved.</p> <p>Buckie is also waiting for permission for their proposed market, however, they involved a local Councillor to help the process to go more smoothly.</p> <p>It was agreed that there needs to be a policy for Farmers markets.</p> <p>Carin also expressed concern that continental markets may be introduced to the detriment of local farmers markets. She expressed the opinion that not only should we be supporting local farmers and buying local produce but also that we should not be encouraging the transportation of goods across the country.</p> <p>Alan agreed to speak to John Russell to see which of the Committees would deal with these issues.</p>	Alan
12	<p>Community Issues</p> <p>Charges for Council run halls</p> <p>Buckie Area Forum were approached by Buckie Arts and Crafts Group who raised the issue of the cost of Council run halls as they seemed to be quite expensive. Alan asked the meeting if this was thought to be the case across Moray.</p> <p>Anita gave the example of a fundraising group who were quoted £200.00 to use the school kitchen to heat up cooked food.</p> <p>Carin however, thought that they couldn’t be that expensive as they are unable to get space on a Saturday in the Forres Town Hall as they are fully booked up throughout the year for Coffee Mornings.</p> <p>It was thought that perhaps there should be a “Community Group” rate which would be more affordable for local groups.</p> <p>Allotment Policy</p> <p>It was noted that this was out for consultation with a seminar to be held on the</p>	

	<p>24th March. Everyone has been invited to attend.</p> <p>Fiona gave a short input as to how the various allotment groups are faring to date.</p>	
13	<p>Time and date of next meeting</p> <p>It was agreed to fix the dates for the next meetings as follows:</p> <p>26th April</p> <p>28th June</p> <p>30th August</p> <p>25th October</p> <p>All Mondays starting at 7.00pm in NEON</p>	