



## Your Moray

### THE MORAY FORUM

**Meeting on Monday 26 January 2009  
7.00pm - New Elgin Primary School Annexe**

**Present:** Alan Beresford (Buckie Area Forum)- Chairperson  
John Bremner (Forres Neighbourhood Forum)  
Rebecca Kail (Elgin South Area Forum)  
Carin Schwarz (Forres Neighbourhood Forum)  
Barry Taylor (Buckie Area Forum)  
Kieron Green (Elgin North Area Forum)  
Anita Milne (Milnes Neighbourhood Forum)  
Aileen Marshall (Elgin South Area Forum)

**In attendance:** Harry Torry (Elgin North Area Forum)  
Alastair Kennedy (Joint Community Councils)  
Ann Griffin (The Moray Council)  
John Ferguson (The Moray Council)  
Ian Todd (The Moray Council)  
Sheila Erskine Action For Children

**Apologies:** Sandy Henderson (Speyside Area Forum)  
Jennifer Walker (Laich Area Forum)  
Sylvia Reid (Milnes Neighbourhood Forum)

**1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and took the opportunity to congratulate Barry Taylor and Buckie Forum on the HMle report which highlighted the work of the Area Forum as National Good Practice also congratulations to Community Learning and Development. Ian Todd outlined the inspection regime and explained the new learning Communities approach of the Inspectorate and the benefits of the experience of inspection.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held in December 1, 2008.**

There were two accuracy checks on the minute. *Item 8 on the first line.* it was Alan Beresford not Barry Taylor who received the letter from Keith and Strathisla Regeneration Group. Under allotment land it should read Cullen and not Buckie.

3. **Matters Arising**

Appointment of Area Forum Support Workers. It was reported that interviews took place over the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of January and Linda Adams was appointed as Area Forum Support Worker for Buckie, Keith and Speyside. Unfortunately we could not identify a candidate to fill the remainder of the maternity cover. A range of methods will continue to ensure that the Laich, Forres and Milnes are given some support. Ian and John wanted to thank the forums for their contribution during the informal session and the forum representatives at the Interviews. Concern was raised by Anita Milne. There had been a communication break down in that she had originally agreed to be part of the interview process but had to withdraw due to the fact that she was submitting a reference for one of the candidates. This had clearly not been passed on as Ian Todd had requested her participation the day before the interviews were due to take place. Alan requested that all future interviews be prepared in advance with all the key players communicated thoroughly to avoid similar mishap.

4. **Action for Children Presentation**

Alan Beresford welcomed our guest speakers to the meeting Sheila Erskine Service Manager for Residential Services in Action for Children was introduced and gave a presentation to the Forum. Action For Children previously known as NCH (National Children's Homes) wanted to let the forums know what services there were in the area and the role of Action For Children in supporting Moray Families and children. It was important to build relationships with the local community. Sheila outlined the work of the Buckie and Elgin residential Units which provide long term residential personal care to children and young people. The Moray Independent living Unit and the Crowhall Assessment unit and the Forres residential Unit which provides short term residential care. Sheila explained how the process was managed and how referrals were made to the units. There was a discussion and a series of questions; Sheila made an invitation to forum members to visit the units and left contact details with the forums Chairs

5. **Vandalism And Litter**

Harry Torry from Elgin North Forum had been looking into the high rate of vandalism and litter in Schools in Elgin Vandalism cost Elgin Academy £27,000, the figure for all schools in Moray £87,000 in 2006/2007. Harry explained that the Council had introduced a curfew from 10pm in the school grounds but apparently this had not been made known to local police officers. Harry expressed his concern about the high levels of vandalism and litter and explained how the community council and the forum had set up a focus group to explore and deal with the issue of vandalism and litter. The focus group worked with the school and had a major impact on litter in the school through speaking to young people and regularly visiting the school grounds. Harry requested that the Moray Forum should take the issue up with the relevant theme group to stress that ways should be examined in which children and parents can be educated to take pride in their schools. The group discussed the lack

of play areas for children and young people and suggested a wider strategy. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Councillor McGillivray to take this issue to the Safer and Stronger Theme group to consider rolling out similar anti litter and vandalism schemes across Moray. Harry will give more details to Alan Beresford who will e-mail Cllr McGillivray.

## **6. Community Champions**

Chief Inspector Doug Mackenzie wanted to speak to the forum about the concept of the Community Champions. Firstly he commented on the discussion on vandalism. He mentioned the citizens award scheme that sought to recognise the biggest contributor to the community and a prize of £1000 had been offered to the school. It was pointed out that in the last year their target had been to reduce vandalism crimes by 250 they had now reduced that by 260. Though reasonably successful the police are aware that there is a section of the community that do not want to speak to the police but would talk to someone in a community that they knew and trusted. There would be anonymity for this person who agreed to take on this the role. The key function would be to pass on information, highlighting an issue that the Police would then research. Chief Inspector advised that he was looking for reports of low level crime and not the requirement to identify individual culprits (unless so desired). Doug Mackenzie stressed that the community had to be behind this, there would be a point of contact for the Champion and that could be the community warden, community beat officer or Chief Inspector Mackenzie. He also pointed out that there was no similar scheme yet in Scotland. The scheme would be publicised using the media and through word of mouth. It does not have to be an individual it could be an organisation that is a champion.

There was a brief discussion around the public perception of the Service Centre and some of the problems that were highlighted by the forums. The Chairperson suggested that individual Forums may want to invite Chief Inspector Doug Mackenzie to speak to their forums at a local level and he supplied a contact number.

## **7. FEEDBACK FROM MEETING WITH CONVENER REGARDING AREA FORUM PROPOSALS**

Alan pointed out that the meeting would not be until Thursday. The issue of new proposals to support community engagement was raised. John Ferguson stated that as there may be staffing issues it would be inappropriate for him to discuss in depth however, John gave a brief outline of the proposals.

John reported that there were three proposals regarding the setting up of a community engagement fund, which set out to distribute existing funds across the various community engagement structures. There are three options at this stage. The first involves a flat rate of £1000 to all forums and Community Councils, with an amount within that set as the administration fund and development grant. Under this proposal funding would be available to both the joint community Councils and the Moray

Forum. Another option would be to distribute the funds on a per capita basis similar to that operated for the Community Councils currently. The last proposal suggested that per capita amounts were distributed to areas and the Forums and Community Councils jointly decided on their distribution. There has been no additional funding so the proposals have to be based on existing funds

The third proposal was that the Community Engagement Group is asked to organise the consultation for the proposals. It was important that as this was on community engagement, the Partnership group on Community Engagement were involved. The Group has established an implementation group to take this forward which includes membership of the forum, Joint Community Councils and the voluntary sector. More detailed proposals will be ready in the second week of February.

#### **8. Allotments**

Carin Schwarz raised concerns regarding the allotment group in Forres. A committee paper is being submitted to Policy and Resources on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. Carin expressed her concern at the current situation for the future of the allotments. Carin felt that they had been misled and had been given the impression that things were going well regarding support from Moray Council. It has now transpired that the group are facing a variety of conditions and barriers placed in their way. The group is being asked to take on a commercial rent. Given the terms of the funding from elsewhere, this could mean that the significant funding that the Future Towns transitions group had acquired could be lost. Carin stated that the group would be raising this issue with councillors. Given the implications for the other four allotment groups in Moray who are at an earlier stage of development, Barry Taylor suggested, and which was agreed by those present, that the chair write on behalf of the Moray Forum supporting the Forres and other allotment groups to elected members.

#### **9. Community Engagement Group**

Carin and Rebecca fed back on the work of the Community Engagement group. A task group had been established which met three times and came up with an action plan to take forward the Community Engagement Action plan. The group is also using VOiCE, which stands for Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement as a system for measuring the quality of community engagement. It was felt that this was moving the partnership in the correct direction. An implementation group has been formed which has membership of the Forum and the joint Community Councils.

#### **10 Community Issues**

- (a) Anita Milne who is the representative on The Local Action group for LEADER. The LEADER programme was launched by Richard Lochhead at Elgin Town hall on the 19<sup>th</sup> January. Anita pointed out that LEADER has to be 50% Statutory and 50% from other sectors i.e. the community, voluntary, private sector and others. Alistair Kennedy from the Joint Community Councils and Anita Milne from the

Moray Forum are on the LAG, which will have its first training session this Friday. John reminded the Forums of the consultative role they would have in relation to bids for funding from the fund.

- (b) Anita reported on the group Local People Leading (LPL) which is an informal alliance of national networks, local community groups and individuals that has come together to campaign for a strong and independent community sector in Scotland.  
LPL has two main functions - to promote the work of local people in their communities and to influence national policy development. They email regular briefings to supporters on both these themes.
- (c) Barry Taylor spoke about an issue previously raised by Councillor Anita McDonald on children safety. Her proposal was that the Council should provide "Hi Visibility" armbands to all primary school children. Highland Council in partnership with Moray Firth radio in and Cash for Kids provided all primary school children. The Buckie Area Forum is looking for grass roots support to ask the Council to change its decision not to fund these armbands. Moray Forum was asked to support this campaign. Alan Beresford agreed to write to Cllr McGillivray on this issue and asking for it to be raised by the Partnership

**11. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next Moray Forum meeting will be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7pm in the New Elgin primary School Annexe.