



Milnes Area Forum

1st of June 2023 @ Lhanbryde Parish Hall, Urquhart

Attending:

Wilma Ralph (Urquhart)

Alison Rose (Scottish Dolphin Centre)

Cllr Paul McBain (Forres)

Cllr Marc Macrae (Milne's)

Cllr Ben Williams (Milne's)

Rhona McNicol (Community Support Unit)

Terry Pickard (FVA/ Fochabers)

Kirsteen Carmichael (NHS Health Improvement)

Susan Stronach (TMC Youth Work),

Paul Ralph (Urquhart/ MAF)

Fiona Rolt (Moray Forum)

Mike Reid (MAF)

Apologies:

Cllr Shona Morrison (Milne's)

Michael Fox (Fochabers Cricket Club)

Ness Smith (Urquhart/ MAF)

Liz Rennie (Fochabers/ FVA)

The meeting was started with a presentation from Paul Ralph on the background of Area Forums, the structure in Moray and current working from Forres and Buckie Area Forum's.

An open discussion then took place with everyone around the room and the following insights were generated:

ISSUES:

- There is a lack of space for services to engage with residents in Milne's.
- There is a lack of networking for practitioners/ development workers in Milne's.
- Lack of engagement opportunities.
- Milne's seems to be a secondary priority in engagement with residents or job roles because of this 'get on with it' attitude. There is a general want to focus more time on projects/ initiatives in Milne's.
- Community councils have quite specific remits and geographies so aren't always the appropriate body to take issues to.
- [On youth voice] Community councils can be an intimidating environment for young people to participate in and often the topics aren't as important to young people.
- There is a capacity discrepancies throughout Milne's. Where some communities 'do well' in delivering support to residents or developing projects/ events, many communities do not have the capacity within to meet that level.

POSITIVES:

- An area forum can be a space for both local practitioners, residents and groups to work in partnership about issues felt across Milne's and not just in specific villages.
- The forum could be a space for young people's voices to be heard, connecting them better to their community.
- Area Forum could be a space to discuss business challenges, local public transport, connectivity etc.
- Councils are elected members; forums can be anyone and therefore will be more inviting for any motivation to engage.
- Strength in 'being together' rather than focusing on individual communities.
- Potential to solve problems being experienced as one unit rather than separately and achieving little change.
- Forums could apply an equity around Milne's communities.
- A space to address public services and improve provision in Milne's.

IDEAS FOR THE NEW FORUM:

- Intergenerational opportunities to engage residents of all ages and abilities
- MAF should look to the pockets of strengths within the community already such as local Scouts groups to engage/ recruit members
- Primary school children have typically given their ideas quite enthusiastically in the past, is there scope to look at some 7
- Representation from as wide an area as possible.
- A youth forum structure that feeds into the MAF.
- Have services/ projects come in and give updates on specific things such as branch surgeries, local development plans etc.
- Could the new structure allow for meetings around Milne's, travelling around communities?
- Showcase projects/ issues/ facilities through MAF meetings.
- Direct recruitment to develop membership base.

Questions/ Actions:

- How do we become a space to support each other's priorities?
- Who does what and where? With community planning partnership it would be good to understand the structure better and receive more information from their meetings/ working.
- What does being a MAF member actually mean? Should develop a terms of reference for prospective members.
- How do community councils fit into the Area Forum structure?
- The MAF relationship to the MCPP needs to be defined so we know that our participation is effective towards better community planning in Moray.
- Begin direct member recruitment through known local groups/ projects/ services.

Next Steps:

- Please forward contacts for other projects and organisations (pockets of strengths) that we can invite to join the MAF to Rhona McNicol (RM).
- RM will share the questions with appropriate partners/ officers and come back to group with information.
- MAF to set date & location for next meeting.