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Crathes, Drumoak & Durris Community Council (CDDCC)
Minutes of March Meeting
4 March 2015 at Crathes Hall from 19.00 hours

1. Sederunt

Community Councillors: David Morrish (Interim Chairman), Robert Harper, Mark Ansell, Peter Renwick, Howard Scholey, Ronnie Mitchell, Marion McNeil, Maxine Smith

Aberdeenshire Councillors: Linda Clark, Graeme Clark, Raymond Christie, Wendy Agnew

Apologies: Angela Bichan, Jill Webster

Members of Public: Jim Singer

Minutes Secretary: John Hopkins

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Marion McNeil pointed out that it was not Aberdeenshire Council that was considering the possibility of a real Christmas Tree, but the Drumoak Durris Community Group (DDCG) - see section 9.1 of February minutes. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the February meeting of CDDCC were proposed by Maxine Smith and seconded by Marion McNeil and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Police Matters

David Morrish noted that there was no police presence at the meeting, nor had any report been received.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes (David Morrish)

David Morrish said that he had already been through the February minutes and that all actions would be covered later in the Agenda.

5. Awayday

David Morrish said that CDDCC members had met for an Awayday on 22 February, with the purpose of discussing CDDCC's own processes. A number of matters had been agreed at that meeting, in particular a revised set of priorities for 2015, which had been reflected in the Agenda of the present meeting. David Morrish noted that he had assigned a name against each Agenda item - not meaning to indicate that only one person had input to that item, but simply to provide a focus.

6. Broadband in Drumoak

David Morrish introduced Jim Singer, who had been invited to the meeting to speak about limitations on the availability of superfast broadband in Drumoak.

Jim Singer said that he was a resident of Sunnyside Drive, and had been a long-term user of broadband. Because of the slow line speed that he had experienced, he was very interested to be informed, in mid 2004, that superfast broadband would soon be available in Drumoak.

After the announcement that Drumoak exchange had been enabled for broadband, he had tried – via the BT website - to register for the superfast service, only for the website to inform him that it could not be made available at his address. He had then asked around a number of other interested parties in Drumoak (including Drum Castle and the Irvine Arms), only to find that they had all received the same response.

He had contacted BT and been told that the problem was that they each had telephone lines that were connected directly to the exchange, rather than passing through a street cabinet. For such addresses, this meant that superfast broadband would not be available for the foreseeable future, probably not until BT Infinity 3 or BT Infinity 4 were rolled-out locally.

Jim Singer said that he had been very unimpressed with this, noting how much money had been given to BT from public funds, with the express purpose of making superfast broadband available in rural Scotland and elsewhere. He had written to BT (copy letter attached as Appendix to these minutes), asking how many broadband subscribers were connected to the Drumoak exchange and, of these, how many could now receive a superfast service. It was his understanding that directly-connected subscribers could, in practice, only obtain a superfast service by being reconnected via a new street cabinet to be installed close to the exchange itself.

It was clear that reality failed to match BT's claims.

Graeme Clark suggest that Jim Singer contact Steven Archer (Aberdeenshire Council Head of Infrastructure, who had responsibility for broadband) to draw this problem to his attention. David Morrish asked Jim Singer to inform CDDCC of any feedback from Steven Archer. Graeme Clark noted that he was expecting to see Steven Archer in the near future and would also raise the matter with him (**Action: Graeme Clark**) Jim Singer offered to continue and report back to the CDDCC on all developments in this matter, and would attend the next CDDCC meeting for this purpose.

7. Priorities for 2015

7.1 Bringing Communities Together (Maxine Smith)

Drumoak Christmas Lights – In the absence of Angela Bichan, Maxine Smith noted Angela was now proceeding with finalising all quotes for the work required to connect electricity points to the agreed site for the Christmas Tree. There was a time restriction on the period to request the funding approved from Aberdeenshire Council which she recalls being the end of March up to the sum of £1,500 which had been agreed. However, we will need the final costs from Angela to know exactly how much the final costs will be. After March, the grant would no longer be available. The grant also had to be match-funded, so DDCG was currently fundraising.

What's On in the CDDCC areas - Maxine Smith proposed that a central calendar of local events be co-ordinated, in order to avert overlaps and to provide one central point of information. This was already being developed for Drumoak and Durris but needs to incorporate Crathes, as well to ensure we are bringing all communities together. The co-ordinated calendar would be put on the new CDDCC website. Ronnie Mitchell suggested that Gillian Edward would be a useful contact from whom to obtain information relating to Durris. David Morrish suggested Nicola Chambury as contact for the Crathes Fly.

Maxine Smith said that all of the above, together with other new means of communication such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., needed to be co-ordinated and will be seeking some assistance from members of the community for this. Maxine noted whilst electronic means of communication is great, i.e. websites, Facebook, Twitter etc. It must not negate the traditional and effective methods of communication, such as face-to-face, telephone and some community gatherings.

Maxine Smith requested a volunteer from each part of CDDCC's area to undertake the integration of the results of the Awayday. She further suggested the results of the recent Community Engagement Workshop conducted by the Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP) at their Extraordinary General Meeting, be included in the reflection and map any areas where the two groups align. The following volunteered to assist with this task: Howard Scholey volunteered on behalf of Crathes; Ronnie Mitchell volunteered on behalf of Durris. To convene the meeting for this purpose (**Action: Maxine Smith**)

7.2 Communicating (Maxine Smith)

Maxine Smith said that the new CDDCC website (www.crathesdrumoakdurriscc.org) was now live, as of the previous night, but that she proposed this was a 'soft' launch so we had a few months to complete the individual areas profiles, build up some of the current pages and build up a range of information and photographs for the on-going development of the website. This will also enable any current migration from

the Durris.net site to the new site to complete. At the end of the 'soft' launch period we would officially launch the site on a broader scale. The launch period was set to coincide with the next Drumoak & Durris Newsletter, by the end of June 2015. Maxine noted that additional volunteers will be required to generate a broader range of information for the website. This was reflected in the 'Vacancies' section on the new website calling for a range of volunteers with specific skills.

Email addresses were being provided as part of the new website and this allowed contact emails to be sent via non-personal email addresses, such as chair@crathedrumoakdurriscc.org, etc.

David Morrish said that he would, once more, try to persuade the police to provide monthly reports, which could be input to the website (**Action: David Morrish**)

7.3 Funding (Mark Ansell)

Mark Ansell said that the information on how to apply for Windfarm grants had been copied to the new website. Despite this and many other attempts to publicise the availability of such money, applications had been slow in coming.

Maxine Smith suggested that CDDCC should conduct a community workshop where people running community projects could attend and receive information, advice and training on how to apply for Windfarm funding. Due to the current cost restraints on the Community Council, it was suggested we consider running a half-hour session at the Crathes Fly on "How to apply for Windfarm Fund Grants". Maxine proposed asking previously-successful applicants, such as the Playgroup and the Scouts, for hints on how to make an application. David Morrish noted that a workshop would not fit the Crathes Fly format, but that a stall providing relevant information would. It was resolved to provide such a stall at the 4th April Crathes Fly. (**Action: Mark Ansell and Maxine Smith**)

It was clarified that, notwithstanding the differing ways of administering the Meikle Carewe and Mid Hill Windfarm grants, a service fee should be requested for the administration of the funds, as is the case for the Rural Partnerships such as the KDP, who presently administer Windfarm Community Funds. Such funds would be very useful to support the work of the Community Council and address the present funding situation. Clarity was sought as to whether the Windfarm funding covered all three areas within the Community Council. It was noted that Windfarm funding covered the Community Council area as a whole.

In response to a question, Mark Ansell said that the available Windfarm Funds Grants were worth some £22,000 per annum in the CDDCC area. It was agreed that this was a not-insignificant amount of money.

It was noted that a new round of LEADER funding (provided from European Union taxes) was coming shortly and the existing Area Manager Fund was still available for community-focused initiatives.

7.4 Budget and Budget Plan (Peter Renwick)

John Hopkins said that he had again contacted Aberdeenshire Council about the Administration Grant and that the new Finance Department contact had discovered that the Banff office had filed CDDCC's application, un-actioned, in the previous financial year's file, but that the payment would now be made within the week.

Maxine Smith handed to Peter Renwick a note from Aberdeenshire Council stating that, in future, Administration Grants would be administered by the Area Managers' offices, not by the Finance Department.

Peter Renwick noted that he had circulated a draft budget plan to CDDCC members. This clearly indicated that more sources of funds would be needed. He asked whether CDDCC could apply for some of the Windfarm Fund money. John Hopkins said that Community Councils were, in fact, explicitly excluded from receiving Windfarm money.

Maxine Smith proposed that CDDCC put forward a programme of events for building capacity and put that

forward to a range of funders. Whilst Community Councils will be excluded from requesting funds to administer the Community Council, it does not mean the Community Council could not provide a range of community skills development and capacity building workshops and apply for funding to roll them out. Mark Ansell asked if this is something the KDP could consider funding. Maxine Smith noted it was certainly something we should present to the KDP as the KDP is actively seeking information on how they can best serve the Community Councils and community groups .

Maxine Smith suggested we consider learning from other Community Councils who engage their communities well. Maybe a presentation at one of the meetings?

Peter Renwick asked Maxine Smith if she can submit any costs relating to the new website and any other related costs she has paid out. He also noted that CDDCC needed to develop a plan for a year's activities and to estimate costs for those.

Maxine Smith said that the plan for forthcoming activities would arise out of the work by integrating the results of the Awayday with the plan recently produced by KDP.

To ask the Area Managers for guidance on the rules for Community Council fundraising, in particular sponsorships and the use of Section 75 funds (**Action: David Morrish**)

7.5 Road Safety (David Morrish)

David Morrish said that notices advertising a consultation over the proposed 30 mph limit in Crathes would be going up on local lamp-posts on 12/13 March and that, following a consultation period of some three weeks, the proposal was expected to be accepted.

Marion McNeil said that the issue of a safe walking route to the new Drumoak School had been discussed at the recent Drumoak School Council meeting and was being taken forward by Angela Bichan and an Aberdeenshire Council representative.

Graeme Clark said that he had recently been party to a meeting with Euan Wallace, the Police and others, to discuss the issue of Speeding in Villages. It seemed that there might, after all, be some possibility of flexibility in the application of the rules on speed limits, which could benefit Kirkton of Durris. He would attempt to get a copy of the minutes of the meeting (**Action: Graeme Clark**)

8. Planning (David Morrish, Marion McNeil, Mark Ansell)

8.1 Durris

To forward a copy of CDDCC's representation about the proposed Woodlands of Durris housing to relevant Councillors (**Action: David Morrish**)

8.2 Crathes

To keep the Crathes Housing subcommittee updated on progress with the potential connection of existing Crathes houses to the new gas and sewerage mains (**Action: David Morrish**)

8.3 Drumoak

Marion McNeil drew attention to a planning application (APP/2015/0256) to convert a steading to three houses on land south-east of Greendams. This had been the subject of three objections from neighbours. David Morrish undertook to look at the application and consider whether CDDCC should make a representation. If so, to circulate a draft representation no later than 5 March (**Action: David Morrish**). To indicate agreement or otherwise with the draft representation no later than 5 March (**Action: CDDCC members**)

It was noted that the planning application to build three houses west of Alma Cottage - to which CDDCC, amongst others, had objected and which had been rejected by the Area Committee - had been the subject of an Appeal by the developer, but that Appeal had now been **rejected** by the Directorate for Planning and

9. AOB

9.1 Election Event

David Morrish said that, at the Awayday, the possibility of CDDCC running an Election Event for the forthcoming UK General Election, akin to the very successful Referendum Event, had been discussed. It had been supported on the basis that it provided a good opportunity for public engagement. He had since been approached by an outside group, which had offered to contact party offices to see whether candidates could all be available on one day, to facilitate such an event. If CDDCC wished to present the event, the outside group would defer to it. If not, they would propose to promote it themselves.

Howard Scholey said that, whereas the Referendum had been, at least in theory, non-party political, he felt that an Election Event would inevitably be the opposite.

Maxine Smith asked whether it were right to consider an Election Event a higher priority than other community activities, particularly when CDDCC was likely to be budget-constrained.

On a show of hands, CDDCC decided not to promote an Election Event itself. To so inform the outside group (**Action: David Morrish**)

9.2 Recruitment of New Members for CDDCC

With the recent resignation of Ann Ross, which was confirmed by David Morrish, there were now vacancies in each of the constituent areas of CDDCC. To identify further new recruits, organising elections if necessary (**Action: Howard Scholey**)

9.3 Minutes

David Morrish noted that the production of minutes had been amongst the matters discussed at the Awayday. Peter Renwick said that the aim was to avoid any publication of minutes before they had been fully agreed. Maxine Smith said that the revised process would be:-

- Production and circulation to CDDCC and Councillors of a draft set of minutes (as at present)
- Receipt of comments on first draft (as at present) and the production and circulation of a tabulated list of all comments
- Production and circulation of a final draft set of minutes incorporating the agreed amendments
- At the following CDDCC meeting, present the final minutes for approval.
- Publication of the finalised version (as at present)

John Hopkins said that he did not question the right of CDDCC to have whatever process it wished for the production of minutes. In his personal opinion, though, the intended revisions worked against the objectives of producing minutes in a timely and effective manner. Accordingly – via the Chairman - he tendered his resignation as Minutes Secretary. There followed a discussion of possible alternative processes for producing minutes, after which David Morrish accepted the resignation, which it was noted would be effective from after the production of the March minutes. He expressed his regret regarding the resignation and thanked John Hopkins for all his support of CDDCC over many years.

10. Next Meeting

Crathes Hall on 1 April 2015 at 19.30 hours.

DISTRIBUTION				
<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>WEBSITE</u>
CDDCC Councillors	Kirkton of Durris Hall Notice Board (via Gillian Edward)	Insp. Stuart Ednie	Maureen Newlands (KMAP/MAP/STP)	http://www.durris.net/ (also for previous minutes)
Cllrs. Linda Clark, Karen Clark, Jill Webster (Ward 16)	Crathes Hall Notice Board (via Nicola Chambury)		Alison Ritchie, Community Learning	
Cllrs. Peter Bellarby, Graeme Clark, Raymond Christie, Wendy Agnew (Ward 18)	Drumoak Church Hall Notice Board (via Mary Robertson)	PC David Mitchell	<u>BY POST</u> Banchory Public Library	<u>BY HAND</u> Park Shop Drumoak Post Office
Mr W Munro, Area Manager, Kincardine & Mearns				
Area Manager, Marr	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator - Alister Bisset	Local Newsletter Editor – Marion McNeil		

Appendix
Text of Letter from Jim Singer to BT

British Telecom plc,
BT Correspondence Centre,
Providence Row,
Durham
DH98 1BT
(dated 27/2/15)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Superfast Fibre Broadband - Drumoak Telephone Exchange

I'm writing as a BT customer who has for many years subscribed to one of your combined telephone and broadband packages.

In the middle of 2014 I was delighted to hear that the Drumoak telephone exchange was scheduled to be upgraded to superfast fibre broadband towards the end of the year. Closely following progress I noted in early December that the work on the exchange had been completed and assumed that superfast broadband was now available to the residents of Drumoak. Just before Christmas I went onto your Openreach website to place my order but was dismayed to discover that superfast broadband wasn't currently available at my address. I subsequently telephoned one of your helplines and spoke to one of your staff who advised that because the telephone line to our home comes directly from the Drumoak exchange, rather than through one of your 'street cabinets', superfast broadband won't be available to us for the foreseeable future. I was also advised that I would probably have to wait for BT Infinity 3 or maybe 4 to be released before I would be able to finally get linked up, whenever that might be.

Drumoak is a small village with the Sunnyside housing estate where I live comprising 80 homes, all of which I assume are similarly unable to access superfast broadband. Other housing estates in the village are geographically closer to the exchange than we are so I assume that the same problem applies to them as well. If my assumption is correct then most of the village is presumably unable to access superfast broadband. **Consequently it would be helpful if you could let me know how many 'live' lines there currently are coming out from the Drumoak exchange and how many of these now have access to superfast broadband.**

All of this is naturally very disappointing and my intention is to pursue this matter further, initially via the Local Community Council, unless you can provide me with an assurance that we'll all be linked up shortly. **I'm assuming that much of the funding for the upgrade of the Drumoak exchange has come from public money via the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme. I would be grateful if you could confirm that this is the case.**

I look forward to receiving your reply in the not too distant future.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Singer