



MINUTES OF THE ONLINE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 21st June 2023

Present : David Ellis, Sandra Van Heusden, John Rogie, Stewart Urquhart, Janet Urquhart, Simon Welfare, Andrew Wilson and one member of the public. Kirsty Macleod of Aberdeenshire Council took the chair.

Apologies : Apologies had been received from Joyce Lovie and Councillors Geva Blackett, Sarah Brown and Anouk Kloppert.

Nominations and Elections:

Three nominations to serve on Cromar Community Council had been received: Stewart Urquhart, Janet Urquhart and John Rogie. All had been duly elected.

Election of Officebearers;

Simon Welfare was proposed as Chairman for the coming year by Dave Ellis, seconded by Andrew Wilson. Simon accepted the nomination and took the chair.

Simon thanked Kirsty Macleod for her attendance on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council and welcomed the members to the meeting.

David Ellis was proposed as Secretary for the coming year by Andrew Wilson, seconded by Sandra Van Heusden. He indicated his willingness to continue as Treasurer since no other Councillors volunteered for the role. David Ellis was proposed as Treasurer by Sandra Van Heusden, seconded by Janet Urquhart.

Minutes;

The minutes of the AGM of Cromar Community Council held on 22nd June 2022 had been previously circulated and approved.

Chairman's Report:

In my review of the Community Council's activities for last year's AGM, I wrote of the importance of good communications to the well-being, prosperity and resilience of our widespread community, and this topic has continued to be much on the minds of Members at our monthly meetings this year.

We have welcomed the new-style of Police Report and are grateful for the time taken by Sergeant Masson, who supplies it, to attend our meetings every quarter. He and the authors of Police Scotland's North East Crime Alert perform a valuable service in keeping the community informed about current problems and challenges and in providing advice on how to keep our homes, businesses, possessions and families safe.

We are working to improve the Community Council's own communications, and thanks to social media training recently provided by Aberdeenshire Council, Sandra van Heusden is running a new Cromar Community Council facebook page. We hope it will keep everyone informed about our work, and eventually provide a forum on which local residents can raise and discuss local issues. We are grateful to Sandra for her work on this and we thank, too, a local resident who joined a recent meeting and gave us some interesting and useful ideas about how we can improve the online community 'conversation', particularly when consultations about new projects are being held.

We had hoped, too, that the work that Dave Ellis, our Secretary, has been doing with Broadway Broadband, a company with the admirable aim of bringing gigabit fibre broadband to rural locations like the Howe of Cromar, would result in a much-needed upgrade in local communications. And so it was with regret that we learned only recently, and after some of the preparatory work had been done, that the company has been put into administration so that the business can be restructured and passed to a new owner who may be able to find a way to take the company's work forward. The Community Council will continue to talk to broadband providers, phone companies, Aberdeenshire Council, local landowners, and representatives of the U.K. and Scottish governments in the hope that ways can still be found to improve our communications systems: this is now urgent.

We plan to use more down-earth means to distribute our Resilience Plan which has been drawn up by Sandra van Heusden. A copy will be distributed soon to every household and business in Cromar via a postal service. Once again, we are grateful to Sandra for her efforts.

Improvements to the infrastructure of our area are a constant priority for us and thanks are due to the MacRobert Trust Estate for agreeing to repair the pedestrian footbridge over the burn in Tarland village. Work is due to start in August. We look forward to the new road signs Aberdeenshire Council has agreed to install on either side of the bridge at Coull and we have been in discussion with the Council and the Tarland Flood Group about flood prevention measures, which we hope will be put in place as soon as costs and plans allow.

The surface of Tarland Square is urgently in need of attention, and, with the help of Cllr. Brown we have asked Aberdeenshire Council to give its maintenance a higher priority, given its importance to the residents and businesses of the village. We have also requested that clearing the snow from the pavements that surround it should be given similarly high priority in the light of the difficult experiences of many residents in negotiating them during the winter.

We are delighted that, thanks to funds from the Marr Area Committee and the Tarland Arts and Recreation Team which have supplemented the Community Council's contribution, new lights have been purchased for this year's Christmas display and that Gordon Ross and his colleagues have also brought the electricity connection for the lights up to standard. We are grateful to all of them.

I salute, too, Cromar's many volunteer organisations that work so hard to improve our way of life: in particular this year, Young@ Heart Deeside whose Warm Space at Cromar Court was so popular over the winter that it is continuing as a Social Space, and the committee of the Tarland Show whose members have been busy reviving one of the best-loved and most historic of our local events. It's something to look forward to in August.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the work of the Community Council in the course of the past year, particularly, of course, my fellow-Members. We are

especially grateful to our Ward Councillors, Cllr. Geva Blackett, Cllr. Sarah Brown and Cllr. Anouk Kloppert for the help and advice they have given us; to the many officials of Aberdeenshire Council with whom we have been in contact; to the Marr Area Manager, Janelle Clarke; to Police Scotland; and to all the members of the public who have raised matters of concern with us in the interests of making life better for everyone here in Cromar.

Presentation of Draft 2022/2023 Accounts

David Ellis presented the draft accounts for the year 2022/2023, which had been duly examined by Donald Gordon. The accounts showed an opening balance of £1,923.07 on 1/4/2022. Income for the year included the Aberdeenshire Council grant and receipts from the Jubilee Event plus a grant to improve the Christmas lights. Total income for the year was £4,456.10.

The main items of expenditure included Platinum Jubilee expenses, the purchase of the Christmas light features and the usual Community Council expenses. These totalled £5054.16. The closing balance of the two Community Council accounts was £1325.01.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gordon for examining the accounts. The approval of the accounts was proposed by Andrew Wilson and seconded by Sandra Van Heusden.

Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.13.