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| **MINUTES**  **Online Zoom Meeting**  **Tuesday 21st September 2021**  **at 7.00 pm** | |  |
| **Present**: James Adams (Chair)  Ron Morrice (Treasurer)  Ken Watt (Planning Secretary)  Alison Wymes (Minute Secretary)    John Anderson  Helena Gilbert  Sylvia Harper  Kenny Harper  Fiona May    Angela Keith (Banff & Buchan Area Manager)  Ken Regan (Principal Landscape Officer)    **Councillors**: Councillor Charles Buchan  Councillor Andy Kille  Councillor Brian Topping | | |
| **1.** | **Apologies & Declaration of Interest** | |
|  | Seamus Logan, Ashley Mackie, Doreen Mair, Mary Regan, Steven Rollo, Dionne Whyte, Community Wardens (Alia Gatt & Alex Scrimgeour) | |
| **2.** | **Minutes of last meeting to be approved – Tuesday 15th June 2021** | |
|  | Proposed – Kenny Harper, Seconded – Helena Gilbert | |
| **3.** | **Matters Arising** | |
|  | * Play Park Signage   **S&K.H.** They went round to the play park in Burns Crescent and noticed there was an old sign on the fencing in the play park, saying NO DOGS ALLOWED IN THE PLAY PARK, but the zip wire is outwith the play park.  **K. Regan** The shire are looking at getting new signage installed across all 6 areas of the shire, not only to highlight dog issues, but also to have contact details on it, should anyone need to report equipment faults or vandalism done to any pieces of equipment.  **B.T**. Has reported issues in the play parks in the past, but very little has been done. One issue which various people have reported is in James Ramsey Play Park, where the ground at one of the entrances has sunk and on wet weather is very muddy. Dogs can get through the gap into the play park, therefore there needs to be slabs or hard core put in place.  **K.Regan** There have been staffing issues recently. A technical officer who was appointed during Covid, has now left to return to college and the replacement officer, appointed from the Buchan Area, starts on 27th September. Obviously during summer months, the Landscape squad are concentrating on cutting grass. Now that has eased, the other jobs can hopefully be done!  **A.Keith** Following all the issues and concerns brought up at the June and August meetings by Community Councillors and on social media, Angela is working with her line manager Derek Murray and Ken Regan to draw up an Action Plan for the town to work with the CC and other volunteer groups e.g. Men’s Shed, BBT, Rotary Club etc. to resolve some of the issues.  **C.B**. That idea is very welcome, but there are some things that volunteers can’t do e.g. WEEDS. That has to be a priority. People are saying other communities in the shire look so much better and he doesn’t want the Broch to be left behind!  **A.W**. Are you proposing to have a meeting to discuss all these issues and for the FF to be represented, as it was that group who highlighted most of the issues? And can the proposed Action Plan which has been sent to J.Adams be shared with all the CC? Yes  **B.T** Can the Councillors see that Action plan too? Yes. When the Scottish Cup football was being played in the Broch recently, some of the players and fans weeded round about Bellslea, to give a better impression to visitors to the town. The general public pay Council Tax and that is one of the services which people expect the Council to carry out!  **H.G**. Are there proposed dates for these meetings?  **A.Keith** Once all the relevant volunteer groups have been contacted, she will send out dates for the meetings.  **K.Regan** Explained a little about the drawbacks which the Landscape Dept had suffered because of Covid restrictions – grass cutting, lifting first cut, losing 2 operatives who were certificated weed sprayers, lack of road sweepers with special brushes for removing weeds from gutters, normally employ 7 seasonal workers – only 4 this year, finding it difficult recruiting and keeping staff etc. Normally, seasonal workers are employed till September, but this year this will be extended to December to try and resolve some of the issues. As far as other towns are concerned e.g. Stonehaven and Inverurie, they have large community groups who relieve some of the pressure from the Council, by providing floral displays etc. The council can no longer provide flower displays in the Saltoun Place Gardens.  **K.W**. Asked about wild flower planting. Was this mainly a cost cutting resolution? Were there areas identified in Fraserburgh where wild flowers are being planted?  **A.Keith** Said before Covid, there had been a presentation given to the Council about providing areas of wild flowers etc to encourage bees and improve the habitat for wildlife and there are areas identified in and around the Broch for this.  **K.Regan** It is not purely a cost cutting exercise, as the ground needs to be specially prepared – it’s not just a case of scattering seeds anywhere! They need to work more closely with the local Landscape Squad, so that these areas are not mowed and the wild flowers get a chance to grow. Perhaps more publicity should be given to this and signage should be put in place, so that the public are aware of areas which are not being cut regularly. There is a Greenspace Officer employed in Banff & Buchan area who would be willing to give a presentation to the CC if they were interested?  J.Adams to share the Fraserburgh Environmental Improvement Plan, which A.Keith has sent to him, with all Community Councillors and Councillors.  A.Keith to send details of an initial meeting to the CC to discuss the above plan  . | |
| **4.** | **Police Scotland/Community Warden Reports** | |
|  | Police Scotland Community Wardens  None received | |
| **5.** | **Urgent Items of Business** | |
|  | **None** | |
| **6.** | **Treasurer’s Report** | |
|  | The most up-to-date a/c was shown in the August Meeting Minutes.  **A.W**. Asked if the £1200 approx. payment into the CC a/c was the CC Administration Grant from Aberdeenshire Council. This was confirmed by **A.Keith** – an increase from previous years’ payments, as it was re-evaluated along with elected members as to how the grant was shared out among CCs. | |
| **7.** | **Sub-Committees** | |
|  | * **Resilience**   **J.Anderson** There is little change with the Food Larder from last month. There are 61 members.  The Resilience group were contacted by Aberdeenshire Council to see if it was still going to use a Snow Wardens’ Scheme. Nathan Ritchie is the co-ordinator in charge. A few questions still have to be answered – How does the group get called out? Where do the Snow Wardens go? If they need grit, where do they get it from?  **A.Keith** There is to be a public consultation devised by Natalie Wood, Officer in Landscape Services which will look at enhancing the Snow Warden policy. The local contact is Alistair Millar (Roads Dept)  John Anderson to contact Alistair Millar about the Snow Wardens policy to get answers to his questions.   * **Flower Fairies**   **S.H.** We have come to the end of the Summer Season and are now at the stage of removing the summer bedding and replanting the Spring bulbs. We will be in contact with Ken Regan in landscape shortly to arrange, as agreed with him, the removal of the Asda entrance planters and have them moved into positions in the Broadgate in place of some of the old galvanised steel planters there at present and perhaps they could, in the meantime, be stored in the Council yard.  We made a visit to Lorna Pirie’s farm outside Strichen. She grew extra flowers for us last year and has agreed to do so again. It was discussed what we felt worked and what didn’t work in the planters and have made adjustments. Due to less funds this year, she will grow the flowers  from seed for us to keep costs down. We did also receive a small donation from the planter vandals.  It was agreed at previous years’ meetings that we would receive a small grant from the Community Council. We are hopeful that that is still the case?  Community Councillors and helpers assisted in wild flower planting in James Ramsey Park on 11th September. It was a very drizzly but successful day.  Doreen was contacted by Rob Gill from Fraserburgh Academy and Derek O’Halloran contacted Lorna Davidson to see if we could have a chat about being somewhat involved in a gardening project at the Academy. It hasn’t been easy to keep contact with Rob, however, due to email issues within the Academy. We were to meet this week and gave 2 suitable days but it was never confirmed.  We would also be interested to have feedback from Angela Keith on the meeting she attended with Alan Wood and Ken Regan on 26th July regarding the town centre. John raised a point at the last meeting asking how the budget is allocated to towns for general upkeep as some towns seem to be kept in pristine condition and others are not. I have asked James briefly to show 2 photos from Stonehaven. They just show that posts are painted and the town centre has a proper and inviting information board. Our town centre is just shabby. Weeds might have been killed off in some areas of our town but being left to rot defeats the purpose.  There was some discussion after this report about the entrance to the town from the Banff road. The FF had discussed this when they met Ken Regan a couple of months ago. A possibility was to remove the planters and put some kind of structure/sculpture in their place, which would be low maintenance. At some point, unknown to Ken Regan, the local Landscape squad had sourced potentilla plants and planted them, so at least there would be a bit of colour over the summer. Unfortunately the water bowser was broken, so no watering was carried out, therefore the plants died. They were eventually removed and the planters are now full of weeds again! This area has been discussed time and time again over the past couple of years!  **S.H.** Had spoken to Jan Emery about this project, who suggested putting the idea to the wider community. If it was to be a structure or sculpture, it would involve a combination of services and may even need planning permission. **H.G.** Said it was far too big a project for the 4/5 FF to undertake themselves, as they were neither knowledgeable nor physically able to do this, all being of a certain age!!  **A.Keith** Suggested this could be added to the Environmental Improvement Action Plan for the town and the FF or CC could apply for funding from the 3rd Tranche of the AIF.  On the topic of lamp posts and signage, **J.Anderson** was pleased to see the new finger direction signs were in place. **J.Adams** also mentioned new signage and banners were being put in place under the Town Centre Regeneration Plan. Lamp posts are desperately needing painted, but they’re made of gulvanised steel which shouldn’t be painted or need specialised paint to be applied. **B.T** brought up again the idea of having a specific ‘blackening pole’!!  Alison to send details of discussions about the entrance to the town from the Banff road to A.Keith with view to adding it to the town Action Plan  Ken Regan to get in touch with Street Lighting Services about how to paint the lamp posts – special paint required, cost etc.   * **Phoenix Group**   **J.Adams** Just a reminder that the £10,000 Grant from Aberdeenshire Council to recover from Covid has to be spent by the end of December. There is to be a meeting of the Phoenix Group on Thursday 23rd September, so he will update the CC at the October meeting. August was Doric month and there were various events put on in local businesses under the auspices of shopfraserburgh.com with BBT and the Rotary Club being involved – music, videos, poetry reading etc. There were supposed to be Doric Murals put up round the town centre, but the college is having difficulty sourcing materials, so once they are completed, they’ll be installed. September is Wedding month.   * **Community Awards**   **A. Mackie** was not present to give an update on how this is progressing, so hopefully, she will update the CC at the October meeting.   * **Litter-Picking Group**   **H.G** The group were out recently on the Links and James Ramsey Park litter-picking with the Boys Brigade. In one particular area, **F.M** found about 50 empty bottles and other items!! Martin Dunbar took the bags of litter away and booked a skip slot to dispose of them. Could the Landscape Services be contacted to take away bags of litter after organised events? **Ken** **Regan** agreed to this and asked that someone from the group should contact Landscape or Waste Services prior to an event. There is to be another Litter-Pick on 26th September with the Anchor boys and on 4th October with The Community Learning and Development Dept from the Academy. The group received £250 from NESS Energy and has bought Hi-Viz vests, pickers, first aid kits, gloves and bags. They still need to buy hoops, children’s litter-pickers, bio-degradable bags, hand sanitisers etc,soare asking for funds from the CC to purchase these items and also to have a kitty, should they need to buy anything else. They asked for £200 initially which was agreed by **J,Adams**. Would it be possible to buy a trailer through the AIF for both the Litter-Picking and Flower Fairies sub-groups – to dispose of bags of litter after an event and to transport plants and water when out planting? They would also need somewhere accessible to store the trailer and cover insurance. The group also want to organise a Litter-Pick with the CC, so will send out available dates.  **A.Keith** Agreed that this could be done, but there was quite a narrow window for applying through the AIF. All forms have to be in by 15th October and the money has to be spent by 31st March. | |
| **8.** | **Questions for Aberdeenshire Councillors** | |
|  | **J.Anderson** Asked about the number of Council garages – how many are in use/not in use? There are definitely garages not being used, as there are bushes growing outside them! If they are standing empty, why? Would they be too dear to rent? If so, could the Council reduce the rent and perhaps they would be used more – it would be some kind of income for the council. **A.Kille** Didn’t know the details, but could find out.  **A.Keith** The council would have a record of the numbers, so will update at the next meeting. There has been a recent review of the garage policy – they can be used for storage now, not just for vehicles. A garage could be used for storage for the Food Larder. **J.Anderson** replied that the Resilience Group has a garage in Alexandra Terrace for storing their equipment.  John Anderson to send an email to A.Keith with the questions he wants answered.  **J.Anderson** Asked if there was a plan for clearing gullies in the town. After the recent heavy rain and flooding of certain areas in the town, it was evident that the gullies had not been cleared of weeds, debris etc. **A.Kille** said there was a budget for this as the Council had protected that budget for the reasons that John was highlighting. **A.Keith** did say there had been a problem with the gully cleaning machine in the Banff/Macduff area, but it has been fixed now. **K.Regan** will speak to the Principal Roads Engineer on Wednesday and ask for a programme of when this would be carried out in Fraserburgh. **B.T**. Campaigned many years ago to get the Council garages upgraded, as many of them were dilapidated. The asbestos roofs were replaced. The Council should actually be checking these areas regularly and not waiting for individuals to complain about the state of them.  **K.W**. Asked if the Council had a policy on allotments in the town. They are a big thing in England and it would be another way of making money. If the Council are selling off land, it could be used more profitably. **C.B**. The Council are becoming quite keen on allotments, if only through the Community Empowerment Act. He tried to push for them a number of years ago, but there was very little interest. There is not a lot of suitable land in Fraserburgh for allotments. The Council would probably have to purchase land on the outskirts of the town. **K.W**. Asked if there is community housing, why can’t there be community land? **A.W.** The subject of allotments was discussed a number of years ago and at that time, they were speaking about a plot of land behind Lochpots School and Robertson Road Centre, but again nothing came to fruition. There are allotments in Mintlaw, but unsure if they are Council owned or privately owned. **A.Kille** Said there is an allotment policy, but there are none in Fraserburgh. **A.Keith** Said the Council were keen to follow this through, as work had been started pre-Covid, but it hadn’t been revisited since. **K.Regan** Said some of the allotments were maintained by Housing and some by Landscape. They will be looking at making all the sites across the shire consistent in rent, as at present, some are free and others have varying rental charges. | |
| **9.** | **Questions from Members of the Public** | |
|  | **A.W.** Was approached by a gentleman while the FF and friends were planting wild flowers in James Ramsey Park. He was asking if some kind of pedestrian crossing could be put at the junction of Maconochie Road-Strichen Road-Links Road near the War Memorial. He is a dog walker and along with many other dog walkers, he is having to wait ages crossing the main road there. I pointed out that it is not only dog walkers who are crossing there, but it is also the route that children from the Academy are taking to get to the Running Track area, as they are being encouraged to have their PE sessions outdoors now. **A.Kille** Said an email would need to be sent to Alistair Miller and he would have to confer with Bear Scotland. They would need to do vehicle counts etc. to determine whether the area would meet the criteria for some kind of pedestrian crossing  Alison Wymes to email Alistair Millar (Roads Dept) about this | |
| **10.** | **Correspondence** | |
|  | None | |
| **11.** | **Planning Applications** | |
|  | **J.Anderson** Asked why FCC were receiving the planning applications, as more often than not, they were all for properties in the Banff area. How can FCC decide what can go ahead or not, when they are not qualified to make decisions about planning. **A.Kille** Replied that the CC cannot make any decisions about planning – it is purely for giving their opinion on an application if desired and this is attached to the application to be further discussed by planning officers and in some circumstances referred to the Area Committee. All planning applications for Banff/Buchan are on the same sheet. **A.W.** For a number of years, the planning applications were never being sent to FCC, but were being sent to other CCs, thus the reason for getting them now. | |
| **12.** | **AOB** | |
|  | **J.Adams** The CC has been approached by Seamus Logan, then Bob Watt of the Rotary Club to support them in a venture of installing a new statue of a lighthouse at the Tesco entrance to the town. This would be on the left hand verge on the approach to Fraserburgh from Mintlaw. **H.G**. Queried why at Tesco Roundabout again? **J.Anderson** explained when the other 2 lighthouses were built – 1 near the turn-off to Sandhaven on Watermill Road and the other at the top of Strichen Road, there were no roundabouts at either place. There was no housing development at the top of Strichen Road and where the Asda roundabout is now, there was no land wide enough in that area, as there was the old Watermill Bar and old Mill**. F.M**. Asked if the Lighthouse on Watermill Road could be moved to the actual entrance to the town from the Banff Road or put 2 new lighthouses up, one at Tesco entrance and one at Asda entrance. **B.T.** Asked that FCC support it in principle, but the Rotary Club would need to get back to the CC with more detail. **J.Adams** put it to a vote and the majority said YES to supporting the proposal in principle.  **J.Adams** Doreen brought the next item to his attention – Craig Masson on FB is proposing getting a group together to discuss the possibility of having a Play/Water Park installed in the old paddling pool at the beach, similar to what they’ve done in Nairn. Would the CC be willing to support this idea in principle? The area of the beach is under discussion now with the Beach Regeneration Project. **H.G.** Again this has been discussed at various meetings and it was suggested that the CC work alongside a group of parents or people interested in such a project – to discuss fund-raising etc. **J.Adams** will contact Craig Masson and tell him the CC are willing to support him and his group and help by getting involved.  James Adams to contact Craig Masson offering him the FCC support  J.Adams Was notified this evening that Norma Craven has left the FCC, as she is moving to Wick. The CC thanks her for her valued contribution to discussions over the last 3 months since joining the FCC. He also wants to pass on the CC’s Congratulations to Ashley Mackie on the birth of her daughter Sophia and also Sympathy to her on the passing away of her father just after Sophia was born. The FCC wishes her well and looks forward to her returning to meetings soon. | |
| **13.** | **Date & Time of Next Meeting** | |
|  | **Tuesday 19th October 2021 at 7pm** | |