

The Royal Burgh of Forfar Community Council
Minutes of meeting 21st October 2021 at The Stag Forfar.

Present:

Community Councillors: - Tom O'Brien (TOB), Graeme Clark (GC), Linda Clark (LC), Brian Batson (BB), Kathryn Patullo (KP) and Jim McMillan (JM).

Minute Secretary: - None

Angus Councillors: - Cllr Lynne Devine

Others present: - Ian Cochrane (IC) Director of Infrastructure for Angus Council and Jennifer Anderson Angus council for AGM hosting.

1. Welcome & Apologies: Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies from J. Gray-Cheape, Eleanor Feltham and Robin Wardhaugh.

2. Minutes from previous Meeting: All ok proposed by BB seconded by JM

3. Matters arising: Cllr Devine asked about the letter sent to all 4 local councillors re the special council meeting and changing places toilets. Cllr LD not sure where the content in the letter came from as no mention in mins of previous meetings of changing places toilets and outcomes of the toilet provision in the letter. TOB said that the community council found out after the previous months meeting about the special council meeting to discuss extra money for the toilets at Forfar loch. The CC decided to have a meeting about this and what response we could send, a letter was decided upon and this was sent out.

4. Question and answer session with Ian Cochrane Director of Infrastructure for Angus Council.

The community council asked Ian Cochrane to attend to answer questions the community council had about the leisure centre, the new toilets to be built at Forfar loch and common good funds/assets, Ian had kindly agreed.

Toilets at Forfar loch: IC gave some background around the reasons for toilets at Forfar loch since the closure of the leisure centre and resolutions to deal with this. IC talked about different options such as waterless toilets, compostable toilets and modular units. Costs also needed to be looked at to build and the upkeep as it is common good land and some of the costs would need to be met from that. Changing places modular unit was looked at but as rejected by councillors due to vandalism (there were around 40 objections to the toilets at the loch if no changing places facility fitted) and queried if this was best place to put a Changing Place at the loch. The Council has set a policy any new major build properties will have a changing places facility fitted as standard. Cllr LD said she was looking into the potential for a facility elsewhere in Forfar however community councillors said that they could still look at this as we may be able to source outside funding. It was mentioned about a standalone unit in Princes St in Edinburgh, however both Cllr LD and IC questioned whether the loch was the best place for a changing places toilet as vandalism was a problem in Angus and the cost of equipment in these was very high to replace and would this be best value for money for the town. The new toilets will have disability access. Questions were raised about the rising costs. IC explained that the initial cost of £40000 was based on surface area costs of a building. Costs have risen due to the need to vandal proof the building and facilities, cost of building materials which have gone up over 30%-50% due to a combination of Covid-19, Brexit supply problems and construction costs. Delays due to the court case over the old leisure centre and the asset transfer proposal by Forfar football trust have not helped the process, these time delays have meant the tender process had to be restarted. Tender for the job has been issued and awarded with an expected completion at end Feb/start of March 2022, cost now around £130000. The proposal also had to go back to committee to get more common good funding as well. GC asked who decides on the common good money, IC said the 4 local councillors and then the proposal goes to Policy & Resources committee for approval (usually passes this stage). GC asked the location of new toilets IC said adjoining the side of the ranger centre. GC also

asked about security, IC said that CCTV would be outside, and the toilets would be locked at night until cleaners open them the next day.

Old Forfar Leisure centre: LC asked about the leisure centre and any update. IC said various options were put out on the consultation paper earlier in the year, the largest vote was for demolition however the other votes were used by others to put a case to not demolish it. The initial consultation was at the Council meeting in November 2020. Council decided to put the centre out for informal consultation for any parties who may be interested to come forward. In March 2021, An initial proposal was received by Station Park Community Trust however this was pulled by SPCT before the Council meeting in June. In June council took to view to market the property for lease. By Sept 2021 9 expressions of interest were put forward but none had developed business plans, so all were not taken up. Council then decided to put formal consultation out with a simple Yes or No on whether the centre should be demolished, this ends on the 26th Nov 2021. GC and TOB both asked what happens if council do not agree with the outcome of the consultation and what happens if some one comes in with an offer just to muddy the waters. IC said the councillors would need to look at the consultation and justify their reasons for any decision. If an offer is made it, councillors would need to consider this in light of any details. These are problems from the court case and making the building common good. TOB asked when does it get to a point where all avenues have been explored and a decision has to be made to sort this out, IC said this is a difficult question which the councillors will need to make. JM asked would this be the end of this, IC said that there could be another 8-week process under section 104 of the communities' act.

Other questions: Tob asked if the new common good asset register had been done yet for Forfar, has he could find Arbroath and Montrose but not Forfar. IC said there had been a report on Arbroath's Common Good properties and a similar report for Forfar was to come forward.. IC said he would forward details. Also asked why no public representation on the common good when it is public money and not the councils. IC noted that the local members make representation on the Common Good proposals.

GC asked if Angus council was increasing the road budget, IC said that £1m extra had been allocated to repair potholes and re-surface roads over the winter. (Post meeting note IC forwarded details that the road repairs was £800,000 with £100,000 for drainage and £100,000 for Winter)

KP asked about the old swimming pool. IC said that an offer was received and was subject to planning permission, however as the potential purchaser has not progressed this, the sale is not going ahead and the building will be going to auction. The sale at auction is not subject to planning. KP said that some of the window coverings were starting to get damaged by the weather. IC said he would get this looked at. Mr Cochrane was thanked for his time and his informative answers.

5. Chairs Report: Chair thanked everyone for attending and thanked Ian Cochrane and Jennifer Anderson for their input. Chair also spoke about being a community councillor and that we need to try and increase our numbers so we can do more and take on projects. Chair said it might be an idea to ask each community councillor to bring along a friend or colleague to a meeting to see if they might be interested. The election for community councillors was coming up next year and we need to bolster numbers. Chair thanked all members for their input.

6. Secretary's Correspondence/Report: All correspondence sent out, usual what's new list and consultations for comment. TOB mentioned defibrillators and that very shortly another 24/7 defib would be available linked to the ambulance service on the Dundee road at the car garage supplied by community council. The upkeep would be met by the garage and the box and cost to fit it would be paid by the Rotary club of Forfar. Discussion followed about the need for more defibs and the work community council were doing to get a register of all defibs and times they are available for use up and running.

7. Treasurer Report: No report, new treasurer to start shortly.

8. Police and Fire Service report: No report, Police informed that we are now doing face to face meetings.

9. Local Councillor updates: No updates this month

10.AOCB: Nothing to report this month.

11. Subgroup updates: No subgroups currently

12. Planning Applications: No planning applications requiring discussion at this meeting.

13. Date and time of next meeting: Next meeting Thurs 18th Nov 2021 at 7pm at The Stag Forfar