



## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TARLAND SCHOOL - 19th June 2024**

**Present :** David Ellis, Sandra Van Heusden, John Rogie, Stewart Urquhart, Janet Urquhart, Linda Moffat, Simon Welfare, Cllr. Sarah Brown and one member of the public (Nigel Healey).

**Apologies :** Apologies had been received from Andrew Wilson, Joyce Lovie and Councillors Geva Blackett and Anouk Kloppert.

### **Nominations and Elections:**

The Secretary said that the process of adopting a single election date in September for all Aberdeenshire Community Councils meant that this would take place at the first meeting after 19th September 2024..

### **Minutes:**

The minutes of the AGM of Cromar Community Council held on 21st June 2023 had been previously circulated and approved.

### **Chairman's Report:**

We were pleased to welcome John Rogie, Janet Urquhart, Stewart Urquhart and Linda Moffat as new Members over the course of a year in which there have been plenty of issues for the Community Council to work on in the service of the residents of Cromar.

Perhaps the most significant event for us was the completion of the Cromar Resilience Plan and its delivery to every house in the Community Council's wide area. The plan was compiled by Sandra van Heusden and delivery was carried out by volunteers from St Moluag's Church with exemplary efficiency, despite the challenging winter weather. We are grateful to them all and the plan has been well-received.

'Bridges, Roads, and Flooding' is a permanent and always much-discussed item on our monthly agenda. I am pleased to report that the new signage at Coull Bridge is now mostly in place and that the footbridge across the Tarland Burn has been splendidly restored and made safe by the MacRobert Trust estate.

We have continued to encourage members of the community to report potholes and Aberdeenshire Council to repair them, and we are relieved that work to put right the long-standing damage to the kerb in Burnside Road is at last top of the current 'to do' list. The resurfacing of half of Tarland Square, however, has only moved up two places to tenth in the 'dynamic list of resurfacing works'. We also await the installation, promised soon, of bike racks in Tarland Square, for use by road cyclists and mountain bikers.

The problem of flooding has not gone away. But the Flood Group is now active and representatives of both the Group and the Community Council have begun discussions with the MacRobert Trust which is supportive of a community initiative to put in measures to tackle

the problem.

As ever, we are grateful to the volunteers responsible for planting, installing and watering the hanging baskets in Tarland and have admired the Logie Coldstone Trust's enterprise in securing funding for the installation of solar panels and batteries in their Village Hall. And Christmas in Tarland would not be Christmas without the wonderful lighting display created by Gordon Ross and his team: this year more sparkling than ever, thanks to a grant from the Marr Area Committee. We also congratulate the Tarland Development Group on the success of the new mountain bike trails.

But not all problems have been solved, of course. Finding and catching the few locally available buses remains daunting for local residents and the roll-out of fast broadband remains frustratingly elusive.

More worrying, though, are the projected falls in pupil numbers at both Tarland and Logie Coldstone schools. There is a possibility that the roll at the latter – rightly seen by the community as the very heart of the village – may fall low enough to be 'mothballed' in the near future. The Community Council will do all it can to support the Parents' Association of Logie Coldstone and hope that both schools will continue to flourish.

A major cause of this and other problems – such as the difficulty of finding staff for our local businesses – is a now-chronic lack of affordable housing, and we appeal to local landowners to release sites so that young families can afford to live in the Howe and secure a prosperous future for everyone.

Last year, and the year before that, and, I think, the year before that, I said that in these days of dwindling council finances, communities like ours will have to do more for themselves. This is truer than ever now: so we are – and shall be - all the more grateful for the help, advice and information given us by officials of Aberdeenshire Council: in particular the Marr Area Manager, Janelle Clark; Sergeant Masson from Police Scotland; and, of course, from our Ward Councillors. And I thank, too, all the members of the public who have raised matters of concern with us in the interests of improving our way of life here in the Howe.

I would also like to thank my colleagues here on the Community Council for all their hard work and their lively contributions to our discussions, and I am particularly sorry that we have to bid farewell to Andrew Wilson, who is moving out of our area. We have many things to be grateful to him for – his wisdom, genial presence, and his extraordinary dedication to duty, which once meant that he took notes for the minutes of an online meeting from a roadside lay-by! Many, many thanks, Andrew.

### **Presentation of Draft 2023/2024 Accounts**

David Ellis presented the draft accounts for the year 2023/2024, which had been duly examined by Donald Gordon. The accounts showed an opening balance of £1,325.01 on 1/4/2023. Income for the year included the Aberdeenshire Council grant and resilience grants. Total income for the year was £2788.

Other than the usual Community Council expenses, the main items of expenditure this year related to the production and distribution of the resilience plan to all residents of Cromar. These totalled £680.60. The closing balance of the account was £823.95. The accounts were accepted by the meeting, proposed by Sandra Van Heusden and seconded by John Rogie.

The Chairman thanked Mr Donald Gordon for examining the accounts.

**Close of meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.10.