



STONEHAVEN TOWN PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF AGM

HELD ON 22nd November 2016 AT 7.00PM

AT INVERCARRON RESOURCE CENTRE, STONEHAVEN

Item

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present Trustees	In attendance	Apologies
David Fleming (DF) Andrew Newton (AN) John Robson (JR) Stuart Alexander (SA) Jim Stephens (JS)	Isabel Munn (IM) Charlie West – Stonehaven Folk Festival (CW) Ian Balgowan (IB) David Wood – Furniture Lodge (DW) Claire Dingwall (CD) Douglas Samways (DS) Cllr Peter Bellarby (PB) Ditta Neuman (DN) Mitch Mackay (MM)	Stonehaven Cycling Club Joanne Randle – Kidzact Alison Dyson – Girl guiding Cate Garrow – Home Start Gary Scott – Stonehaven Angling Association Bill Allan James Douglas Cllr Graeme Clarke

2. Minutes of last AGM

	Action
The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as a true record of the meeting.	

3. Chairman's Report – David Fleming

	Action
<p>David Fleming gave the Chairman's report.</p> <p><u>Chairman's Report - 2016</u></p> <p><u>After the last AGM</u></p> <p>I would like to start my report some 15 minutes after the end of last AGM, when the Trustees you elected met and came to the decision that there was no one suitable to be elected Chairman, so they opted for me. Your Trustees apologise most sincerely for this failure. So I would like to continue in that same vein, by spending a few minutes on our other failures during the last year.</p> <p><u>What has not worked</u></p> <p>We have spent some time continuing the campaign about the Bervie Braes. We have two simple requirements. The first is to remove those ugly useless orange and dirty white monstrosities which pollute the views in this tourist town. The second is to have reasonable weight and time restrictions, again to promote our beautiful town as a tourist attraction - and yes, we have a special interest in wanting to allow the highly</p>	

successful 12-wheeled Land Train to come down it safely. I have to report that, apart from regular reports from the Area Manager that something is happening, nothing has happened at all. The relevant officer has not had the courtesy of even speaking to us, or anyone else in the town.

Secondly, we attended a so-called consultation on the decision to use East Newtonleys for the new improved and much needed Council Depot. We claim no credit that that decision has since been reversed. What it does illustrate, again, however, is how not to go about consultation. The correct way is set out in something called the Gunning Principles, but, despite asking, there is no indication that this simple message has reached the offender. In fact, we have had no response over the whole year from the relevant officer.

The third example of failure is also characterised by the silence of the relevant officer, this time since May. He attended our meeting, and gave a very thorough and understandable verbal explanation of the issues surrounding the development of the Gas Works site in the Old Town. Since then, despite many requests, we have received absolutely nothing.

You will, by now, realise the gist of my analysis of our failures - the singular inability of some (and I strongly emphasise, some) council officers to apply reasonable standards of response, of courtesy, of democracy, and of professional standards of communication. This is in despite of us, acting on a suggestion from a member of the public attending one of our normal meetings, of having bi-monthly progress-chasing Liaison Meetings with the four Ward Councillors and Aberdeenshire Council's Area Manager. I appeal here and now, once again, to our elected councillors to sometimes stop defending the indefensible and hold those officers to your public account. It cannot be correct that officers alone take decisions and do not even try to connect with the community they are paid to serve. The current situation is very disappointing.

"Disappointing" is diplomatic language: a better way to describe the Aberdeenshire Council's position might be that it is alarming and deeply unsatisfactory.

Having said that, I do hope that the bi-monthly Liaison Meetings will continue, but that they will be attended (as was originally suggested) by relevant council officers, not just the Area Manager alone, and they come along with the intention of consulting and discussing and not dictating about the decisions that affect Stonehaven's future. The purpose of the meetings (in line with our constitutional duty as facilitators of improvement) was not to create and air further obstructions but was, and is, to find the solutions that Stonehaven needs to on-going problems,

But now, let us focus on our successes.

What has worked

Our most visible success has been the Land Train, our mobile smile machine. If STP had a pound for every time it brought a smile to someone's face, or I got fifty pence for every hand raised to wave to it, then STP and I would be rich. I must publicly thank all those who have put in many many hours of work, both on the road and behind the scenes, to bring so much fun to the Town. We have carried over 6,200 passengers since Easter this year, and of course, in doing so, brought trade to the town, fun and enjoyment (and a bit of education) to children and adults alike, and a very welcome boost to STP's reserves.

Our second project, whilst not so complete, is nonetheless a major progress in the improvement of the Town. We now have the complete cooperation and blessing of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service in the acquisition of their landmark but redundant, empty and unused Court Building in Dunnottar Avenue. We have gained the cooperation of six local service organisations (led by the Citizens' Advice Bureau) who are prospective tenants. We have the plans drawn up. All we need now is the £200,000 which is our current estimate of the full refurbishment costs. If any of you know of a benefactor or two, or any other source for this funding, we would be delighted to hear from you.

There are a number of other projects under way. I hope you will excuse me if I don't mention them all.

Other AGM matters

However, there are three matters which ought to be formally reported to the Partnership's AGM. First, we have concluded a long running change to the leases in respect of the Queen Elizabeth Caravan Park, representing the resolution of the dispute over the unannounced earthworks on the west banking of the Park. Secondly, we have tied up all the affairs of Stonehaven Town Partnership, The Company Limited by Guarantee, (which was the original vehicle for STP) and have now been able to have it de-registered. We are now operating solely as a SCIO, and are reaping the benefits of that. Thirdly, our membership now stands at 59 organisations, probably representing over half of the active community organisations in the town.

The future

One of the tasks of a Chairman's Report should be, in my view, to give some indication of the immediate future of the organisation.

In that respect, I am pleased to report that we have a strong team of Trustees, each one of whom I would like to thank most sincerely for their time (given willingly and voluntarily) and a lot of hard work, and for putting up with me. It is very gratifying that most of them have agreed to stand again as Trustees for the forthcoming year. That will provide a very solid core of expertise and enthusiasm for the further work. We are also very lucky indeed to have the services of our Project Officer, Isabel Munn. Her increasing skill set and delightful personality makes her support absolutely invaluable. I am even more pleased to be able to report that we have achieved one of my aims, namely that our financial base has been strengthened in the year in that we have been able to set aside a fund to ensure that STP can guarantee Isabel's payroll for quite some time in the future.

The other aspect of the future is the birth of new projects. Three are currently on the stocks.

The first is the idea of choosing Stonehaven as a stopping point for the many smaller cruise liners that are plying up and down the coast. This is in gestation.

The second relates to the current lack of safe facilities for cyclists in and around the area. We would hope that this project would be done in co-operation with other organisations covering the wider Kincardineshire area, and this project is at the formulation stage.

The third project is the Grande Promenade idea. This arose out of a perceptive article, first of all in the Stanehyve magazine of the Heritage Society, then picked up by the Leader newspaper and then by the Tourism Group. Some exploratory work has been

done, and we are actively testing whether there is support throughout the community for the overall idea.

I haven't reported every item on our agendas, but I hope I have given you a balanced report of our failures and successes, and that I can conclude by reporting overall that we have had a successful year, we continue to be a strong organisation, with a strong balance sheet, and a strong team spirit, focussed on the community's wishes, bringing significant improvements to the town we all love. So I believe I can report that the STP is in good heart, with a good future to look forward to, and plenty more to get enthusiastic about.

Does Stonehaven need Stonehaven Town Partnership?

Now you all know that I am standing down as Chairman immediately after this meeting. For reassurance (or otherwise), let me clarify that I would like, if you permit, to stay on as a Trustee, but only until such time as the Court Building project is completed. However, I think appropriate at this change to ask ourselves "Does Stonehaven really need Stonehaven Town Partnership?" That leads to some more detailed questions, such as:

- Would things happen with Aberdeenshire Council?
- Would things happen on some form of 'community initiative'?
- Is it correct that doing nothing is a possible option?

I think that all the evidence over the eight years since STP was founded - and I have been involved for all the time, so I have plenty of evidence - is that most of the answers to those questions are in the negative.

Stonehaven would not have a highly successful Caravan Park. Stonehaven would not have the hugely attractive Tolbooth Museum. Stonehaven would not be blessed by the fun enjoyed by over 6,200 people on the Land Train. Stonehaven would still have a Court Building languishing waiting for a buyer.

Without an organisation like STP, the budget cuts forced on Aberdeenshire Council and other public bodies would be much more visible in the life and infrastructure of the Town. Without an organisation like STP, the town could not address the stark fact that the Council cannot do everything the electorate expects of it. Without an organisation like STP, Stonehaven would be a duller, poorer, and a far less attractive seaside tourist destination and place to live and work in. We and all our guests would all be worse off.

I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have, or enter into a discussion on any of these matters that I have mentioned. I conclude by thanking all of you who have given me the opportunity to be part of this improving movement. I commend STP to your guardianship and this report to your meeting.

Thank you.

David Fleming
Stonehaven, November 2016

DW asked if the Court Building is now under STP ownership. DF responded that once the funding has been confirmed and the legals are in place SCTS will transfer to STP.

<p>IB made the comment that although the Cllrs get stick, they try to get the Council Officials to carry out the work.,</p> <p>IB also mentioned the Grande Promenade. It was confirmed that Sheila Howarth is taking presentation to groups in the Town.</p> <p>CD asked if the presentation can be put onto the STP website – IM to ask SH for presentation. SH is also asking for support from clubs</p> <p>MM thanked the chairman for his work this year and read out a letter that needed no response.</p> <p>DS thought that if the council officers are not responding to STP requests, it could lead the public to thinking that nothing is being done and this in turn could lead to difficulties getting volunteers for the future. The Chairman agreed, and the Council's behaviour is not encouraging.</p> <p>A question was asked about the Land Train income this year. It was noted that £26.5K was received in income but there were expenses such as salaries to come off this amount.</p> <p>DS thanked DF for the work he has done as Chair this year.</p> <p>DF responded that he is only standing down as he needs to concentrate on St James at present.</p>	IM
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4. Secretary's Report – Andrew Newton

	Action
AN reported that there had been 2 secretaries in the year DF for the Company which was wound up during the year and AN for the SCIO. AN now just makes the annual report to OSCR and ensures that STP is carrying out its work legally.	

5. Treasurer's Report– John Robson

	Action
<p>Financial Statement 22/11/16</p> <p>Copies of the accounts for the year ending 31/2016 are available in the room tonight for information.</p> <p>I don't intend going over the accounts just now, suffice to say that as of 31/3/2016 the bank account stood at £39.5k opposed to £25.6k the previous year.</p> <p>The chairman's report has given the various activities which either used funds or bought in more.</p> <p>Since 31/3/2016, I have opened a deposit account for STP to be used as a sinking fund towards next year's wages.</p> <p>The bank accounts now stand at £26k in the current account and £53.7k in the deposit account.</p>	

6. Presentation of annual accounts

	Action
Accounts will be submitted to OSCR on DS proposal and SA seconded	

7. Appointment of External Examiner

	Action
CS was nominated and accepted to carry on being the external examiner.	

8. Election of Trustees

	Action
<p>This year there were eight active trustees and one dormant trustee.</p> <p>JR, AN, SA, JS, BA, JD remain as trustees for next year.</p> <p>DF, EH and MW stood down as per constitution. DF offered himself for re-election and was voted in again as a trustee.</p> <p>CD would like to become a trustee but needs to join a club and be nominated as their STP representative.</p> <p>As a result of the meeting agreeing these nominations, there are now 8 trustees and 4 vacancies. Three trustees can be co opted onto the board over the course of the year.</p>	

9. Future Meeting Dates

	Action
<p>The new trustees will set dates for the 2016 meetings.</p> <p>These have taken place on the 4th Tuesday of every month. No meetings in July or December. Januarys meeting is usually arranged to be early in the month.</p>	New Trustees

10. AOCB

	Action
<p>None</p> <p>DF thanked people for coming to meeting.</p>	

Meeting closed at 20.00.

Trustees Meeting after AGM**Present:**

Present Trustees	Apologies
David Fleming (DF) Andrew Newton (AN) Jim Stephens (JS) John Robson (JR) Stuart Alexander (SA) Claire Dingwall (CD) Isabel Munn (IM)	Bill Alan (BA) James Douglas (JD)

1. Election of Office bearers

	Action
Nominations for Chairman – JS, DF proposed and JR seconded. Nominations for Treasurer – JR, DF proposed and JR seconded Nominations for Secretary - AN DF proposed and CD seconded	

2. AOCB

	Action
Date of next meeting is 3 rd January 2017 at St James' Church Hall. Agenda to be sent out before Christmas.	IM

Meeting closed at 21.30**IM 22nd November 2016**