

**STONEHAVEN TOWN PARTNERSHIP**  
**AGM**  
**TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**  
**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The report which follows reflects STP's SCIO status in that I will comment on the achievements of STP over the past year, particularly in relation to our projects, by linking what has been achieved to our Charitable Objectives which are:

to advance citizenship and community development by

1. encouraging voluntary activity and increasing the involvement of individuals in community activity by assisting voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises to develop their skills in eg managing and operating a community asset;
2. assisting in the regeneration of the area through the improvement of the physical, social and economic environment in order to: manage community land and associated assets for the benefit of the community and the public in general;
3. providing or assisting in providing, recreational facilities, and/or organising recreational activities, which will be available to members of the community and public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life of the community;
4. advancing community development, including urban or rural regeneration within the community;
5. advancing the education of the community of its environmental, cultural, heritage and/or history;
6. advancing environmental protection or improvement including preservation, sustainable development and conservation of the natural environment, the maintenance, improvement or provision of environmental amenities for the community and/or the preservation or buildings or sites of architectural, historic or other importance to the community.

Each project or activity undertaken by STP in 2014/15 will be taken in turn and matched to the Objectives using the numbering above before being commented on in more detail.

**The Queen Elizabeth II Caravan Site (1, 2 and 6)** – the caravan site, which is of economic and historic importance to the Town, continues to bring many visitors to Stonehaven. It will remain open until after the Festive period, closing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2016 for its winter break. The money STP has received in rent since the site re-opened in June 2013 on completion of a £1.9M refurbishment programme has been redistributed as per our Disbursement Policy which can be viewed on our website. Mark Kummerer, the consultant we have commissioned in the past, will produce a report on the economic impact of the caravan site on Stonehaven. This is David Fleming's project and I thank him for the hard work in continuing to monitor this asset to the town in line with our obligations as holder of the lease from Aberdeenshire Council. Our change in STP's status from Company Limited by

Guarantee to SCIO necessitated an amendment to the lease to reflect this. It has taken longer than expected but I am pleased to report that the change has now been made. As a consequence of this, the original company limited by guarantee and registered at Companies House as SC 320516 has now been dissolved.

Our thanks also go to the wardens Richard and Maggie Walker who continue to do a splendid job in making the site a welcoming place.

**All Weather Facility (1,2 and 3)** – STP continued working with others (mostly sporting) groups within the Town and the SDCC and this resulted in the all-weather playing surface, a basketball and netball court at Mineralwell being officially opened on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September by Jamie Hepburn MSP, minister for sport, health improvement and mental health. Now that the facility is open the Stonehaven Community All Weather Sports Facility Committee which had two STP representatives, John Robson and me, has fulfilled its remit and has been replaced by the Stonehaven Community All Weather Facility Management Committee. The SCAWSF MC is chaired by me and has community as well as Council and user representation. Getting to where we are now with this project has developed the skills of the local people who were members of the SCAWSF Committee, and those who will be involved in managing the facility will also learn from the experience. Hopefully these people will use these skills and pass on their experience to others in the future. Now that the facility is open and operational a recommendation in October to the Trustees that this project be deemed complete was accepted.

**Town Hall Trust (1)** – STP maintained its support for the Stonehaven Town Hall Trust. In particular, in April we welcomed the then Chair of the STHT who updated the trustees on progress with the transfer of this community asset and gave details of the improvements that had been made to the appearance of the Upper Town Hall. An outcome of Alan McConnachie's presentation was that Wynne Edwards' offer of advice and support to the STHT in relation to the fitting of a biomass boiler was accepted. A response from STHT is awaited. STP also continued to do what it can to ensure that the Trust gets the support it requires in order for it to attract volunteers to continue the impressive work it does in providing and delivering services to the people of Stonehaven as well as developing this valuable asset for the town. For example, STP's member groups were informed via our website and the monthly Mearns Leader column of the need for people to volunteer as trustees of the Town Hall Trust

**The Land Train/Bervie Braes Road (1, 4 and 5) –**

The efforts of our local councillors on our behalf to clear the way for negotiations with officials to secure a special dispensation for the Land Train to use the road have stalled. STP took the opportunity of the change in the administration to seek to reopen the negotiations by contacting Councillor Martin Kitts-Hayes and requesting a meeting to discuss all year opening, dispensation for the Land Train and a solution to the problem of the unsightly barriers. In response, Councillor Kitts-Hayes asked for reports from the Council's Legal and Governance and Roads departments. We hope soon to be contacted by Councillor Kitts-Hayes with a date for the meeting. Efforts to get the Land Train to use the Bervie Braes road, to have the road open all year round and for something to be done about the ugly and, we would argue, unnecessary barriers will continue.

One of the reasons behind the CCF grant was that the Land Train would create employment. It is pleasing to report that four part-time drivers and four conductors were employed. They have all done an excellent job and have been impressive ambassadors for Stonehaven and for STP. Thanks also go to the volunteer conductors who stepped in when necessary especially after some of the original appointees who were students went back to their studies. Also contributing to the success was the support of Les Clark and his team at Stagecoach's Spurryhillock depot, particularly Barry Foreman and Bob McAllan, for storing the train during the season and generally looking after it, and Alan Hurry of Survival Craft Inspectorate (SCI) which supplied the diesel. Our thanks also go to Emily Telford, Wendy Sylvester and Martin Gray of Dunnottar Castle/Dunecht Estates, and Richard and Maggie Walker at the Caravan Site for their support. STP is also grateful to Kevin Braidwood of Kirkton Motors for agreeing to store the train at his premises over the winter months. A special mention must be made of the contribution to this project of Robert Rodgers. Robert has driven the train from the very beginning and STP has benefitted from his advice, experience and enthusiasm for the project. For personal reasons Robert resigned in September and we wish him well for the future.

A survey of passengers was carried out in August with feedback being very positive. Many useful and imaginative ideas were put forward some of which have already been taken forward. STP is grateful to the K&M councillors for supporting our application to the Area Budget for £2,193 to help cover the cost of rain covers for the carriage and other items beneficial to both passengers and staff.

Feedback from the survey and other sources once again highlighted the need for another carriage. In August we were contacted by the CCF to say that they had been allocated a sum of money for existing projects to enable them to continue until December 2016. An application was made for the purchase of a second carriage and for additional funding for the PDC. A second carriage would provide even more opportunities for local businesses to advertise, and it is pleasing to report that more local firms are benefitting from the success of the Land Train in bringing visitors to the town by taking advantage of the marketing opportunities it provides.

Prior to its first run of the season we organised another competition for primary pupils, this time to name the train. It was won by David Tucker of Carronhill School and the Land Train is now officially known as "The Stoney Express".

The Land Train began operating for the season on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April. Its last run was on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October although it will be involved in the Stonehaven Business Association's Christmas Extravaganza this coming Saturday. Plans for next year are well advanced.

**Project Development Co-ordinator (1,2,3,4,5 and 6)** – As mentioned above, part of the grant from CCF was to enable STP to employ a Project Development Co-ordinator (PDC) for two years with the intention of the post becoming self-financing thereafter. Isabel Munn has been in post since 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and has proved to be extremely effective, efficient and competent in supporting STP, its trustees, its member groups and others in the work they do on behalf of the people of Stonehaven. She is a very valuable asset to STP and the town and we would not have managed to achieve what we have done this past year in progressing our numerous projects without her hard work and dedication particularly in relation to the Land Train. We are continuing to seek sources of funding to secure the post beyond next May. Hopefully our application to the CCF (see above) will be successful and

we can continue to benefit from Isabel's growing expertise and experience until the end of 2016 at least.

**Harbour Development Feasibility Study (2,3,4 and 6)** – A bit of background information will be helpful here. STP was asked by Aberdeenshire Council (see agreed minute of K&M Area Committee meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013) to “investigate the potential development of a marina at Stonehaven Harbour”. Following from that, the Council supported STP in producing a feasibility study. A grant was obtained from the European Fisheries Fund Axis 4 fund. A Steering Group consisting of representatives of those organisations funding the feasibility study ie Aberdeenshire Council and STP, was formed and, after due process, one of the bids to carry out the work to determine what options may - but equally may not - be possible was accepted. Comments were sought from those the Steering Group thought might be directly affected by any development of the harbour. These comments were passed to the consultants conducting the feasibility study. Within the process of undertaking the Feasibility Study, any and all individuals or organisations wishing to comment or make relevant suggestions, had the opportunity to do so. The consultants produced a draft report in April. The Steering Group met as soon as possible thereafter to consider the report and further clarifications were sought from the consultants. The final report along with a suggested course of action was presented formally at a special Trustees-only meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August. As a result and as promised (see last year's Chairman's report and elsewhere), the full report was placed in the public domain and a public meeting primarily of stakeholders was held on 27<sup>th</sup> August. The report, its conclusions and recommendations were presented at the meeting along with a recommendation on how to take it forward with the formation of a “Harbour Sustainability Group” ie before any decisions were taken, the entire matter was placed before a full public consultation when the people of Stonehaven were able to comment and submit their views and opinions. The ultimate aim was to ensure that Stonehaven harbour is sustainable for future generations, no matter what the financial climate. It was the sincere wish of STP that a viable solution was found which has the general support of the people of Stonehaven is found. Sadly, this was not the case as the meeting rejected the proposal to form a group to take the recommendations of the feasibility study forward in favour of keeping things as they are. Wynne Edwards, Michelle Ward and Isabel Munn are to be thanked for their efforts to ensure that this important feasibility study was undertaken and that relevant individuals and organisations were involved and included in the process. At the September meeting it was agreed by the Trustees that this project was now complete.

**Gas Works Car Park (2 and 4)** – A meeting with a surveyor from SSE in March indicated that the owners might be willing to consider options whereby the site could become a car park; however there has been no further communication. STP through project leader Michelle Ward will continue to push for this piece of land to be used for the benefit of the community.

**Court House (1,2,4,5 and 6)** – this building was also put up for sale by its owners, Scottish Court and Tribunal Services (SCTS), in 2014. Along with many others in the town STP would prefer if some form of community use could be found for the building rather than have it lie empty or be sold for some other purpose so STP contacted SCTS and they gave us until the end of March 2015 to come up with plans to use the building for community benefit. Project leader David Fleming then asked

for people to come up with suggestions as to how the Grade B listed building might be used and a number of possible uses were suggested. These were considered, an options appraisal document produced and another public consultation held. SCTS were satisfied that the possible options we were suggesting had merit and potential and gave the go ahead for us to develop the proposals further. STP then applied for and was awarded grants in June by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study. To date, the work, which is being led by professional advisors, has consisted of: preliminary work of assessment of options, which has resulted in the exclusion of two suggestions (the use by Dunnottar Primary School situated next to the building, and the re-location of the police services, allowing the whole building to be considered); a conservation statement to establish precisely the history of the building (parts of which date back to 1767); a full architectural survey of the existing building, including an assessment of the heating system; activities to ensure that the maximum community engagement and involvement is achieved and the creation of a business model to be able to assess the long-term sustainability of any proposals for the building's use. The support provided by the Consultation Institute enabled STP to organise a series of workshops for local people on consultation presented by Institute associate Davy Jones. The SCTS Estates Manager has been kept fully up to date, and STP is very grateful for her help and collaboration. The Historic Scotland adviser to Aberdeenshire Council has been kept fully informed. STP is also receiving valuable advice and mentoring from the Prince's Regeneration Trust. David and the other members of this project's sub group, John Robson, Elizabeth havens and Isabel Munn, are planning a major community engagement exercise in early December, and this will allow STP to complete the feasibility work and draft the Business Plan for the future of the building. The expectation is that the draft Business Plan will be developed by mid-January 2016, and the decision whether or not to proceed, (and in what form) will be made by the STP Trustees in late January, and in time for consideration at the SCTS Estates Committee's February meeting. Assuming we are to proceed, the following three months will be taken up by the negotiations to arrive at a final agreement about transfer, in time for the SCTS's Estates Committee meeting in May 2016.

**Former Model Lodging House/Cowie Lane (1,2 and 4)** – like the preceding two projects this also involves the possible regeneration of a community asset. Originally STP was considering the possibility of redeveloping the Cowie Lane building as a backpackers' hostel or bunkhouse to bring jobs and extra income to the town. The intention was for the asset to be transferred from council control to STP under the council's Community Asset Transfer policy with a view to turning it into a bunkhouse once funding from such sources as grants has been accessed. To that end, project leader Michelle Ward had lodged a CAT 1 application with Aberdeenshire Council. However, STP became aware that the Furniture Lodge Group (FLG) had also applied for the building to be transferred to them for use as a furniture exchange where people in need can acquire good furniture in an economically and environmentally beneficial and sustainable way. Volunteering and possible job creation is also involved. The Furniture Lodge Group became a member of STP earlier this year and the decision was taken to withdraw our CAT application and support their bid to have this asset transferred to them. Furthermore, through our disbursement of funds process, FLG applied for and was awarded a sum of money to assist in funding condition and valuation surveys of the building. Assuming the

building is suitable for both these uses, STP will continue to support the FLG to achieve their objective.

**Improving Our Town Centre (2)** – Although the three Planning for Real public consultation exercises which covered the north, central and harbour areas of Stonehaven were carried out a few years ago and the results assembled into a large spreadsheet with the identified actions allocated to a wide range of organisations, STP was reluctant to call an end to this project even though the task, undertaken by STP at the specific request of Aberdeenshire Council, was complete and many of the ideas had already been put in place. The original spreadsheet was updated to recognise the many actions that had actually taken place as a result of the townsfolk's suggestions, but highlighting those that remained. The intention was to demonstrate that participating in such public consultation exercises was worthwhile in that it showed what had been achieved in meeting expectations. The updated document was posted on the STP website with hard copies placed in the Library, Resource Centre, Leisure Centre, Community Centre and Viewmount. A press release accompanied its launch and STP is grateful to Neil Horne for his assistance. David Fleming lead this project and he is to be congratulated for his hard work and perseverance in ensuring that as many as possible of the improvements suggested by residents are brought to fruition.

An offshoot of PFR is Improving Our Town Centre (IOTC). The aim of this project was to bring together those who live, work or have responsibility for the town centre, or those such as the Horizon Group who just want to see Stonehaven look as pleasing and inviting as possible and, by the power of communal effort, tackle some of the little (or not so little) things which could make such a difference. The two public meetings held in 2012 and 2013 produced an improvement plan which Jim Stephen who took this on as project leader is working to implement.

It is pleasing to report that this STP project facilitated the establishment of the Stonehaven Town Centre Improvement Group which includes STP, the Horizon Group, SDCC, SBA and Aberdeenshire Council. Jim represents STP on this group which has made a positive start in engaging with businesses and local people to identify and highlight the issues as well as agree courses of action with the aim of improving the appearance of the town and the local environment generally.

**Energy Initiative (6)** – A presentation by independent energy consultants was made to trustees at the February meeting. It was however decided not to pursue a partnership with that particular organisation. Later in the year Wynne Edwards was approached by another provider offering a similar scheme involving STP setting up a sub group to establish a group buying scheme with the aim of improving the energy efficiency of the current housing stock of the town. By promoting the scheme, STP would receive a small payment for each house signed up to the scheme and this money would be reinvested in the community through STP's disbursement policy. It is expected that the scheme will also create jobs for local people. Wynne is pushing ahead with this project which will be of economic and environmental benefit to the people of Stonehaven.

**QR Codes (1 and 5)** – an approach was made to STP in August 2014 by Alan Craig requesting support for his attempts to develop the original QR code project which at the moment does not work very well in Stonehaven because signals for mobile phones are not very strong and there is no public Wi-Fi generally available. STP

took on the task of assisting Alan in overcoming the challenges of improving access and expanding the good quality content making it worthwhile for visitors and residents alike to use the service. It was initially thought that this project fitted in with what the Stonehaven Town Centre Improvement Group was proposing but it was felt that the demand for improved wi fi connectivity could be met by providing strategically positioned boosters and that this was a prerequisite of the STCIG's more detailed plans anyway ie the identified need for better wi fi connectivity could be met quicker. However, planning permission and listed building consent will be required. STP is still seeking the assistance of individuals or groups to help us with this project and anyone who is interested should contact either Alan Craig or project leader David Fleming.

**Plan B (2,3,4 and 6)** – I wish to begin this section with a reminder that it was made clear when it was launched and should be stressed again here that the Plan B vision was intended to give people something to consider, a stimulus to their thinking, a possible way in which the area might be developed, a starter for ten. It was never meant to be something that might form all or part of a planning application. Significantly, the vast majority of the feedback came from those who understood this and had actually seen the proposals. It was clear from these responses that people recognise that there is a need for change and that this area of the town has significant potential which, if managed carefully and sensitively, could have long term sustainable benefits for Stonehaven and its residents. It must also be stressed that Plan B related to the area of land between the river Cowie and the Queen Elizabeth II caravan site ie it includes the Recreation Grounds but is not specifically about them.

Throughout the year and as the deadline (28<sup>th</sup> November 2015) for the implementation of the Long Leases (Scotland) 2012 Act approached, STP became increasingly concerned at the lack of any apparent action being taken by the Council or the Recreation Ground Trustees (RGT) in relation to the need to secure the long term future of the Recreation Grounds. We took advantage of an exchange of letters in the Mearns Leader to have a meeting in June with a local solicitor acting on behalf of the RGT to address some misconceptions about our motives and intentions but also to express our concerns and seek feedback from the RGT. The solicitor agreed to convey the matters discussed with him to the RGT. The response when it came in late August was brief and unhelpful: "The Trustees were quite clear that they do not accept that there are any public concerns regarding their management and operation of the Recreation Grounds." It reinforced the view that the RGT believe that there are no grounds for concern about the long term future of the grounds and perceive any actions/comments by STP and others as an attack on them personally. Significantly, our concerns were shared by SDCC which also stressed the need to secure wider community involvement in the Trust. In my opinion it is ironic that, given the unjustified and misinformed attacks - many I suspect orchestrated by or on behalf of the RGT - on STP's Plan B proposals, it has been STP rather than the RGT that has been doing most to obtain reassurances about the long term future of the grounds for recreational purposes.

For the past seven months at least STP and SDCC have been pressing Aberdeenshire Council for information/confirmation as to what was being done to address the concerns as the date of implementation of the Long Leases Act approached. It took until late September for the first of two meetings with councillors and relevant council officials to be held. The Council's position and actions were

clarified/explained at the second meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October. I found it astonishing to learn that as of the 26<sup>th</sup> October ie a month before ownership of the Recreation Grounds is passed to them, the RGT had not even approached let alone discussed with the Council the necessity of placing a burden on the transfer to make doubly sure that the site can only be used for “recreational purposes and purposes incidental thereto”. It has to be said that the Council has similarly not been proactive in this matter. It also concerns me greatly that the RGT appear to have no intention of reinstating the requirement of the 1902 Town Hall Confirmation Act - in which they have hitherto placed so much importance – for the wider community of the town to be represented on the Trust.

In consultation with others, STP will continue to examine what can be done to meet the aspirations as communicated to us in the feedback from the Plan B event. All trustees have been involved in Plan B and I thank them for their continued support for this major project which has the potential to provide significant future benefit for Stonehaven.

**Cruise Ships (1,5)** – this project is led by John Robson who came up with the idea of attracting cruise ships to Stonehaven. The cruise ships would anchor in the bay and tender passengers to the harbour where coaches would be waiting to take them on various excursions to, for example, Dunnottar, Crathes or Balmoral castle(s), distilleries, Fowlsheugh, Trump Golf Resort. There would also be opportunities for disembarking passengers to visit the town’s shops, pubs, restaurants, open air pool. STP would derive financial benefit from the promotion of the excursions, which in turn would be added to the funds to be dispersed via the disbursement policy. A brochure of what Stonehaven has to offer, including possible excursions, was put together and sent to a number of cruise ship companies, one of which suggested that a powerpoint presentation would be helpful to them and possibly others. This was done and issued. Responses are awaited. STP is indebted to Elma McMenemy attended the meeting in January to advise on the project. STP also wishes to thank Bill Allan of the Rotary Club for his contribution to the project.

**Harbour Illuminations (2 and 4)** - Initially the idea behind this project was to extend the Christmas lights from the High Street to the harbour but it was felt that illuminating the harbour all year could add to the attractions that already exist there. Project Leader Jim Stephen is working with Aberdeenshire Council officials, a company which specialises in lighting and other interested parties such as the businesses/organisations which operate at the harbour to take this development forward.

**Beach Toilets (1,2 and 6)** - As the threat of closure still hangs over the Beach Toilets, STP made a stage 1 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application. The process was delayed while Aberdeenshire Council investigated ownership of the toilets and indicated that if they did own it then they would consider leasing it to STP. Aberdeenshire Council eventually confirmed that they did indeed own the toilets but that the land could only be used for recreational purposes. Alongside the CAT application approaches were made by Project Leader Michelle Ward to the businesses which operate along the promenade to see if part of the building might have the potential for some form of commercial activity. Although some initial interest was expressed nothing concrete was forthcoming. STP then contacted the member groups to inform them of the situation and asking for interest in and/or ideas



relating to finding a sustainable way the toilets could be maintained in the future. In recent communications Aberdeenshire Council has suggested that STP proceed to CAT Stage 2 and that there may be other options for the building. STP is awaiting confirmation from Aberdeenshire Council as to what these other options might be.

**Boardwalk (2)** – this has not yet been adopted as an official project but Jim Stephen has some ideas as to how the Boardwalk might be improved and has met with Aberdeenshire Council officials with a view to ascertaining what might be possible.

In the past year STP also undertook the following tasks which are not directly related to our Charitable Objectives but are relevant as regards our SCIO status. Firstly, in relation to our efforts to improve communications and raise the profile of STP it was decided to take a stall at the Feein' Market again this year. It was also decided to take a stall at the very successful Harbour Festival at the end of August. Similarly, quarterly newsletters have been produced as well as a regular column in the Mearns Leader. Also, an advert was placed in the new Mackie Academy booklet and two adverts for Mearns FM were produced, the first informed listeners that STP's regular monthly meetings were open to the public, the second gave information about the disbursement of money to local groups (see below). Related to this was the desire for STP to become as open and transparent in its operations as possible and to that end it was agreed that the monthly Project Update was published on our website alongside the agenda prior to the monthly meetings, the Project Updates were expanded to include an explanation as to the origins of and reasons for STP adopting the individual projects, the agenda heading was amended to make clear that the trustee meetings were open to the public and copies of key STP documents eg constitution, as well as minutes and agendas were placed in folders and distributed at key locations eg library, Resource Centre, around the town. These folders are updated regularly as are our membership records. The need for such activities was highlighted by comments received by people interested in the activities of STP as well as the result of the "Health Check" conducted in 2013. I recommend that another "Health Check" review be conducted this coming year. STP is keen to evaluate its performance and to that end an examination of our involvement in the "Chippergate" affair was conducted and the lessons learned especially in relation to communication were noted. Furthermore, a document entitled "In the Town and for the Town", compiled by me and agreed by the trustees, which explained the role, status and functions of STP as well as explaining how we are accountable, our relationship to Aberdeenshire Council and how we consult was placed on the website. The STP's Communications Policy was finalised earlier this year.

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of STP I welcome three new member organisations: The Furniture Lodge Group, Grampian Tigers Youth Cycling Club and Enscape.

Although our SCIO constitution would normally prevent us from objecting to a planning application, it was felt that because we sub let the caravan site to the Caravan Club, we should object to Stewart Milne's plan for the Mains of Cowie site on the grounds of amenity in that it overlooked the caravan site. STP also had concerns about flooding. David Fleming successfully put STP's case at the Mains of Cowie pre-determination hearing in April.

Our SCIO constitution does not specifically require us to disburse any money raised by STP directly to groups or organisations in the town but we have chosen to do so. A Disbursement Sub Group was formed as per our Disbursement Policy and STP

has so far disbursed over £4,000 to local organisations. Stuart Alexander, Mike Robins and George Strang who were the lay members of the sub group are to be thanked for their contribution.

STP has assisted other organisations in the town in response to requests. For example, the SBA asked for assistance in its drive to build on its membership and some of our Project Development Co-ordinator's time was allocated to this. Also, STP supported the objections of the Stonehaven Flood Action Group's Coastal Flooding Sub Group by participating in the consultation exercise on the Aberdeenshire Council/SEPA flood alleviation plan.

Finally, STP was one of the first non community council groups to join KDP and after their recent AGM, our secretary Andrew Newton was elected to KDP's board.

STP is grateful for the support and encouragement it has received and continues to receive from our four Stonehaven councillors in particular and the Ward 18 councillors in general. The help and advice provided by Willie Munro and Karen McWilliam is also very much appreciated.

At the beginning of my report to last year's AGM - and the previous one - I commented that STP was going from strength to strength as an organisation that gets things done and has the best interests of the people of the town at heart. It is once again very pleasing for me to report that the reputation of the STP as an effective community based voluntary organisation continues to grow and its ability to identify projects which will benefit the people of Stonehaven and take them through to fruition is recognised widely throughout the town and beyond. This success is in no small part due to the commitment of able volunteers giving up their time for the benefit of the people of Stonehaven and the more people become involved, the more we can achieve.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their invaluable assistance and advice over the past year. We should all be reassured that David Fleming, Andrew Newton, Michelle Ward, John Robson, Elizabeth Havens and Jim Stephen have indicated that they are willing to continue for at least another year because that combination of dedication, experience and continuity will help STP serve its members and the people of Stonehaven. I wish to thank Michelle Ward for her work as treasurer, and John Robson for taking on that role part of the way through the year. Mandy Murray resigned earlier this year and I thank her for her contribution. Wynne Edwards and Allan Sutherland are standing down at this AGM and require to be recognised formally for everything they have done over a number of years to make STP the successful organisation it is today. Their departure and mine coupled with existing trustee vacancies leaves six vacant posts and I hope these will be filled because, although STP has achieved a great deal, much remains still to do.

Douglas Samways  
Chair, Stonehaven Town Partnership  
November 2015