

MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2008

At a meeting of LERWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL held in the Town Hall Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick, at 7.00pm

Members

Mrs A Simpson
Mrs K Greaves
Mr D Ristori
Mr W Spence
Mr A Johnson

Mr E Knight
Mr W Stove
Mrs M Robertson
Ms K Fraser

Ex-Officio Councilors

Cllr J Henry

Cllr J Wills

Co-opted Members

Mr L Henry

Miss C Holmes

In Attendance

PS B Gray, Northern Constabulary
Margaret Birrell, 'Drink Better' Co-ordinator
Hazel Sutherland, Executive Director, Education & Social Care, SIC
Mr Robert Sinclair, Senior Contract Manager, Capital Programmes, SIC
Mr Neil Riddell, Shetland Times Reporter
Mrs K Semple, Clerk to the Council

Chairman

Mrs A Simpson, Vice Chairman to the council presided.

08/12/01

Circular

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

08/12/02

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from and Mr J Anderson, Mr R Leith, Mr M Peterson, Cllr C Smith, Cllr A Wishart and Mr L Angus

08/12/03

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2008 were approved by Mr D Ristoti and seconded by Mrs A Simpson.

08/12/04

Business Arising from the Minutes

08/11/05 – Mrs K Greaves noted she had previously requested a breakdown of the drugs figures but was told it was not possible.

Sergeant B Gray explained it would be almost impossible to give a breakdown of the figures on a monthly basis but in an attempt to give the Community Council more information had prepared a breakdown relating to a 3 month period.

He also advised Members that, following the Chairman's enquiry at the last meeting of Lerwick Community Council, the installation of CCTV in the town was being held up by Planning, SIC.

08/12/05

Police Report

PS B Gray noted the following details of offences compared to those of the same time last year.

Class 1 - Crimes against the person – Up from 10 to 12, all detected
Class 2 - Crimes involving indecency – Remained the same at 17, with 13 detections
Class 3 - Crimes of dishonesty – Up from 187 to 203 of which 144 were detected
Class 4 – Crimes of vandalism – Up from 186 to 213 of which 125 were detected
Class 5 - General Crimes – Up from 131 to 150 with 145 detections
Class 6 - Miscellaneous crimes – Down from 389 to 384 with 362 detections
Class 7 - Traffic Offences – Down from 415 to 346 with 342 detections

The Sergeant stated that from 1st July – 1st October 2008, 18 persons were reported in connection to class A, B and C drugs and 74 searches were carried out, in the same period, under the misuse of drugs act. He noted this compared to 59 during the same period the previous year.

He noted the 'Drugs Dog' had been deployed 26 days at Northlink Ferries and 25 days in another specific area.

Mrs M Robertson stated the force seemed to be 'superbly proactive' in relation to drug searches but the figure reported seemed very low in comparison.

PS B Gray noted that 74 searches for the period was a good figure as the police must have specific reasons to search. He stated that if someone is stopped, searched, found in possession of drugs and taken to court the Police must still show they had reasonable grounds to search the individual in the first place.

He stated that 18 positive searches out of 74 was a high standard.

PS B Gray went on to explain it was much more difficult to prove if someone had taken drugs compared to alcohol, and often it could be a mix of drugs and alcohol.

Cllr J Henry enquired if he had an age breakdown.

The Sergeant replied that it was across the board but was predominantly late teens to twenties.

Miss K Fraser noted that in the previous year the crimes statistics went down but this year they seemed to be going up. She asked if this was a trend.

PS B Gray replied that the rise in crime figures at one point could be attributed to one individual who had since been dealt with. He went on to explain that he could not say there were more crimes compared to previous statistics but more were being reported.

The Vice Chairman enquired if a replacement Traffic Warden had been found and asked who funded the position.

The Sergeant stated the costs came out of the Police budget and noted there was still no word of a replacement.

The Vice Chairman thanked PS B Gray for attending the meeting and giving his report which concluded at 7.20pm.

08/12/06

'Drink Better', Shetland Drug & Alcohol Forum – Margaret Birrell, Co-ordinator

Ms M Birrell began her presentation by explaining that the long term strategy of the 'Drink Better' campaign was to tackle people's unhealthy relationship with alcohol and promote the fact that alcohol can be enjoyed in moderation for its quality and taste.

She stated that 'Drink Better' was modelled on 'Educ'alcool', a pioneering campaign which has been running successfully in Quebec, Canada for the past 20 years.

Canada's success proved drink culture could be changed and Ms M Birrell stressed it was a long term plan to educate the public, particularly young children of the damage caused by alcohol misuse.

She stated rather than demonising alcohol people could be educated to enjoy alcohol moderately, safely and responsibly focusing on positive enjoyment.

Ms M Birrell reiterated that the campaign was a long term approach to tackling the problem and it could be expected to be 10 years before any real improvement could be noted.

She stated the message would be put across in subtle, small ways – a "drip, drip effect" with six key messages, drink less, not at all, drink better quality, for the right reasons, context and respect the choice of those not to drink.

The campaign challenges attitudes and the perception that the young drink to excess where in reality, for example, 25% young teens don't drink but the perception of that age group is that 99% does. 'Drink Better' focuses on the actual norms and highlights them.

Ms M Birrell advised 'Drink Better' would be very happy to raise awareness of the campaign by visiting Community Councils, Community Groups, Schools, work places etc. and work in partnership, getting the public to sign up to the key messages and understand that it is "owned by the community".

Other campaigns to promote 'Drink Better' and build up the logo includes a promotion to be held at Tesco, Thursday 18 December, where information, bags, calendars and bottle openers will be given out.

She stated that next year they hoped to get licensees, halls off licenses, hotels and pubs on board.

Cllr J Wills enquired how Ms M Birrell could be sure of getting honest statistics.

Ms M Birrell stated that some information may have to be taken with a pinch of salt but noted that on the whole people were honest as they had nothing to gain otherwise and explained some funding was set aside for research.

Cllr J Wills suggested a student could be employed at little cost to do a dissertation.

The Vice Chairman enquired if the proposed survey on retail sales of alcohol had taken place.

Ms M Birrell replied "Not as yet" as they had been waiting until Tesco had "set up". She explained that it had been reported that Somerfield, the previous owners of the building, had the highest sales of alcohol over the whole of Scotland.

Mr B Stove highlighted the difference in structure, attitude and access between Canada and Britain and stated "it would probably take 50 years to make a difference here".

Ms M Birrell agreed it was easier for them in Canada but was still keen to see how things "pan out in Shetland".

Ms K Fraser asked what plans were in place to get pubs and licensees on board.

Ms M Birrell replied they would be asked to sign up to the "key message" and sell more expensive, better quality alcohol. She noted it would be a challenge but they would have to try.

Ms K Fraser noted that in her opinion most pubs were "dismal, dreary and quiet" and may only gain by the campaign.

The Vice Chairman thanked Ms M Birrell for her interesting and informative presentation.

The presentation concluded at 7.45pm and both PS B Gray and Mrs M Birrell left the meeting.

08/12/07

'Blueprint for Education' – Hazel Sutherland, Executive Director, Education & Social Care, SIC

Mrs H Sutherland stated in November 2007 at the Services Committee meeting it was agreed that the Education Service should be reshaped as a whole across Shetland.

She stated a substantial reduction in population was anticipated raising the question of viability of some rural schools and the educational and financial viability of these schools would have to be considered.

It was essential that the opportunity for savings be looked at while providing the best quality educational opportunities at all levels. An action plan was put in place to look at all schools within Shetland, their management and quality of education provided.

In June 2008 the information gathered was reviewed and it was agreed to look at quality education and transition at three stages, Pre-School/Primary, Secondary/Further/Higher Education and Additional Support Needs.

She stated that given the Council's current financial position the structure put in place must be affordable and sustainable while offering quality education across the board and a balance found between management and teaching.

Added pressure on the budget was the introduction of free school meals at a cost of £250,000 per year and an increase in the entitlement to pre-school education.

Mrs H Sutherland noted that the Curriculum for Excellence meant no one would leave school without the skills needed to find employment and vocational learning would be recognized as a valuable alternative to academic learning.

Ms K Fraser asked how Shetland's "set up" compared to Orkney's.

Mrs H Sutherland replied it was difficult to compare as the geography of Orkney was much rounder. However, she noted that in comparison Shetland had more secondary schools.

Cllr J Wills stated he went to a 'Blueprint for Education' meeting at Sound School and only two parents turned up for the meeting. He noted they were happy to be consulted but felt the questionnaire was poorly put together.

He stated that he could not understand why the proposed New Anderson High School did not include a Nursery and Primary section.

Mrs H Sutherland agreed the Blueprint for Education questionnaire was not perfect but stressed the discussion it generated was more important.

Mrs K Greaves expressed concern that 'experts' had to be brought up from South to fill specific posts and asked if facilities could be put in place so Shetlanders could be trained for the posts instead.

Mrs H Sutherland replied that it could be looked upon as discriminatory but stressed there were some very good training programmes available for those wishing to further their careers.

Mr W Stove stated those who leave Shetland to go to University and College should be encouraged to return as graduates.

Cllr J Wills noted Shetland Islands Council provided excellent training for their staff and Train Shetland was the envy of many places.

Ms M Robertson noted that it seemed a bit of a "time loop". The education system had been looked at before when there was talk of closing smaller rural schools. She stated people got passionate about their own area and looked upon schools as the centre of the community.

She asked if something positive would come out of the consultation.

Mrs H Sutherland advised there was a drive for change and changes had to be made in order to afford the best of education for all within the budget available.

Mr L Henry queried any changes to the leaving age. He stated that if this was increased any pupil forced to stay at school against their will could be disruptive to other pupils wanting and willing to learn.

Mrs H Sutherland stated there was no planned change to the leaving age but different training opportunities would be made available to those who were less academic.

Mr W Spence asked if the preferred classroom size of 20 for Primary children was the same for Secondary.

Mrs H Sutherland replied that unfortunately this could not be the case as the choice of curriculum made this more difficult.

Cllr J Wills stated they had touched on a big problem and perhaps government policy may have to be revised and a different model put in place for the Highlands and Islands.

The Vice Chairman thanked Mrs H Sutherland for her presentation which concluded at 8.15pm

08/12/08

Update, Proposed new Anderson High School – Mr R Sinclair, Senior Contract Manager, Capital Programmes, SIC

Mr R Sinclair advised the site selection was complete and the Knab was still the preferred site for the proposed New Anderson High School.

He stated the new plans looked to minimise the disruption to pupils. Decant and phasing proposals were being developed and a new traffic impact study was underway which would also take into account the impact of traffic during construction.

He stated the Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) approach was continuing and advice sought from the Scottish Government.

The budget set for the new school is £49m.

Mr R Sinclair noted the accommodation schedule had been reduced to 15,000m², new design underway and planning application for March 2009 still believed to be achievable.

He stated that the concept designs show a 4 storey building in an "F" shape with links to the existing Additional Support Needs base.

There would be two entrances, both with sheltered access; the main entrance to the school would be from Knab Road.

Mr R Sinclair noted it was still a work in progress but gave some idea of the new plans.

Level -2 Ground Floor, Sports Hall, Plant, Janitors Accommodation.
Level -1 Upper Floor Sports Hall, Cleaners Rooms, Storage, Kitchen, Dining Hall, Craft & Design, Technical Department, Learning Support & Life Skills.
Level 0 Main Atrium, Social Area, Admin & Reception, Home Economics, Multi Purpose Hall, Music & Business Studies.
Level 1 Languages, Social Studies, Library and English.
Level 2 Science, Art and Math's.

The Vice Chairman asked how many could be seated in the proposed new Dining Hall.

Mr R Sinclair replied that it would be 300 – 400. The current Dining Hall seats only 75.

Mr L Henry asked if there would be different recreational areas according to age groups. He advised that pupil's preferred to stay within their own age groups.

Mr R Sinclair stated he would feed back Mr L Henry's comments and reiterated the design was still a work in progress.

He noted as much as possible would be done to minimise disruption to the pupils and stated Music could possibly be decanted to the New Bruce Hostel as it had the same floor area. Otherwise, temporary buildings would be sought.

The Vice Chairman remarked that no doubt this would come at a "terrible cost".

Mr M Robertson asked when the consultation letters were sent out advising residents in the area of the proposed changes as she had not received any. She also requested if a consultation meeting was to be arranged for the residents.

Mrs H Sutherland apologised for not sending Mrs M Robertson a consultation letter and advised a meeting would be arranged sometime between now and Christmas.

She stated the concept designs would go before the Council in February to make sure they were financially and educationally "do-able".

Mrs M Robertson remarked it was "good to see something on the table" as the uncertainty had become quite stressful for some of the residents.

Mrs K Greaves asked what the chances were of the costs being reduced by a significant margin given the building industry was in decline.

Mr R Sinclair replied there should be much keener interest from contractors and they would try to get the best price possible.

The Vice Chairman raised concerns regarding the proposal to demolish a building containing asbestos, discussed at previous presentations, **08/07/07** page 4 and **08/09/05** also page 4.

Mr R Sinclair advised that for a number of reasons the idea of demolishing had been abandoned.

Cllr J Wills stated that there had never been a decision to go to the Knab site and if the school could not be built affordably and at minimal disruption another site would have to be chosen.

He stressed that the Council could not afford the projected £49m to build the school. He advised perfectly good schools were being built on the mainland for £26m. He conceded that any school built in Shetland required a higher specification due to the weather conditions and larger social space required but still felt costs could be brought down to £34m, "a 44% decrease" on the original estimate.

Cllr J Wills stated the design of the proposed New Anderson High was dictated by the site and it was far more costly to construct a building 4 storeys high rather than two storeys on a larger footprint.

He noted steps had been taken in the new concept plans to minimise disruption but it had not gone far enough. He advised the seven phase demolition and building plan would mean pupils could be "on a building site for three years".

Cllr J Wills stated this was the fifth attempt to plan the new Anderson High School in the Knab area and £3m had been spent so far. He stressed this was massive maladministration and had taken his concerns to the Ombudsman.

The Vice Chairman thanked Mrs H Sutherland and Mr R Sinclair for the presentation which concluded at 8.50pm.

Mrs H Sutherland asked if she could come back in February 2009 to further update Members on the plans.

The Vice Chairman agreed and asked the Clerk of the Council to contact Mrs H Sutherland and advise her of the February meeting date.

08/12/09

Correspondence

9.1 Finance Services, Shetland Islands Council – New Anderson High School, Costs

To date (as at 06/11/09)

Noted

9.2 Davis Williamson, Building Maintenance, SIC – Response following request for information regarding the estimated total maintenance costs to the existing AHS buildings through to 2014

Noted

9.3 Sandra Laurenson, Chief Executive, NHS Shetland – Parking Issues, Gilbert Bain

The Vice Chairman stated that that day, she had counted 25 vacant spaces at the back of 'Brevik' which should be used by staff as opposed to the Gilbert Bain car park.

Mr A Johnson noted that the car parking spaces at Gilbert Bain Hospital were filled each day by 9.30am

The Vice Chairman noted that in her response Ms S Laurenson did not refer to Lerwick Community Councils request for Hospital staff to be told to park at 'Brevik' rather than being "encouraged" to do so.

She asked the Clerk of the Council to write again to Ms S Laurenson with the request.

9.4 Grant Gilfillan, Property Officer, SIC – Old Archives, Poor Condition of Site

The Vice Chairman asked the Clerk of the Council to 'chase things up' and make sure the problem is dealt with.

9.5 Alan Blaine, Deputy Manager, Shetland Amenity Trust – Heritage Signs

Mr E Knight noted the Shetland Amenity Trust had the ability to deal with the project of 'Heritage Signs' but not the funds to do so and suggested this could be something Lerwick Community Council could help fund.

The Vice Chairman agreed this could be looked into.

Mr D Ristori stated he could assist by gathering information and putting forward suggestions of what could be done.

The Vice Chairman thanked Mr D Ristori and stated she looked forward to hearing his suggestions.

9.6 Chris Medley, Head of Capital Programme & Housing, SIC - Craigilea

Noted

9.7 June Burns, Secretary/Treasurer, The Swan Trust – Vacancy for Trustee

Mr E Knight nominated Mr A Johnson for the position.

This was seconded by Mr D Ristori.

All Members present at the meeting and the Chairman, who had left details of his nomination, were in agreement with the proposal.

9.8 Laurence Smith, Lerwick Town Centre Association – Street Furniture

Noted

08/12/10

Financial Report

The Vice Chairman stated she had been advised by the Clerk of the Council that an Additional £363.00 could be added to the estimated free funds figure.

08/12/11

Financial Assistance

All requests for financial assistance held over until January 2009

08/12/12

Planning Applications

12.1 2008/360/PCD – To change use of storage sheds/open space to plant & garden Centre, 3 Brentham Court, Harbour Street, Lerwick by Mr M Stewart

No objections

12.2 2008/376/PCD – To erect 2 storey rear extension, 1 Upper Baila, Lerwick by Billy and Nicola Johnson

No objections

12.3 2008/373/PCD – To erect 15, 1 bedroomed flats and 2 Commercial units, North Star/Mooney's Wake, Harbour Street, Lerwick by Hjaltland Housing Association

Objection on the grounds that commercial premises in the area is not required and two additional flats should be included instead.

08/12/13

Any Other Business

Mr D Ristori noted cement which had dripped and set on to the handrail at Tod's Steps had given a bad cut to a member of public. He stated he had checked the handrail himself and could see it was a danger.

Mrs A Simpson asked the Clerk of the Council to contact Neil Robertson, Network Engineer, Roads, SIC, advise him of the situation and ask that the problem be dealt with as a priority.

Mr D Ristori advised three more lane signs needed to be replaced. 'Irvine Closs', between Alliance & Leicester and Stems, 'Campbell's Lane' between Rae's and Loose Ends and 'Mullay's Steps' between The Noost and Chicken Hut.

The Vice Chairman asked the Clerk of the Council to write to Neil Hutcheson, Roads, SIC and pass on the details.

She noted there was still problem of cars parking across from each other at Lower Hillhead causing the remaining road to be too narrow.

The Vice Chairman stated she had observed the 'gritter' having a difficult time passing between the cars.

She asked the Clerk of the Council to write to Neil Hutcheson, Roads, SIC and asked that the problem be addressed.

There being no other competent business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

MRS A SIMPSON
VICE CHAIRMAN
LERWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL