

Item Issue

1. Welcome & Apologies

John Chapman, Chairperson of The Garioch Partnership, welcomed all to our Summer Forum and 2018 AGM.

Attendees and apologies are listed in Appendix A.

2. AGM 2018

a) Minutes of AGM 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Kay Diack, seconded by Marion Chapman.

b) Matters Arising

Following the request made at last year's AGM, paper copies of the Annual Report had been made available, along with copies of the revised constitution.

After the last AGM, there had been 2 trustee spaces remaining following Audrey Findlay's resignation. George Petrie was co-opted onto the Board following the AGM, leaving one unfilled Trustee space of eight available.

c) Chairman's Report

John reported that it has been another busy year for The Partnership. We had been hoping to have the accounts examined before the AGM. Dawn has been busy with GDPR presentations, providing training for a variety of groups in both City and Shire. It is important to note that this is just the start: The Information Commissioner's Office are already planning new rules. It has been a struggle for small groups and businesses alike; there was two years' notice provided of the new GDPR regulations, but the ICO continued to make changes to requirements in the run-up to implementation.

We had a really good Spring Forum, which included Dawn's presentation on GDPR. This was followed by a good discussion around the issues arising. We hope that Dawn's training has helped, but John emphasised that we are still happy to help if anyone has any questions about GDPR. If we don't know the answers, we will know someone who will!

The Garioch Partnership have continued to be represented at both regional and national bodies; it is nice for the Partnership to be respected this way and for Dawn especially to be recognised in this area.

We have had several financial obstacles to overcome this year, like so many in the Shire and throughout the UK. Our Service Level Agreement has been cut by 5% for 2018/19 and our Community Initiative Grant Fund has also unfortunately been cut. We have been accounting for the expected SLA cut, by reducing our outgoings.

Our website and newsletter continue to be a conduit for information. Louise has also set up a weekly e-mail update: we are aware that we share a lot of information on a regular basis and e-mail seems to be the easiest and most cost effective way of achieving this. Hopefully the new update presents the information in a

clearer and easier to read format, but if it doesn't work, please let us know. We will accept all feedback.

Lastly, John thanked the staff, Board and Review Panel for their time and effort. He added that "The members of our virtual review panel do a sterling job in the background and we couldn't do the job without them. I believe in the staff and Board, and believe that we can deliver, do a job for the Council and for the Community and we will continue to support them."

There was a comment from the audience, regarding the weekly update, stating that it was clear and useful information. John stated that this was the first question he had had at an AGM!

d) Treasurer's Report

A draft statement of receipts and payments was provided in the meeting programme. Marion Chapman, Treasurer, stated that the full accounts would be published once they had been approved by the financial examiner. She added that, while we are waiting to finalise the balance sheet, the Receipts and Payments accounts shows the years trading, illustrating the true picture of The Garioch Partnership.

The statement of receipts shows that grants are down from 2016/17; this figure includes a grant from Awards For All, for updating IT equipment. In addition to this, the Partnership added £1,000 for the new equipment. Gross receipts from other charitable activities includes a refund from an overcharged payment.

We also paid out £465 more in Community Initiative Grant funding than was supported by the Council.

Overall, the figures show that we are reducing expenditure, including a decrease in Governance costs, due to reduced cost of financial examination, in comparison with last year.

Currently, we are in a good financial position at the moment, with approximately £65,000 in the bank, although this includes approximately £7,000 held on behalf of other groups.

John thanked Marion for her report, and added that, once the accounts have been examined, they will be combined with the Annual Report and submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Registrar (OSCR). This must be done before the end of December, but we are aiming to submit them in the first week of September at the latest.

John also pointed out that, following a request at last year's AGM, the list of Community Initiative Grants awarded has been included in meeting programme. These show that we funding a good range of groups and purposes, including training and development, supporting long lasting development.

A question was raised about the Grant process; John explained that we try to keep the process simple, using an online form requesting cost and benefits of the proposed project for funding. These are generally received electronically, then sent to our review panel. This is a panel of volunteers who give their opinions on each funding bid. If the panel do not reach a unanimous decision, the application goes to the Board, who will review the opinions and comments of the panel, and make a final decision.

There were only 3 applications declined in 2017/18, primarily due to retrospective applications. Where applications have been declined, we will try to work with the groups to help them submit an alternative funding bid.

e) Election of Board Members

There were 7 nominees for re-election, with no further nominations from the floor; all 7 were accepted. These were: John Chapman; Marion Chapman; Kay Diack; Heather Fulford; Graham Geddes; George Petrie and Nom Wright.

John highlighted that there is still one trustee space available; he asked anyone who may be interested to get in touch.

g) AOCB

John asked members to approve the revised constitution for The Garioch Partnership.

The original constitution had been created 6 years ago and was one of the first Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) constitutions in Scotland. It was comprehensive at the time; SCIOs were new so they didn't go into any great depth. We have applied to OSCR for a SCIO to allow the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) but it will also allow other things, so it will be necessary even if the CAT does not go ahead.

The new constitution will allow us to:

- Raise funds for ourselves;
- Charge for membership – but we won't.
- Take in accountants as part of the Board
- Will allow us to co-opt representative of community councils to the Board, giving us greater partnerships with our communities;
- More clarity of what our trustees can or cannot do;
- Revises quorate figure from 20% currently to 10% under the new constitution.

Copies of the revised constitution had been made available online, with paper copies available at the meeting and OSCR were happy with the revisions.

New constitution was approved.

3. **Presentation: TGP Business Plan for Market Place School Community Asset Transfer**

John started by explaining the reasoning behind the proposals. In the current financial climate, The Garioch Partnership, like almost every organisation, are facing financial constraints. In order to safeguard our future, we needed to look at ways of raising funds. The big question was how? A popular way taken by other groups has been to set up cafes – but there are already 32 cafes in Inverurie and we didn't want to add to that, and potentially threaten other groups. Looking at other options, it was decided to investigate developing a Third Sector Hub as we know that there is a lack of affordable space for community groups, including uniformed groups, arts groups and drama groups.

Inverurie was chosen as the preferred location as it has transport links by road, rail and bus. It is also probably the biggest town in the Garioch. Inch is too far out and in Westhill we were currently supporting a group with their own Community Asset Transfer and we did not want to compete with them.

Other buildings were examined for suitability: The Health Centre is no longer structurally sound and would require rebuilding on site. The NHS is not included in the Community Asset Transfer legislation, so we would be unable to negotiate the purchase cost. The Wyness Hall is not big enough for what we would like to do and has no parking: we could only generate enough funds to pay for one development worker, whereas our aim would be to expand our business. We want to have more development workers and increase our work in the community, not just maintain our current levels.

Having looked at what buildings were available, very few come up and when they do, they are very expensive. While looking at potential opportunities, approximately 18 months ago, Market Place Primary School was just coming to the end of its financial life. We started looking at other groups who had done similar: we visited Norton Hall in Edinburgh, who have converted a former school into a Third Sector Community Hub, making a modern, vibrant space while maintain some of the original features of the building.

Market Place School – is this a going concern or just a dream? Having spoken to a number of groups, there is a need for this type of space. We have already had calls from groups wishing to book rooms. The Garioch Partnership is about bringing people and groups together; this project is an opportunity to bring new groups

together, creating a new synergy: new people meeting brings new ideas.

The process has taken 18 months so far. Our Community Asset Transfer request and Business Plan have been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council. Our original plan was submitted under the previous Garioch Area Manager; with staffing changes and changes to the regulations, some things may not have been handled correctly. We have had a meeting with the new Garioch Area Manager; this went well and seemed very positive. We agreed a timeline, but issues have since arisen with the changes to the Council Strategy, meaning that we had to submit early, although we believe it is still a good plan.

The Hub would be based purely in Market Place School.

- **Childcare:** The existing nursery could be used to provide affordable childcare, assisting people back into work.
- **Disaster Resilience:** The building could be used as a central resilience centre, for example if there was a repeat of the 2016 floods. There would be one key-holder who could allow access to a multi-roomed building with kitchen for supporting evacuees. The council could also put in staff to provide an outreach centre for council support.
- **Foodbank:** Currently, the Foodbank are split with office space and storage space on two different sites. These could be combined in Market Place School, with the added benefit of reducing stigma in attending the Foodbank as people could be visiting any of the groups using the building.
- **Disabled access:** The building is all on one floor, apart from 1 section on the first floor. Some groups have already been identified as potential users of this space and they would have no requirement for disabled access, so no alterations would be necessary.

There followed a number of questions and comments from the floor:

- The potential users included uniformed organisations; the Inverurie Scouts have their own hut and it is unfair to suggest that this is unsuitable for them.
 - Dawn explained that the user groups identified were the Girl Guides, who were struggling for suitable accommodation. She added that there was potential for a Social Café to be used as a fundraiser for uniformed groups, as well as the possibility of the building being used to host community sleepovers for uniformed groups.
- Are TGP planning on developing any part of the site?
 - John stated that there are no plans to develop the site. The building is unsuitable for modern-day teaching, but the building is already usable. We will renovate or refurbish as we go, so there will be several phases of refurbishment. Funders are already supportive. We have been looking at energy efficiency, with the Energy Saving Trust offering free advice; they will then use the building as an example of their work.
- What is the size of the building?
 - John didn't have the exact specification available, but advised that the details would be made available on The Garioch Partnership Website.

John added that we think it is doable; we would like it to be doable.

A comment from Al Amal suggested that this was a visionary idea. Community organisations are finding it harder and harder, with government expecting more and more. This is an exceptional idea. Inverurie and the surrounding areas are disappearing into housing with no opportunities for people to meet and come together. Previously, it was promised that Meldrum Academy would become a Community Hub, however the pressure of numbers is pushing groups out. This would be a chance to meet people; to integrate. We (Al Amal) are keen to be involved and support the project. A car park would be short-sighted; this is an amazing opportunity for communities. Community groups want this; how do we mobilise their voices?

John described Norton Park as amazing, in that they'd been able to develop a community hub while keeping the heritage of the building. He pointed out that there is lots of support for Third Sector Hubs, for example a Hub in Stirling received £34 million from the Robertson Trust.

A question was raised regarding the council decision, asking whether it would be based purely on financial points or would community sway support. John admitted that we don't know exactly how the decision will be made, but we assume that they will review the submitted business plan, which includes our aspirations and is not just financial proposals.

Cllr Marion Ewenson stated that Council officers would review the proposal and judge its viability, before it goes to the Garioch Area Committee in July. Dawn stated that that was not the procedure that the Garioch Area Manager had indicated would be followed, adding that we had been advised that the decision would go straight to the full council for a decision. Cllr Ewenson confirmed that it would go to the Garioch Area Committee first and Dawn thanked Cllr Ewenson for updating us at to the procedure.

It was commented that the government is very keen on communities helping themselves, adding that surely the voices heard tonight would help to sway the Council.

Potential sources of help and support, with John confirming that we have already received lots of offers of support and help with our plans. Dawn added that we also have external support from the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), so we have the very best support.

John stated that our plans have to make financial sense; if it does then there is probably a huge amount of community support there. Our plans ensure that with 30-40% occupancy, we would be making a profit.

A question was raised regarding the local councillors; if Council Officers say that it is viable, how many councillors do we have to persuade? How many are there out with Inverurie who may not be aware of the proposals? It was suggested that we share the benefits of the project with our groups who could in turn contact their local councillors.

Cllr Lesley Berry confirmed that there were 15 members of the Garioch Area Committee. She added that Council Officers would produce a full report, with the business plan, so no councillor would go in 'cold'. There is nothing stopping representatives of groups approaching their councillors and that would be taken into account in the decision making. The papers will be made available one week before the meeting.

It was suggested that there was a difference between reading a written report and receiving a visit from a concerned group. Cllr Berry agreed that visits would add weight to the councillor's decision. John thanked Cllr Berry for clarifying the process.

John indicated that the timescale for the project would be almost immediate. We would be looking to generate income as soon as possible. There is a 'Do nothing' scenario in the business plan, and The Partnership can sustain one year with no income, but the plan is to generate revenue as soon as possible and to get the building used immediately. It is recognised that it is difficult to be profitable in Year 1, but if you can cover that deficit, you can plan the future.

4. Close of meeting

John thanked everyone for attending, especially when there was sports on the television and we had such nice weather, and invited everyone to stay on to enjoy the refreshments provided by Fly Cup as well as an opportunity to network with other attendees.

Appendix A: Attendees and Apologies

Attendees:

John Agnew	Elizabeth Barrow	Carolyn Harper	Kerrie Stein
Aber Alhalabe	Cllr. Lesley Berry	Griselda McGregor	Sharon Strachan
Anita Allan	Dawn Brown	Tricia McLean	Caroline Tawse
Bill Allan	Kay Diack	Ian Murray	Louise Thorburn
Fiona Allan	Cllr. Marion Ewenson	Peter Ridout	Cllr. Judy Whyte
Jill Averell	Graham Geddes	Helen Spencer	Nom Wright
Cllr. Neil Baillie			

Apologies received from:

Doreen Adams	Inverurie Foodbank
Sarah Bell	Garioch Community Kitchen
Irene Ferguson	Kemnay Community Council
Irene Ferguson	Milton Meadows RCG
Ilene Fyfe	Kintore Childminders
Reid Hutchison	Aberdeenshire Council
Gillian Martin	MSP
Janet Newberry	Kemnay Village Hall
Mike Rumbles	MSP
Linda Singer	GO
Hazel Smith	Cllr, Aberdeenshire Council
Sue Wainman	Greener Kemnay

Member Groups Represented:

Al Amal	Inverurie Hockey Club
Alehousewells Primary School Parent Council	Kemnay Community Bee Group
Bennachie Community Council	Kiddiwinks
Bennachie Leisure Centre	Newmachar Community Centre Association
Fly Cup Catering Ltd	Pitscurry Environmental Project
Garioch Community Kitchen	Port Elphinstone Community House
Garioch Heritage Society	Port Toddlers
Garioch Youth Musical Society	St Andrew's Parish Church
Grampian Opportunities	Steps into Wellness
ICAN	The Philosophy Café
Inspiring Insch	Wartle Community Association

22 member groups were represented; approximately 23% of our membership.