



Our Aberdeenshire

Marr
Edition

June~July
2008

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership newsletter

Community Planning

working together for the best quality of life for everyone in aberdeenshire

What is community planning?

Community Planning is all about ensuring that public organisations work together and with people in local communities. It is simply a way of working to improve people's quality



Marr Area Committee

of life through more effective delivery of services.

It is something that happened in Aberdeenshire long before it was officially called 'Community Planning', but has been made a statutory duty through the Local Government Act (2003).

The aim of Community Planning is to make sure people and communities are genuinely involved in decisions made on public services. For

example, decisions related to health and social services, the environment or education. It is also a commitment from public organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.

The partners...

In Aberdeenshire, there are nine main community planning partners; Aberdeenshire Council, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, NESTRANS, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, Aberdeenshire Community Councils, Aberdeenshire Councils for Voluntary Service, and Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships.

Are you already involved in community planning?

You may already be "doing" community planning without even knowing - possibly as part of a community group or community organisation - if you put forward the views and wishes of your community into local

projects. This could mean any project that affects your community and is being undertaken in partnership.

We are keen for the community planning partnership to be aware of these types of projects. The easiest way of making sure of that is to contact either your Local Community Planning Group, or one of our community and voluntary partners mentioned above, i.e. Community Councils, Councils for Voluntary Service (K&D Voice), and Local Rural Partnerships. Support or advice may be able to be provided.

Our Website



We have recently launched our new community planning website.

The aim of our stand-alone website is to provide a source of information for anyone interested in community planning. For more information please visit our website at www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk

contact us

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locally...



Community Ward Forums

The May Forums benefited from a good turn-out, with representatives from community councils and other community groups, plus our Aberdeenshire councillors and representatives from other public bodies including the Police and Grampian Fire & Rescue. Everyone seemed to enjoy informal networking over fine local refreshments, which were provided in turn by Huntly Herbs, the Airedale Lounge and Buchanan



Foods.

Among the speakers, Frank Sheridan (pictured) presented his thoughts from a Community Council perspec-

tive, asking some challenging questions about the future for Community Councils and the role of Community Forums. This prompted lively and open discussions in all three wards, with many valuable and often differing opinions and viewpoints expressed. Feedback was also given following on actions already taken or underway by the Marr Community Planning Group in answer to issues raised at the February Forums.



August Ward Forums:

13th - Ward 14
Gartly Hall
venue tbc

14th - Ward 15
Aboyne Victory Hall

20th - Ward 16
Finzean Hall

Better Communication

The August forums will provide us with an opportunity to find out how our communities could benefit from the expected increase in Scottish tourism next year, as we welcome Andrew Hill from Aberdeenshire Council to speak on behalf of Homecoming Scotland 2009.

We will also develop our discussions about how we engage with our communities and each other, using the Ladder of Participation tool (see next page) introduced at the May Forums. Please put forward any other specific issues you would like discussed at the August Forums, as soon as possible. An email loop has been cre-

ated for use among members of community groups in Marr and attendees of the Ward Forums; marrcommunitynetwork@yahoo.com will eventually become the sole email address used for two-way communication about the forums and related matters. It will be the only one you need in order to reach all of the members.

If you have not yet received an email invitation to join up, please contact Suzanne Wall of the Marr Area Partnership on 07786 579426 or mapsupport@hotmail.com. If you cannot access email, please let us know so that we can arrange alternative means of getting information to you.

locally...



The Ladder of Participation

helps us be clear about what we want to achieve when engaging with the public.

Which rung of the ladder are we on?

Where are the MLCPG on the ladder of participation?

Where are you, in your engagement with your own communities?

- 5 Supporting independent community initiatives: you help others do what they want, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support from the resource holder.
- 4 Acting together: different interests decide together what is best and form a partnership to carry it out.
- 3 Deciding together: you encourage others to provide some ideas and decide with you the best way forward.
- 2 Consultation: you are clear about what you are asking and why, plus what can and cannot be changed. You offer options and use the feedback you get to help make decisions.
- 1 Information: you tell people what is planned so that they are informed about what is happening.

The Audit of best Value and Community Planning

Audit Scotland spent time at Aberdeenshire Council at the end of 2007; reviewing information, observing meetings and interviewing councillors, partner organisations and employees about their work. The Accounts Commission highlights many examples of good service and commends the council's commitment to continuous improvement. Marr and Buchan were looked at in more detail and Exhibit 4 specifically looks at their Area Committees: Marr was highlighted by, 'there are strong partnerships arrangements in the Marr Area to deliver for the local communities.'

http://www.auditscotland.gov.uk/work/local_bestvalue.php?year=2008

Community Event

Unfortunately, due to the low numbers of responses we had received, we decided to cancel the Community Event due to be held in Aboyne on 21 June. It is hoped that the presentations arranged for that day, including the session being led by the young people of Marr, will be incorporated instead into Community Forums to be held later this year. Thanks must go to all the young people, presenters and the Huntly Arms Hotel, Aboyne for the preparations that had already been made and to those of you who were due to attend.

Jill Sowden
Community Planning Officer,
Marr Local Community Planning Group

Climate Challenge Fund

The Climate Challenge Fund, mentioned at budget time earlier this year, has recently been launched. The link for further information is below. The main aim is to fund projects coming through communities but also includes schools, and community group partnerships with local authorities and community planning partnerships.

http://www.itsourfuture.co.uk/climate_challenge_fund

Locally...



Village Halls Research programme begins

Major research into the current state, usage and provision of community buildings in rural Scotland has been commissioned by the Scottish Government. This very welcome initiative is a direct response to SCVO's (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) Halls for All campaign, and follows on from the very successful Village Halls Summit 2008. The research is being jointly managed by SCVO, and carried out by a team from the Scottish Agricultural College, headed up by Dr Sarah Skerratt.

There are an estimated 3,000 community-owned or managed buildings across Scotland which are key facilities for the location and delivery of services. Currently, there is a lack of comprehensive and reliable information about the location, condition and use of these buildings. Up to 80% of these may be in rural areas, where they are particularly important as a hub for social and cultural life in a community. Their role is often undervalued, yet many communities depend upon these sites for accessing services and to make possible thriving and sustainable communities. The existence and opera-

tion of these venues often depends on the good will of committees of dedicated volunteers who offer their time and skills to maintain and manage the venues, and, therefore, offer people in rural areas



access to health and advice services, and to affordable recreational, cultural, educational and sports facilities."

In June 2007, as part of its Halls for All campaign, the SCVO lodged a petition with the Scottish Parliament, which called for greater central government support for village halls and other community buildings and for comprehensive research to establish a baseline of information about village halls in Scotland that will inform the debate on the best ways of supporting them. The petition highlighted the need for more support and funding for Scotland's network of village halls and community buildings.

Having heard representations from SCVO in November, the Public Petitions Committee wrote to the Scottish Government for a response. The Scottish Government response was broadly supportive outlining research as a core element to improve understanding of the role/effect of community facilities in rural areas. One effect of this lack of understanding is that it hinders communities when seeking funding and hampers the consideration of applications by regional assessment committees.

SCVO are holding fire on any major campaigning initiatives on village halls and community facilities until the results of the research are published this autumn, but hope to use the report as the basis for the next round of village hall events.

Within Marr, the pilot project which investigated the impact on the Public Entertainment licence on halls and other community groups has recommended and produced a draft Your Hall manual. As well as covering legal requirements and providing templates that halls can customise the manual will include advice on how to get better usage for hall facilities.

contact us

MARR LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

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