

Hall Forest Residents Association

Minutes of meeting held at Torryburn Hotel, Kintore on Monday 17th October 2005

Attendees: John Stewart, Craig Kennedy, Richard Henderson, Ava Sainsbury, Alex McPherson, Karen Will, Gary Scott, Gordon Cowe, Ron Dickie, Dougal Slater, Tony Harvey, Graham McDonald, Scott Carmichael

Apologies: Ian Thomas, Alan & Ava Denny, Andy Till

Item	Description	Action
1.	<p>Introduction</p> <p>JS welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda for the meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 10th October were accepted and approved.</p>	
2.	<p>Other Groups</p> <p>JS gave an overview of the recent developments with other groups who have similar problems with Greenbelt. The group in Kemnay held a meeting, the highlights of which were shown on Grampian TV evening news.</p> <p>The main outcome was the Greenbelt agreed to retract any late payment charges applied to residents, and they agreed to meet with any group who reported similar problems.</p> <p>The Kemnay group have set-up a website at www.aagg.co.uk (to be verified), which will act a focal point for any residents groups who have issues with Greenbelt.</p> <p>All of the other groups we are aware of are encouraging residents to complain individually to the BBC Watchdog program also (website. www.bbc.co.uk/watchdog). We should also all do this as individuals, as it may highlight many other groups with similar issues.</p>	
4.	<p>Committee Nominations</p> <p>The following people volunteered for the following positions. All received unanimous support:</p> <p>Chairman – Graham McDonald Treasurer/Membership – Tony Harvey Secretary – John Stewart Vice Chairman – Craig Kennedy Vice Treasurer – Dougal Slater Developer Liaison Office – Richard Henderson Social Events: Role shared by Ava Sainsbury, Alex McPherson & Karen Will</p> <p>The other committee members volunteered to share other tasks and responsibilities as the needs arise.</p> <p>Ron Dickie was unanimously accepted as a committee member.</p>	

<p>5.</p>	<p>Immediate Tasks</p> <p>Our next newsletter should be focus on the many positive aspects the organisation can bring to community life in Kintore, to encourage membership. We should ask if there are any solicitors living in any of the developments, should we ever need some quick and impartial legal advice.</p> <p>We should write to the developers, asking them for a copy of their contract with Greenbelt, as our title deeds refer to these documents and therefore we should be entitled to see their content.</p> <p>CK to forward details of Betts Head Office to JS.</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>CK</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Website</p> <p>JS, AT and GM held a meeting the previous week to discuss the website design. GM had already done a draft version of a website, which At and JS thought was excellent. It was agreed that the website should focus on the many positive aspects of community life, and some areas of the website will be private, visible to verified members only. GM would continue to work on the design on the same lines as he had started.</p> <p>At the meeting, GM presented some printed layouts for the final design, which was met with universal approval. The website will act as a valuable portal for residents, but also allow other potential residents to get an idea of the benefits of living in the area. The website will have many links to other useful website, listing school holidays, bus and train timetables, local council and many other sites of interest and benefit to residents.</p> <p>GM has designed the website so that the contact can be maintained by committee members, who can submit news articles without any technical knowledge of website design. The website will automatically update the latest news section when new articles are added.</p> <p>The private members only section will include a discussion forum/bulletin board, where any members can talk openly about any subject. This section will have copies of meeting minutes etc.</p> <p>There will be an additional section, which is available to registered users of the website only, but they do not need to be residents. It is intended that this area will be used to hold information useful for local councillors, developers etc.</p> <p>Once the website is published, all members will be encouraged to visit the website as often as possible. This will increase the hit-count for the site, and increase it's ranking in search engines. This may lead to valuable advertising income in the future, so that not only is the website self funding, but it also generates addition revenue which can be used to benefit the community.</p> <p>Children will be encouraged to make use of the website, to organise events, activities etc.</p> <p>GM will look to make the website live in the coming weeks.</p>	<p>JS</p> <p>GM</p> <p>AT</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Discussion Regarding Greenbelt</p> <p>JS announced that he had arranged a meeting with Alex Middleton, the</p>	

MD of Greenbelt for Friday 21st October at 12:30pm. As many residents as possible should attend. The meeting will start at McFadden Park, and will include a tour of many problems areas to highlight the problems.

Greenbelt has asked for an agenda for the meeting, and want to include some items on future plans for the greenspace management of the areas. Greenbelt are also inviting representatives from each of the developers along to the meeting, so that some “grey areas” can be clarified.

It was agreed that members should now make a partial/token payment to Greenbelt, either by sending a cheque for say 60 pounds - roughly one third of the total, or by setting up a direct debit. Please be warned that they will adjust the payment schedule so that full amount is recovered within their original timescales. This may mean a high initial payment. Payment should include a letter stating that this payment is made on goodwill, and we reserve the right to withhold payment in the future should the standard of work not improve. We need to encourage Greenbelt to actually do the work, rather than fighting battles with them.

We need to get Greenbelt to agree to remedial works to bring the open areas up to an acceptable standard, and that the residents will not be charged for this work, as it is Greenbelt negligence that has resulted in the state of the open areas.

We can offer to develop a snag list for all the developments, listing the remedial works required for each individual area, and tick them off as they are done to our satisfaction.

We should ask to see copies of the HSE reports that the contractors are supposed to complete after each visit, until such time that we are satisfied with the standard of works.

We also need to get the developers on our side, and we can threaten to “influence” potential sales of new houses to make sure they take note of our concerns. The developers may have more persuasive powers to get Greenbelt to agree to remedial works and maintain this high standard. Ultimately, we may be able to influence the developers to not hand over the remaining open areas to Greenbelt, and ideally to hand back the areas of land currently under Greenbelt ownership.

We should get a quote from other landscaping firms (Kemnay used Findlay Clark, who are expensive but have an excellent reputation). Their quote was magnitudes lower than the fees collected by Greenbelt for the same work, but to a higher standard.

We should ask Greenbelt for compensation for the substandard work experienced this year, though as some residents have paid in full, this may not be possible until the next payment year.

We should discuss with the developers and Greenbelt, how their “fair and reasonable” fee was reached, and how this might be revised in future years.

As many residents as possible should attend the meeting, even if just there

	in person to show support.	
8.	<p>Donations It was agreed that members should be asked for a donation of one pound per person per year towards the running of the association. Running costs are expected to be very low, and any surplus would be used for community events (summer party with bouncy castle, family orientated outings and other social events).</p> <p>It was noted that some residents have already made donations of up to five pounds by cheque, and this would cover them for 5 years membership. Cheques and donations should be sent directly to the treasurer (Tony Harvey, 1 Hallforest Avenue, Kintore), who will record these against the membership records.</p> <p>Once the bank account has been set-up, it should be possible to accept on-line donations via Paypal, and other electronic mechanisms.</p> <p>CK suggested that there are numerous grants available to organisations like ourselves, and we should actively pursue these. These will be discussed in detail at future meetings.</p>	<p>COM</p> <p>CK</p>
9.	<p>AOB There were a number of other matters and suggestions raised at the meeting.</p> <p>Some examples are:</p> <p>Road Safety – we should encourage the local council to install priority signs giving right of way to one direction on traffic on Forest Road. There is often confusion over who has right of way at the bottleneck area, and it is believed that giving one direction priority will help improve traffic flow and reduce the risks from accidents.</p> <p>Dog Fouling is getting to be a problem in some open areas. It has been observed that the culprits actually reside outside the development area. We should investigate getting signs erected.</p> <p>Grit boxes – we need to determine who is responsible for filling the grit boxes on the developments, and who is responsible for gritting the roads during the winter.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – CK agreed to look into getting someone to act as a central focal point for the set-up of these schemes. Many streets/areas could be covered by a single meeting, thus saving time and expense.</p> <p>Meeting venues. AS stated that as well as the Kintore public hall, it was also possible to use the church hall and scout hall as venues for larger meetings (eg to discuss neighbourhood watch schemes).</p> <p>JS stated that due to work commitments, he may not be able to complete and issue the minutes in a reasonable time following Friday’s meeting with Greenbelt. RD kindly agreed to produce the minutes should this be the case.</p>	

	It was agreed that these items will be further progressed following the Greenbelt meeting on Friday 21 st .	
10.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The general consensus was that the date of the next meeting should be decided following the Greenbelt meeting, and announced in a newsletter/email bulletin.</p> <p>GM thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which ended at 8:45pm.</p>	