

Minutes of public meeting held in Chapel of Garioch Village Hall on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

Apologies – Samantha Tribe, Bill Conn, Keith Millar, Tim and Wendy Glasspool, Christine Maude, Mike Flaherty, Poul Ipsen, Dan Price-Davies

85 people attended the meeting.

**Welcome** and safety – Mark Worsley.

Good show of hands when Mark asked how many people have looked at the website.

Mark gave an update on progress so far – alliance, website, constitution, mission statement, previous public meeting, bank account, publicity on BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Television News, P & J.

Mark asked people to engage with councillors and MSPs about the A96 and Bennachie.

Bob updated the meeting on **Transport Scotland objectives** for the A96 dualling –

- To improve the operation of the A96 and inter-urban connectivity between the cities of Inverness and Aberdeen and their city regions through reduced journey times, improved journey time reliability and reduced conflicts between local and strategic journeys
- To improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users through – reduced accident rates and severity and reduced driver stress
- To provide opportunities to grow the regional economies on the corridor through – improved access to wider strategic transport; and enhanced access to jobs and services
- To facilitate active travel in the corridor
- To facilitate integration with Public Transport Facilities; and
- To reduce the environmental effect on the communities in the corridor

Transport Scotland completed Stage 1 in May and 4 routes will go forward to the next stage which will commence in Summer 2016. Consultants will be appointed to look at the 4 options and will complete their assessment in mid-2018.

Figures indicate that only 1% of traffic make the journey between Aberdeen and Inverness. The highest volumes are between Aberdeen and Inverurie on the Eastern end and entering Inverness at the Western end.

There are 27,300 vehicle movements on the Aberdeen side of Inverurie and 9,500 vehicle movements on the Huntly side of Inverurie.

An estimated 17,500 travel North into and through Inverurie to and from Oldmeldrum, Rothienorman and beyond.

Transport Scotland are responsible for trunk roads (A96) and Aberdeenshire Council responsible for other roads (including the A947).

## Website

The website, facebook and twitter is a critical part of the project to get the best decision. Gary indicated that the conversion rates between website and facebook are spectacular. He asked that the meeting encourage other people to "like" by reposting as the plan is to increase by tenfold.

Politicians use twitter so this is a good way to communicate.

Blog – Gary encouraged people to write about what Bennachie means to them. This helps Google and other search engines to recognise that the website is important and this moves it up the rankings. At the moment it is in the top 30/60.

Posting photos on facebook helps too. Little things make a huge difference as the campaign needs to reach 2 or 3 critical people.

Sandra - **Usage** – launch, newsletter, P & J article all brought traffic to the website.

What people can do –

- Blog
- Discussion and forum on the website
- Send in details of any skills or expertise to the website
- Speak to local councillors
- Speak to MSPs and candidates
- Speak to MPs
- Speak to Community Councils
- Have conversations on facebook.
- Report sightings of plants, animals and wildlife, especially notable species to NESBReC, [www.nesbrec.org.uk](http://www.nesbrec.org.uk) as Transport Scotland will consult with them (see Margaret Garden)

## Alliance

- Bailies of Bennachie (Andrew Wainwright) – Bailies are on side. Oyne CC, Bailies etc should write separate letters to politicians but pool information. Bailies are working towards getting a Special Landscapes Area designation. Bailies are a charity and are entitled to raise money.
- Oyne Community Association (Clive Smith) – have had a working group on A96 since May and had subsequent conversations with Chapel of Garioch. More groups are needed to take the message forward. Website is focal.  
Has had joint meeting (Oyne and Save Bennachie) with Councillor Fergus Hood and has contacted ward councillors. Future meetings planned with Doug Milne (Area Manager), Stephen Archer (Infrastructure), Philip Mackay (Roads). Need to give solutions with evidence.
- Kemnay Community Council – (Rob Mackay) Consensus voted to join Alliance (includes councillors).
- Greener Kemnay – on their agenda for next week.

## Stakeholders and interest groups

- Mike Flaherty got supportive letter from Cairngorn Club who have MSP on their board.
- Kintore group following us on Twitter.

### **Discussion**

- Strategy – should we look at other groups? Positive campaign planned aimed at helping traffic problems. Traffic simulation planned.
- Would Option C give better access to Bennachie? Noise problems and sparse junctions planned. Devastating environmental impact on either side of road.
- Money should be spent once – option C will not sort traffic problems around Inverurie and will involve more expenditure. Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland need to work together.
- Could involve schools in project work.
- Foraging community might support us.
- Explore health benefits and link to policy with a paper to Minister for health.
- Involve Active Aberdeenshire.
- Involve business community.
- Only north route solves the problem. Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland need to work together.
- Use current A96 – drawback is development around it.
- Explore use of flood plain. Could alleviate flood problems at Inverurie.
- Need to look at public transport eg Kintore Railway Station, Inch buses.
- All routes apart from Option C may go through Glens of Foudland but Option C will go over 500ft – a similar height to A96 at Morgan Mcveighs.
- Is there a mechanism to engage with unsuccessful consultants to get professional advice? Tenders are not yet out.
- Winter resilience
- Look more closely at new developments around Inverurie – Gary can do projection.
- Transport Scotland will solve any technical problems. We need to concentrate on political decision using public opinion.

### **Ideas put forward**

- Banner for website
- Inverurie Health and Wellbeing event next month
- Promote Save Bennachie at Run Garioch 20 March
- Deeside Cycling Club
- Have pdf on website for flyers with brief summary of key points
- List of key people on website
- Campaign website 38 degrees
- Just giving

More ideas should be via e-mail to Save Bennachie.

**Funds**

Starting to needs funds. A form is available for sending donations. This will be on website.