

Kingswells Community Councils Chair Report  
AGM on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008

KCC has had a very busy but extremely productive, positive year. We have nine hard working community councillors with, at present, three vacancies. Our members are experienced and motivated, all fully committed to improve Kingswells village and demonstrate interest and involvement in wider Aberdeen city concerns.

I wish to thank all fellow Kingswells community councillors for all their hard work, commitment and support over the last year.

Special thanks to Ian, our Secretary, for his unfailing hard work and enthusiasm in every aspect of community council business and the unbelievable hours he spends keeping our website current and all internal communications running smoothly.

Each and every KCC member has had to tackle a huge diversity of issues this year. We often feel that we cannot give full attention to our "housekeeping" business because of other unforeseen issues which often rise unexpectedly and must be attended to promptly. This makes long term planning difficult and priorities have to be changed very quickly.

However, our members have steadfastly worked on making massive improvements to our village environment.

One issue which has been historically difficult for Kingswells has been inconsistent ground maintenance. Open areas are maintained by a combination of ACC, housing developers, residents associations and individuals. This has resulted in a patchwork of quality and standard of maintenance. A few of our KC councillors have concentrated this year in trying, once and for all, to untangle this mess and produce an accurate map of land ownership to work out who has responsibilities for what. This has been a huge undertaking involving a huge amount of communication with many different ACC departments, companies and individuals. Quite a few discrepancies have been found and rectified. This work is ongoing but the eventual outcome will give us a base line to enable a future of standardisation of quality and accountability.

Members have been making huge improvements to our village by working with ACC officials instigating initial works to be done then ascertaining schedules of grass cutting, pruning, litter collection, drain cleaning, painting of lampposts, repairing steps and general maintenance. Future clearly defined schedules will help keep the village tidy and improve standards. Many thanks to members who have organised hanging baskets, tubs of plants in the village centre and who have planted bulbs to give the village a much needed splash of colour. Thanks also to the members for all their effort to install the village Christmas tree which was, again, a huge success.

Thanks to one of our members for his ongoing communications and organisation to fund Bill, our village litter warden. This is time-consuming but makes a huge difference to the village centre. We appreciate what a difference Bill makes – often going well beyond his call of duty to keep the village centre pleasant.

We are about to start the installation of additional CCTV equipment in the shopping centre, thanks to the Small Project Grant from ACC. This will hopefully, make the village centre a more pleasant and safe place to be.

KCC have started to design and find suitable positions for “Welcome to Kingswells Village” signage. As well as being welcoming, these will illustrate to visitors what a special place Kingswells is - within the city of Aberdeen. This year will also see us becoming involved in encouraging participation in “Beautiful Scotland”- an initiative to enhance Kingswells and generate community spirit.

Last year saw a difficult time for us all when KCC members were very involved in the sensitive issue of Gypsy Travellers setting up unauthorised camps in Kingswells Park and Ride. KCC represented the majority of Kingswells residents who were very unhappy with ACC’s proposal to make the Park and Ride one of two official Halting sites within the North Aberdeen. This issue remains controversial and KCC continues to strongly oppose the use of the Park and Ride as a temporary, or permanent, encampment. We, however, continue to offer our advice and a depth of local knowledge to ACC and remain optimistic that a far more suitable, safe site will be found.

Transport issues have seen members heavily involved in consultation on changes to bus routes and timings. Proposals for core paths and cycle tracks have been requiring much thought and attention from members. These issues are ongoing.

KCC continued unwavering commitment to represent the views of Kingswells residents through the Finalised Local Plan Inquiry and beyond have taken much time and effort. Now that the process nears the end of its journey and is back in the hands of the City Council, we trust that the Reporters recommendations for Kingswells will be adhered to.

This next year sees many challenges ahead with the draft Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan latest announcement and a forthcoming AWPR Public Inquiry.

A Community Councillors role is often deeply frustrating when we find ourselves trying to represent the views of our community to Aberdeen City Council. Although we wholeheartedly welcome any opportunity to be involved in any consultation, it must be a meaningful exercise where our views are being seen to be taken into account and acted upon. Consultation with community councils should not be seen as a “ticking the box” exercise. Trying to rectify this problem will be a priority for KCC in the year ahead.

Barrie Buchan  
Chair  
Kingswells Community Council