



# Cullen Voluntary Tourist Initiative

[www.discovercullen.com](http://www.discovercullen.com)

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Minutes  
Of  
Annual General Meeting  
Held in the  
Main Hall, Town Hall, Cullen  
on  
9th November 2011

Present: Zillah Jamieson \*(Chair) Graham Bell \*(Sec ) Barbara Nash \* (Treasurer)  
Simon Tucker \* Rob Pinkerton\*  
Anne Henderson Emma Pearson Marjory Tucker  
Evelyn Pinkerton Diane Pinder Cy Pirie  
Steven Liley Jennifer Welsh Elaine Forsyth

Apologies: The Rt Hon The Earl of Seafield Mrs Claire Russell David Rush

*\* Denotes Committee Members*

## Chairperson's Address

ZJ reported that as Vice-Chair and Acting Chair, she would be presenting the Chair's Report this year.

"One of the key objectives of the Tourist Initiative has always been the running of the Tourist Office over the summer months, and we hope this will continue for many years to come. You will hear further details, under the Office Report agenda item, regarding visitor numbers etc. Almost 3,000 people passed through our doors this year. However, at this point, I would like to express our thanks to all the volunteers who manned the Tourist Office over the summer. The Office had been open 7 days a week, with very few times unmanned for the 4 month period of being open. This year, we were open from mid May to mid September. Like everyone else who knew her, we were of course saddened by the death of Sandra Addison who had been a volunteer for many years.

I thought it would be interesting to quote some of the comments made by Visitors this year, who signed our Visitors Book in the office, and these comments, as you will hear, reflect not only the fantastic area we live in, but also the value placed on the Tourist Office - and these are just a sample of the fantastic comments we received. (Comments to be found on [www.discovercullen.com](http://www.discovercullen.com) - Cullen Voluntary Tourist Initiative page).

It had been another successful year of working in tandem with the Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group over the months of June, July and August. The opening times of both the Office and the Heritage Display changed to be the same. Visitor numbers to the Tourist Office will be outlined later, but Steve Liley, Secretary of the Heritage Group has advised me that their visitor numbers amounted to 1,622, slightly down on last year. When comparing this with the Tourist Office numbers, we must remember that the Heritage Display was open 5 days a week during the 3 months. Quoting from the Heritage Group's report: 'For the Cullen Summer Festival, the Heritage Group was able to integrate with the needs of the Festival organisers, and, as a consequence, it was the most successful weekend for the Group.' It is obviously hoped that the Tourist Office and the Heritage Group Display will be in operation over the same period in 2012, and that the Cullen Summer Festival will be repeated.

As stated earlier, the Tourist Office will remain one of our key objectives, but we have done other things over the past year. For the first time in 2011, the Cullen Summer Festival became a collaboration with many other community groups in Cullen. This worked extremely well. The Tourist Initiative had sought to bring all the groups together. We would thank the Cullen Bowling and Tennis Club very much indeed for making their premises available to us for these meetings. As you will hear later, we plan to repeat the Festival in 2012, and will be starting our preparations earlier this year over the course of the winter months.

Another great community effort and collaboration with the Cullen & Deskford Community Council, which worked brilliantly, was the repairs to the Salmon Bothy path. Whilst Moray Council had indicated that they would provide the materials necessary, external funding applications by the Community Council to finance the labour element had been unsuccessful. The catalyst for getting this work done was a suggestion from Simon Tucker that a team of volunteers could effect the repairs, especially since the stretch of path was nowhere near a public thoroughfare. Without his enthusiasm, initiative and contacts to provide the technical expertise and heavy machinery required, the path would probably still be in a perilous state. Following a fantastic response to the call for volunteers from the Community Council, the work took place on a fantastically sunny day in July. We are indebted to Mark and Stuart Stevenson, Ian Currie, Billy Miller and Mel Stevenson for not just their technical expertise to ensure that the much needed drainage was appropriate and made to last, but also for the heavy machinery which was absolutely critical to getting this job done. They also gave freely of their own time on the Sunday. Alongside that, there was some ditch digging which could only be done by hard manual grind, and this is where the team of volunteers came in - as well as putting their backs into ensuring that the hard core was put down as the path's new surface. The team was even joined by a holidaymaker who on hearing about the project volunteered to help. Thanks are also due to: Moray Council for providing the materials, the team of volunteers who gave up their leisure time so readily, Cullen Bay Holiday Park for allowing use of their toilet facilities, Emma from Light Bites for contributing refreshments and Elizabeth Douglas for those fantastic cakes!

The community website, [www.discovercullen.com](http://www.discovercullen.com), which was developed in conjunction with the Cullen & Deskford Community Council, continues to be popular, and now has 64 people signed up for the Newsletter. Newsletter subscribers receive regular e-mails regarding developments and news from Cullen, and are always directed to the website for more information. Every attempt is made to keep the website up-to-date, with amendments made usually every 2/3 days. If however you see an error on the website or something that is out-of-date and should be removed, then please let us know. More recently, the database mailing list was used to alert local businesses and groups of a car theft in Cullen. Almost like a Neighbourhood Watch, but probably more an Alert Watch; we have been in discussions with Grampian Police re trying to make this more proactive and current. We await their thoughts. In finishing my comments on the website, I would like to thank Neil Hedley, who designed our website, for his on-going help and support when things go wrong and help is needed. He is always very responsive and very helpful.

To promote Cullen, the Tourist Initiative placed a full-page advert in the Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership, What to Do and See Guide, as a general advert for Cullen, highlighting the businesses, the facilities and the website.

In closing off my remarks regarding the past year, I would like to express thanks to the members of the Committee who have worked tirelessly over the last year. But in particular I would like to thank Barbara Nash, Treasurer, and Graham Bell, Secretary, who between them not only set up and managed the Tourist Office which is so vital for the wellbeing of tourism businesses in the town, but have also contributed in so many other ways. Thank you both very much.

During the year, we were sorry to lose Gus Robertson, Monica Hunt and Judith Johnston from the Committee. We would like to thank them all for their service to the Initiative. Whilst it is wrong to single out any one particular individual, I feel we must mention Judith Johnston in particular who was a stalwart for so many years.

So, what of plans for the coming year-

- Reindeer Night - Wednesday 7th December 2011; plans are well on their way, posters to advertise the event are imminent - carols will be sung, and we are grateful to the Cullen & Deskford Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and Cullen Primary School for their support in this
- redesign and print of a Cullen brochure: stocks of the leaflet which has served us well for a number of years are now gone, so over the winter we will be redesigning the leaflet and having brochures available for the spring; if businesses wish to have stocks of the leaflet prior to the office opening in June, then we would be very happy to provide these if you let us know
- running the Tourist Office of course over the summer months of June, July and August
- in addition, we will be working towards securing more permanent and guaranteed premises for the Tourist Office; all the discussions we are having on this are very preliminary, but we are exploring all possibilities, including collaboration with the Cullen, Deskford and Portknockie Heritage Group; we will also be actively involved in discussions with the Community Council when the way forward on asset transfer becomes clearer
- Cullen Summer Festival: we hope to be repeating the Festival which was so successful last year, and hopefully making it bigger and better; preparations will start over the winter months
- Advert in Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership Area Guide. This guide will be much bigger and better than the What to Do and See Guide. There will be 2 pages of editorial on Cullen (teamed up with Sandend). The print run for this publication will be double (20,000 copies) and distribution will take place to key sites around Scotland, not just within the Banffshire Coast area. The Tourist Initiative will be placing a full-page advert along similar lines as before."

### Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that he had no further matters to raise as everything had been covered by the report from the Chair.

### Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that during the course of the year the income had been £1566.17, the Expenditure had been £1596.02. This represented a small loss of £29.85 in the trading account for the year. It was pointed out that the Bank Balance was £3698.90. However there were two uncleared Cheques amounting to £164.50. This therefore left a residue of £3485 40.

## End of Year Accounts

The Chair asked if there were any points to be raised from the floor. There being none, ST proposed the Report and Emma Pearson seconded. The Accounts were carried.

## Office Report

GB reported that the total number of visitors for the year was 2908, which amounted to 29 visitors less than 2010. He also wished to point out that this was the result of the office having been opened from mid May to mid September, which was an extension on the previous year. As a result it would prove difficult to make a true comparison with previous years. He pointed out that the only true comparison he could make was to look at the figures for June, July and August.

Year	No	+ or -
2009	2556	+518
2010	2878	+322
2011	2430	-448

Whilst the reduced numbers were extremely disappointing, it was also reflected in the reduced numbers that had been reported by the Heritage Group. He felt that there were two contributing factors which had affected the numbers:-

- a) The economic climate that had affected every person and business alike
- b) A total of twenty-eight shifts had been lost due to lack of volunteers and holidays.

## Appointment of Auditor

It was agreed that subject to his willingness the present Auditor should be invited to continue to audit the yearly accounts.

## Elections to Committee

The Chair indicated that it was unfortunate that the present committee had dwindled to only five members and requested that the floor should seek to increase the number on the committee.

She advised the floor that both GB and BN had agreed to continue as Secretary and Treasurer and this was passed.

RP proposed ZJ as the Chair and ST seconded This was passed by the floor.

RP proposed ST as Vice-Chair and BN seconded. This was passed by the floor.

There were no further nominations for electing further committee members and it was therefore agreed that the committee should seek to find people who would be willing to help by becoming members and co-op them on to the committee at a future date.

Emma Pearson, Ann Henderson and Jennifer Welsh kindly volunteered to help out specific projects as necessary during the year.

## AOCB

The Reindeer Night event was raised by the floor. The chair informed the meeting that it was the intention of the Committee to allow individuals to pick the raffle prizes. The floor indicated that they would prefer it if the Committee would allocate the prizes to individual tickets and this was passed.

There being no further business the Chair brought the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for their attendance.

DRAFT