

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **NORTHERN AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 13 JANUARY 2005**

#### **ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **Report by Annual Seminar Working Group**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to advise the Local Committee of the outcome of the Annual Seminar for Community Representatives held on 20 November 2004.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Decentralisation Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 24 September 1998 (Item 2, Page 3875, 96/99) agreed to progress with arrangements proposed by the Working Group for the Annual Seminar as part of the Council's commitment to continual improvement within the Decentralisation Scheme.
- 2.2** The main purpose of the Seminar was to provide a Forum for Community Representatives to exchange best practice ideas on Local Committee processes, identify personal development needs and comment on the Decentralisation Scheme insofar as it affected Local Committees.

### **3. 2004 ANNUAL SEMINAR**

- 3.1** One of the main issues which arose from the 2003 Annual Seminar, was the development of further training to both Community Representatives and Substitutes. As a result of this, the Working Group, supported by Council Officers, developed a training initiative for Community Representatives and Substitutes which utilises the Annual Seminar. The cycle begins with the Annual Seminar in November, followed by induction training in January, new Representative training in May, and finishing with ongoing training between May and November. A copy of the proposed training cycle is enclosed under Appendix 1.
- 3.2** In light of the new training cycle, the Working Party met and agreed that the format of the Seminar be altered with a view to promoting the Local Committees and to encourage the recruitment of potential Community Representatives.
- 3.3** It was therefore, agreed to hold the Annual Seminar on Saturday 20 November 2004 in the Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock between 9.45 am and 2.15 pm. Each Community Representative and Substitute was given the opportunity to invite two colleagues from their nomination organisation along to the Annual Seminar.

- 3.4** The format of the Seminar was an information day/training day, with specific topic areas which gave insight to the life of a Community Representative, the relevance of Local Committees, and the value of the Community Representative's pre-meetings. All of which led to a mock Committee in the afternoon session. The Seminar was attended by 49 people (which included 10 potential new representatives).
- 3.5** The evaluation results from the Seminar are enclosed under Appendix 2. It can be seen from the evaluation responses that the Seminar was an overwhelming success with those attending finding it beneficial. The main concern of those responding felt that there could have been more time in the workshops for discussion, however this can be viewed as positive feedback on the interest experienced by participants.
- 3.6** As part of the Seminar consultation process suggestion boxes were placed in each topic area and participants were encouraged to place comments/questions in the boxes. A summary of the comments/questions and the appropriate responses are detailed in Appendix 3.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** Any financial implications arising from the Seminar would be met from existing budgets.

#### **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil.**

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1** To recommend that the Committee :-
- (i) note that the Annual Seminar will now form part of the training cycle for Community Representatives; and
  - (ii) note the success of the 2004 Annual Seminar for Community Representatives.

The Working Party for the Annual Seminar for Community Representatives

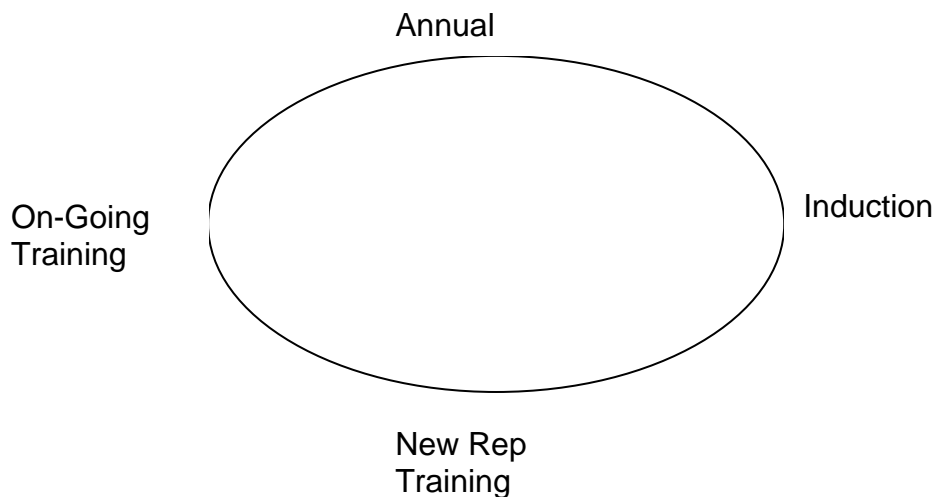
LC/SM  
15 December 2004  
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#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - NIL**

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576135.

**Implementation Officer: Christine Baillie, Administrative Officer**

## Proposed Committee Representative Training Annual Training Cycle



<b>Proposed Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>Annual Committee Rep Seminar:</b> <u>Timetable</u> 0945-1000 - Coffee & registration 1000-1015 - Key Note Speakers 1015-1200 – Workshops (3) 1200-1245 – Lunch 1245-1330 - Mock Committees 1330-1415 – Feedback, Q&A, Evaluation	Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2004	½ -1 Day
<b>Induction Training:</b>  Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Structure of the council</li> <li>➤ Overview of East Ayrshire's aims and objectives</li> <li>➤ Current agenda of the council e.g. in specific relation to issues the Community Reps are going to become involved</li> <li>➤ Facilitated group discussion(s)</li> </ul>	January	1 day or 2 evenings

Proposed Activity	Date	Duration
<p>re: – what development would aide their undertaking of this role? (from this, the content of the 'on-going training' may alter!)</p>		
<p><b>New Rep Training:</b> Content as July 2004</p>	May 2005	½ day
<p><b>On-Going Training:</b></p> <p>Content: A series of 3 hour workshops aimed at being as practical as possible and facilitated by myself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Towards a Common Goal</b> – understanding the dynamics of a committee, what role they would play, realising what their successful input means</li> <li>➤ <b>Communication</b> – what makes it effective? Listening skills, how to identify which type of communication is appropriate</li> <li>➤ <b>Managing your priorities</b> - managing their time effectively as a committee rep</li> <li>➤ <b>Practical Problem Solving</b> – applying practical problem solving techniques to the problems they may face as a committee rep</li> <li>➤ <b>IT Skills</b> – undertaking any of the councils generic IT courses which they feel may benefit them in their role</li> </ul>	May - November	3 hours, can be delivered either in business hours, at evenings or some Saturdays (with exception of the council's generic IT courses.)

**LOCAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL SEMINAR**  
**20 NOVEMBER 2004**

**EVALUATION**

<b><u>Session</u></b>	<b><u>Good overall</u></b>	<b><u>Mainly good</u></b>	<b><u>Just adequate</u></b>	<b><u>Unsatisfactory</u></b>
<b>Workshop 1</b>	21	9	1	1
<b>Workshop 2</b>	20	9	1	1
<b>Workshop 3</b>	29	1	1	
<b>Mock Local Committee</b>	26	2		
<b>Question &amp; Answer Session</b>	14	6	2	

**How could the Information Day have been improved?**

- More time in workshops
- More publication
- More time for discussion
- Don't think it could have been improved
- It was good, no need to improve
- Could not have been improved on
- More time for discussion
- Building a bit warm
- More practical involvement
- If visiting reps on day could have been reminded that workshops and mock local committee were exercises
- More practical involvement
- Yes
- Very little, other than more time in workshops
- More time given in workshops
- Be a little less formal
- Been improved
- Excellent
- Young people hosting workshop
- Advertise it more
- Well prepared
- Make more time available
- As the programme aimed at younger people, too less were present
- Mock local committee very true to meetings I have attended

**Please provide any comments you have on any aspect of the Information Day.**

- Some people seemed to be that they thought they were the only people in the group
- Have learned a lot
- Good

- Feel the 3 groups should have been split at one point to meet other people
- Enjoyed the day, all aspects of it
- I have had a really good day
- Nothing, was very good
- I had an excellent day
- Venue and facilities, workshop content very good
- Keep encouraging young people
- Good chairs
- I found the mock pre-meeting and committee very interesting and has given me an interest in joining a community
- Some workshops too short in time
- Officials were well prepared to answer questions raised
- More young people need to be persuaded to attend and participate

**If there was any one thing you could change about the Local Committee what would it be?**

- To encourage more people to attend
- To ensure that every Community is represented, which is not at present
- Don't use too much jargon, words we don't always understand
- Substitutes should be able to speak at meeting
- More involvement of young people
- Voting rights for reps
- More involvement of young people
- Agree with a need for a degree of formality, but would appreciate less "Committee/ Council speak"
- It could have been 10 minutes longer, allowing more questions
- The focus on small points
- Get more people attending, time does not suit on a Wednesday
- More time at beginning of meeting for questions
- More question sessions

**What did you learn?**

- How to pass on information to my group
- Just how different committees discuss what is important to them and don't be afraid to speak out
- Talking at Workshop 1 and have got some new ideas on Communication to the groups I represent
- To ask if I want to know something I don't understand
- Quite a lot
- There is always something to learn
- A lot of information about the process of grants and structure
- Tolerance
- How to speak out in front of people and have confidence
- Not learn so much as refresh my memory, as such invaluable
- To speak up
- Better insight into Administrative Process and Procedures
- A lot on the history

- I learned how a committee worked and how the process of decision making was done
- Always find something to learn
- Better ideas of structure
- As a first timer, I learned a lot
- May long standing members don't understand the system
- Community reps function at Local Committees
- How the committee worked
- Admin rules, chairs don't, but admin baiting is good fun still
- Staff should be foretold to look out for disabled and be on hand to assist them.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Good Overall</u>	<u>Mainly Good</u>	<u>Just Adequate</u>	<u>Not Satisfactory</u>
<b>Venue</b>	29	2	1	
<b>Lunch</b>	29	3		
<b>Day</b>	25	6		1
<b>Time</b>	26	4	1	1
<b>Staff</b>	32	1		

**49 ATTENDED** (37 reps/ subs/ friends and 9 Elected Members)

**33 RETURNS** (not including Elected Members)

22 November 2004

## **WORKSHOP 1 – SHARING GOOD PRACTICE**

A total of 6 questions were raised from Workshop 1, Sharing Good Practice and are summarised below (shown in bold), together with a summary of the appropriate response (shown in italics).

**Notice Boards should be made available to cover all communities to allow public knowledge of meetings, grapevines, etc.**

*Information is available at local offices and public Libraries and in addition to this, the grapevine newsletter is circulated widely (approx 300+) to all community representatives and substitutes, all local offices, libraries, all Community Council secretaries, and other community groups. Information is also available on the Council's website [www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk). Through the Decentralisation Scheme there is recognition for the need to provide information throughout East Ayrshire, where there are no notice boards, representatives were invited to contact the Council if it was felt that a notice board was required.*

**If possible, why can't the grapevine from each and every Local Committee be sent to the Secretary of every other Community Council so that all of East Ayrshire Area have information available?**

*Representatives were advised that this currently happens, and the individual in question undertook to contact their Community Council Secretary.*

**If you represent a Community Group on a Local Committee and you object to a Committee decision, why is this not shown on the minute?**

*Minutes are not verbatim records, but are, as required by law, a record of a decision. As provided for by legislation, Elected Members have the authority to make such decisions under the Scheme of Delegation and the Standing Orders, and as such can record their dissent to a decision. Community Representatives are not legally entitled to vote and are not, in terms of the legislation making decisions, therefore, there can be no record of dissent in the minutes.*

**Advertise Kilmarnock South Local Committee Meetings.**

*Every cycle, 2 weeks prior to the first of the 7 Local Committee meetings, a generic notice is distributed to all Local Offices, Community Centres, and Community Education Centres, providing information on the dates, times and venues of all 7 Local Committees, and the appropriate Admin Officer and their contact number.*

*Approximately 2 weeks before each individual Committee, a separate notice is displayed in the meeting venue, highlighting the date, time and venue of the meeting, and the appropriate Admin Officer and contact number.*

*The Agenda for each Local Committee is also distributed to all Local Offices and Libraries and are available on the Council's Website.*

*Representatives were invited to advise the Administration Manager if there were any specific venues that notices could be placed in their communities.*

**Every Community should have a Community Representative; and (ii) Members of Local Committees, i.e. all Community Councils, Business Reps.**

*The Decentralisation Scheme provides for 10 Community Representatives and 10 Named Substitutes, however it is recognised that in certain areas there is a desire for an increase in the number of Community Representatives. However, a recent survey of Community Representatives, Named Substitutes and Elected Members highlighted that the majority of those who responded took the view that 10 Community Representatives and 10 Named Substitutes was an adequate number for each Local Committee.*

## **WORKSHOP 2 – HISTORY AND PURPOSE**

A total of 7 questions were raised from Workshop 2, History and Purpose and are summarised below (shown in bold), together with a summary of the appropriate response (shown in italics).

**The Evolution of Local Committees – has this been documented and collated – and is this available to view?; (ii) The work done by Glasgow University in the Decentralisation Process – was this fed back to the 10% of the public who were engaged with?; and (iii) Grapevine Newsletter – is an under-utilised opportunity to disseminate information to the public - please consider review of this document.**

*An initial response was given to the individual in question in that the evolution in regard to the Decentralisation Scheme had been documented. A fuller response to this question and the remaining 2 that were not responded to on the day of the seminar would be given to the individual.*

**I wanted to know the process of applying for a Community Grant.**

*Information on the grants process and an application pack has been issued to the individual in question.*

**Grants should be more open.**

*It is understood that this question is in relation to the alleged complexity of the Community Grant Application Form and in particular to the issue of asking groups for membership lists. The issue has been dealt with and the individual in question has been advised of the “Open Door “ approach to the grants system, and informed that membership lists are required to ascertain the cross boundary split of any given application. Although the application form does ask for a membership list, it is acceptable if the group provide addresses only, or if the group split the members into ward areas themselves. It is the responsibility of the group whether to disclose the information with the application form and to ensure that the members of the group are aware that their information is being passed on.*

*A review of the grant process was previously undertaken and the Local Committees were asked for a representative to participate in the working group reviewing the grants process, resulting in the current application form and assessing process.*

### **How will the new Community Planning Partnership impact on the Local Committee System?**

*As Local Committees are seen as a key facilitator in involving Community Partnerships in the Community Planning Process, the question should be "How does the Local Committee impact on Community Planning?". From time to time, reports will be submitted to the Local Committees providing information on the achievements to date within the individual action plans within the Community Planning Process. The Chief Executive informed the representatives of the progress to date and advised that targets were expected to be met.*

### **Community Transport availability, especially for disabled groups.**

*With regard to transport for groups, it was confirmed that in respect of the particular needs of individual Community Representatives or Named Substitutes, transport was available to access Local Committees. Also, in general terms, Community Representatives and Named Substitutes receive the same transport allowance provided to Elected Members.*

*With regard to the specific issue of the provision of transport to disabled groups, especially during the evening, it was confirmed that a consultation exercise was currently being undertaken by the Social Work department and any group wishing to take part in the consultation were invited to contact the Executive Head of Social Work.*

## **COMMENTS**

**Opportunity to take part in righting the wrongs in your village. (Workshop 1)**

**In this group the Grapevine was discussed at length, some said it was dull – I don't agree, the news is condensed and nothing is left out and it is able to be pinned to a noticeboard without too much reading.(Workshop 1)**

**Always Learning (Workshop 2)**

**History a Good Lesson and I enjoyed it. (Workshop 2)**

**I found the workshop very informative and it made my own personal questions much clearer. (Workshop 2)**

**Excellent summary of Local Committees and how they function with Local Councillors. (Workshop 2)**

**I found in this group there was a certain “intimidation”, the group split into 2 and the main speakers were a bit “over the top” and not much time for the other reps. (*Workshop 3*)**