

Mearns Community Radio Group
Minutes of Committee Meeting (Open)
Stonehaven Community Centre - Thursday 16 November 2006 at 7.30pm

It was agreed that programming has to take a back seat just at the moment, but Ian is still talking to the CMA about "podcasting" (on demand streaming) from their website. There is a concern about bandwidth from www.mearnsfm.co.uk but for now the only programme we have made – the Stonehaven Business Association's networking evening – is available to download there.

Charlie "volunteered" to make a music/chat programme and then we can check out the costs of making music available to download. It was noted there were a few hundred pounds in the kitty. The more people download the higher the royalty costs, but at least then it would be possible to go to advertisers and say look xxx people will listen to your programme.

On premises, Ian is to formally ask Willie Munro for permission to use one of the backstage dressing rooms. A Town Hall address was thought to be good for the licence application. There are drawbacks – we will need to vacate the room from time to time – but we need to secure premises soon and the alternative we were considering – the old Cheers drop-in centre - is not going to be available as there are plans to bring it back into use again. The wood turners use part (the old toilets) of the community centre and we could share, but that is a fall-back alternative.

On funding, Ivan Groundwater (Groundwater Lift Trucks Ltd) has made a donation of £250. And the Stonehaven Community Council will give £300 towards the £600 licence application fee. Aberdeenshire Council community development and/or top-up funding should meet the balance – in fact they have hinted we should apply for more than just the £300. We are then thinking about funding in two stages.

1. To get us up and podcasting, we can apply to Awards for All and a couple of other sources including top-up funding, for maybe £5,000 to kit out a studio and for running costs.
2. And then later we can apply to the Big Lottery Fund and others for the £20,000 or so we will need to broadcast on FM. (I see today Ofcom has announced they are going to do away with FM radio completely at some point in the future!)

We have a problem with Ofcom. They have made it clear they do not like multiple transmitters, and the preferred range from each transmitter is only about 3 – 5 miles. I thought we should apply to cover the whole area anyway, but the consensus was that we go for two studios and transmitters – Stonehaven and Inverbervie (Burgh Hall, Church Street). Then at a later date we can support separate applications from Newtonhill/Portlethen and Laurencekirk and St Cyrus etc. The application fee is apparently set to be reduced. Having separate licences would not, of course, prevent us from sharing programmes and infrastructure and that would be the intention –but Ian was to investigate the matter further.

The deadline for submitting the licence application is 5pm on 16 January 2007, and there is a lot of work to do. Ian and Charlie have both drafted bits and pieces but Ian and Mike Burleigh agreed to get together to make a proper start to prepare it

It was thought that there can be too many people involved in doing something like this, but if anyone else wanted to get involved it was proposed they contact Ian to co-ordinate responses possibly with different sections for people to have a go at.

It was also noted that all the proposed directors will need to be asked for details of work, political and religious affiliations and community interests and activities.

The next meeting is on 14 DECEMBER 2006 (i.e. brought forward to the second Thursday of the month). Working drafts of the application form were to be posted on the website.