

**Newburgh Train Station Group Convener's Report
To The Annual General Meeting, July 2018**

1) NTSG has continued making progress with the campaign to have the station reopened and has maintained a basic three pronged approach:

a) Building, nurturing and informing political support on a cross-party basis;

b) Maintaining and developing a presence and relationships with the local authority, Fife Council, and regional transport partnership, SEStran;

c) And extending this by establishing a presence and relationships with national level agencies Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail.

2) These relationships are now entering a critical point and will remain fundamental for progress to be made. The campaign is now at a stage in the process where it will know with more certainty how things stand regarding the station reopening.

3) In the last year, the pre-appraisal STAG study the campaign has been working on showed evidence that, for the transport situation facing Newburgh, there was a justifiable case for change, enough to allow the next stages of appraisal, STAG 1 and 2, to proceed. The study undertook a substantial consultation not only here in the community but with bus companies, rail operators, rail planners, Transport Scotland, Fife Council and SEStran, as well as Sustrans on cycle paths.

4) At the same time the campaign continued its involvement with the other Fife rail campaign groups in the Fife Rail Forum, coordinated by Mark Ruskell MSP and David Prescott of Allan Rail. A strategy for rail based projects in Fife was set in motion during 2017 and published at the end of the year.

5) On the back of the Fife Rail Strategy, early this year the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland (and Network Rail) set up the Local Rail Development Fund. This provides funds to assist local projects with a rail element in them to carry out appraisal work. With the Newburgh STAG pre-appraisal work complete, the campaign has made an application for the funding necessary to complete the full STAG appraisal process.

6) Fife Council and SEStran, having given strong approval and backing to the Newburgh STAG pre-

appraisal and its progression into the rest of the STAG process, have supported the application for funds to enable this. If successful, the community in Newburgh through the campaign will be on a steering, working group with Fife Council and SEStran. SEStran will hold any grant funding and manage the funding of the procurement process as Project Promoters.

7) The campaign in Newburgh, especially if the station option proves itself through the whole appraisal process, has the opportunity to be involved in and shape a whole range of transport issues affecting the community. This would involve, not only rail issues but the issues around public transport in the form of bus services, active travel in the form of cycleways, car-sharing schemes and roads, footpaths and even at some point river based transport. All of which would continue both the aspirations and previous work of Newburgh Community Trust.

8) The past year especially has laid an important and sound basis for future action, both immediate and long-term. It has also shown difficulties in the campaign connected to capacity and governance. These have been recognised for some time, and raised at meetings, but now the campaign as an organised, community based body must take a hold of these for the direction of its progress to be sustained. Even working on the assumption that the campaign succeeds in achieving a station halt for Newburgh, and that itself still requires a lot of work, the transport situation in Newburgh, including rail, will require significant community involvement if Newburgh wants to have a say alongside the statutory authorities at local, regional and national levels. This in turn requires a rethink of the Newburgh Train Station Group's organisation as a community body.

9) At the moment the campaign as an organisation has a constitution, however it has no legal personality or status to balance any risk it could face. This can be addressed by changing the organisation into a company limited by guarantee and then into a charity. Such a move would allow a greater range of funding opportunities which may be needed for projects. The convener has made some exploration of these issues over the last three months.

10) The new data protection law which came into effect on the 25th May meant that the organisation had to obtain written approval from supporters in Newburgh on its list of email contacts to remain on the list in order to be contacted with campaign news and notices. 53 people have given their consent, roughly a quarter of the previous number.

Nigel Mullan, Convener, Newburgh Train Station Group, June 2018