

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of Meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater on Monday 13th May 2024
at 7.00pm

Present: Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer Bill Braid (BB) John Bannerman (JB) Gareth Johnston (GJ)	Apologies Jo Croll Tom Flynn Ellie Kinghorn Bruce Lawson Ken Gibson Simon Mearns Ray Riddoch Angus McNicol	Also present: Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Cllr Anouk Kloppert (CAK) Linda Drever - BRG (LD) Paul Gibb (PG) - CNPA Dougal Morgan (DM) Athol Bowman Scott Peacock (SP) Calum Halhead Lucile Verrot Cat Houston Ron Drever Martin Ellison Whit Romilly
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1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 **Conflicts of interest.** WJ indicated Riverside footpath as possible conflict of interest.

3 Emergency Services Report

No report received.

4 **April minutes were approved** after amendment to add Paul Gibb and Cllr Anouk Kloppert to list of apologies received.

5 Matters arising from previous meeting.

6 Action Tracker Update.

No 69 road safety on Bridge Street to be removed from AT. BB reported that Abco will install posts for snowcams at Gairnshiel (no121) in July. GJ still pursuing possible

sponsorship for maintenance of snowcams. Regarding Balmoral issues (no 124), the April meeting between Balmoral and BCCC was postponed until August. The refurbished footbridge at Crathie was re-opened on 10th May. CNPA will look at sign-posting from car-park at Balmoral to the bridge on the North side of the river, but unwilling to consider an off-road footpath from Balmoral Gates to the bridge on the south side. A new ATM (no 127) had been installed but not without incident as a failure to update software and to inform change of access for machine to be filled resulted in lack of ATM for 20 days. **RF** reported that ATM had been out of service for 33 days so far this year. There had been a meeting with Andrew Bowie MP to update him on this issue. He hopes that changes to rules to set up banking hubs may mean that upper Deeside might qualify for a banking hub although a location would have to be found for this. **CSB** had contacted relevant department in Abco to supply extra dog waste bins and will consult with **SM** as to potential locations.

7 Sub-committee Reports

Housing & Planning

- a) **BB** reported that following the planning application for a house at Greystones, 7 public comments had been made as to why the application should not go forward.
- b) **GJ** summarised the note agreed by BCCC to send to Scotia and planning authorities regarding H1 development. The street plan is very linear rather than flowing resulting in 800 metres of road, with access to housing sometimes just on one side or even neither side of road for some distance. The direction of the houses means they do not benefit from solar power, while the windows are also too small. The design of the houses is not specific to Ballater but is taken from other developments by Scotia in other parts of the country. Also, the design is not in keeping with general design in the village. Also concern at the proposed use of concrete roof tiles. BCCC is disappointed that the affordable housing section has been reduced from 45% to 35% of total build. It is hoped that there would be conditions in the title deeds of the affordable housing to ensure that properties would not be sublet, nor should they be available for re-sale without some form of profit penalty. It is hoped that they might use a similar letting policy to that used at the Old School development. **JB** explained that the Deeside Way defines the flood plain, but is not a flood defence, hence the reason why the development would need to be raised by up to 1.5 metres about the current level of the ground. This is why it was so important to have a 3d model of the development to compare to surrounding area. While H1 may not be in the flood plain, it is very much adjacent to it. The note was sent to Scotia on 1st May, but no response has been received. **SP** asked if any stipulation had been made regarding heating options, suggesting that this might be an ideal

opportunity to install ground source heating. Planning currently pushes towards solar or air source heating.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

There had been a meeting with Andrew Bowie MP to update him on flooding issues, in particular the work on the Hesco boxes and CBEC. FIG had brought together SSEN and Ballater Golf Club with a resulting new access road to the riverbank. The earth from this work had been used to create an earth bank to one side, although there remains the problem of consolidation and re-greening. **JB** thanked Abergeldie Estate for 45 windblown trees which will be used on flood defence work (**WJ** expressed conflict of interest as he is engaged to remove them). **RF** reported a meeting with Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change at CNPA, thanks to Paul Gibb. FIG will be involved in future meetings to look at catchment level solutions to flooding and drought on the upper Dee. It is hoped to expand those involved to smooth the flow of the river ("lower the highs and raise the lows").

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported a quiet period. A meeting of coordinators is planned to discuss equipment requirements.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report.

Roads and Paths

RF and Kate Allum had met with Ken Gibson and a report had been circulated to BCCC. There will be an article in the next Eagle outlining the plans for the cinder path, with an invitation for the community to comment before planning application is made. There is concern that it should be what the community requires and not likely to be affected by H1 development. **Whit Romilly** pointed out that the cinder path is a high usage core path and hoped that work would not be deferred on it. All core paths are wet & muddy, partly due to weather and partly due to poor drainage and Ken Gibson has been in touch with various estates regarding this. **DM** asked if it would be possible for Invercauld Estate to realign the fencing where the River Gairn bank has eroded on the 7 Bridges Walk. The Public are walking on the road, rather than using the upper footpath. **RF** will consult with Invercauld. **LD** asked about the state of the Old Line foot path to the Gairn. **JB** reported that Invercauld Estate are looking at the condition of the Posties Leap, as well as other drainage issues on the path.

8 Crathie issues

The refurbished footbridge had been opened on 10th May.

9 Other Reports

Aberdeenshire Council

CSB reported plans to introduce a Clearway at Easter Balmoral from the South Deeside Road up to Lochnagar Distillery. There is a 4 week period for consultation with stakeholders followed by 4 weeks of consultation for members of the public. The Stagecoach public consultation will take place in August. It is hoped that the

current connection service from Braemar might return to a full service from Braemar. The Sunday service to Braemar will recommence on the 2023 timetable until October. **CSB** had also included links to show the resurfacing works and proposed costs for Marr area in the next financial year - Appendix C - Roads Works Proposals - Prioritised Area List - Marr.xlsx (modern.gov.co.uk).

RF asked **CSB** to ensure that Abco and Stagecoach had proper signage in place for proposed closure of Bridge Street on 23rd May which would impact on the service.
CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

PG reported that there would be a CNPA board meeting in Ballater on 24th May followed by a tour of the Old School development. There would be a Dee resilience meeting in Finzean on 28th May to which FIG had been invited. **JB** said that FIG had requested a 10 minute slot to speak, but had received no response. The meeting is intended to bring together all possible public and private bodies with a stake in a strategy for the resilience of the River Dee. The Cairngorm Trust would also be in the village to celebrate various projects that have benefited from the trust.

CAP - Community Action Plan

RF suggested that it was important for BCCC to have a subcommittee devoted to the economy of the village, now that Ballater Business Association had wound up. **RF** suggested that the CAP should be presented along with BRD. BCCC elections will take place on 19th September with an AGM to take place before 5th October. It was proposed that AGM should take place on Monday 23rd September at 7pm to elect office bearers etc. **RF** to consult with Janelle Clark as to who should chair this meeting until appointment of office bearers. **SP** spoke regarding the environment section of the CAP. There will be an Eagle article on home energy improvements available followed by a presentation in Victoria Hall on 26th June by Home Energy Scotland and other groups offering consultation and funding information.

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

RF reported that BRD would meet to discuss flooding, hardship and playpark funding amongst other projects.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

Caravan Park continues to be busy.

Halls

BB reported that there had been an attempted break in to the store in the lane. There is a new website for the Halls. A new defibrillator has been purchased following donations from the Ladies' Probus Group, Roger Searle Fund, Highland Games to be available to all groups using the Halls.

CAN - Climate Action Now

SP said that there would be an open meeting at Park House on 13th June at 7.30pm to encourage more people to be involved in the group in Ballater. The tour of the waste energy plant at Torry had been very successful although it was disappointing to note how much of the rubbish still included recyclable materials. **SP** raised the issue of

littering at Cambus o'May car park and bridge. This is part of Dinnet Estate with no Abco responsibility. **CSB** would contact Dinnet Estate and CNPA rangers (Paul Gibb) regarding the possibility of a sign to encourage visitors to take litter home. In the past, bins have only resulted in more littering. The Squirrel Bridge in the pass would go ahead following investigation as to whether road closures would be required.

10 Correspondence An e-mail had been received from a coach driver concerned at being unable to get in to Church car park with his coach. **WJ** would meet with David Cobban and John Burrows to look again at the possibility of a bus park and ride on outskirts of village.

11 Finance

PD provided a statement of account for 2023-2024.

13 AOCB

WJ had seen the public bins on the green being emptied several times by ABCO and noted that the recycling and general waste both went into the same truck. **CSB** would query this, but it was her understanding that the recycling bins in public areas were usually contaminated so it was impossible to ensure separate collections.

The meeting ended at 20.10

The next meeting will be held on 10th June in Mike Sheridan Room at 19.00hours.