

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of Meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater on Monday 8th July 2024
at 7.00pm

Present:	Apologies	Also present:
Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary Pat Downie (PD) Jo Croll (JC) - Vice Chair Bill Braid (BB) Ellie Kinghorn (EK) - Treasurer Lewis Macdonald (LMD) John Bannerman (JB)	Gareth Johnston (GJ) Simon Mearns (SM) Cllr Anouk Kloppert Cllr Geva Blackett Cllr Sarah Brown	Linda Drever - BRG (LD) Dougal Morgan (DM) Athol Bowman Ron Drever Scott Peacock (SP) Ray Riddoch - BRD (RR) Sergeant Allan Masson - Police Scotland Whit Romilly Mike Hadley Lucile Verrot

1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 Emergency Services Report

Sergeant Allan Masson had submitted most recent crime statistics for Upper Deeside. He assured the BCCC that further investigation had shown that some of the reported crimes were not as serious as initially thought, for example, knife-carrying and firearms. While there had been reports of breaking and entering, these had not been for the purposes of theft. Police would be working with wildlife rangers to ensure that damage to environment (such as breaking branches and making fires) would be dealt with. While there had been no serious incidents involving Mountain Rescue, there had been an increase in call outs to Alberts Cairn at Balmoral due to increased footfall in that area.

3 June minutes were approved. BB reported that the Bank of Scotland would continue to use the Hub for another year, with around 8-10 people using the service

each week (no 127). **RF** would continue to follow up on footpath erosion at River Gairn (no 134). It was agreed to maintain no 135 on the Action Tracker regarding the issue of blocked road gullies on Queens Road and Anderson Road, although these have been declared low priority by Abco. **PD** reported having to remove weeds out of gullies to allow water to drain.

4 Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when required during the meeting.

5 EGM to agree the amended constitution - the proposed changes to the constitution and standing orders largely relate to single election and co-option issues, such as extending categories of those might stand for election to 2nd home owners.

RF proposed, **WJ** seconded and all agreed to amendments.

6 Sub-committee Reports.

Housing & Planning

- a) No contention applications.
- b) H1

WJ declared a conflict of interest, as he is a keen supporter of the housing development going ahead. As a business owner, born and bred in Ballater, it had proved impossible for him to find housing within the village and he was currently travelling from Strathdon. **JB** proceeded to chair this part of the meeting. The Housing committee had drafted a letter to submit to CNPA planning committee as a response to the Scotia application. It was noted that the application had been lodged on 17th April 2024, but not validated until 24th June, leaving any comments to this application to be made by 15th July. The letter outlines a number of concerns raised by BCCC to the developers which have not been taken in to account. These concerns are focussed on the settlement objectives set out in the Local Development Plan. Housing committee gives thanks to Dougal Morgan for his professional analysis of the application. These houses are not specific to Ballater, having been built elsewhere in Scotland by Scotia. A 3-d model requested by BCCC to let the community appreciate how the development would integrate with the rest of the village has not been forthcoming. The application has only been for domestic development, while the local plan would prefer a mixture of commercial and domestic development. The percentage of affordable housing has been reduced from 45% to 35%. Due to the site being partly on a functional flood plain, the development was reduced from 250 to 107 houses. The Deeside Way cannot be considered a flood defence, hence the reason for the properties to be built 1.5 to 2 metres higher than current ground level. BCCC would ask CNPA, Abco and SEPA to review flood risks to adjacent developments and to look at the possibility of reducing the height of the Deeside Way. There would also be an impact on the Highland Games being held in Monaltrie Park. BCCC agreed that **RF** would post the proposed letter on BCCC website for the community to look at. Any further tweaks could be made before submitting the letter next Monday (15th July). It would be likely that BCCC would be able to make a presentation to the planning committee.

RR asked about the economic viability of the development. If Scotia does not get the go ahead to build, then the question arises as to who else would take it on. Housing Associations have no funds currently available. **JB** suggested that anyone commenting on H1 in social media or on BCCC website should be encouraged to make their comments officially direct to CNPA. Comments on social media cannot be considered by the planning committees.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

JB and **RF** had met with Dee Catchment Group to present FIG work streams. They would also attend a meeting on 12th July with Andy Ford of CNPA regarding upstream storage study and meet with Roger Knight of Spey Catchment Group and the Dalwhinnie Flood Resilience Group to learn about their flood defence strategies. The BRD-funded CBEC study had been completed with a 70-page draft report outlining possible local options for flood defences. There will be further meetings with CBEC and the potentially impacted landowners prior to a recommendation being made to the community on the way forward.

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that she was still in discussion with Abco regarding the operation of rest centres in Ballater. Abco had suggested a 12-hour power outage before opening the rest centre, but BRG were pushing for a much shorter period, as action needed to be taken much more quickly in this area.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report.

Economy

RF reported that a committee had not yet been formally set up. He would welcome suggestions from all members regarding who should be on the committee. He suggested that a representative from Invercauld Estate, as one of the major landowners in the village, should be invited.

Roads and Paths

SM had submitted a report that he would meet with Ballater Golf Club and Abco to discuss best possible locations for dog waste bins.

RF had been working with Ken Gibson to finalise the plans for the Cinder Path repair. It was suggested that the repair would cost over £100,000, with Paths for All probably prepared to meet 80% of the costs, with the remainder hopefully being paid by CNPA. However, no one is prepared to take on the future maintenance of the path - there are three owners of the ground it crosses: Invercauld Estate, Abco and Monaltrie House. While it may be that H1 will impact on the work on the cinder path, it was suggested that the planning application for the work should go ahead.

7 Crathie issues

Nothing to report.

8 Other Reports

Aberdeenshire Council

CSB had sent a report. Ballater Nursery had been inspected and found to be Very Good. She also reported on the proposed closure of the South Deeside Road by SSEN, starting on 15th July for 3 weeks, followed by one week open, then followed by a further 3 weeks of closure. The road would be closed to all traffic, possibly also pedestrians and cyclists depending on what work was taking place each day.

CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

Nothing to report.

CAP - Community Action Plan

The Hub is doing well, while there is also work being done on the VisitBallater website.

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

RR acknowledged the work of John Burrows in ensuring the power supply to the Greens. There had been an unexpected electricity bill, but this had been successfully resolved and a new supplier appointed.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

RR reported that the caravan park continues to be very busy, although they are turning away on average 10 clients each day, which suggests there is more demand than supply. Work was continuing on the possibility of community ownership of Monaltrie Park, although it was clear that revenue streams would need to be set up before accepting the costs of running it.

Halls

Nothing to report.

CAN - Climate Action Now

SP reported that the Home Energy drop-in event had been successful, both for the community and for those groups/companies attending. Further information is still available in The Eagle for those unable to attend the drop in event. The Squirrel Bridge would be erected on 16th July, when the Pass of Ballater would be closed for 3 hours to allow the work to be undertaken. There had been no response to the article in the Ballater Eagle which attempted to link those seeking an allotment with those overwhelmed by their garden.

JB thanked **SP** and **TF** for all their efforts in setting up the Home Energy drop in event.

9 Correspondence

RF had received a few e-mails relative to the HI development.

10 AOCB

The call for Community Council candidates would be issued on 19th August. The closing date for nominations would be 8th September, with the election (should there be sufficient candidates) scheduled for 19th September.

The meeting ended at 20.00 hours

The next meeting will be held on 9th September at 19.00 hours