

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of Meeting held at Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater on Monday 11th September 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:	Apologies	Also present:
Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ)	Cllr Geva Blackett	Paul Gibb (PG) - CNPA
Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary	Cllr Sarah Brown	Dougal Morgan (DM)
Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer	Cllr Anouk Kloppert	John Burrows (JB-BRD)
John Bannerman (JB)	Jo Croll	Ken Gibson (KG) - Paths
Bill Braid (BB)	Iain Henderson	Charles Wildash (CW) - BRG
Tom Flynn (TF)	Scott Peacock	Sgt Allan Masson - Police Scotland
Gareth Johnston (GJ)	Mike Forbes	Callum Halhead -Abergeldie
Simon Mearns (SM)		Brian Wood (BW) - Braemar CC
Ellie Kinghorn (EK)		Michael Kitts
Lewis Macdonald (LMM)		Willie Murdoch

1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 Conflicts of interest.

3 Emergency Services Report

Sgt Masson reported few crimes in Upper Deeside. He pointed out that recent newspaper reports regarding the policy of non-investigation of minor crimes did not consider that this was only in the case of no lines of inquiry, such as witnesses, forensic evidence or CCTV. There had been several call-outs of the Mountain Rescue team to the Tarland Trails, and the team had appreciated the training opportunities, the last being in May. PD asked about the possibility of yellow no parking lines opposite the exit for the ambulance service as there had been an issue on Ballater Games Day when careless parking made it impossible for the ambulance to get out. Sgt Masson agreed to speak with ambulance crews with a view to applying to Abco for yellow signs. WJ pointed out that the no parking signs would have to be enforced which was not always the case.

4 July minutes were approved

5 Matters arising from previous meeting.

6 Action Tracker Update

A meeting had been held with Jim Bowe and Scott Copeland of Abco on 3 options for the bus stop on Golf Road. None of the options were ideal and Scott Copeland will come back with further options (no 6). A Plan has been produced for the pedestrian crossing at Bridge Street to Station Square and was circulated at the meeting (no 69) and approved. **RF** will chase up Abco about update on paintwork on the Royal Station (no 90). **WJ** will contact Raymond Cooper for an update on the under-pass work at the Inver (no 109). It is unlikely that the road repairs at Crathie Kirkyard will be undertaken by Abco as the road belongs to Invercauld Estate. **RF** will contact **CGB** about the Crathie road sign (no 122). There had been a Teams meeting between BCCC, CNPA, Abco, Abergeldie and Balmoral Estate with further meetings planned for October to discuss the increased number of visitors to Balmoral and its impact (no 124). **RF** has found it challenging to contact Bank of Scotland regarding the future branch closure. A meeting is planned with Link to explore ATM options. **PD** understands that Bank of Scotland is exploring possibility of renting a room in the Halls for a member of the banking staff to meet with bank customers once a week. The village requires more than one ATM machine.

WJ invited Calum Halhead to talk about plans for Abergeldie Estate. He reported that there had been repairs to fencing and dry-stone dykes throughout the estate. Mr & Mrs Storey were keen to build up a team to maintain and repair the estate. There were several planning applications with Abco to restore currently uninhabitable properties as well as to restore Bovaglie as a main residence and office. **KG** asked about walkers' access past Bovaglie and was assured that this would continue. There is still an issue with parking on the Distillery Brae, compounded by erosion of roadside verge following recent heavy rain. The £5 charge on the car park at Balmoral encourages people to seek free parking elsewhere. It might also be useful to consult Invercauld Estate for alternative parking sites and development of other paths. Pedestrian safety at Brunel Bridge and along the South Deeside road towards the Distillery Brae remains an area of concern.

Sub-committee Reports

Housing & Planning

- a) Scottish Water top up tap for the Green has been approved. Current applications include solar panels for the Halls.
- b) There has been no further movement on the H1 development and no 3-d model of the site has been forthcoming. The flooding risk assessment for the site has not been submitted yet. **GJ** will contact Invercauld Estate to ask if any developments from Scotia. **TF** reported that both vacant flats at Sluie Mhor had now been filled.

FIG -Flooding Information Group

JB reported that there had been a meeting between CNPA, SEPA, Abco, River Dee Trust and the Deeside Fisheries Board, to discuss a catchment level approach in response to climate change challenges.

Subsequent to this meeting FIG met with Grant Moir, CEO CNPA, to discuss the subject. G Moir explained that there was general consensus that upstream water impoundment should be modelled at a catchment level in order to better understand the impacts of the various projects in progress and decide on future projects. Grant Moir urged the community councils of Braemar, Ballater & Crathie and Mid-Deeside to work together to express their views on water management within the Dee catchment area. **PG** said that Andy Ford, Director of Nature and Climate Change at CNPA, has been nominated as the focus point for this work and he urged community involvement at the outset.

FIG also had a meeting with ABCO to discuss the way forward for the 3A funding submission. This meeting was with Gillian Owen, Leader of the Council and Alan Turner, Chair of Infrastructure Services Committee who has had experience as head of "FIG" for Stonehaven, whose flood defence works are just ending. Alan Turner pointed out that it is one thing to say what you do not want but it is equally important to build community consensus around what you do want.

FIG are currently trying to set up a meeting with Alan Wood from Abco to press them to present the results of the complementary study to the community by way of a public meeting during November. Should Abco not attend the November meeting it will fall to FIG to present the results of the complementary study. The current plan is that the meeting will be chaired by our local MP Andrew Bowie.

RF expressed thanks to Lucille for her work on gathering data for FIG.

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

RF expressed thanks to Mike Forbes who has resigned due to health issues for all his work with Ballater Resilience Group. Charles Wildash agreed to stand in until Mike's return. BRG is updating their register of properties and occupants. Equipment is under review. Steve Williams, Fire Service Station Commander for South Aberdeenshire will visit to meet with BRG and look at its current set up and equipment. The Memorandum of Understanding between BRG and the Halls is progressing slowly.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report.

8 Crathie issues

PD reported that flower beds at Crathie are looked after by the Council so there would be no possibility of ordering flowers for the beds. It would require volunteers to plant and maintain. Similarly, pots in Balmoral Car Park would also require consultation with Balmoral Estate.

9 Other Reports

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

Paths

KG gave an update on the Paths Group, which he feels has much to learn from other such groups on Deeside. He also emphasised that the restoration of the riverside path was due to the voluntary work of Bill Stephens and co-workers. In 2019, under the chairmanship of Angus MacNicol, **KG** undertook a review of the core paths and signage which he continued to do throughout the covid years. This has led to improved signage and the walking hub in the Station Square. **KG** requested volunteers in an article in the Eagle to help monitor paths. The History with Boots network of paths has been audited and a report & recommendations has been put forward to BCCC and BRD. He has also reviewed the CNPA walking leaflet. The Ballater Paths Group now meets quarterly with the Mar Paths Forum and this has been a source of information and expertise for the group. **KG** has undertaken a feasibility study to get pedestrians off the South Deeside road from the bridge to the bridge over the River Muick. He has also been involved in discussions with Ian Mitchell who is seeking an off-road cycle path from Ballater to Balmoral. They have been in talks with Abergeldie Estate who have given options for both north & south of the river. This also ties in with the westward extension of the Deeside Way. **KG** has also been responsible for discreet signs on Craigendarroch warning of the steep cliffs following the sad loss of James Duncan last year. Also for signage on the riverside path urging walkers to take care at times of spate. **KG** would like the Paths Group to have a formal affiliation with BRD and/or BCCC as well as to explore the possibility of acquiring simple maintenance equipment. Also to increase the number of volunteers to undertake both maintenance and administrative tasks in the group. Looking to the future, **KG** would like to see an improved online present for Ballater walks similar to what is available at Lumphanan for example, where routes can be downloaded. Angus MacNicol had given invaluable information regarding the ownership of land over which various footpaths go.

TF asked about the westward extension of the Deeside Way. **KG** felt that this still had some way to go as CNPA appeared to be looking for a route with minimal ascent/descent, wide and accessible to wheelchair users.

RF expressed thanks to Ken Gibson for all his work.

JB-BRD is currently exploring two programmes, firstly in terms of child-care for under 3 year olds. Finding a venue could be challenging, as could meeting all regulations. **CSB** provided a link for parental consultation for Early Learning and Childcare, which is open until 29th September - Aberdeenshire Council's ELC Parental Consultation 2023 /Engage Aberdeenshire. Currently, Early child-care in the village is parent-organised. The Fife Arms is interested in developing early years child care to improve recruitment of staff.

JB-BRD is also looking at health & social care aspects of the community action plan looking at voluntary care to a professional level as well as voluntary support for such things as shopping, companionship etc.

Hardship fund is ongoing, with a recent donation of £8,000 from Mackinnons.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

Nothing to report from the caravan park.

Aberdeenshire Council

No councillors present, but **CSB** submitted a report.

CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

Paul Gibb highlighted that CNPA has already started to consult for its Local Development Plan starting in 2028.

CAP - Community Action Plan

Next meeting due in 4 weeks.

CAN - Climate Action Now

No report

10 Correspondence

Michael Kitts expressed his concerns about speeding on Bridge Street and on South Deeside Road and asked if BCCC would support approaching Abco to introduce speed restrictions. **WJ** explained that concerns about speeding vehicles had been discussed at numerous BCCC meetings and raised with Abco, the usual response being that no incidents had been reported so there was no need to change. There are no speed cameras in the village and no speed enforcement. Willie Murdoch reported that speed signs and speed bumps did not necessarily reduce speeding as he had discovered on Monaltrie Avenue next to the Primary School - it needed to be enforced. **CGB** had indicated that there would be a review of speed restrictions across Aberdeenshire in 2023. **BW** said it was his understanding that Abco were waiting for funding to come through for signage 'Twenty is plenty', already seen in many other areas of Scotland, but would not do so until funding was available.

Michael Kitts agreed, with the support of Tom Flynn & Athol Bowman, to look at speeding issues throughout the community and come back with a report to the BCCC which could be sent to Abco.

11 Finance Nothing to report.

12 AOCB Willie Murdoch attended the meeting to complain about vandalism and anti-social behaviour by youths at the Hut adjacent to the playpark on Monaltrie Park. Broken bottles and litter make it unsafe for children and families and he had given up clearing the litter himself. Police response had not been good. When the youths had been approached, they had run away to the back of the Primary School and had been spotted trying to set a fire in a small hut at the rear of the school. It is a problem that there is nowhere for young people to gather other than this hut, but Mr Murdoch asked if he might have the support of the BCCC for moving the hut. This was agreed.

The meeting ended at 20.50.

The next meeting will be held at Moxon Quarry Studios, Crathie at 19.00 hours