

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of Meeting held at Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater on Monday 10th July 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Jo Croll (JC) - Vice Chair Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer John Bannerman (JB) Bill Braid (BB) Tom Flynn (TF) Gareth Johnston (GJ) Simon Mearns (SM) Ellie Kinghorn (EK)	Apologies Lewis MacDonald Cllr Geva Blackett Cllr Sarah Brown Cllr Anouk Kloppert Paul Gibb (CNPA)	Also present: Dougal Morgan (DM) Linda Drever (LD) John Burrows (JB-BRD) Ian Henderson (IH) Calum Halhead -Abergeldie Gordon Riddler - Halls (GR) Kate Allum (KA) Bruce Lawson (BL) Angus McNicol (AMN) - Invercauld Estate Allan Jones - Aberdeenshire Sheltered Housing
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1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 Conflicts of interest.

3 Emergency Services Report No report received.

4 Allan Jones - Housing Manager Aberdeenshire Council (Abco) - Sheltered Housing

TF introduced Allan Jones to make a presentation following local concerns at vacancy at Sluiemohr and time taken to fill any vacancies. AJ pointed out that housing was run as a business, split into 4 main areas of Options & Homelessness, dealing with matters up to becoming a tenant of the council; Management of Tenancy, dealing with rental collection etc; Management of Assets, dealing with maintenance and repairs of council properties and finally, Housing Strategy & Building Standards, dealing with future planning to meet housing needs. There are 13,500 properties in Aberdeenshire, allocated according to housing policy. Anyone aged 16 or over can apply for council housing and the council has a legal duty to deal with anyone suffering from homelessness for whatever reason (eg property damage, relationship breakdown etc). A local connection is no longer a requirement of applying for a property in any given area. There are currently approximately 5,000 people on the waiting list, of which

Ballater has 43. The vast majority are seeking 1-bed properties. This number includes people wishing to move to the area for work, to support other family etc.

Regarding Sheltered Housing, this was severely impacted during Covid as regulations did not permit immediate re-letting of properties. Upper Deeside has only Sluiemohr in Ballater and Bonty Court in Aboyne, although Aberdeenshire has a good number of sheltered housing properties per head of population. There are 15 sheltered housing properties in Ballater, 112 council properties in total. An unsuccessful application for a property would not be informed. **TF** asked if there had been any interest in vacancy at Sluie Mhor following advertising on local community boards and facebook pages, but the only applicant had not met eligibility criteria for the site. **AJ** suggested less people were willing to live in communal facilities. Also, sheltered housing could be perceived as more expensive, although rent did include heating and electricity. **IH** pointed out that the lack of a live-in warden or sheltered housing officer made Sluiemohr less attractive to vulnerable residents, who potentially required Very Sheltered Housing, which was more expensive to provide. While Abco does not have an age requirement for their properties, they must ensure that residents remain safe. **JB** asked if **AJ** knew how many council properties lay within the flood zone and if property level protection had been provided. **AJ** would respond with further information. **BL** asked if there was an Emergency Plan for properties such as Sluie Mhor. **AJ** said that Abco had Instant Management Teams set up for emergencies and worked with other agencies such as SSEN to ensure that vulnerable tenants were cared for. **JC** asked if the application process for a council property was only online, but **AJ** assured her that they had a dedicated team which could assist in applications by telephone and paper copies could be sent out, although it was very rare for council officers to go out and assist in completing application forms.

5 Approval of Minutes June minutes were approved.

6 Matters arising from previous meeting

RF had written to Invercauld Estate regarding the planned Jubilee Avenue of trees at Eastfield and Angus McNicol had replied. Both initial letter and response would be posted on Ballater Facebook page as well as BCCC Facebook page. **AMN** said that research would be undertaken to find native broadleaf species with upright growth. Trees would be planted 6 metres from the side of the road to avoid overhanging branches etc. Invercauld Estate would monitor the trees annually to ensure safety, although sponsorship should cover up to first five years of maintenance.

7 Action Tracker Update

A letter to Bank of Scotland had been drafted by Richard Frimston and Kate Allum and shared with other Community Councils and local business groups. BCCC agreed to send the letter to Bank of Scotland to ensure that dialogue was opened to address local concerns, in particular about provision of ATM facilities. A meeting with Balmoral Estate had also opened a dialogue between BCCC and the Estate and it was agreed to continue this policy.

Sub-committee Reports

Housing & Planning

- a) A planning application for the top-up tap had been made.
- b) Scotia had written to **JC** to say that they would provide a 3-d visualisation of the development in plenty of time for comments to be included in the pre-application. The Housing Group had also requested a Statement of Community Benefit from Scotia.

FIG -Flooding Information Group

JB reported on the publication of the complementary study by RPS following the February 2021 flood event during which the riverbank and river flow changed. It can be read in full at [http://ballater-fps/additional-supplementary-reports/\(ballater-fps.com\)](http://ballater-fps/additional-supplementary-reports/(ballater-fps.com)). FIG continues to lobby Abco to hold a public meeting to explain the report to the community. The report concludes that the flood risk to Ballater has increased since the last survey was done to support the initial Flood study in 2019. More properties are at risk of flooding in the higher frequency lower level flooding i.e. up to the 1/30 yr flood. The impact of a Storm Frank type flood has not changed. To partially mitigate the increased risk a bund and some clearance work has been recommended in the area adjacent to the golf course's 4th hole. The cost of these works is significant. Today it is unclear how these works can be financed. A consultation with all stakeholders is necessary to gauge the level of support within the community for these works.

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that work to update the register continued. Contact had been made with Scott Williams of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and it is hoped that a Memorandum of Understanding might be closer to completion between Halls, Emergency Services and BRG. A large donation of towels had been received from the Hilton. Gas canisters had been sourced, awaiting a storage area.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report until contractor had completed works. Geoff Feeney will contact **WJ** to finalise arrangements.

8 Crathie issues

Nothing to report.

9 Other Reports

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

JB-BRD will meet with Ian Shand to discuss management of trees on village green. Plans are in place for a new power tower for the long green to be placed on Hawthorn Place. As the Community Bus is no longer available, work is underway exploring

alternatives such as Car Share etc. BRD will be examining the Community Action Plan in forthcoming meetings. **JB-BRD** congratulated **WJ** on his recent marriage.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

Nothing to report from the caravan park.

Aberdeenshire Council

No councillors present.

CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

Paul Gibb sent his apologies and unable to attend.

CAP - Community Action Plan

Draft CAP now available for community groups to examine. BCCC to set up a meeting to discuss CAP in detail.

Halls

GR and **BB** were making applications for funding to update the heating systems in the Halls to ensure that rents to community groups could be maintained at reasonable costs.

CAN - Climate Action Now

No report

Other

BL had met with representatives from Stagecoach following consultation with VisitScotland and local businesses. He had raised a query regarding the gap in afternoon departures from Ballater to Aberdeen and this has been addressed in the new timetable, although the afternoon section of the new timetable remains puzzling to follow. It has been suggested that a new Aberdeen-Banchory service will cover the upper section of Banchory previously covered by the 201 Aberdeen-Braemar service so that should reduce the travel time of the service. An earlier arrival time in Ballater in the morning had been requested to allow workers from Banchory & Aboyne to arrive in Ballater at an earlier start time. This was being looked at by Stagecoach. The 201 service will receive newer buses so should reduce the number of breakdowns in the service due to old stock. **BL** had suggested that the 201 service could be better marketed, possibly offering a hop-on/hop-off castle service, for example, to be included in the fare or possibly for the Highland Games at Aboyne, Ballater and Braemar. Also asked about possibility of later departure from Braemar to cover events at St Margarets or other venues. There did not seem to be a great deal of enthusiasm from Stagecoach.

10 Correspondence Nothing to report.

11 Finance Nothing to report.

12 AOCB **RF** presented a jar of Home-made Marmalade to Bill Braid in appreciation of all the extra work undertaken by him in managing the defibrillators.

The meeting ended at 20.30.

The next meeting is planned for Monday 11th September 2023 at 7pm at Mike Sheridan Room, Station Square, Ballater