

## BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

[www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com](http://www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com)

Minutes of BCCC meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
at 7pm

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Also present:</b>
James Anderson - Chairman (WJ)	Cllr Geva Blackett	Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB)
Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF)	Paul Gibb	Dougal Morgan
William Braid (BB)	Ray Riddoch	Weston Main
Kate Allum (KA)	Mike Hadley	Ron Drever
Simon Mearns (SM)	Jo Croll	Bruce Lawson
Linda Drever (LD)	Alan Nicoll	Martin Ellison
Jennifer Davidson (JD)	Whit Romilly	Sergeant Masson - Police Scotland
Scott Peacock (SP)	Valerie Stoddart	
Calum Halhead (CH)		
Lewis Macdonald (LMM)		
Ellie Kinghorn (EK) - Treasurer		

### 1 Welcome by WJ

**2 Emergency Services Report** Sergeant Masson reported a decrease in reported crime in the last quarter. A police officer will take residence in Braemar from April and operate out of the Braemar office. Police officers had issued parking tickets on Distillery Brae, but few drivers understood the meaning of the signs at either end of the brae, signifying no parking on the road. A meeting is planned to look at better ways of getting information across.

**3 February 2025 minutes were approved.** KA reported that, along with RF, she had contacted Nic Crossley of Scottish Orienteering to clarify plans for the event in July, in particular parking during the registration day on 26<sup>th</sup> July and the urban sprint day on 30<sup>th</sup> July. The registration day would mean 1,100 cars plus 100 motor homes arriving in the village for registration in the Victoria Hall between 11am and 4pm. Invercauld Estate had agreed to parking in the field at Monaltrie Park on 30<sup>th</sup> July, but only in the event of dry weather. At this stage, there are no plans in place for wet weather parking although KA and RF suggested alternatives and would discuss this also with Angus McNicol of Invercauld Estate. Sergeant Masson was unaware of the event, suggesting that possibly no application had yet been made for an event licence. JB suggested that if an application for event licence had been made, then concerns

about parking, traffic management and road safety would all have to be resolved. **CSB** asked Sergeant Masson about pedestrian safety as she was concerned about 300 to 400 runners being involved in the street event in Ballater on a busy summer day. He believed that was the responsibility of organisers to have marshals in place. **WJ** expressed collective concern of BCCC that the organisers might not have thought everything through adequately. Sergeant Masson would contact Nic Crossley to clarify.

**4 Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when they arose during meeting.**

#### **5 Action Tracker**

No 122 may be removed as there is now a road sign at Crathie entering from the west. The application for a banking hub (no 127) has been partially successful and a request has been made to Cash Access UK as to what may be provided and when. No 128 may be removed as a fence has been erected at Red Braes on Seven Bridges Walk. **RF** will check with Angus McNichol regarding repairs to bank erosion on the Gairn (no 134). **SM** reported that dropped kerbs at crossings would be requested (no 136). **CSB** reported that bollards would be installed in Station Square at pavement once paving stones repaired and streetlights, while low priority, would be looked at behind the Old Station. Streetlights causing a nuisance had been reported but no response yet. No 139 regarding the barely legible signage of disabled bays on Golf Road has been raised with Abco but deemed low priority. **CSB** has requested a timescale.

#### **6 Sub-committee reports**

##### Housing and Planning

Terms of Reference for the Housing & Planning Subcommittee were approved.

##### A Planning

**BB** reported that an application for the Auld Manse in the Square had not been called in by CNPA. An application for the demolition of Bovaglie and erection of a new replacement house had also been made. **WJ** asked about planning application for a Chipper Van on the Green, but **KA** confirmed that the application had been withdrawn.

##### B H1

Nothing to report, but **RF** would raise at meeting with Angus McNicol.

##### Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

Terms of Reference were approved.

**WJ** declared an interest in work being undertaken on riverbank for FIG. **JB** reported a small amount of damage to the Hesco boxes, requiring some minor landscaping. There would also be work on the bund at the caravan park to ensure any water gathering did not get directed into the park. Phil Benzie and a group of volunteers would be planting willow as part of a pilot scheme to consolidate the banking on the edge of the drainage channel on the golf course. The CBEC model has been completed and now awaiting a final report. FIG will have meetings with Dee Resilience Group and Atlantic Salmon Trust during March.

##### Ballater Resilience Group

**LD** reported that she had met with Tricia Cooper & Calum Halhead regarding the revival of the Crathie Resilience Group. They were accompanied by Amy Bloomer from Abco who suggested that funding might be available to pipe in gas from the canisters to the cooker in the hall. All equipment would remain in Crathie.

### Economy

Terms of Reference for the subcommittee were approved. **RF** reported that meetings continued regarding concerns about the closure of the Information Centre at the Old Royal Station.

### Roads & Paths

**SM** and **RF**, along with Ken Gibson would represent BCCC on advisory group regarding the extension of the Deeside Way from Ballater to Braemar.

Castle Plant had been asked to submit a quotation for the Old Line repairs.

The Cinder Path remains ongoing. A funding application to CNPA and to the Ian Findlay Path Trust would be made and tenders sought for the work to be completed.

Discussion with the various landowners would also be required - Abco, Monaltrie House, Invercauld House and BCT - to determine ongoing maintenance. Work on cinder path would also benefit the play park as this would include the stretch from the school to the play park.

The Walk Ballater website is being updated with additional walks and maps, of interest both to visitors and locals. **KA** reminded **SM** and **SP** to ensure that any work undertaken by Ade at the Hub should be funded by Ballater Walking Festival.

**SM** assured Bruce Lawson that he was willing to assist in clearing the roadway at Eastfield to ensure pedestrian safety.

### **7 Crathie Issues**

**CH** reported that parking on Distillery Brae remained an issue.

### **8 Other reports**

#### Aberdeenshire Council

**CSB** asked if BCCC had received any response yet from the village regarding press reports about plans for the council budget. She was particularly concerned about the scale of savings required and the impact this might have on the community, particularly regarding health & social care. Homes such as Allachburn would not be under Abco control but would possibly be put out to the private sector. This could be disastrous for rural communities where there is already a shortage of Abco provision, never mind trying to find private service companies. There is a planned 10% increase in council tax (which forms 22% of funding to the council).

#### Cairngorm National Park Authority

No report

#### Community Action Plan

**RF** reported that the AGM will be in June. **KA** reported that the Memorandum of Understanding between Abco and Ballater Community Trust was no longer fit for

purpose and BCT were looking to pull together all elements in order to present a new Memorandum of Understanding.

#### Ballater (RD) Ltd - Ballater Community Trust

**RR** sent a note to report that Ballater Walking Week had sold out. John Burrows would be running the Duck Festival, but happy to welcome volunteers on board. Also, there were still vacancies for Directors on the Community Trust board.

#### Ballater Community Enterprise

Bruce Lawson reported that the caravan park had been full on first weekend of opening. **WJ** expressed thanks on behalf of BCCC to Sandy Mitchell for all his hard work as chair of BCE.

#### Halls

**BB** reported that halls continue to be busy. Insulation work is ongoing in Albert Hall and Victoria Hall.

#### Ballater School

The School sent a newsletter of recent events and expressed a willingness for the school to be involved in local events.

#### Climate Action Now

**SP** reported a successful litter pick. However, he had been discouraged at number of cigarette ends at the Hut on the Green. He asked about the possibility of a bin attached to the Hut, but this would require permission from Old People's Association as well as agreement from Abco to empty the bins. **KA** suggested that replacement bins on the green might also include an ash tray. Sadly, the recycling bins on the green were almost always contaminated so could only be treated as non-recycling waste.

**SP** asked about the financial donations to the Food Pantry and suggested that people should only take what they could immediately use to avoid further food waste.

**KA** said that the Hub were seeking to improve the structure for the Book Sale in the summer. **JB** suggested that FIG and BRG might also work together to fund a shelter as something was also required for water heaters in the event of an emergency. Bruce Lawson asked about a permanent loan of huts from Deeside Log Cabins such as used during Ballater Victoria Week. **KA** was already looking into this possibility.

#### Other

Nothing to report

### **9 Correspondence**

A letter had been received from BT about the phone box in Station Square which is a listed building. BT would like to remove the analogue phone and lock the phone box. However, **RF** pointed out that this was an attraction to tourists in the Square. He had noted that he had been able to receive calls in the box but not make any outgoing calls. BT maintained that only 40 calls had been made in the last year and the phone box required over 52 per year to make it viable. **JD** pointed out that she had depended on the analogue phone box to make medical appointments during recent power cuts and **LD**

confirmed that after Storm Arwen, the collection box had been full. **RF** will contact Marr Area Committee to oppose the planned removal.

#### **10 Finance**

**EK** reported that insurance had been paid, and a grant received from Abco.

#### **11 AOCB**

**KA** reported that the Golf Club has agreed to provide land & landscaping for a proposed Bike Storage facility available to store adapted bikes as well as visitor bikes. It would be secure storage with CCTV. It would allow more rides to be organised for disabled cyclists as well as being available to visiting families trained to use the adapted bikes. It would also generate income from visitors seeking secure storage for their own bikes.

**JB** reported that Rachel Esson from the Mid Deeside Transport Group had been in touch requesting names of volunteers for hospital appointment transport. This is currently undertaken in Ballater by Probus and a number of volunteers have put their names forward.

Alistair Thom had been in touch to ask if there was any interest in reviving the Rotary Club in Upper Deeside. **JB** suggested it was already a struggle to find sufficient people to manage and organise groups in the village. He would respond to Mr Thom.

The meeting concluded at 20.25

The Next meeting will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Quarry Studios in Crathie