

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of BCCC meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater, 10th February
2025 at 7pm

| Present: | Apologies | Also present: |
|---|---|---|
| James Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF) William Braid (BB) Kate Allum (KA) Simon Mearns (SM) Linda Drever (LD) Jo Croll (JC) Jennifer Davidson (JD) Scott Peacock (SP) Calum Halhead (CH) | Ellie Kinghorn Lewis Macdonald John Bannerman | Paul Gibb - CNPA (PG) Ray Riddoch - Ballater Community Trust (RR) Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Cat Houston Lucile Verrot Weston Main Ron Drever Mike Hadley Martin Ellison Athol Bowman |

1 Welcome by WJ

2 **Appointment of Associate BCCC Members:** Mike Hadley, Weston Main and Martin Ellison proposed by **WJ**, seconded by **RF**, all voted in favour.

3 **Emergency Services Report** Sergeant Masson will attend the March BCCC meeting.

4 **January 2025 minutes were approved**

5 **Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when.**

6 **Action Tracker**

CSB reported that Nestrans would lead procurement of the design process for relocation of the bus stop (no 6) and a series of consultations with stakeholders will take place throughout March. **RF** reported that the snowcam at Gairnshiel (no 121) faced increased costs as Invercauld Estate had requested a re-routing of the wiring. This meant that it would be impossible to complete before 28th February and **RF** suggested pausing this programme to have a re-think on priorities. **RF** to inform Marr Area Committee of this decision. **WJ** would find out if Crathie sign had been installed (no 122). The Community Assessment Manager for a banking hub in Ballater had visited and we are waiting for a decision following an initial dismissal had been withdrawn (no 127). CNPA had received a commitment from Balmoral Estate to install dog-proof fencing above Red Braes (no 128). **SM** reported that increasing number of dog-waste bins would not necessarily resolve the issue of dog-owners failing to pick up dog waste. The bins had to be in locations which would be accessible to Abco refuse

vehicles, so extra bins on riverside path or on Old Line would not be possible. **JC** suggested signage to remind dog-owners that bins were available at the end of these routes. **LD** asked if anyone had been fined for failure to remove dog waste, but this information was not available. Remove from Action Tracker as BCCC had no further options available. No 133 to be removed from AT as BCCC had done as much as possible to deal with noise & other issues from the bus garage. Footpath erosion at Glengairn is ongoing (no 134). The potholes and gullies at Queens Road/Abergeldie Road (no 135) remain a low-priority issue for Abco as they have limited resources and not deemed safety critical. Athol Bowman pointed out that it means that wheelchairs and mobility scooters are forced on to the road at this section because of flooding and surface issues combined with on-pavement parking. **CSB** suggested that persistent on-pavement parking offenders should be reported, and she would send link to do so to the BCCC. **CSB** will continue to ask about this section of road. **SM** asked about where lowered pavements should be prioritised in the village (no 136). Pat Downie suggested the corners of junctions with accessibility from both directions. Also that pavement accessibility should be considered when re-locating the bus stop. The question of streetlights causing disturbance to adjacent residents (no137) is still to be resolved. There is also a plan, raised on Facebook by Cllr Geva Blackett, that streetlights might be switched off at certain times during the night to save energy and money. Lucile Verrot pointed out that a light had been out of order for a number of weeks on Braichlie Road, but she had been told that only safety-critical lighting would be fixed in current budget. **JC** asked if there was a time limit within which reported lights should be fixed as there were several lights in Station Square which had been out of action for some time. **CSB** would follow up on this issue in addition to raised paving stone on pavement in Station Square.

WJ queried the financial viability of the council's system of fixing potholes as he was aware of recent cases where adjacent pot holes had not been fixed as they were not on the reported list so had not been categorised for filling.

7 Sub-committee reports

Housing and Planning

A Planning

BB reported that the application for a house at Shenval, Glengairn had not been called in by CNPA.

B H1

Nothing to report.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

RF reported that CBEC should have completed modelling by end of February and would put report together with options and costings.

The Hesco box project was now complete but no real high-water events to test the bank. The bridge still flooded in the channel on the Golf Course and FIG were in discussion with Golf Club regarding this.

Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that Resilience Plan was now complete and would be put on BCCC website. There would be an Emergency Brochure and an Adverse Weather Conditions leaflet. Tricia Cooper and Calum Halhead had offered to take over Crathie Resilience Group from Geoff Feeney and Iain Henderson. **LD** would meet with them to make an inventory of resilience equipment held at Crathie Church Hall and would discuss with them if new CRG might continue to hold equipment there. **RF** to verify the equipment and location for insurance purposes. An article is planned for The Eagle.

Economy

There have been meetings with VisitScotland and Abco regarding the Old Royal Station building. Abco will also now be involved actively seeking a commercial tenant for the space when VisitScotland stops at end of September. However, there is some doubt if a commercial tenant would wish to share the space with the Library. **KA** emphasised that it was essential to gain assurances from Abco about retaining the library in its current form. **RF** also pointed out that ownership of the Royal Railway Carriage also had to be determined. CNPA was also now on board and appreciated the value of the Old Royal Station as a visitor attraction in the centre of the village.

Roads & Paths

SM and Ken Gibson would represent BCCC on advisory group regarding the extension of the Deeside Way from Ballater to Braemar. Calum Halhead was unable to take on this role due to conflict of interest as representative of Abergeldie Estate. **SP** would be meeting with Ballater Community Trust regarding funding for the Cinder Path and for maps for Walking Week.

8 Crathie Issues

CH reported that parking on Distillery Brae remained an issue although Sergeant Masson had sent a patrol vehicle but found no issue on that day. **CH** felt that lines on road or clearer signage might be required. Distillery Brae parking to be put on AT.

9 Other reports

Aberdeenshire Council

CSB said that Abco was currently discussing budget setting for next year - very difficult decisions to be made. A mapping system had been developed on the Abco website with full information regarding energy-related planning. Also in discussion is the issue of visitor levies to be raised with relevant stakeholders.

Cairngorm National Park Authority

PG reported that the Dee Resilience Strategy Meeting will take place in Dinnet Hall on 9th March. Also a fund of £170,000 available in tranches of £1,000 to £25,000 to groups seeking to fund projects for sustainable transport.

Community Action Plan

KA reported that the Hub had reduced its deficit, but still running at a loss. However, it is a very important asset to the village. **KA** is seeking to extend the agreement with Ballater Community Trust and the Halls to cover this deficit until

September 2026 - a sum of £10,000 pa. Without their financial support, the Hub would not function. There had been an increase in income from printing services and from the website. More than £3,000 had been gained from the book sales which was excellent as books were all donated, so no need to have working capital to buy stock. **WJ** asked about Ballater-branded gifts, but that would require a working capital and stock management. The Hub is looking at improving their outdoor summer display area. **RF** suggested that the Community Action Plan could report on what has and has not been achieved at the AGM of BCCC on 9th June.

Cat Houston reported that the Playground Improvement Group had been in contact with equipment suppliers to find out what was available with funds available.

Ballater (RD) Ltd - Ballater Community Trust

RR reported that first meeting of the year would be held this month to review what had been achieved and look at what could be supported in next year's budget. Also vacancies for directors. He agreed with **RF** and **KA** that the village needed to work hard to ensure that the Old Royal Station was not left empty when VisitScotland closed their office.

Ballater Community Enterprise

Nothing to report.

Halls

BB reported that floors have now been re-sanded, thanks to financing from BCT. Halls staff did try to ensure that access to the halls was safe during bad weather, but Caithness stones meant only gritting and not salt could be used. Halls are looking at rubber mats to be put down in icy weather.

Ballater School

An approach had been made to the School to design a flag for the 150th anniversary of the Albert Hall, funded by Athol Bowman.

Climate Action Now

SP reported that they were still looking into issue of allotments and a possible tool lending scheme. Litter pick to take place on 15th February. The new hut had resulted in greater uptake from the Food Pantry. There would be a report in the next Eagle.

Other

Nothing to report

10 Correspondence

There continued to be correspondence regarding the location of a defibrillator outside the centre of the village. This would require someone to purchase it and a building with public access and a maintained electricity supply, so any ideas for potential locations would be welcome.

11 Finance

Nothing to report.

12 AOCB

JD asked if the signage for disabled parking at the Co-op and the Station Square could be made clearer. It is currently not clearly marked and there is no-one to enforce correct usage. **CSB** will raise with signage and this to be added to AT.

JD also highlighted that visibility where the Old Line crosses the A93 at Eastfield remains poor. Abco had cleared trees to the statutory distance but still not ideal. Bruce Lawson had approached Invercauld Estate with a view to clearing the remainder of the area. **RF** would contact Bruce Lawson for update and copy in **JD**.

KA was concerned that she still did not have a clear response from Nic Crossley of Scottish Orienteering regarding their plans for parking in July. **LD** said that Games Committee were also concerned and would be in touch with Nic Crossley.

KA reported that 34 out of 75 businesses approached to be in the VisitBallater website had signed up. There would be a marketing round in March to encourage further uptake at a very reasonable price of £40 pa.

BB reported that he would be joining the Patterson Cottages Trust which was initially set up to offer housing to retired farming & estate workers previously in tied housing - it is managed by the 2 ministers, Willie Meston & Pat Downie. While currently full, applications can be made.

WJ raised a current controversy on Facebook regarding which flag should be flying on the pole on the Church Green. **KA** said that this would come under the Memorandum of Understanding between Abco and the Ballater Community Trust regarding how the Greens should be managed.

WJ asked if the new Associate Members had any areas in which they wished to become involved. Weston Main suggested that he might support **KA** in her efforts to obtain funding for a secure shed for bike storage, both as a commercial venture for visitors and to store adaptive bikes for visitors to enjoy the ride-outs organised locally. Mike Hadley expressed an interest in housing and in representing issues from Cambus O'May.

The meeting concluded at 20.40

The Next meeting will be held on 10th March 2025 at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Michael Sheridan Room, V&A Halls, Ballater