

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

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

Present: Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer Bill Braid (BB) Tom Flynn (TF) Simon Mearns (SM) Gareth Johnston (GJ) Ellie Kinghorn (EK)	Apologies Cllr Geva Blackett Cllr Anouk Kloppert John Bannerman Jo Croll Calum Halhead Cllr Paul Gibb	Also present: Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Linda Drever - BRG (LD) Ian Henderson (IH) Scott Peacock - CAN (SP) Sergeant Allan Masson - Police Scotland (AM) Kate Allum (KA) Mike Hadley (MH) John Morrison (JM)
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1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 Conflicts of interest. WJ had helped flood works on River Dee and was also sub-contracted to clear snow on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council.

3 Emergency Services Report

Sergeant Masson had submitted a report for last quarter of 2023. Online fraud remains an issue, but difficult to detect as perpetrators are frequently overseas. There had been isolated incidents of knife-carrying, but considered more out of ignorance than as potential threat. An incident of fly-tipping had led to the discovery that a horse-box had been stolen. Sergeant Masson urged rural areas to be vigilant as opportunistic criminals seemed to be in the area, with quad bikes etc being targeted. Mountain Rescue had been quiet, although one incident involved a homeless person seeking shelter in a bothy; contact had been made with Aberdeenshire Council and the person had now been found alternative accommodation. WJ asked why the snow-gates at the Bush Farm and at Gairnshiel Lodge had not been closed, as several vehicles had been stuck on that road. Sergeant Masson believed that there was only electronic signage there which would be under the control of Aberdeenshire Council. The possibility of insufficient officers to close the gates in plenty of time could be an

issue and he would check with Aberdeenshire Council as to responsibility for their closure. **WJ** also asked about the possibility of gates at Gairnshiel before the new bridge going over to Strathdon, as several vehicles had also been stuck there during bad weather. Sergeant Masson would follow up on this as it is a particularly open and treacherous stretch of road.

4 December minutes were approved with corrections.

5 Matters arising from previous meeting.

6 Action Tracker Update

CSB still waiting for response to issues of paintwork on Royal Station (no 69). **CSB** would write to BCCC to update on No 108A regarding parking problems at Crathie School as the Abco plan had not met with any agreement from either school or residents. No further action but would remain under review. Meetings via Teams continue with Balmoral Estate, parking being a particular issue (no 124). **IH** asked if residents at Aspenholme had any problems with visitor parking - **WJ** would check. **KA** and **RF** continue to lobby for answers regarding bank closure and ATM problems, and in particular for a banking hub (no 127). **PD** pointed out that staff shortages at the Co-op had meant that banking facilities were not always available. Balmoral Estate had agreed to erect fencing and signage at Red Braes on the Seven Bridges Walk (no 128). Balmoral Estate did not believe that it had any responsibility for the War Memorial at Crathie. **CSB** confirmed that it was not listed on Abco register of assets. **IH** would contact **RF** with full details of the damage and **RF** would contact the War Graves Commission and include Balmoral Estate in the correspondence (no 129). **CSB** agreed to send another application for exemption on pavement parking for Sir Patrick Geddes Way to BCCC (no 130). **CSB** reported that work will start as soon as possible to repair kerbs outside Strachans shop (no 131).

7 Sub-committee Reports

Housing & Planning

- a) No contentious applications, although there had been a great deal of comment on social media on the development at Bovaglie. No approaches had been made to BCCC.
- b) **GJ** had spoken with Games Committee regarding the H1 proposal and its impact on Monaltrie Park. Housing Group will meet with Gavin Miles of CNPA to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the BCCC in relation to the H1 application from Scotia. Scotia had answered all the questions from the Housing Group, although there is still no 3-d model available. It looks as though the social housing would be built first.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

RF emphasised how the development of H1 might well benefit flood defences for other properties in Pannanich Road. **TF** reported on work with CBEC to begin design work for BRD for flood mitigation but to a lower level than that provided by Option

3A. Proposals were being circulated to Abco, Ballater Golf Club, the Caravan Park and local estates and will be considered by the BRD board. CBEC will develop outline designs to improve flood resilience within Ballater but this will be subject to BRD obtaining funding. Subject to that it would be proposed to start work in March, using drone boats to take detailed surveys of the entire river bed, as well as looking at potential sites for defence works both on the banks and in the river, integrating these with previous earlier surveys. These surveys would lead to modelling of the river and its surroundings, examining various interventions and the impact of each intervention. It would also look at costs of each intervention. These proposals would be presented to stakeholders for comment before being taken to BRD and BCCC for final approval. The proposal would then go to a public meeting. The fee of £25,000 would meet the costs up to this stage. CBEC will be looking at nature-based, green engineering rather than the concrete walls of option 3A. It will try to assist the river to find its way with least damage to the village. Another survey is required because the river has changed with each flooding event. The design stage, after the public meeting, would potentially cost another £25,000 while the work itself might be several hundred thousands of pounds. TF emphasised that the technical support offered by Lucile Verrot had been invaluable in dealing with this strategy to date.

Mike Hadley and John Morrison will take over from John Bannerman in developing and encouraging Property Level Protection. Richard Bush is in discussion with Abco regarding the condition of the Ballater Bridge, following issues with Aboyne Bridge. RF and Lucile were in discussion with CNPA regarding upstream initiatives. CSB said that Abco were looking at repairs to the Aboyne Bridge. She had been assisting other community councils in the setting up of Public Meetings and Local Forums, but urged BCCC to let her know of any south Deeside issues as a result of the Aboyne Bridge closure.

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that BRG were relieved that much of the recent bad weather seemed to have missed out Ballater & Crathie.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report.

Roads and Paths

SM and Lucile Verrot were continuing to consult with parents regarding safe paths to school. SM reported that Ken Gibson had been seeking tenders for work to be done on the cinder path to present to the Ian Findlay Grant Fund, although there might be issues of ownership of the path between Abco, Invercauld Estate and private householders.

8 Crathie issues

Nothing to report.

9 Other Reports

Aberdeenshire Council

CSB reported that school car park was not a priority for gritting, and that immediate access routes were the responsibility of the school. **SM** will include winter conditions in analysis of safe routes to school. **CSB** had asked Abco to reassess the A939 Snow Road, between Ballater and Strathdon as it is currently not considered an essential route and is only gritted if resources are available.

Police Scotland had undertaken two speed check events in Ballater, with no speeding detected. **SM** will also consider road speed as part of safe routes to school consultation. Twenty is Plenty will only come into play in 2025 when Scottish Government funding will be available.

CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

Nothing to report.

CAP - Community Action Plan

There is a lot going on. **KA** reported that leadership of most of the areas of interest had been completed. It is hoped to present a report in the spring of the areas of interest and who is leading on them. The economy had previously come under the auspices of BBA. **RF** proposed a sub-committee of Economic Affairs on the BCCC. This could look at the long-term future of Balmoral, for example, as well as providing a focus for groups interested to bring events to the village and reviewing the economic health and development of the community. **KA** suggested that previously the economy had concentrated on hospitality but perhaps more diversity and sustainability should be sought. **RF** said that the Economic Affairs sub-committee could co-opt members from the community and will not only be members of BCCC. **RF** pointed out that not all residents welcomed increased economic activity.

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

Ray Riddoch has taken over as Chair of BRD. **RF** suggested that Ray should become an associate member of the BCCC to receive reports.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

The Caravan Park is closed. The Board is seeking to appoint further directors.

Halls

BB reported that AGM will be on 30th January 2024. Dr Glass and Ed Bushnell will be standing down as trustees.

CAN - Climate Action Now

SP has organised a Litter Pick on 13th January, 1-3pm.

There is also a tour of the Waste Energy Plant at Altens scheduled for 12th March, with maximum of 15 visitors. Please contact Scott Peacock if you wish to attend.

10 Correspondence

RF reported no positive response from Link regarding ATMs in the village. A request had been received from Red On Group regarding an additional possible bike event. He and KA would investigate.

11 Finance No change

12 AOCB

PD had received complaints about dog waste in the village and it had featured on social media. CSB would contact council for advice. WJ suggested involving the local school as this had worked on previous occasions. KA asked about the number of dog waste bins available. GJ pointed out that more bins had been installed and moved to dog-walking areas, but it remained a problem.

The meeting ended at 20.15

The next meeting will be held on 12th February 2024 at the Mike Sheridan Room, Station Square, Ballater at 19.00hours.

Approved