

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

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

Minutes of BCCC meeting held at Quarry Studios, Crathie, Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Also present:</b>
James Anderson - Chairman (WJ)	Cllr Sarah Brown	Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB)
Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF)	Scott Peacock	Weston Main (WM)
William Braid (BB)	Sergeant Masson	Ron Drever
John Bannerman - Vice Chairman (JB)	Kate Allum	Paul Gibb - CNPA (PG)
Lewis Macdonald (LMM)	Simon Mearns	Dougal Morgan (DM)
Tom Flynn (TF)	Martin Ellison	Whit Romilly
Ellie Kinghorn (EK)	Richard Gledson	Geoff Feeney (GF)
Linda Drever (LD)	Ray Riddoch	Gavin Miles - CNPA Director of Planning
Calum Halhead (CH)	Katrina Farquhar	Angus McNicol (AMN)
Jo Croll (JC)	Valerie Stoddart	

### 1 Welcome

2 **Emergency Services Report** had been submitted by Sergeant Masson who will attend a later meeting. There had been a number of mountain rescue call outs during the summer.

### 3 Approval of minutes of Inaugural Meeting and BCCC meeting held in September 2024

### 4 Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when

### 5 Action Tracker

JC reported on a Teams meeting held with Abco regarding the bus relocation (no 6). Further drawings would be made available to show the preferred location behind the Church. Issues raised included possibility of loss of car parking and bus parking space in the main car park. Solutions might include using the waste ground adjacent to the car park behind the Royal Station, but CGB suggested that future funding may well be a problem. The paintwork on the Royal Station (no 90) has now been started, but JC reported that there is still no maintenance schedule in place. No 90 may now be removed. Funding of the Snowcam at Gairnshiel remains a problem (no121). BB reported that the capital costs were not an issue, but the ongoing cost of a sim card (estimated £22 per month) was a problem. It was suggested that BB approaches CNPA for initial funding and BCCC might be able to source funding for the sim card for an initial 5-year period until alternative funding sources were found.

**RF** has submitted a second application for a banking Hub for Ballater with the support of Andrew Bowie. (No 127).

## **6 Sub-committee reports**

### Housing and Planning

#### A Planning

A pre planning notification n application has been received for a mobile phone mast up Glen Muick. **AMN** confirmed that whilst the landowner's view would be considered as an objection, it would not necessarily determine the outcome. **DM** queried the possibility of painting the mast a more suitable colour rather than white. **JC** pointed out that loss of analogue phone system made it essential to ensure mobile phone coverage for everyone. **AMN** confirmed that mobile phone mast installation in Glengairn had currently stalled.

#### B H1

Gavin Miles from CNPA confirmed that the H1 application would not be determined in its present form. Scotia had to submit an initial Proposal of Application Notice to Aberdeenshire Council, as H1 represented a major development. Scotia should then have made a formal planning application in valid form within 18 months of date of the initial notice. However, the planning application was not made within the 18 month period so that the application was not valid and CNPA cannot consider the application. Scotia would now need to go through the whole application process once again. **AMN** reported that Scotia are undertaking an appraisal of the whole project and would make significant tweaks to the plans in the light of consultation from the local community and CNPA. He anticipated a first form drawing in December with consultation prior to that with BCCC. **JB** asked Gavin Miles if CNPA had given advice to Scotia regarding the application - he confirmed that this was so, but made it clear that it is up to the developer to then incorporate such advice as they see fit commercially. **JC** suggested that initial BCCC concerns about H1 should be reiterated to Scotia.

#### Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

**JB** had taken on chairmanship of FIG from Richard Frimston. The group principally consisted of John Bannerman, Tom Flynn, Phil Benzie, Martin Ellison, Lucille Verrot and Richard Frimston. CNPA funding had assisted in finishing the Hesco boxes work on the river bank. Abergeldie Estate had donated windblown trees to protect further erosion of the bank. Balmoral Estate would donate a further 10 to 15 trees to finish this work. The boxes increase flooding resilience but would not protect against a Storm Frank event. The trees and boxes were stabilised using boulders under advice of the consultants, CBEC. FIG had meetings with Andy Ford of CNPA in advance of the Dee Resilience Group meetings, whose stakeholders share the aim to 'smooth the flow of the River Dee' thus dealing with both floods and drought. A further meeting with Abco had been constructive regarding further local flood resilience projects but it was clear that no funding would be available from Abco, other than possibly a grant

from the Marr Area Committee. A meeting is planned on 29th Oct with the landowner on the south side of the river in the vicinity of the "ministers pool" to discuss the CBEC report. On 28<sup>th</sup> November at 19h00 there would be a public meeting in the Victoria Hall to present updates on CBEC and CNPA initiatives.

**JB** reported that Richard Gledson of Balmoral Estate had been invited to give a presentation on planned work to be undertaken at Loch Muick.

**RF** said that BCCC owed a great deal of thanks to John Bannerman and Tom Flynn for the huge amount of time and effort expended on flooding resilience. **TF** also made clear that the work of Martin Ellison and Phil Benzie in seeking funding for projects was very much appreciated. While government has statutory responsibility for physical flooding defence projects, it was difficult to source funding from bodies such as the National Lottery Fund. **TF** asked **CGB** for further assistance in applying to Marr Area for funding.

**WJ** also expressed thanks to Ballater Golf Club for all their support in the installation of hesco boxes.

#### Ballater Resilience Group

**LD** reported that 2 coordinators had attended an Aberdeen conference for resilience groups which had been an excellent networking opportunity.

A meeting of all coordinators would be held at the end of the month to review plans for the winter.

#### Crathie Resilience Group

**GF** reported that he and Ian Henderson would be stepping down from Crathie Resilience Group. Notification would be made on Facebook and the Community Noticeboard and he and Ian would remain to hand over to another volunteer. **WJ** asked if there were any plans in place should no volunteers come forward.

#### Economy

**RF** reported that, along with **KA** and **RR**, he had been working on the banking Hub. Also concern that the VisitScotland visitor centre was closing in September 2025, but Abco did not seem to have a plan in place as VisitScotland had the lease until 2028.

**RF** is concerned that the next generation of Royals may not have the same interest and investment in Ballater as the King previously did in his role as Prince of Wales.

The Visit Ballater website has been worked on by Ade and Cheryl and is still ongoing.

It may well be that 2 different Ballater websites might be introduced - one for visitors and one for locals. A strategy for websites would be helpful. Philippa Franks had done great and considerable work on the BRD website.

#### Roads and Paths

Ken Gibson and Adam Streeter-Smith were still working on the cinder path. This is a difficult issue as there are 3 landowners involved. While a grant from the Ian Findlay Trust is available for 80% of the capital work, the balance must be met from a second party. Until all funding is in place, a planning application is difficult. Also, no particular body is keen to be responsible for maintenance of the completed path.

Moreover, H1 could well impact on any path work undertaken. PD wondered if the houses built on Monaltrie Avenue had any responsibility for the path, but this would be difficult to ascertain as the houses are now over 25 years old.

## **7 Crathie Issues**

CH reported that he is still waiting for a meeting regarding the parking issues on Distillery Brae. RF reported that Ken Gibson was looking into the possibility of signage from Easter Balmoral across the suspension bridge to the car park at Crathie. However, CH pointed out that most visitors still wanted to come over the Brunel Bridge for photo opportunities at the Balmoral gates. The south Deeside road continues to be a hazard with no pavement from the Balmoral Gates to the Distillery Brae. Whit Romilly asked about the access route for construction vehicles for the work at Bovaglie. CH confirmed that these would be over the Brunel bridge.

## **8 Other reports**

### Aberdeenshire Council

CGB reported that budget discussions dominate at present. She is fighting hard to protect the winter maintenance budget for Upper Deeside. At present, Abco uses weather reports based in Banchory, but she has finally persuaded them to use the weather information collated by Chris Booth in Braemar.

CGB had been concerned that her Winter Food Parcels might not take place this year, but was pleased to report that Glenmuick, Balmoral and Invercauld would all be supplying retail type packets of venison sausages, mince, meatballs, steaklets etc. The removal of winter fuel payments had put more pressure on to people in this part of the world. There would be information about the Hardship Fund and the Log Bank in the Eagle and on Facebook as well as on the BRD website. RF made clear that economic hardship in the community was a core issue for BRD.

### Cairngorm National Park Authority

PG reported that there would be a consultation meeting on the Quoich flood plain works in Braemar on 29<sup>th</sup> October. There would be a Cairngorm Business Partnership Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November and Tourism Partnership Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November. The footpath between Braemar and Keiloch would open in November, funded by CNPA and Abco. RF asked about how to put comments on to CNPA website. Gavin Miles explained that this was being looked into to make it easier and more relevant.

### Community Action Plan

Nothing to report

### Ballater Community Trust (BRD)

Nothing to report

### Ballater Community Enterprise

Nothing to report

### Halls

BB reported that it costs on average £8,000 per month to operate the halls. RF reported that the Hub currently costs about £40,000 per annum but efforts are

being made to make it more self-sustaining. The Hub currently requires almost 50% subsidy - it is important to strike a balance between charging for services and serving the community.

#### Ballater School

**WJ** and **RF** had attended a presentation by the children of the school on Sir Patrick Geddes. The Head Teacher is keen for the school to be involved in community projects.

#### Climate Action Now

**SP** had submitted a report.

#### Other

**AMN** reported that Invercauld had submitted a grant application to Forestry Scotland to regenerate woodland at east end of Micras. There would also be peatland restoration at Mains of Monaltrie. The cost benefit analysis of work at Callater to provide protection for the Invercauld Caravan Park had led to the plan being dropped.

#### **9 Correspondence**

Nothing to report

#### **10 Finance**

**EK** reported that it had taken 3 visits to Banchory Bank of Scotland branch to complete the transfer of office of treasurer to her. She would set up online banking as soon as possible.

#### **11 AOCB**

**PD** reported that there were still issues with ATM not working or running out of money. **RF** urged anyone having problems to contact BCCC. **JC** raised a query about problems with card payment terminals in the community due to internet connectivity. It was agreed to contact local businesses to ascertain if this was a problem.

**PD** expressed thanks to Weston Main and Ballater Golf Club for the Bingo evening which raised nearly £1,000 for the Nursery.

**EK** confirmed that she would be resigning as Chairperson of the Housing Group. It was agreed to discuss a new chair or co-opting a new chair for this group. As the H1 development was such a major local issue, it would require someone with a good grasp of planning and housing, prepared to bring together all views of the committee.

The meeting concluded at 20.40.

The Next meeting will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Michael Sheridan Room, V&A Halls, Ballater