

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

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Minutes of a Meeting held 12th April via Zoom at 7pm

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| Present: James Anderson - Chair (WJ) Jo Croll (JC) - Vice Chair Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary William Braid (WB) Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer Ellie Kinghorn (EK) Gareth Johnston (GJ) John Bannerman (JB) Lisa McMahon (LMM) Lewis Macdonald (LMD) | Apologies Cllr Peter Argyle (CPA) | Also present: Cllr Paul Gibb (CPG) Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Tom Flynn (TF) John Burrows (BRD-JB) Nadine Stuart Angus McNicol (AMN) Ken Gibson - Paths (KG) Grant Moir - CNPA (GM) |
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1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

2 Emergency Services Report No relevant report received.

3 Matters arising from previous meeting and Action Tracker update.

March minutes passed.

JB had been in touch with Louise Duckworth of Ballater School and the children have named the standing police officer 'Greta'. The children will nominate a range of sites for the officer and the plan is to change location on a quarterly basis.

An alternative route on the south Deeside path to Cambus o'May bridge has been set up.

4 Reports

BRD

BRD-JB reported that ongoing discussions regarding BRD leasing the Church Green had raised issues regarding the structure of BRD. However, the planning permission process continues. BRD will put together a team to explore the improvement of the tennis courts based on a query from Josephine Hazeley. The Hardship Fund is running well and has provided data highlight weaknesses in the village structure. Approximately 40 families have been assisted.

Aberdeenshire Council

Both **CPG** and **CBG** were disappointed that they had not been informed in advance of the announcement that the Sunday bus service to Braemar would be cancelled. They would raise the issue at a meeting on 20th April. There had been a Clean Sheet Review in middle and lower Deeside to provide demand-

responsive services and they would ask why Upper Deeside had not been included. **WB** pointed out that unfortunately it was not a simple solution for the Community Bus to replace the service to Braemar.

CNPA

The Local Development Plan has been adopted, so any future planning applications should do so regarding the new Plan.

FIG

RF, TF and **JB** have started work on the second part of the flood report covering losses because of the flood, changes to the river and resilience. They were also contacting Tony Cox and Douglas Johnston as well as Gordon Riddler and Paddy Wright. There is a need for expert advice as to what would be the best solution for the village in the light of the flood of 20th February 2021. The bund repair undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council following Storm Frank had held and played a role in minimising damage. However, there was substantial damage to the footpath beside the river, where it had overflowed the bank, and there needed to be discussions as to how to repair/extend the bund, find alternative safe footpaths through the golf course and what other steps could be taken to safeguard the village without causing other problems. FIG will meet Aberdeenshire Council Flood Team on 19th May. **WJ** will meet with **BRD-JB** and **JB** to discuss interim repairs to the path from Sluivannichie along the river. **WJ** said that expert advice was essential regarding the corner of the Dee at Invermuick.

CAP

BRD-JB reported that information for the website from the Care Group would be available in near future.

Halls

WB reported that Gordon Mitchell Contractors would start work on the basement of the Victoria Hall and would assign some of the work to local electricians and plumbers. Allan Milne would install a new kitchen in the Victoria Hall. **WB** is investigating a new lift for the Albert Hall. In response to **WJ**, **WB** said that no solution had been found to the paving stones in front of the Halls and they were currently covered in grit as were the stones in front of the Old Royal Station. **WJ** and **WB** raised the issue of the state of paintwork of the Station Building and **CGB** will raise the matter of poorly finished paintwork with Aberdeenshire Council.

Enhancement Group and Improvement Group Nothing to report.

Paths

KG reported that new funding was available from NatureScot - Improving Public Access Scheme to upgrade/create paths to historic sites and sites of natural beauty. **KG** was seeking support from BCCC for several potential projects which

would also require agreement from landowners. Applications to be complete by end of June 2021

Firstly, an off-road footpath on South Deeside road from Invermuick to Dalliefour. This might also tie in with an extension of an off-road footpath to Knock Castle although Historic Scotland are not permitted to put a sign up for the castle.

Secondly, a footpath to Farquharson's Needle, although this may be limited to signage indicating that cattle were on the route.

Thirdly, an off-road path and reinstatement of the bridge over the Ballater Burn from Morven Way to the start of the Scarbuie footpath. This could also be tied in to improving the surface of the cinder path to Morven Way through some muddy sections.

Finally, to clear a path and erect signage for Abergairn Castle.

WJ expressed the support of BCCC for these projects so that **KG** might then approach landowners to put forward applications for permission, planning and funding.

Other

Grant Moir (**GM**) from CNPA attending the meeting to outline visitor management plans for the coming season.

There are 3 seasonal rangers employed by CNPA on Deeside, as well as 2 further permanent rangers to be appointed. Funding had also been provided to Balmoral Estate for a ranger to be responsible for traffic monitoring at Glen Muick. Increased car park space at Linn of Dee and Muir of Dinnet as well as overflow car parks set up at Glen Tanar.

Aberdeenshire Council had been granted awards for seasonal and for permanent variable signage. There were traffic orders in place at Glen Muick and Linn of Dee to restrict access should there be too many vehicles.

There would be fortnightly meetings with representatives from NTS, Glen Tanar, Invercauld and other estates and bodies. The message is to Protect, Respect and Enjoy - Plan Ahead - have a Plan B and to encourage responsible behaviour.

CGB asked who would control the messages on the signs and where will they all be located as she had only seen one at the White Cottage, Aboyne, so far. She also asked about better communications as Pete Crane had suggested a Whatsapp group for rangers, community councillors, councillors so that all could understand where any issues were located, and information could be quickly shared on social media.

The content of the signs would be responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council but they could and would be changed 7 days a week.

GM replied that it was intended to hold meetings each Thursday to have a look at weather forecasts etc and to create a traffic management plan to be forwarded to all concerned so that plans for any closures would be indicated. **JC** pointed out that there had been substantial verge parking up Glen Muick on previous weekends without any road closures. **GM** said he would speak with the estates and rangers regarding the implementing of rules. He also said that he was happy to discuss funding and ranger training for estate staff to supplement the permanent CNPA rangers.

JB asked what sort of authority the rangers had, should someone continue to behave irresponsibly in terms of parking, camping, littering etc. **GM** replied that the rangers require the support of Police Scotland should such situations arise. Fixed penalty notices for illegal parking can only be issued by the local authority.

WJ welcomed the presence of the rangers for the forthcoming season.

BRD-JB asked if CNPA had any plans regarding the small car park at the Cambus o'May bridge, which also had road safety issues being located on a bad corner. He also asked CNPA to speak with Aberdeenshire Council regarding the uplift of litter. BRD were willing to install dustbins at the site but required an assurance that Aberdeenshire council would empty them.

5 Planning Matters Nothing to report.

6 Correspondence Nothing to report.

7 Finance No change since last meeting.

8 AOCB

BRD-JB announced that Ballater Walking Festival-Covid Compliant- would take place from 15th to 21st May.

GJ asked about the turnstiles at the Cambus o'May bridge restricted access for some people to the bridge. **CGB** understood that they could be removed with the agreement of the landowners at either side of the bridge, but it would also involve Historic Scotland as the bridge was listed and the turn-styles might be part of the restrictions. **BRD-JB** will explore this matter.

RF, in response to query from **PD**, said that nomination forms for the community council elections would be arriving shortly. If there were any nominations over the number of council vacancies, then elections would have to be held.

JC reported that the Food Pantry would take place in the Beaton-Craigie Room after 26th April and a website and Facebook page would follow.

PD will speak to Alison Mcleod of Aberdeenshire Council regarding the archive of Community Council papers from the late Jane Angus.

The meeting concluded at 20.40hours. The next meeting is scheduled for 10th May, 19.00 to 21.00 hours, possibly by Zoom.

