

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of BCCC meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater, 13th January 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) John Bannerman (JB) - vice chair Lewis Macdonald (LMM) Jennifer Davidson (JD) Scott Peacock (SP)	Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Valerie Stoddart Calum Halhead Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Cllr Anouk Kloppert	Paul Gibb - CNPA (PG) Ray Riddoch - Ballater Trust Bruce Lawson Cat Houston Alan Nicoll (AN) Dougal Morgan Atholl Bowman Gordon Riddler Lindsay Smith

1 Welcome WJ wished all present a Happy New Year and congratulated the good turn-out.

2 Co-optation of Jennifer Davidson as BCCC member RF proposed, seconded by **JB** and all voted in approval.

3 Emergency Services Report Sergeant Masson had submitted a report and will attend the March BCCC meeting.

4 December 2024 minutes were approved. **KA** noted that she had heard nothing further from Nic, Scottish Orienteering Association, so would contact her and Janelle Clark regarding the possible event in July.

5 Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when.

6 Mark Brazendale, Abergeldie Estate and its Forestry Plan

Mark introduced himself to the BCCC. He has been at Abergeldie for 18 months. He has spent his entire working life in Forestry, having studied at Forestry College in Inverness before working for the Forestry Commission and Tilhill, before taking on a position at Atholl Estates as a deer manager.

He has been involved with Crosscut Inverness in drawing up a long-term Forestry Plan for Abergeldie Estate, looking at 4 main objectives of timber production (for fuel, housebuilding and other commercial ventures), ensuring wildlife biodiversity, maintaining the forest as an amenity and for social purposes. The aim is to use local contractors and workforce. Abergeldie Forest currently consists of a large section of

mature trees, so it is hoped to create a more balanced forest with younger trees and of different varieties. Harvesting will be primarily through thinning although there will be clearance of areas as well. Access will be a major issue and will require upgrades to roads and paths, which will come through to BCCC in planning applications. A deer fence is to be re-constructed to ensure balanced deer numbers both in the woodland and on the hill. Mark will be responsible for ensuring that all work undertaken does not disturb the environment unnecessarily. While ensuring public access, the estate also must be aware of public health and safety concerns, so it will be important to ensure that any works will be communicated to the area. Abergeldie has consulted with neighbouring estates, SEPA, River Dee and NatureScot in the creation of the Forestry Plan, which is currently with Scottish Forestry for approval. Further plans will include creating new woodland, such as riparian woodlands on the banks of the Girnock.

JB reminded Mark that Abergeldie had supplied wind-blown trees to FIG to aid riverbank restoration and that there would still be interest in receiving further such trees.

Mark was keen to emphasise that Abergeldie wished to ensure that local community was kept informed of future plans and would welcome any questions from the BCCC and community.

7 Action Tracker

CGB reported that she was seeking further information on lack of signage outside Crathie (no 122). **KA** pointed out that a community assessment manager was expected from LINK regarding the appeal for a banking hub and that it was important that BCCC should be in a position to fully inform this person of the situation in the village (no 127). Bruce Lawson had been unable to get any further regarding residents' concerns with noise and diesel emissions at the Bus Garage (no 133). He had been informed that the buses had to be inspected before leaving the garage and this had to be done once warmed up and could not be done after the bus left the garage. He suggested that the resident should be put in touch with Environmental health to measure noise and pollution levels if they wished to pursue this further. **RF** would draft a response. The road gullies at Queens Road (no 135) continue to cause concern with Athol Bowman reporting that serious damage could be done to both pedestrians and vehicles. **WJ** suggested that a publicity campaign might be the answer, showing curling meetings, swimming galas etc at the flooded section of road. **RF** will ask **CSB** to refer the matter again to Abco.

8 Sub-committee reports

Housing and Planning

JC reported that Alan Nicoll had agreed to be chairperson of the Housing & Planning Committee. He was willing to be an Associate Member of the BCCC. **RF** agreed to re-write the constitution of the Housing & Planning Committee to allow an associate

member to become chairperson as the current constitution required a full BCCC member.

A Planning

BB reported that there had been 4 planning applications since December, but none had been called in by CNPA. A new application had been made today for a house at the Shenval, Glencairn (sic), but this should be Glengairn.

B H1

Other than the report in The Eagle about future consultations, there had been no further details from Scotia Housing regarding the H1 development.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

JB reported that CBEC had returned to the River Dee in December to survey further for their mathematical modelling. New workstreams would be update for the February BCCC meeting. There had been high water over the festive period, but all work seems to be holding. Bruce Lawson reported that there continue to be changes to the River Muick side of the river.

Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that they had been working on updating the resilience plan, splitting it into 2 parts - what needs to be done and how rest centres should be managed. It is currently being circulated amongst coordinators for feedback and should be presented to BCCC at next meeting. **LD** had spoken with Geoff Feeney regarding the situation at Crathie Resilience Group and she suggested that it might be possible to retrieve any equipment held by Crathie Resilience Group and store it in Ballater until such time as it might be of use to Crathie.

Economy

RF, **KA** and **RR** continue to lobby for the banking hub in the village. Another major area of concern is the Old Royal Station, particularly the closure of the VisitScotland Information Centre in September 2025. It seems that VisitScotland will seek to sublet the information centre on the open market but it is of concern how this will be done and how this will ensure an attractive area for the village. There will be a meeting on Teams with Abco, VisitScotland and BCCC on 14th January regarding the future of the Old Royal Station.

Roads & Paths

SM had met with Ken Gibson and Scott Peacock regarding the footpaths in Ballater. He is drafting a constitution for a group of volunteers to work on maintaining the paths. This is required to obtain insurance and other funding for such work.

KG believes that there is funding available from CNPA to do repair work on the muddy section of the Old Line Path towards the Gairn. It is also believed that Invercauld Estate intend to reinstate the Gairn river bank which is currently eroded. **KG** also reported that a walking party group would be investigating the potential route of a Deeside Way extension to the west towards Braemar. The cinder path continues to be an ongoing issue. 70% of the cost may be available from the Ian Findlay Path Trust,

but this is conditional on the other 30% being raised. Abco will not fund this project. It is also proving difficult to find funds to maintain the cinder path in the future. Unless this is in place, then the initial sum would not be available. **SM** is also working with **KG** on expanding the Walking Week website to show walks & maps available to visitors and locals, as well as its current role as a registration site for Walking Week participants. **KA** interjected that it was important for any funding for such projects to also include the cost of maintaining such websites currently undertaken by the Hub, to ensure that Ade would be properly supported in this.

Ken Gibson was also unhappy with the signage at Red Braes. **RF** will write to Balmoral Estate to request that the signage be consistent and sufficiently strongly worded to reflect the risk. **WJ** also asked if a fence had been installed as suggested initially by Balmoral. There is no fence and **RF** would also query this.

9 Crathie Issues

No report.

10 Other reports

Aberdeenshire Council

CGB had circulated her report.

Cairngorm National Park Authority

PG reported that he is now Deputy Convenor of Planning at CNPA.

Community Action Plan

KA will give a financial report on the Hub at the next meeting. Work is ongoing on VisitBallater website which, even at this time of the year, records 2,000 hits per week.

Ballater Community Trust [Ballater (RD) Ltd]

RR reported a quiet start to the year, but long-term strategic plans for the Community Trust are being looked at.

Ballater Community Enterprise

Bruce Lawson reported ongoing low-level maintenance.

Halls

BB reported that the floors of the Victoria Hall & Albert Hall are being re-sanded and re-surfaced. This is being funded through BRD on the understanding that no markings (for badminton etc) will be made on the new floor. The AGM for the Halls will take place on 28th January 2025.

2025 is the 150th anniversary of the Albert Hall and a sub-committee has been set up to organise events throughout the year. Athol Bowman & Gordon Riddler will be visiting the Primary School this week to set up a competition for a flag for the Albert Hall anniversary.

Ballater School

Nothing to report.

Climate Action Now

A quiet start to the year.

Other

Nothing to report

11 Correspondence

A letter had been received from a resident asking if it would be possible for particular street lights to be switched off for a period during the night. **EK** said she had complained about a street light at her house shining straight into the house and Abco had installed a shield but this had not been very effective. **RF** would ask **CSB** as to how best to approach the issue with Abco.

BB had received a query asking whether a defibrillator could be installed at Pannanich Road. All other defibrillators are installed in the centre of the village. However, it would cost £2,000 to install a defibrillator and it would cost £1 a week for electricity to maintain it. It would require a volunteer to install and maintain it. **RF** would write to suggest that it might be something the correspondent would like to drive forward themselves as it was not something that BCCC had finance or time to pursue.

12 Finance

Nothing to report.

13 AOCB

Bruce Lawson reported that he would be meeting with Mid Deeside Community Council regarding transport issues between Banchory & Aboyne.

JB and **BB** made clear that this was a separate issue from the Mid Deeside Community Trust which currently organises hospital transport from Aboyne to Aberdeen. This would be something which Ballater Community Trust might investigate, expanding on the current system operated by Probus.

The meeting concluded at 20.15

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