

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of Meeting held at Moxon Quarries, Crathie on Monday 9th October 2023 at
7.00pm

Present:	Apologies	Also present:
Jim Anderson - Chairman (WJ)	Cllr Geva Blackett	Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB)
Jo Croll - Vice Chair (JC)	Lewis Macdonald	Cllr Anouk Kloppert (CAK)
Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary	Scott Peacock	Dougal Morgan (DM)
Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer	John Burrows	Iain Henderson (IH)
John Bannerman (JB)		Linda Drever (LD)
Bill Braid (BB)		Angus McNicol
Tom Flynn (TF)		Michael Kitts (MK)
Gareth Johnston (GJ)		Whit Romilly (WR)
Simon Mearns (SM)		Mike Hadley
Ellie Kinghorn (EK)		

1 Welcome

WJ welcomed all to BCCC meeting.

2 Conflicts of interest.

3 Emergency Services Report

Sergeant Masson had sent in the quarterly emergency services report on behalf of Police Scotland, including Mountain Rescue call outs. WJ reminded BCCC that the usual drink-drive campaign would cover the festive period.

4 September minutes were approved

5 Matters arising from previous meeting.

6 Action Tracker Update

The bus-stop relocation (no 6) had attracted the concern of Andrew Bowie MP, who had sent a letter to all households requesting any further information on this and other local issues. JC asked if RF would write to the MP to highlight the work already carried out on this project by BCCC and request his support. BCCC approved the drawings for the Bridge Street crossing to Station Square (no 69). JC reported that the paintwork on the Old Royal Station would be undertaken on a rotational programme. She had been told that the paint reacted differently to old, treated wood and to new wood, hence the problems. Kate Allum, RF and CSB had met with Bank of Scotland regarding plans following branch closure (no 127). The bank has proved difficult to pin down. BB reported that Bank of Scotland would be at the Hub every Monday from 16th October, between 10am and 2pm, but would only be able to

offer advice as they would not be linked to the bank's software operating system. This has only been booked for 18 weeks with no further information about where bank facilities would be offered. The bank also does not believe that a second ATM would be required and suggested that the community can request more frequent filling of the ATM at least 12 weeks in advance of any busy periods such as the Games or Victoria Week. **GJ** asked if any information had been provided to the Post Office in the co-op as to how many bank customers might potentially wish to use Post Office banking facilities, and whether the co-op was suitably geared up for increased banking business. It was noted that Crathie Post Office has stepped forward with further information on banking facilities and opening times in their branch. **RF** and Kate Allum would continue to put pressure on bank and co-op for answers.

Sub-committee Reports

Housing & Planning

- a) No contentious applications.
- b) Roger Laird had been approached at Scotia for an update on H1. **AMN** was able to report that a pre-application had been completed and that a 3-d drawing of the development would be made available. Scotia might be in a position to attend the 8th December BCCC meeting to discuss any queries.

The approval of the Glengairn phone-mast was raised as BCCC had asked questions of the development, without receiving any response. **CSB** explained that this had appeared before Mar Area Committee, with a recommendation to approve as part of the Scottish Rural Network Scheme to ensure mobile phone coverage for all parts of the country. She had raised concerns of both BCCC and Invercauld Estate, so the mast would be erected, but without building an access road.

FIG -Flooding Information Group

JB made following report:

Met with ABCo Directors 6/10, our takeaways are:

1) Central and local budgets (Capex and Opex) are extremely tight and there is little chance that this will change in the foreseeable future. Although Ballater is classified as a Potentially vulnerable area (PVA) for flooding, there are many others at National (Scotland) and Local (Aberdeenshire) levels.

At this time ABCo have no funds for Ballater flood defences and they stated that they had no legal obligation to do more than they have already done.

2) The timing of a SG decision on the funding request for 3A is uncertain. Due to tight budgets and other priorities, it is generally thought unlikely that 3A will be funded during this cycle.

3) Technically the funding application does not allow any material variation, in the unlikely event that 3A is funded, what will ultimately happen is a political decision.

4) ABCo are willing in the short/medium term to "support" but not lead the Ballater community in mitigating the flood risk to Ballater. The form that this support might take is to be agreed. However, it is unlikely to be financial.

Taking the above into account, FIG propose,

- 1) Continue to express the community's objection to 3A to our local councillors.
- 2) To support the local volunteers who have been working on the riverside path to extend their work to some temporary flood control measures based on the complementary study from ABCO/RPS.
- 3) Request BRD for funding to initiate a design exercise with a specialised company for flood defences other than 3A. This could potentially be in phases and progressively scalable. The objective being to propose options to the community.
- 4) Continue to collaborate with ABCo to maximise on the support they are willing and able to give us.
- 5) Reflect on how funds could be raised to deliver flood protection other than 3A.
- 6) Initiate contact with ABCo to discuss the wider resilience issues related to the Royal Bridge.

In addition to the above:

FIG continues to pursue with all stakeholders an upstream study as the first step in increasing upstream storage to mitigate flooding and drought. To this end we have been invited to a meeting organised by the CNPA on 17/11.

WJ offered the use of plant machinery to local volunteers for any flood defence work undertaken.

BRG - Ballater Resilience Group

LF reported on the BRG response to the flood events of 6th, 7th and 8th October. The Halls had been opened late on Saturday evening. Most people preferred to remain in their homes, but 6 took up the offer of refuge in the halls. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service had been first class, identifying the main area at risk and maintaining a constant overview to ensure that all households were safe and helping move furniture etc. The fluctuating water levels made planning more challenging. The Bothy, Orka and the Rothesay Rooms had provided food and drink to the emergency services and volunteers, for which many thanks. In this instance, it had been fortunate that it did not become a major incident, but it was a useful bonding exercise. Major Bob Weir at the Barracks had offered the assistance of the Royal Guard, and the fire appliance was moved to the barracks as floodwater rose. **WJ** expressed the community's thanks to Linda, BRG, SSEN, all the Emergency Services and volunteers who helped cope with the flood.

CRG - Crathie Resilience Group

Nothing to report. Locals had looked out for neighbours and ensured that empty houses were checked.

8 Crathie issues

Nothing to report.

9 Other Reports

Speeding & Roads

SM had worked with Michael Kitts to compile a report regarding speed limits and road safety, looked at nationally and what we might do locally. It was agreed that a survey should be set up to find out what the community thinks about the issue of speed on roads throughout the BCCC area. It would also be helpful to have data to back up if we do in fact have a speeding problem, though this might be difficult to persuade Abco to set up to show the volume of cars, speed, direction and type of vehicles. **CSB** suggested approaching Sergeant Masson to set up speed checks in the area, but there is a shortage of personnel. **WJ** emphasised that it was important to ensure that imposing speed limits on one part of Ballater did not result in traffic moving to other routes to bypass restrictions. Also, BCCC had been trying to speed limits reviewed in Crathie, Bridge of Gairn, Cambus o'May and the Pass of Ballater, so far without success.

BRD - Ballater (Royal Deeside) Limited

There would be discussion to obtain independent funding for the Hub.

Paths

SM had met with Ken Gibson. Ken felt that the History with Boots network would require significant work and funding, which might make it a difficult project. **JB** suggested perhaps looking at the network in smaller sections and allowing volunteers to adopt a particular section and take ownership of that section, in similar style to what volunteers have undertaken on the river pathway. **KG** had applied to the Ian Findlay Path Fund for a grant for improvements to the cinder path and planning application. **KG** would also like to explore the possibility of setting up a website or app for people to enjoy walks using their mobile phones.

BCE - Ballater Community Enterprise

Awaiting a report on the effect of the flooding.

Aberdeenshire Council

CSB had submitted a report. A good dialogue had been set up with Bruce Lawson, representing the community, and Stagecoach to ensure the services met the needs of the community. **CSB** also drew attention to the Parking Prohibition on Pavements, which Abco should police from 11th December 2023. Full details are still forthcoming, but it has been suggested that there would be no exceptions in Ballater. However, it was pointed out that on Sir Patrick Geddes Way, should vehicles NOT park on pavements, then there would be difficulty for emergency vehicles to pass through, especially if H1 goes ahead. **CSB** would investigate this. **CSB** also pointed out that Abco faces challenging times ahead to remain within budget, with current services projecting a deficit of over £91 million - further information can be found on 09Aberdeenshire Strategic Assessment 2023 1.pdf(moderngov.co.uk).

CAK had been disturbed that second home owners in Ballater would rather pay double council tax, than rent out the properties.

CNPA - Cairngorm National Park Authority

Whit Romilly asked if the BCCC Facebook page might highlight the 2024 CNPA Local Development Plan to ensure that local people might participate. Murray Ferguson of CNPA hopes to attend the December BCCC meeting.

CAP - Community Action Plan

Nothing to report.

Halls

BB thought it unlikely that there would be future Post Mortem shows at the Halls as the company had left the committee to dispose of waste material.

CAN - Climate Action Now

Scott Peacock had attempted to apply to CNPA for funding for a squirrel rope bridge across the Pass of Ballater. He will review with BRD.

10 Correspondence

WJ had been approached by a resident concerned at garden rubbish being dumped in the council-owned woodland adjacent to Dundarroch Road and requested a footpath through it to tidy up the woodland.

11 Finance No change, although **PD** reported an issue with a cheque not being recognised by the Bank. She had gone to the local branch to sort this out, but in the future, this would require a visit to Banchory to sort out. As she cannot drive, this would be impossible for her to do. As her internet connection is also poor, she would not be willing to set up internet banking on behalf of BCCC.

12 AOCB

PD had received report of a motorised scooter user finding it difficult to use their machine in the village, as the dropped kerbs were not even, frequently were not directly across from each other and the pavements are not marked for the visually impaired to find the dropped kerbs. **CSB** will request a review by Abco, and BCCC will seek to find someone to represent them on this issue.

CSB congratulated Pat Downie on achieving 20 years' service to the local community.

JB expressed thanks to Linda Drever for her BRG work (and to Ron Drever).

Linda thanked Jo Croll for using the BCCC Facebook page to update the community on the flood. **WJ** said that in future admin would seek to ensure that posts be kept as calm as possible. **EK** asked about sandbags. **JB** reiterated that sandbags should be a last resort to flooding and that each household should try to ensure they have some in advance in storage. **WJ** asked **JB** to draft a post for the Facebook page regarding sandbags and property level protection.

The meeting ended at 20.55.

The next meeting will be held on 13th November 2023 at the Mike Sheridan Room, Station Square, Ballater at 19.00hours.