

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

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

Minutes of a Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 via Zoom at 7pm

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Also present:</b>
James Anderson - Chair (WJ) Jo Croll (JC) - Vice Chair Richard Frimston (RF) - Secretary William Braid (WB) Pat Downie (PD) - Treasurer John Bannerman (JB) Lewis Macdonald (LMD) Tom Flynn (TF) Ellie Kinghorn (EK) Gareth Johnston (GJ)	Nadine Stuart (NS) Lisa MacMahon (LMM)	Cllr Paul Gibb (CPG) Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Cllr Peter Argyle (CPA) John Burrows (BRD-JB) Ken Gibson - Paths (KG) Scott Peacock - CAN (SP) Linda Drever (LD)

**1 Welcome** WJ reported that Tony Cox had resigned as a Community Council member.

**2 Emergency Services** Police Scotland sent a report outlining anti-social behaviour, theft of heating oil, shop-lifting incidents and the aspects relevant to Ballater, are set out below:

### **Marr Policing Priority - Antisocial Behaviour, Violence and Disorder**

Between June to August 2021, incidents involving anti-social behaviour have been reported, mainly in the Aboyne area. In the main, youths in the area have been behaving responsibly, however, Police Scotland is aware of a small group of individuals who are causing issues locally, and these individuals are being dealt with through various mechanisms, including diversionary measures.

### **Marr Policing Priority - Acquisitive Crime**

Crimes such as housebreaking and thefts continue to remain at very low levels in the Upper Deeside area. Patrols continue across various areas in an effort to deter and disrupt criminal activity. Between June and August 2021, the following occurred  
Theft of heating oil occurred in the Ballater area. Enquiries were conducted, however, no persons have been charged.

A shoplifting occurred at the Co-op, Ballater, resulting in a male being charged. Communities should remain vigilant, ensuring their properties are secure at all times, including shed, garages, outbuildings and any other areas, including vehicles, that could be a target for criminals.

### **Marr Policing Priority - Road Safety and Road Crime**

Between June and August 2021, we have seen a steady increase in vehicular traffic across the Deeside area, coupled with excellent weather which has attracted many people

to various villages. A number of drivers have been dealt with for a variety of offences including Careless Driving, Drug Driving, and Drink Driving. These drivers are now subject to ongoing proceedings at Court. The large roads network across the Deeside area is being patrolled with assistance from Road Policing colleagues. The roads have continued to be busy, however, the number of road related incidents have been low, which is to be welcomed. I am aware of particular concerns about speeding in different area across Deeside, and Road Policing colleagues are aware and will attend to carry out speed checks were appropriate. New speed detection equipment is being rolled out also, with local Officers being trained in the use of this equipment, which will be put to good use in the coming months. Should incidents of inappropriate or anti-social use of vehicles be seen, I would actively encourage members of the public to report this to the Police at the time in order for robust action to be taken.

### **Marr Policing Priority - Wildlife Crime**

During June 2021, theft of a wildlife trap occurred in the Ballater area, however no persons have been charged.

### **Other Policing Activity and Information**

Visitor numbers to the Deeside area are increasing significantly over the last few months, however, is very welcome as we see communities returning to normal following the COVID-19 restrictions over the last 18 months. Our local beauty spots are busy and in response to this, we continue to work with our partners at the Cairngorm National Park and estate staff, as part of a Visitor Management Plan.

Police continue to receive significant reports of online / telephone frauds where individuals are giving out personal details. Residents should be reminded to never give out personal details, and if in any doubt, hang up the call and contact their bank to discuss.

**CGB** had shared her concerns that incidents involving domestic pets had been included under wildlife crime as this did not give an accurate picture of the area.

### **3 Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of July meeting were approved.

### **4 Matters arising from previous meeting.**

**WJ** reported that the electronic sign at Glen Muick entrance remained illegible. **CGB** was waiting for an update from Janelle Clark regarding bins, flower beds and re-painting of the Old Royal Station.

### **5 Action Tracker Update**

**SP** had received a letter from Richard Bailey of the Road Safety Unit in response to concerns about speeding in the Pass of Ballater. The letter pointed out that Abco had a current moratorium on changes to speed limit as an area-wide review of speed limits was being undertaken. **CPA** pointed out that this was an issue which required the assistance of Police Scotland to ensure that limits were adhered to, but that current staffing and funding issues within Police Scotland meant that there was a gap between

what Police Scotland ought to be doing and could do. Unless drivers believe they will be caught speeding, then they are less likely to adhere to various speed limits.

## **6 Reports**

### BRD

**JB-BRD** reported that a grant of £500 had been received for the purchase of litter-picking equipment. **WJ** reported seeing staff from VisitScotland undertaking litter-picking in the village.

The Memorandum of Understanding between BRD and Aberdeenshire Council would be signed in the next few days and work could then begin on the management of the village green.

To date, **JB-BRD** had been unable to recruit sufficient volunteers to allow the Royal Carriage to be open to visitors on those days when the Rothesay Rooms Restaurant was closed. He would continue in discussion with VisitScotland and Robert Lovie of the Dumfries House Trust.

The Mountain Bike Festival of the last weekend in conjunction with BBA & BRD had been successful. Awaiting results of the Pump track questionnaire.

### BCE

**WB** will forward minutes of latest meeting to BCCC.

### Aberdeenshire Council

**CPG** reported that a design for pedestrian crossing at Station Square is underway with the possibility of funding from the Council's Disability Discrimination Act funding. He had also been contact by householders on the A93, approximately half a mile west of the Cambus O'May bridge who had been seeking a pavement to enhance safety. While a pavement has been ruled out, **CPG** asked if BCCC would give support to the installation of SLOW signs on the A93 at this spot. **RF, WB, WJ** and **CGB** pointed out that there were safety issues on the A93 from the Cheese Factory right through to the Burn o'Vat junction. **CPG** will go back to speak to Martin Hall about this whole area.

**CGB** reported that approval to go out to Tender for the Gairnshiel Bridge construction will be decided at the next Marr Area Committee.

Snow gates for B976 are currently being made and the decision on where to place them will be made in conjunction with the police

A93 closure week of 20 September at Tomidhu.

Work on the drains in Abergeldie Road is happening and SSE will be starting work at the end of the month to ensure power supply to get the GHA houses finished so people can hopefully be in by Christmas.

### CNPA

**CPA** reported the launch of the National Park Partnership Plan.

<https://cairngormsviewsmap.commonplace.is/comments>

**CGB** highlighted the launch of the Strategic Needs Assessment and thanked council members for suggestions of where paper copies could be left: doctor's surgery, library, residential homes & sheltered housing complexes, local cafes, pharmacy. **CPA** agreed it was important to ensure hard copies were available in the community and not to restrict the assessment to online resources.

The planning application for huts behind Tomidhu was refused but the applicant may appeal.

### FIG

**LD** would meet with Aberdeenshire Council Flood Team on 14<sup>th</sup> September to discuss any lessons learned from the February 2021 flood event.

**TF** asked if there had been any feedback on Draft Report 2: Social and Economic Damage. **LD**, **RF** and **TF** to meet to discuss how to submit this report to the community and get feedback on it. **LD** felt that Resilience needed to update records on the village residents at risk from future flood events as the current list would be out of date.

**TF** had been working with Paddy Wright and Stewart Robertson on upstream works to reduce flooding in Ballater. Interestingly, natural flood management projects such as tree-planting, increasing bends in rivers etc would benefit the natural environment but would not necessarily reduce the chances of flooding in Ballater.

Upstream storage, undertaken in other parts of Scotland by SEPA, would be a better solution in terms of flood prevention. **CPA** pointed out that damming the River Dee, which had been considered in the past, was not without controversy.

**TF** continued to point out that he had been reading Nature Scotland reports which suggested that a greater future problem would be climate change resulting in drier summers (and hence droughts) followed by wetter winters (and flash floods).

Upstream storage would therefore work better to reduce the drying out of land in summer and flooding in winter. This would benefit the natural environment, agriculture, and people. It is imperative to ensure that wetlands do not dry out if Scotland is to reduce its carbon footprint - 85% of carbon in Scotland is trapped in peat, with disastrous consequences should the peat dry out and release this carbon.

**TF** will forward information to **CPA** who will raise this with Abco. It is essential that **FIG** produces a report, based on RPS report, showing the feasibility and cost of upstream flood retention, even as an alternative to option 3A.

**RF** will send out SEPA consultation material to all members as consultation closes at end of October.

**JB** suggested that **BCCC** should have a response in place should the funding for option 3A come to fruition, bearing in mind that this option does not necessarily have the support of the village.

### CAP

Nothing to report.

## Halls

The Hub was opened by TRH Duke & Duchess of Rothesay. Increased number of groups using the Halls facilities.

## CAN

The group had been working with Balmoral Estate on leaky dams, which was interesting in the light of Tom Flynn's report. **SP** suggested that he should meet with **TF** to work together on an Eagle article on water recycling and saving water. **SP** encouraged councillors to follow the CAN Facebook page.

Litter-picking trial is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> October.

There had been articles in the Eagle Summer edition regarding using eco friendly products and local recycling opportunities.

Positive support had been received from Nature Scotland regarding oak tree regeneration on Craigendarroch.

## Improvement Group

Nothing to report.

## Paths

**KG** is looking for volunteers to adopt paths and to check them out for any repairs or issues arising. He had been disappointed that Forestry Land Scotland had closed 2 core paths on Pannanich with no consultation and no diversions in place. Signage had been taken down, although Forestry Land Scotland have assured **KG** that they will be reinstated. A third path had been closed with a sign instructing walkers/cyclists to take an alternative route, but with no signage for an alternative route given. **KG** has been in touch, with CNPA, to ensure that alternatives are put in place. He has also suggested that Forestry Land Scotland should consult well in advance before undertaking such works in future.

## **7 Planning Matters**

Nothing to report

## **8 Correspondence**

Nothing.

## **9 Finance**

**PD** suggested that BCCC had funds in place to assist community projects.

## **10 AOCB**

**JB-BRD** reported that early dialogue regarding community plans for the Platinum Jubilee was underway.

**CGB** raised the issue of Aboyne Hospital closing to inpatients after the end of October. **RF** will frame a letter to be sent to HSCP from the Community Council, outlining objections to this closure.

**TF** wished the success of the Tour of Britain Cycle Race, which went through Ballater on 12<sup>th</sup> September, to be minuted. This had been a truly exciting and well organised event across the whole of Aberdeenshire. **CPA** reported that it had been so

successful that already plans are in place for the Tour of Britain to start in Aberdeenshire in 2022, with further plans for expansion.

**JC** reported that The Pantry has started in the Beaton-Craigie Room, in conjunction with The Community Kitchen, every Wednesday from 12pm. It is open to everyone and aims to target food poverty and reduce food waste.

**WJ** had received further complaints regarding the lack of parking in the village.

**The meeting concluded at 20.45. The next meeting is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> October, 19.00 to 21.00 hours, possibly by Zoom or face-to-face.**

Approved