

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

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Minutes of a Meeting held on 7th April 2014, Crathie Kirk Hall, Crathie

<p>Present: Graham Adams (GA) Chair (resigned) Susan Matthews (SM) Secretary (resigned) Ian Cameron (IC) James Anderson (WJ) Jane Angus (JA) Pat Downie (PD) Treasurer Sheila Sedgwick (SS) Billy Duguid (BD) Phil Swan (PS)</p>	<p>PC Donald McLeod, for Police business Jack Coull for BRD Members of the public Cat Houston (CH) Minutes Apologies received: Francis Duguid (FD) Vice Chair Cllr Katrina Farquhar (CKF) (also CNPA elected rep) Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Anne Reid (AR)</p>
<p>1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence.</p>	ACTION
<p>2. Police Business. PC McLeod reported a recent spate of vandalism to a number of crow cages and said some legally-set traps had also been sprung in the Gairnshiel area. A report had been sent to the Procurator Fiscal following a trespass with a firearm (air rifle) in the Crathie area. Officers had been involved in two Mountain Rescue incidents. He urged people to remain vigilant and keep properties and vehicles secure and again reiterated the existence of the 101, 999 and Crimestoppers services. PC McLeod said officers would continue to monitor parking issues on Bridge Street and that contact would be made with AbCo this month to see what timescale there is for repainting yellow lines. He pointed out that the unified force of Police Scotland was now one year old and the changes had brought with them several benefits for the area, including increased manned office hours at the Ballater Station.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes from the March meeting. The minutes of the March meeting were agreed as an accurate account.</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising from the March meeting. Since the last meeting an election had taken place. GA welcomed the council's new councillors, Phil Swan and James Anderson.</p>	
<p>5. Reports. No AbCo representatives were present.</p>	
<p>6. Ballater News. Victoria Week: CH said the group had been pleased with the response to its April Fool publication on Facebook which had subsequently made the front page of the Piper. The new BVW tartan would be chosen from 30-plus entries at the next meeting on April 10th. From now on the group would be focused on bringing the programme together and making it happen in August (9th-17th). The next Ballater Films feature would be The Lego Movie on April 19th, followed by 12 Years a Slave on May 17th. BRD: Village defibrillator JC said he had succeeded in buying a defibrillator for the village, using five different funding sources. It would be situated in the halls in the Mike Sheridan Room. It had cost £1,350 and only the battery would be need replacing every five years or so.</p>	

<p>Community Bus The Community Bus needs to renew its licence, which may be more complicated than previously. BD offered his assistance.</p> <p>Caravan Park The Caravan Park was going well and had opened on April 1. There was scope to approach the Scottish Land Fund for up to 90-95% funding to enable the BRD to purchase the lease, so that the Caravan Park could again be in Ballater's hands. Rent was presently paid to AbCo of £12,500pa, but that was at a substantial discount. In two years the rent will rise to much more so it makes sense to purchase the lease in the meantime.</p> <p>Old School Building As reported last month, the NESPT had withdrawn its interest in the property. JC explained that the problem with regards using the OSB for the planned Heritage Centre was the issue of listing. It would be useful if the building was delisted to make it more attractive to developers.</p> <p>BBA: SS reported that there was a great deal of concern among businesses in the village and the outlook was gloomy. Some had reduced their opening hours. There was a shortage of B&B accommodation. Some complained Ballater was turning into a "dormitory village" as there were too many second homes. There were plans to rebrand the BBA as "Visit Ballater", mainly in regard to its web presence. There had been plans to take over control of the hut on the green but the Old People's Association had decided to keep control of it at their recent AGM. Chair Bryn Wayte was to meet the BCCC on April 15th to discuss ongoing concerns over business rates. AR, BD and PS to attend.</p> <p>V&A Halls: JA reported that the halls planned to have a grand opening/community day on May 9th, when community groups would be invited to promote themselves. She suggested BCCC should take part and had circulated a missive to encourage ideas. PD agreed to assist with this and a meeting was arranged for 7pm on Thursday 10th April to discuss options.</p>	<p>BD</p> <p>AR, BD, PS</p> <p>PD, JA</p>
<p>7. Scottish Government Consultations. Nothing to report.</p>	
<p>8. Planning Matters. BD indicated that he had sent a letter of support to the CNPA regarding the planned development at Sir Patrick Geddes Way. He also stated that there had clearly been a problem with AbCo's planning department's website of late as he had been unable to access information via that method. SM stated that the CNPA's Planning Network was now giving community councils 28 days to respond to planning applications, a little more than the present 21 days proffered to the public.</p>	
<p>9. Finance. Nothing to report further to the earlier AGM.</p>	
<p>10. Correspondence. AbCo had invited members to a workshop on Invasive Non-native Species on May 21st.</p>	
<p>11. AOCB. Prompted by PD, GA indicated that he would continue in the office of chairman of BCCC until elections were held and a new office bearer could be found. SM reiterated that her resignation was with immediate effect. At the subsequent election there will be one vacancy for Ballater and two for Crathie. There was some discussion over whether the organisation of the council could be changed so as to</p>	

<p>exclude Crathie, in the interests of maintaining the council's numbers, as no candidates had come forward from Crathie for a number of years. It was concluded this would require a change in the constitution. There was some speculation as to when an election could take place. The end of May was suggested. SM indicated that at least two months was required to accommodate the amount of work and notice required and suggested another member contact Marr Area Partnership for a schedule on how such elections should be conducted. The end of June was mooted. PD agreed to take on the organisation of a meeting to discuss plans for an election. An appeal was made for an acting secretary from those present. None were forthcoming. It was established that the offices of secretary and treasurer need not be occupied by council members but by members of the public. SM agreed to draw up a list of mandatory actions required by the secretary to assist anyone considering the role and indicated that she would provide a complete and comprehensive handover to the next bearer.</p> <p>PD queried if there had been any further contact from the group wishing to establish a skate park in the village. It was thought that there had been none. AR subsequently added by email that she had been approached by the young people concerned on the issue, they did wish to progress forward, and she had advised them that as the BCCC's April meeting had been brought forward a week owing to the Cowie Bus Depot presentation, they should take a presentation to the BCCC's meeting in May (12th) instead.</p> <p>PS raised the issue of public accountability and suggested the re-establishment of the "listening post", utilising the hut on the green. This had been tried in 2008 but did not continue after his resignation from the council around that time. BD seconded the notion and suggested that such an event could take place once a month, on a Saturday afternoon for example, to encourage the public to approach BCCC with any issues they may have and to make BCCC more "visible". WJ raised concerns that such an activity would be limited in its success and that it would end up being the same council members undertaking to do it every time. PS undertook to proceed with the plan with the assistance of BD.</p>	<p>PD</p> <p>SM</p> <p>PS, BD</p>
<p>14. Date of Next Meeting. Monday 12th May at 7pm in BEATON CRAIGIE ROOM, Ballater. The meeting closed at 9.15pm.</p>	