

# BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

[ballaterandcrathie.org.uk](http://ballaterandcrathie.org.uk)

Minutes of a Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015, at 7pm in the Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater

Present: Billy Duguid (BD) Chair Pat Downie (PD) Treasurer James Anderson (WJ) Jane Angus (JA) Ian Cameron (IC) Cllr Katrina Farquhar (CKF) (also CNPA rep)  Apologies received: Francis Duguid (FD) Phil Swan (PS) Dr Sedgwick Cllr Geva Blackett (CGV) Mike Forman (MF) Barry Florence (BF) – Fire Service	Also present: Alan Harrison (AH) – Ballater Royal Deeside Limited Tony Cox (TC) – Old School Working Group Grant Moir (GM) - CNPA John Bolton Iain Latta Ruth Sim (Access Panel) Fraser Robin (FR) – Police Scotland Stuart Archer (SA) – Police Scotland Moira McDougall (minutes)
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## 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

## 2. Emergency services – Police and Fire Services

The Police Service current report is available on the Community Council website. Low levels of crime were reported including one attempted unsuccessful break-in to a rural property. Adverse road conditions had been challenging and resulted in a number of road traffic accidents. Operation Quarterlight is a new national crime initiative intended to target vehicle thefts. Further information on how to keep vehicles safe is available on the Police Scotland website.

BF advised the Community Council that he has been instructed by the Fire Service that he is not required to report to the CC. BD will investigate further.

3. Listening Post was cancelled due to bad weather.

4. Minutes from the January meeting were agreed.

## **5. Matters arising from the January meeting.**

There is no need for further reports regarding Public Accountability as this is covered by the Community Empowerment Bill

## **6. Reports**

### **Ballater Royal Deeside Limited**

AH reported that preparations are under way to re-open the Caravan Park for the 2015 season. The play-park has been refurbished. As BRD could not find a contractor to upgrade the toilet block, this has been deferred to next year.

Aberdeenshire Council have intimated that they will not sell the Caravan Park to BRD and it will be retained by Aberdeenshire Council as an asset. BRD had offered £450,000 for the Caravan Park, but this was rejected. BRD currently pays Aberdeenshire Council a rent of £12,000 pa. BRD will draft a document in the coming month to outline how the income from the Caravan Park will be allocated to the benefit of the community.

BRD has purchased Dalmochie from the Forestry Commission and the lease will be transferred to the Local History Group in due course.

BRD will support CKF and Aberdeenshire Council in plans to upgrade the toilets at Monaltrie Park.

### **Old School Working Group**

TC reported that BRD will be the applicant for the Community Asset Transfer of the Old School. Alan Harrison and Richard Carrington from BRD have been appointed to the Old School Working Group with the daily routine work assigned to OSWG and a reporting link to BRD has been established.

A meeting with Aberdeenshire Council to explore the Council's intentions with regard to the Old School had been excellent as Aberdeenshire Council viewed the Old School as a suitable project for a Community Asset Transfer. TC reported that the bid for the Community Asset Transfer will be presented to the Marr Area

Committee to view the cohesion of the bid and that a decision will be made before the end of February.

TC reported on a meeting with Ronnie MacCrae by skype with regard to local low-cost housing and community care housing and a formal agreement on future procedure will be made.

There was a meeting with the Chief Executive and the Development Director of VSA. Although primarily involved in city projects in the past, VSA is seeking to identify rural communities for care in the community housing. VSA has agreed to formally support the bid being made to the Marr Area Committee.

TC suggested that a wider community engagement and wider political engagement might now be necessary as the bid proceeded.

TC expressed thanks to Grant Moir for assistance from CNPA officers.

### **Aberdeenshire Council**

CKF invited Ruth Sim to voice her concerns regarding the disabled parking and access to the new Co-operative Store on Golf Road. She pointed out that disabled parking had been moved from the entrance to the store and that lorries and buses occupied the space and that the rear fire escape included steps. The doorways are narrow. CKF and RS had both spoken to Keith Weeks to set up a site visit. CKF had invited Blair Keen to visit the Community Council to address the CC's concerns but had not received a response.

Funding is now available for the restoration of Polhollich Bridge.

There is confirmation that Aberdeenshire Council would be willing to fund the daily opening, closing and cleaning of the toilet block but that the local community should fund the refurbishment of the block. The refurbishment should be vandal-proof and Aberdeenshire Council estimated this would cost £20,000. CKF will approach Ballater Games, Ballater Chiels and BRD Limited to explore funding options.

The damaged and blocked gutters on the Co-operative Building on Bridge Street were the responsibility of the owners of the flats above the store.

The Knit and Natter Group meets every Tuesday at Ballater Library between 7 and 9pm.

PD asked CKF to approach Aberdeenshire Council with regard to fencing off the garden of the former warden's flat at Sluiemohr as this was currently being used as a right of way, when it is in fact a private garden.

CKF confirmed that the Balmoral Bridge should open on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February. This was welcomed as the clearing of snow on the South Deeside road had not been consistent or effective under comparatively light snowfall.

## **CNPA**

In discussion of the moving of the CNPA Planning Office to Grantown on Spey, GM said that 90% of planning business was in the Badenoch and Strathspey region and the population had increased by 3000 people. JA pointed out that the First Aim of the Park was Conservation and that the initial statements were that the Eastern side should have a rather less than fair share of the administrative posts. After the planning department was moved to Grantown, there was a statement that important departments would be based in Ballater. There was no rebuttal.

Talks were taking place with other groups about sharing the Ballater office space. These had included the Marr Area Partnership, Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust, Visit Scotland, Visit Royal Deeside and RSPB. Funding was also being sought to improve the meeting room facilities and to create a separate reception area. The office space should offer a better source of information to the community than it had as a planning office. CNPA was committed to funding 5 or 6 community development officers over the next three years in conjunction with other bodies such as BRD and Marr Area Partnership.

JA mentioned the welcomed and helpful return of the large screen in the Park office which could display planning proposals more clearly than most domestic computers.

## **7. Planning Matters None**

**8. Correspondence** Aberdeenshire Council asked for names for the new housing development at the play park at Sir Patrick Geddes Way. CKF is to approach Ballater Primary to suggest a suitable name.

As there have been problems, CKF is to discuss with Steve Walker the 8.30am bus service from Braemar.

**9. Finance** The invoice had been received for the November memorial wreaths. PD had received a request for the 2013/14 Balance Sheet which she had already submitted to Banff, but Banff had not forwarded this information on to the relevant department. CKF will discuss this with Janelle Clark

## **10. AOCB**

WJ asked how often the Community Council website and Facebook page were updated. BD will look into this.

WJ/PD had noted that the Dog Waste Bins at Ballater Golf Course were overflowing. CKF will contact Waste.

Confirmation of the passing of plans for the bus depot on Pannanich Road had been received.

CKF confirmed that Royal Mail will maintain a sorting office in Ballater, either in the current building or elsewhere in the village. At the moment, driving licence forms are only available online or at Banchory where help is available.

BD confirmed that there is one vacancy for Ballater and two vacancies for Crathie on the Community Council. BD, FD and JA will approach a current member to discuss future attendance at Community Council meetings.

JA will prepare the AGM papers regarding the possibility of staggered elections for the next Community Council meeting.

A letter of thanks to Jack Coull for his time and effort at BRD especially in co-operation with the CC and good wishes after his accident.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm in the Mike Sheridan Room. The meeting closed at 9.00pm