

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CCC)

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Minutes of a Meeting held on 13th July 2015

7pm in Mike Sheridan Room

Victoria and Albert Halls, Ballater

<p>Present: Billy Duguid (BD) Chair James Anderson (WJ) Jane Angus (JA) Pat Downie (PD) Mike Forman (MF) Phil Swan (PS)</p> <p>Apologies Frances Duguid (FD) Ian Cameron (IC) Sheila Sedgwick (SS) Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Cllr Katrina Farquhar (CKF)</p> <p>Members of the Public John Bolton (JB)</p>	<p>Also present: Jack Coull - Ballater Royal Deeside Limited Tony Cox (TC) - Community Plan Ian Latta (IL) PC Morag Campbell (MC) - Police Scotland Moirra McDougall (minutes)</p>
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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

2. Emergency services - Police

The Police Service current report is available on the Community Council website.

MC reported low levels of crime in the area apart from a break-in to a lodge in Glengairn and a case of shop-lifting in Ballater. MC indicated that Police Scotland would roll out Operation Cedar over the next few months which would concentrate on safe driving, speed checks and general road safety. BD reported that there was still considerable concern with regard to parking on double yellow lines in front of the Co-op and asked if this might be included within the remit of Operation Cedar. TC also raised his concerns with regard to speed limits within the village and asked about the extension of 20mph limits. BD will contact CKF for further information.

3. Minutes from the June meeting were amended and agreed.

4. Matters arising from the June meeting.

JA had written to the Co-op and PO with regard to continuing problems regarding the opening times of the Post Office counter and staff training, but had only received a reply promising training. These have yet to have effective results. BD will request a site meeting with representatives of the Post Office and the Co-op in an effort to resolve these issues.

WJ had not been successful in speaking with the school transport driver to discuss his concerns regarding the safe pick-up and drop-off of school pupils but will do so. The planning application for the bus shelter on Golf Road has been deferred again. CKF will report on the planning decision.

5. Reports

Ballater Royal Deeside Limited

JC reported that Aberdeenshire Council has flatly turned down the application by BRD for the Caravan Park to be subject to a Community Asset Transfer. BRD currently pays an annual rent of £12,500 to Aberdeenshire Council, although this will go up in 2017, possibly to £40,000 per annum. It is therefore in the financial interest of the Council to retain ownership of the Caravan Park.

PD asked if there was a copy of the transfer of ownership of the Caravan Park from the Burgh Council to Aberdeenshire Council. **JC** made the point that profits from the Caravan Park are currently available for community projects. If the Caravan Park were purchased, the loan would have to be paid off. In June, BRD distributed £25,000 to repair the Victoria & Albert Hall Roof, £5,000 to the refurbishment of the toilet block at Monaltrie Park, plus a further £5,000 to the extension of the Seven Bridges Walk and £1,000 for the carved Nativity Scene for the village green.

A contractor has, after a long search, been appointed to undertake the upgrading of the toilet block at the Caravan Park next winter.

The Community Council will submit planning applications for three public access defibrillators at the Victoria Hall, the Church Square toilet block and the Tourist Information Centre at Crathie.

Old School Working Group

Janelle Clark had e-mailed **TC** to confirm that Aberdeenshire Council would request permission from Councillors on August 16th for the Community Asset Transfer of the Old School. **BD** will request **CKF** to inform the Community Council of the outcome of that meeting.

Community Action Plan

TC reported that he had reviewed earlier Community Action Plans, as well as speaking with a number of local people regarding the changes in Ballater over the last ten to fifteen years. The general consensus seemed to be that the commercial and economic health of Ballater was not good, although it remained, in a social sense, a very pleasant village in which to live. A lively debate ensued regarding what was required for Ballater to regain its economic well-being. **JA** highlighted poor support for business start-ups and the problems of an aging population. **PD** reported higher business rates in Ballater than in other Deeside villages. **PD** also suggested an Open-Door event in the Victoria & Albert Hall, attended by all interested parties, each asking what the village needed. **WJ** queried the inability of the village to promote and exploit its natural attributes in the same way as, for instance, Aviemore. **WJ** also expressed his wish to attend any meetings with **TC** towards promoting Ballater. **TC** will contact the CNPA Economic Development Department and Nick Mardell to organise a meeting with members of the Community Council and members of the representatives at the united meeting, to work out a way of finding out what both inhabitants and visitors want from the village. **JA** agreed to attend any such meeting. **JC** suggested contacting bus tour operators to find out what could be done to improve Ballater. A suggestion box at the Caravan Park was also put forward.

Aberdeenshire Council - There was no report

Cairngorm National Park Authority - There was no report

6. Planning Matters - There was nothing to report.

7. Correspondence

8. Finance

PD reported that the insurance for the Notice Board was now £24 per annum, a reduction from £203 per annum. **PD** will approach **BRD** to check the cost of using the Notice Board. **PD** had received a query from Stagecoach wishing to make a donation to the Old Royal Railway Station. There was also a donation of £400 from Tesco, Banchory. **WJ** had received a number of queries about what exactly the funds were for. **PD** explained that they were for those employed at the businesses in the Station while seeking new employment etc.

9. AOCB

There had been complaints about garden vegetation breaching pavements. **BD** will contact **CKF** regarding Aberdeenshire Council's approach to this problem.

Following complaints from members of the public, **PD** had approached the Co-op manager due to Co-op staff dropping cigarette ends on the village green after staff breaks. Although the manager spoke with staff, this remains a problem. **BD** will contact **CKF** to find out what further steps can be taken.

A member of the public asked if a licence was required for businesses to place tables and chairs on the pavements. He also queried to what extent shops were permitted outside displays of goods as this caused problems of access for prams and wheel-chairs.

It was also reported that sections of wood were loose on the bridge at Postman's Leap on the Old Line Walk. **JA** will notify the Cairngorm Outdoor Access Trust.

WJ pointed out that the Gairnshiel to Crathie road was classified as a Snow Route. To that end, he queried why there were no snow gates on either side to ensure that drivers, in particular visitors, were not placed in danger. There had been a number of instances, even in recent milder winters, when drivers had ignored the Road Closed signs and had then become stuck in the drifts.

MF reported that John Burrows had received a donation of £400 from Johnston Oils which he had passed on to **BRD**. This was a 'buyers' reward' to the oil purchase group.

JA raised the issue of there being no rotating other than recycling bins at cemeteries and will contact Lorna Hogg.

JA nominated as representative on the Association of Cairngorm Communities.

JA and **PS** will attend the meeting on health and welfare on 2nd September. **JA** is particularly concerned about the lack of patient mental health provision in NE Scotland and an inability of the NHS in dealing with these issues.

PD announced a meeting of the Marr Forum for Community Councils at Tarland on 27th August.

JA reported that applications for LEADER funding from Cairngorm Action Group may soon be made. Applications are to be made from October - November.

The Meeting closed at 10pm.

The next meeting will be 14th September 2015, Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater, 7pm - 9pm.