Braemar Community Council

Approved Minutes

Monday 15th November 2021

Monthly meeting held in St Margaret’s starting at 19.30

1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendees

Community Councillors – Brian Wood (chair), Alastair Simpson (vice chair), Alison Walker, Molly Macintosh, John Torrance

Aberdeenshire Councillors – Geva Blackett, Paul Gibb

Speakers – Gavin Miles (CNPA), Paul Davies (Dark Skies), Simon Blackett (BCL)

Members of the public – 4 members of the public attended the meeting

Apologies – No apologies were submitted.

1. Minutes from October – Approved – Alasdair Simpson

 Seconded – Brian Wood

1. Matters Arising from October Minutes

Geva Blackett advised of amendments that needed to be made to previous minutes – John Torrance will amend before submitting minutes

The parking meeting held on the 5th November went ahead and was attended by Geva Blackett, Paul Gibb, Peter Argyll, Brian Wood, Police Scotland and Aberdeenshire council representatives.

The Ambulance meeting has been postponed due to COP 26 and has been re-scheduled for Friday 19th November

An email was sent to Hostelling Scotland to enquire about the future of the Braemar Hostel, in reply we have been told that the hostel will re-open in April 2022 and already has some bookings.

Brian Wood commented on his disappointment to an email sent to Invercauld estate regarding the future of Castleton hall and the reply which made clear that the community council would be informed of any decisions made, but implied that they would not be involved in the process.

1. National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP)

Gavin Miles from the National Park was introduced to give a presentation about the NPPP, what it is, the areas that it covers and how the consultation process works.

The NPPP details the priorities for the CNPA for the next five years. It is ultimately approved by Scottish Government ministers.

The NPPP is split into 3 main sections to cover

* Place
* Nature
* People

The NPPP lasts for 5 years but the effects of it are expected to last over 25 years.

The NPPP consultation is now live and can be viewed online, consultation is open for all and closes on 17th December

BCC to submit comment on the consultation and to encourage others in the community to do so as well.

1. Dark Skies Status – Paul Davies

Paul Davies a local resident had asked to come along to the CC meeting to make presentation for the idea of gaining Dark Sky Status, and to tell us about what it would involve and the potential benefits.

Dark Sky Status would involve the switching off, of the village street lights for a period over night. This would have great benefit to the local wildlife, especially night time pollinators, whose activity would be greatly increased due to total darkness. Other benefits are also to Braemar Carbon footprint as this would reduce the village’s energy consumption, another benefit would be to those who wish to observe the night sky and could be used as an attraction to encourage visitors to the area.

This was followed by some discussion between the CC and members of the public, Councillor Blackett presented a communication she has had from Aberdeenshire Council about the idea, as it would be the council that would have to initiate it.

Some councillors were in favour of the idea, others were against it and some could see a compromise. With this in mind it was agreed that Councillor Blackett would go back to Aberdeenshire council to investigate the idea further and see how or if some sort of compromise could be initiated.

1. Reports from Aberdeenshire Councillors

**Paul Gibb** – With the survey for a crossing point on the A93 between the top of the main car Park and St Margaret’s Church coming back negative, Paul gave an update on possible ways that the community could still get a crossing put in place. As Councillors they could raise it as a Members Proposed Issue (MPI) with Marr area, or the School Parent Council could raise a petition that would be presented to Aberdeenshire Council. Paul suggested that a petition would be the better route forward as it could be better supported by Marr Area Committee and the wider community.

BCC would lend its full support to any petition for a crossing point.

Aboyne Hospital – Review decision on 28th October was to keep both Glen o’ Dee and Aboyne Hospitals open for as long as staffing would allow them to do so. Staff restructuring and recruitment is being carried out for this purpose.

**Geva Blackett** – reported that the Chief officer for the AHSCP`s had visited a couple weeks ago and that she and Paul Gibb had taken the officer on a tour of the area to highlight the distances that health care has to cover in this area. They then met with Dr Cruickshank to discuss the challenges of providing health care services in the area.

Aboyne Hospital is to remain open for Inpatient Care as long as staffing allows.

There has still not been a person appointed to lead the Strategic Needs Assessment for the hospital.

Ambulance meeting has been delayed due to COP 26

Invercauld Bridge – work to install the permanent lights system should start at the end of the month.

Gairnshiel Bridge – Tenders for construction close in mid December, a report will then be submitted to Marr Area Committee with work on the new bridge hopefully starting in spring 2022 and completion early 2023.

1. Update on Aboyne Hospital – Item covered by Aberdeenshire Councillors
2. Car Parking and Village Signage

A meeting to discuss parking and signage within the village was held on Friday 5th November, the meeting was attended by representatives from Aberdeenshire Councill, BCC, Police Scotland and the 3 Ward councillors.

Following discussion at the meeting it was agreed that the following programme of works would be developed.

* Investigate potential of an edge of village car park
* Formalise plans for church yard parking
* Carry out improvements to Balnellan Car Park
* Look at improving pedestrian footways from the Games Park and an edge of village car park to the centre of the village.
* Monitor situation once complete and if required investigate if further parking restrictions are required in village centre.

The time scale for implementation of the above proposals will be dependent on when funding is made available

The issue of people parking in front of drive ways had also been raised for the meeting, advised that residents can apply for an H bar to be painted in front of their drive ways which could help alleviate the problem. Applications can be made to Aberdeenshire Council.

Village signage needs to be overhauled as signage has become congested.

There have also been discussions that would see parking enforcement being decriminalised, which means enforcement would move from being a policing issue to an Aberdeenshire Council issue.

1. Planning

Only 1 new planning application

Alterations and Extension to Dwellinghouse Somerset Cottage 25 Mar Road Braemar Aberdeenshire AB35 5YL Ref. No: APP/2021/2488 | Received: Mon 01 Nov 2021 | Validated: Tue 02 Nov 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision

No objections were raised by BCC

Existing planning applications still awaiting decision

Alteration and Extension to Rescue Centre

Braemar Mountain Rescue Centre Glenshee Road Braemar Aberdeenshire AB35 5YQ

Ref. No: APP/2021/2368 | Received: Tue 12 Oct 2021 | Validated: Thu 14 Oct 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision

Demolition of Chalet

The Chalet Kindrochit Drive Braemar Aberdeenshire AB35 5YW

Ref. No: APP/2021/2223 | Received: Wed 22 Sep 2021 | Validated: Wed 22 Sep 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision

Alterations and Extension to Old Coachhouse and The Hayloft and Erection of Replacement Chalet (Short Term Letting Accommodation)

The Old Coach House, The Hayloft & Callater Chalet Kindrochit Drive Braemar Aberdeenshire AB35 5YW

Ref. No: APP/2021/2207 | Received: Mon 20 Sep 2021 | Validated: Fri 08 Oct 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision

Erection of Dwellinghouse and Garage

Land To North Of Coldrach Lodge Chapel Brae Braemar

Ref. No: APP/2021/1823 | Received: Fri 30 Jul 2021 | Validated: Mon 02 Aug 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision

The Community Housing Scheme is also still waiting to be discussed by the CNPA planning authority.

1. Police Report – In the recent police report there was nothing specific to Braemar to be reported.

However the usual advice is given, that although acquisitive crime remains low in the area residents should not become complacent to this and should do everything they can to prevent it.

1. Reports from other organisations

BCL – Simon Blackett

Castle is now closed for restoration, likely for 2 seasons, with the site now being handed over to contractors. The grounds remain open to the public.

Auchtavan – road has been upgraded and fence repaired with further improvements planned over the winter.

Community Housing – is awaiting the outcome of the planning decision before it can be progressed.

Sheds behind Kindrochit Court – one is scheduled to come down in the coming weeks with safety fencing and notices being installed and an asbestos contractor taking asbestos off site. Planning permission and building warrant for the demolition of the shed already exists from previous planning applications.

Community Wood – No further work is planned for the woods at this point. There has been some report of litter and anti-social behaviour in the wood land, but routine observation had noted that it is no more than expected elsewhere in the local area, and any mess has been tidied up as required. The situation will be monitored over the next season.

BCL AGM has been postponed date to be confirmed.

Braemar Castle – Doreen Wood

The Castle is very close to receiving full permission to start the £1.5M “raising the Standards” restoration project. With funding coming from National Lottery Heritage fund (£500K), Historic Environment Scotland (£500K) and the remaining £500K being raised locally. With costs escalating fundraising will continue for a while yet.

As part of the commitments to the educational aims of the Heritage Lottery fund there is a need to recruit 2 engagement officers. Anni Stonebridge has been confirmed as the Volunteer Co-ordinator and she will run the activity plan.

There has been advertising for the position of Outreach Co-ordinator but without success so far, the position will shortly be re advertised.

The Castle is now packed and ready for the contractors to move in, the collections have been packed and covered and will remain in the castle during the restorations. Bell Ingram have formally taken over the site as of 1st November and Harper and Allan are the main contractors.

1. Correspondence

5 items of correspondence have been brought up.

Glenshee – have written to ask Braemar Community council to remove its previous objections to the removal of the BT phone box sited at the ski centre, this would assist with re development of the toilet facilities at the ski centre.

BCC have consulted with Glenshee and councillor Blackett reported that she has been in contact with the emergency services who have stated that they would have no issues with it being removed.

With that in mind BCC will write to remove their previous objections to its removal.

Squirrel Bridge – A member of the local community has asked if it would be possible to look at installing some sort of squirrel bridge across the A93 near the youth hostel and camp site.

BCC have been in communication with the Marr Area ranger who sounded optimistic about the idea.

BCC will pass it onto Invercauld estate and Braemar Nature group to progress.

Bridge Lighting – A member of the local community has asked about the lighting under the bridge in the centre of the village, as it has not been working for some time.

It was discussed and decided that the current lighting which was installed many years ago is now outdated and in need of replacement, previous methods of changing light bulbs from a ladder when the river is low are also not compliant with modern Health and Safety.

Brian Wood and Simon Blackett have agreed to approach the Fife Arms Hotel to ask for their assistance, as their guests would get the greatest benefit from the lights being replaced.

Queens Platinum Jubilee – Aberdeenshire council has sent information regarding plans for the Queens Platinum Jubilee next year.

This will be looked at in due course.

Mess in Community Woods – A member of the local community has written to raise concerns about the level of mess in the Community woods.

This issue has been addressed in the BCL report.

1. AOCB

Alastair Simpson – Community Action Plan is ongoing and he has set up a new Email for incoming mail for the project - braemarCAP@gmail.com

1. Date of next meeting – 17/01/2022

Venue to be confirmed