**Draft Minutes**

**Braemar Community Council**

**Meeting held on Monday 18 April 2022**

1. **Attendees**

**BCC –** Brian Wood, Allison Walker, Alistair Simpson, Gareth Guy

Apologies – Molly McIntosh

**Aberdeenshire Councillors –** Paul Gibb, Geva Blackett

**Local Representatives –**

Apologies – Simon Blackett(BCL)

**Members of the public –** David Geddes, Jos McGregor, Claudia Leith, Sarah Brown

1. **Minutes from March meeting**

Proposed – Alistair Simpson

Seconded – Brian Wood

1. **Matters arising from the minutes**

**Lights under the Clunie Bridge** – Brian met with Adam Dyke the interim GM at the Fife, who was unaware of the discussions around the replacement of the lights , he will follow up on this and revert back. David Geddes offered his support to the Fife as he has experience of what will need to be done to fix the lights.

Brian also discussed Fife staff Parking with Adam – the village will start to become busier soon and the lack of parking in the village centre will become problematic. Adam confirmed that the Fife have purchased a mini bus to transport staff from Aboyne through to Braemar and back again on various shift patterns thus meaning that staff will not need to use their own private transport to come to work. The Fife are currently recruiting for drivers to facilitate the service. Staff who do use their own cars for commuting to work will be encouraged to use the parking facility at the church.

An issue was raised by a member of the public that Fife staff houses have over flowing rubbish bins and also black bin liners full of food waste left lying on the ground around bins ( photos of the issue were taken ) It is evident that this is attracting vermin and gulls around these properties. Adam confirmed that they would apply for or purchase additional bins for their staff houses. He also confirmed that they would introduce an initiative to educate the staff on their behaviours and responsibilities whilst living in the staff accommodation. Staff wardens are to be introduced to check these facilities are kept up to standard.

Adam is also keen to have the Fife teams more integrated in the community groups and also open up better dialogue and communications with the community. This included the encouraging locals back to using the Fife as a place to socialise.

**Water Management meeting update**

Brian, Alistair and Geva attended a meeting led by Ballater CC. The attendees are all in agreement that the project is not about flood prevention and barriers but water management, various measures could be introduced to manage the water in upper Deeside ie Dams. Funding would appear to be a major constraint, and it is unlikely that this project will receive enough funding given the high costs of the suggested solutions.

It is also noted that there are major drought concerns on the Deeside rivers. All parties agree that the matter needs to be managed and are keen to see all community councils pulling together to support the initiative.

**Food security meeting update**

Brian attended the virtual meeting this month. A wide range of areas were discussed including food banks and pop up pantries and the need to encourage the proper disposal of fresh food etc. It was noted that the group saw no distinction between food banks and pop up pantries. The group is keen to promote the use of these facilities to reduce waste and everyone should be encouraged to use them. The pop up Pantry in Braemar is open again in its new location by the Fire Station.

**Response of Fire Brigade correspondence from last meeting**

Geva updated on the Response from SF&R re leave etc: “We do have guidance for the local managers to try and ensure that leave is taken on a staggered basis to try and ensure the appliance is available.  However this is only guidance and we can’t stop people from going on holiday. The situation at Braemar on the day of the fire was unfortunate as I had 2 personnel isolating due to Covid which left a total of 5 including a trainee.  The trainee is not counted in the figures until the Breathing Apparatus phase of their training is complete so in this instance with just one person on leave the appliance would not have been available as there would have only been 3 qualified personnel who were available and an appliance can only go out with 4.”

Gareth added that recruitment is an issue at the moment. The retained crews give up a lot of their time to training and development. Training requirements have also become greater as have the expectations on the individuals volunteering for the service. This adds significantly to the challenges in recruiting suitable crew.

**Post office hours**

Brian discussed the comments raised at our March meeting with Chris Booth manager at the Co-op. The Co-op have the contract to run the Post Office and it requires to be staffed by the Co-op trained staff. Despite going through some weeks with staff sickness, the recruitment of new Co-op team members remains a challenge. It is noted that the community very much appreciate the efforts of the Co-op team and Chris in particular. The community would support Chris if he needed to explore reduced but more fixed post office opening times and this was offered as a potential solution and perhaps the Post Office could open between 0900-1500 rather than the full opening times of the store.

**Use of School for Monthly meetings**

Our initial bookings have been rejected as a janitor / caretaker is not available to facilitate the opening and closing of the school in the evenings. It has been discussed with the lets team that historically BCC have not required this facility and were able to use the school. The Lets Team are looking into our past use and hopefully we will be able to replicate what we have done in the past going forward. It is hoped that a solution will be in place for our meeting in May.

**Platinum Jubilee**

A meeting is planned for next week.

1. **Finance Report**

Bank balance is currently at £4760.43

Expenditure since the last meeting has been £35.00 for annual Data Protection fee.

Accounts for Year 2021/22 have been finalised and audited by Stewart Davidson in advance of the AGM.

Geva suggested that some funding could be considered to provide honesty boxes with dogs leads around the National Park to encourage dog owners to have their pets under control when walking on the hills to stop disruption caused to nesting birds etc at this time of the year. A similar project is running in Dumfries – we will look at this and consider if it could work here.

1. **Emergency Response Plan**

Submission of SSEN Funding application should happen this week

The EPO Neil Cameron from Aberdeenshire Council has today given his endorsement of our plan and like Police Scotland has offered his support in helping with any table top exercises should we decide to do these.

Expected Project costs for Mobile Generator for the village hall, 2 Satellite Phones and 2 year contract, 4 VHF Radios and Refuge resources for the VH are £24,631.00

£15,560.00 has been raised / pledged through grant funding and private local donations so we will be seeking funding from SSEN for the balance.

Next Steps over the coming months:

Clarify the Comms kit required – VHF Radios tested last week around the village

Hiring for the key positions

Training session for the resilience team

Wider Village engagement on the plan and home resilience

Production of a home resilience guidance booklet

1. **BCC Elections Process and Timetable**

All the office bearer positions will be put up for election/re-election at the AGM. Janelle Clark as the Returning Officer (or someone on her behalf) will attend to chair the meeting until the Chair has been elected/re-elected and would then hand back over for the rest of the meeting.

The draft proposed plan setting out the process for advertising vacancies in advance of the AGM, including what the Area Office will do and what the Community Council should do was distributed to the BCC members present. The timetable will be pushed one month if the AGM takes place in July rather than June.

The 4 members who were elected last year continue as members  (Brian, Allison, Alastair & Molly). Co-options only last until the next elections, so co-opted members would need to put in a nomination during the nomination period to continue.  As we are moving to a single election date in 2024, anyone elected this year will be for a 2 year term instead of the usual three.

Due to various members of the BCC team being unavailable in June it was agreed that the AGM and BCC meeting for June would be pushed to July 18th ( there will be no BCC meeting in June )

Since the meeting we have contacted Marr Area and our AGM needs to take place in May or June – we are looking for a suitable date in June.

1. **Reports from Aberdeenshire Councillors**

**Paul Gibb** – Report

**Road Crossings**

I submitted an MPI [Member Promoted Issue] which is attached for your reference.

This was submitted to the appropriate Director [Ritchie Johnson] and should be heard at the next Marr Area Committee meeting – which will be after the election.

I submitted this in March, but Officers are allowed 28 days to compile their response, a duration which meant that a paper wont come to committee before my time ends. The new Chair of Marr Area Committee may chose not to admit the MPI, but then any one of newly re-elected members can re-submit the MPI in their name. I would, if you [both PCs and CCs] wanted me to, be willing to speak to the paper [even though I will only be a resident].

**Aboyne Hospital**

Keep Care in our Communities met in April and agreed to request meetings with:

* Niamh McIver - Community Engagement Lead within Health Improvement Scotland. The Community Engagement Team within Healthcare Improvement Scotland [formerly the Scottish Health Council] responsibilities include i) monitoring the activity of the Health Board, for example, such as when there is a service change, i.e. maternity services, and ii) supporting Health Boards manage their engagement with communities.

KCC have requested a meeting the w/c 25th April, and would like guidance from HIS on exactly what we should expect from AHSCP during the consultation phase and what their duties are to ensure the consultation is far reaching and captures all concerns within the catchment.

* Pamela Milliken, Chief Executive – AHSCP. They have appointed a lead for the SNA [Carina Ebdy] and advised that the public consultation won’t begin until after the election period [5th May].

KCC would like to meet in person and learn the timetable for the consultation and discuss how we can support the design and implementation of the Strategic Needs Assessment.

**SSEN**

Last week I met with Shona Horn and her colleagues Ryan and Ross who gave me a tour of the Ops Room. It was interesting to see how they saw the information [displayed on various screens] regarding the network, the faults, the impact on the properties/businesses and critical infrastructure like hospitals in the area of each fault, and how they responded to the various challenges of getting the power back up.

In extreme storms of this nature, with extensive disruption across the area, SSEN focus on restoring the largest number of customers in the quickest way possible, working systematically. Mobile generation is also used strategically. The explained that they power is distributed by different systems, A roads - the main high voltage network (33kV and above), B Roads - high voltage network (11kV), and C Roads - the low voltage network [street level]. SSEN’s systems cannot see every house, and there are occasions, especially in remote rural areas where a spur off a C Road leading to a few houses cannot be seen on their screens. SSEN may announce that Power Is Restored, but they know there will be a few properties still without power and they need to hear from the community from resilience groups etc. where power may be out as there could be a tree down or fault on the line along the short spur to the last few houses at the end of the line. SSEN Engineers are approachable and will feed back information if you see them in the area.

Regarding applications for funding: there were two comments [and some may have heard this already], please have **maintenance plans** for your generators, and please have a component of your application that includes how you plan to improve **household resilience**. The latter could be information booklets and grab bags [containing useful items to help you through those first few hours/days].

Brian expressed his sincere thanks to Paul for his diligence and support that he has given to Braemar and the Community Council during his time as Councillor to Ward 15.

Brian also at this time acknowledged the hard work and commitment shown by John Torrance during his time on the Community Council and as Secretary. We all wish John and his family success in their new ventures.

**Geva Blackett** – Report

New Gairnshiel Bridge is underway. The bridge is closed 19/20 and 21 between 9 & 5 for all except locals and emergencies to allow a compound to be built in the field so that all machinery etc is off the road. Actual bridge will be constructed by the autumn but road will take a bit longer – on track for spring 2023 opening.

B976 Crathie/Bridge should be open by the weekend

Run Balmoral: traffic on A93 will be managed as usual by police. There may be delays but the road is not completely closed which is what the map showed.

Traffic lights on Invercauld bridge – have asked what the problem is…

Paul and my motion to Communities Committee re fireplaces was voted down. The opposition partnership of which I was a member had the motion in advance of the meeting and decided during the meeting they were seconding the administration against us – a betrayal which led to me resigning from the partnership and am currently an unaligned independent. If re-elected I will work with whoever will help deliver for this ward.

Concern expressed to me by accommodation providers about the lack of evening meal facilities in the village, particularly on Monday nights, has led to Federica and me organising a meeting with them and meal suppliers next Tuesday. Grant Mason and his team are doing everything they can and are now open 7 days a week but booking can be needed 2 weeks in advance… Braemar Lodge are keen to help and Federica and I have some other ideas we are looking into. My worry is disgruntled holiday makers could easily give the village a bad name if there is now where to eat…

Finally, a huge thank you to Cllr Paul Gibb who has been an absolute rock! I am not the only one who will miss him but I look forward, I hope to continue working with him on Keep Care in Our Communities and to seeking advice

**CNPA**: I have ASKED that NFUS give a briefing on their food concerns which include requiring a halt to planting trees on arable land before . Another Board member has suggested that James Withers of Scotland Food & Drink might be better – I am happy with either but the request is apparently being ignored… The other Board member will ring the convener tomorrow.

 I attended a meeting with Ballater Flood Improvement Group last week along with Xander McDade the CNPA Convener and 2 members of Braemar CC. Upstream management of water needs to be considered withing the climate change agenda, not just flooding.

1. **Reports from other organisations**

**CNPA –** included in Geva’s report

**Braemar Community Limited –** Simon Blackett

Simon sent his apologies for the meeting but provided his report as follows:

A quiet Month for BCL.

Castle works are progressing well. It is hoped that it will reopen mid to late 2023

It is noted that litter is being left by young den builders in the Community Woods. National Park rangers will assist in clearing the litter and help educate individuals to clean up after using the woods.

Still waiting for housing planning determination. Housing consultant Sam Foster has now left to take up a different job but still advised by Rural Housing Scotland.

Improvement works to Auchtavan should be complete by the end of the month.

Hydro Grant Award ceremony takes place Tuesday 19th in the Fife

Work has started on the new path to the Auld Brig of Dee.

**Highland Society / Games Pavilion – David Geddes**

David updated us positively on the amount of visiting vehicles parking in the games ground over the holiday weekend. It is hoped that this will continue into the tourist season and help ease the parking issues in the centre of the village.

It was noted that it is disappointing that some of the coach tour operator’s drivers still continue to use the mews car park to park during their visits causing congestion for other car park users. We will continue to try to educate the drivers that an alternative and more suitable parking is available in the games ground.

1. **Planning update**

Aberdeenshire Council

**Decided:**

Approved | APP/2022/0446 | Erection of Archway and Installation of Flagpoles | The Duke Of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion Princess Royal Duke Of Fife Memorial Park Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YX

**Awaiting Decision:**

APP/2022/0834 | Conditions 1a (Layout and Siting), 1b (External Appearance and Finishing Materials), 1c (Landscaping Scheme), 1d (Levels Survey and Cross Sections), 1e (Boundary Treatments), 1f (Drainage), 1g (Access), 1h (Car Parking/Vehicle Turning Area), 5 (Energy Statement), 8 (Visibility Splays) of Planning Permission in Principle Reference APP/2018/2700 for Erection of Dwellinghouse and Sub-Division of Feu | Broom Cottage 8 Broombank Terrace Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YX

PP/2022/0578 | Alterations and Extension to Health Centre and Installation of Air Source Heat Pump | NHS GRAMPIAN Braemar Health Centre St Andrew's Terrace Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5WR

PP/2022/0631 | Alterations and Extension to Dwellinghouse | Tigh Na Roi Glenshee Road Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YQ

Nothing new called in by CNPA

1. **Police Report**

No Report provided this month

1. **Correspondence**

* Marr Area Partnership – two meetings scheduled in the next month. Community Council Forum 27 April – Brian will attend and Regional Community Action Hub Meeting 28/4 1000-1200 over zoom.
* Ballater Green Waste – Seasonal garden waste recycling points will operate from April 2nd to October 29th Roads Depot, South Deeside Road from 0800-1100 on Saturdays. Sites to be used for grass clippings and small trimmings. Larger trees and bushes should be taken to household recycling centres.
* Jubilee Media support – passed to the Chair for distribution to the Jubilee event group
* Email on Twinning – Brian will investigate any value in Pursuing this. Paul will provide contact details for the twinning group coordinator from Aboyne
* Tour of Britain Cycle race – Email will be forwarded on to Braemar Tourist Group for Info

1. **AOCB**

Alistair Simpson asked if there had been any updates on the outstanding matters relating to Castleton Hall – it is noted that no further updates have been given since the last meeting.

1. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 16th May 2022.

Meeting location to be confirmed.

We are hoping that our application to use the school for our future meetings will be accepted.