**Draft Minutes**

**Braemar Community Council**

**Meeting held on Monday 21 March 2022**

1. **Attendees –**

**BCC –** Brian Wood, Allison Walker, Molly McIntosh, Alistair Simpson

Apologies – John Torrance, Jamie Atkinson, Gareth Guy

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

**Local Representatives –** Simon Blackett(BCL)

Apologies – Sarah Ann Hubbard ( BTG ), Mark Nicolson ( Marr Estate )

**Members of the public** – Doug Anderson, Jim Wood & David Geddes

1. **Minutes from February meeting**

Proposed – Brian Wood

Seconded – Allison Walker

1. **Matters arising from the minutes**

Simon Blackett had spoken with Mark Denton from the Fife Arms Hotel about replacing the lights under the bridge. It was noted that Mark has now left employment with the Fife so this would be followed up with his successor.

The issue with the posting of BCC minutes into the public domain is now resolved. Draft and Approved minutes will be posted onto a page on the new Community website. The Chair acknowledged the good work done by Molly to get the Community’s page on the site updated to be able to upload the minutes. The secretary will send the minutes to Molly each month for upload.

Platinum Jubilee – next Meeting of the group will take place on Tuesday 22nd March.

Facebook – Braemar Community Group page is unmonitored and has been attracting some unpleasant content. It is noted that there is much less activity on the site since members were encouraged to remove themselves from using the page. Geva encouraged the CC to ratify a statement that should be used for people still using the site to be encouraged to only post on the Welcome to Braemar Community page. It was confirmed that this would be a good idea.

Meeting Venue – Games Centre very kindly offered to host, the Chair thanked them for this. The school is now available for our use again. The secretary is processing the application to establish monthly use of the school and it is hoped that the agreement will be in place for our April meeting.

1. **Finance Report**

Bank balance is currently at £4795.43

Expenditure has been £51.06 for new pads on the defibrillator machine in the Mews.

1. **Emergency Response Plan**

GENERATOR and ER KIT

The village Hall have verbally confirmed that they will apply for the funding for the generator in the name of the Village Hall. We have still to receive this confirmation in writing. Work continues on the generator specification and costs; We have suggested to John McPherson who is leading the specification of the generator that we review the size and power of the generator as the initial specification of machine may exceed our requirements.

All tasks are ongoing - Braemar SSEN funding application and Braemar Hydro Funding applications.  
Next tasks will be to Produce and distribute a Home Resilience guide, Engage the wider village in the ER Plan   
to Recruit an ER team of Volunteers to operationalise the Plan, run the refuge etc. Train the ER Team and Procure and store the equipment (assuming we get the full funding).

The police and the EPO at Aberdeenshire Council have both reviewed the plan.

Aberdeenshire council have awarded Braemar Care £1778.00 from their resilience fund. The monies will be used to help provide communications equipment for the village in power outage. Likely Satellite Phones.

Geva continues the campaign on the loss of analogue lines in the community and solutions to the communications problems when there are power outages. A petition will be sent to Ofcom regarding the digital roll out, asking that it be paused until areas such as this have confidence in back up communications.

1. **Water Management**

An Informal meeting was held on Monday 24th January

Attendees: Richard Frimston, John Bannerman Ballater CC; Geva Blackett Aberdeenshire Cllr; Alastair Simpson Braemar CC

Building physical barriers to control flooding are expensive and time consuming (10 years+} in planning etc. It was felt that upstream management of rivers, controlling the water flow with several small dams should be explored. Discussions with Estates, salmon fishers, national park etc. would be required. Small hydroelectric schemes could be included in these dams. Water levels could be controlled by opening or shutting the dams. Fish ladders would be required

A closer working relationship between the Upper Deeside community councils of Braemar, Ballater and Aboyne looking into this and other shared issues should be encouraged with regular discussions sharing ideas and presenting a unified front.

1. **Reports from Aberdeenshire Councillors**

**Paul Gibb**

School Crossing Petition

When a Councillor submits and MPI, Officers have 28 days to compile a response.

Due to the time they have to prepare the paper, the MPI will not be discussed on the 29th March which is the last Marr Area committee meeting before the end of this Council. The April meeting is not schedule due to it being Easter.

If the Chair of the new Marr Area committee does not want to include this paper in the first meeting of the new Council [because I am no longer a Councillor] then I suggest that the parent councils give this MPI to the new Councillors and ask them to submit it straight away. If asked to talk in support of the paper, on behalf of the parent councils, and if allowed, then I would be happy to do so. Geva also stated that if re elected she would pursue this if Paul is not able to in an un official capacity.

Keep Care in the Community

The Strategic Needs Assessment has still to be completed. To the best of Paul’s knowledge this had not been started yet. Two letters have been sent to:

1. Pamela Miliken responsible for recruitment of personnel to conduct the assessment asking when this will happen and a meeting date requested.
2. Chris Friend – representative for a government body who facilitate Strategic Needs Assessments to arrange discussions on the assessment.

Paul if he can will also continue to pursue this in a personal capacity after he steps down as a councillor after the May elections.

**Geva Blackett**

**CPNA** – CPNA - Meeting scheduled on Friday 25 March – developer contributions for house builders in the national park will be discussed.  It is proposed that fees may be raised.   Given land prices any rise in fee contribution is concerning as it reduces the desire for developers to build smaller more affordable properties in the community.

1. **Reports from other organisations**

**CNPA –** included in Geva’s report

**Braemar Community Limited – Simon Blackett**

Simon sent his report in advance of the meeting for discussion and is noted as follows:

Castle project going well so far. A new company will be formed to run the castle as a subsidiary of BCL. Georgina the castle manager has now left her employment, Simon thanked her for her contribution and wished her well going forward.

Blown trees in wood now cleared. Community wood by the garage is owned by Aberdeenshire Council. A community asset transfer is being sought for the land and the future plan is to plant trees, a garden, build paths and site benches for use by the community.

Review of paths and bridges ongoing. Repairs will be required soon. Surveys and costings being done. Improvements to paths on the Deeside way are being looked at to link the village down to Balmoral.

Hydro fund now closed to applicants and plan to have community event to announce winners and celebrate success.

Auchtavan – new website updated. New story panels now erected on site. Simon confirmed that it is well worth a visit.

**Braemar Community Housing – project update**

The planning application, which was submitted in May last year, continues to be processed by Cairngorms National Park, with the design team responding to multiple queries from different departments. It seems to be taking forever, but this is not unusual with such a detailed application.Most of the correspondence has focused on how the flora and fauna of the woodland will be affected by the removal of some of the trees, as well as agreeing precisely the details of the new road. Various storms over the winter have blown over some of the trees that were planned to be felled – as well as some that weren’t – and Simon has arranged for most of these to be removed to avoid them becoming safety hazards and clear the paths. The next step in the planning process will be for the application to be put in front of the planning committee. A date for this has not yet been confirmed by planning.

 A building warrant has been secured for the removal of the sheds. These still remain standing – for the time being – while BCL agree precisely who will take them down.

 The business plan has been refined with the help of Michalina Godniak and Kate Parker – two prospective members of the group that intends to take on the project from BCL in the coming months. Subject to final checking this will soon be sent to Ecology Building Society to find out if they are interested in providing a mortgage for the project.

 The project currently faces five specific funding needs to allow it to move forward:

* An additional advertisement fee for the planning application due to the site boundary being updated - £150 inc. VAT;
* Legal services to review and enablethe updated Section 75 on BCL’s behalf – approx. £4,000 inc. VAT;
* Contamination surveys and preparation of cost estimate for remedial works – approx. £20,000 inc. VAT;
* Remedial works to address contaminated land – cost unknown;
* Funding for Work Stage 4.2 (Tender) to match fund the £70,000 committed by Aberdeenshire Council from developer contributions.

**Invercauld Estate – Angus McNicol**

No Report Tabled.

Jim Wood attended the meeting to establish where Invercauld and the Council are with the lease of Castleton Hall. It is expected that 10k per annum will be charged in rental. This is in addition the hall maintenance costs of around 5-6k per annum. The trustees of the hall have over the years spent around 148k in upgrading the hall for the use of the community. It is noted that the Hall will again need substantial amounts spent to improve its facilities if an agreement is made to continue with the lease through the council. The trustees have not committed to any works over the past 5 years as they have not been able to confirm the continuation of the tenancy between the Council and Invercauld estate. The trustees and the community do not have the kind of money asked to support the rental fee, ongoing running costs and maintenance and the necessary upgrades required. It was also noted that the land the hall sits on was gifted by the Farquharson Family for community use and the Hall is a public building by subs. As the lease with the council lapsed the building has been revalued and new terms applied.

The trustees have been pushing for updates on the lease etc but have heard nothing from either party on the status and have waited 4 years for clarification. It is noted that no other venue in the village would be able to cater for the groups that currently use the hall.

Next step could be a public meeting to force an outcome !

Jim Wood confirmed that no additional support was required from BCC at this point. He confirmed that he was pushing for answers from the Council. He would then follow up with a letter to the Estate.

1. **Planning update**

Only one new planning application this month:

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  
Ref. No: APP/2022/0446 | Received: Thu 03 Mar 2022 | Validated: Thu 03 Mar 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision  
2 applications with the same name, the second is Ref.No APP/2022/0447

There were no objections to the above planning application

1. **Police Report**

No Report provided this month

1. **Correspondence**

* Door Open Day September 2022 – Various establishments participated last year and would be sent notification on the event this year.
* Aberdeenshire Council Fly Tipping – A consultation has taken place on litter and fly tipping and more severe penalties are being proposed for offenders.
* Marr Area Partnership – two meetings scheduled in the next month.

1. Forum on Food Security 30 March – Alistair or Brian to attend
2. Community Council Forum 27 April – Brian will attend

* Post Office Closures – Chair received a letter from Carol Paterson on the repeated and sporadic closure of the post office. The coop has the contract to provide the service to the community. The issue appears to stem from staff shortages and lack of trained staff. A complaint has been raised directly with the Post Office. More regular hours are required for the facility even if this meant that the post office hours were less than the COOP opening hours. BCC will take this matter up with the COOP and the Post Office.

1. **AOCB**

**Ambulance**: meeting took place at Air Ambulance in Aberdeen a few weeks ago (Brian, Doug and Geva attended) to understand how they operate and see what we need to do here to make a sustainable landing pad with lighting.

Meeting with SAS was held on 21st March – this meeting resulted in no further development and we are no further forward than we were 18 months ago. Pressures on the NHS and COVID have been given as reasons for lack of activity SAS asked exactly what the community wanted them to do and detail it. SAS have suggested meeting again in 2 months. It is proposed that a local meeting will take place and a plan on the community’s specific needs developed and this will be presented to SAS.

**Ukraine**

Should the CC do more to raise funds for the refugees fleeing the war? After discussion it was decided that individual initiatives are happening and these are being supported locally St Margaret’s donated £ 1300.00 from the concert at the weekend.

Aberdeenshire Council has an established Refugee Host Support Service and registration can be made directly with the Council. Geva has provided the link via the Community Facebook page.

The community should use trusted & established Charities to donate monies to Ukraine.

**Fire Brigade**

Some concerns were raised in the community after the recent fire at Braemar Lodge that the local fire unit was not available due to staff shortages. It was noted that time off for the retained staff was done electronically and any breaches would be noted.

Geva will email Colin Westwood with the concerns raised at the meeting this evening to make them aware of the community’s concerns and if they could give a better understanding of the situation and how things work.

The Fire & Rescue are coming to Marr Area for a Public Meeting on 29th March.

1. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 18st April 2022.

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