**Minutes**

**Braemar Community Council**

**Meeting held on Monday 15th August 2022**

1. **Attendees**

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

 **Aberdeenshire Councilors** – Cllr Geva Blackett

 Apologies – Cllr Sarah Brown, Anouk Kloppert

 **Local Organisation Representatives** – Doreen Wood ( BCL )

 Apologies Sarah Anne Hubbard (BTG ), Simon Blackett( BCL ) Angus McNicol ( Invercauld Estate )

 **Members of the Public** – Doug Anderson, Trish Sutherland, Lorraine Grant, Jim Wood

1. **Minutes From June Meeting**

 Proposed: Gareth Guy

 Seconded: Alistair Simpson

1. **Matters arising**

**Clunie Bridge Lights -** this is work in progress and options are being looked at meantime.

**FIFE Staff Mini Bus –** up and running and working well.

**Village Squirrels & Squirrel Bridge and Speed Limit on A93** – See Cllr Sarah Brown’s report. It is noted that signs have been purchased by Trish Sutherland and these have been erected on private land along the A93

**MPI Update** – See Cllr Geva Blackett’s report

**Recycling bins query by Robert Faulds** – See Cllr Sarah Brown’s report. Outcome is that BCC will investigate further and consult with the community if the outcomes are favourable.

**Campervan parking Village car park** – See Cllr Sarah Brown’s report

**Dark Skies** – Gareth provided a very comprehensive update on his investigations. He has been in discussions with Oliver Giles from the Development Trust of Tomintoul & Glenlivet. He confirmed that the process for obtaining dark sky status is a very long and specific process and lots of criteria require to be met to progress. Notwithstanding this – lots of enthusiasm from individuals working on the project.

Gareth confirmed that dark sky status did not mean blackout and one way is to have specially shielded street lighting as an example.

Oliver would be happy to come along to a BCC meeting and share his experience. Gareth will discuss dates with him as this was thought to be a good idea.

Tomintoul are having a dark skies event on 24th September and BCC councilors invited to attend and observe the dark skies discovery.

Brian asked about the direct benefits to Braemar of pursuing this. Oliver confirmed to Gareth that they have not been able to directly measure the Tourism Impact that the dark sky status has had on Tomintoul, they feel that it’s too early to tell.

1. **Finance Report**

We have received Income of £492.00 since our last meeting. These monies were for Grant Funding from Aberdeenshire Council for general annual costs for Community Council Business.

**Bank Balance is £ 5252.43**

Cheques have been raised for the following expenditure:

BTG - £300 Contribution to Village bunting

John MacPherson – £52.08 Repairs to Lion Rampant Flag situated in the mews

Lady Haig Poppy Factory - £36.70 purchase of poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday

Treasurer would like to propose a donation to St Margaret’s for the use of the venue for last year’s meetings – based on the average cost of venue hire in the Village a donation of around £250-300 is proposed. Brian declared an interest as Chair of the St Margaret’s Trust. AW asked if Councilors would support this ? It was agreed that £300 should be donated to cover any costs for heating and lighting etc.

Our Defib has been recalled for a software update – we don’t expect that we should have any outlay for this. The unit should be collected Tuesday 16th August and we expect a 7-day turnaround on the unit. Donald Cruickshank has been notified and it was agreed that we would put a notice on the storage unit for the machine that First Responder units could be summoned by calling 999 or the Doctors Surgery number.

A donation of £200 has been given by Betty Gibb to BCC. It was proposed by Alistair that this should be used to buy bird and squirrel food. This was agreed. Gareth offered to look at buying this at wholesale cost through his business. BCC will write to Betty thanking her for her donation.

1. **Updates on Actions and activities from 2021/22**

**Parking** and the current status – Geva will raise this with the Area Manager in their upcoming meeting.

**Community Action Plan** – It was agreed that we would schedule a separate meeting to go through this in more detail. Alistair to look at dates late September.

**Twinning** – we concluded that Braemar is too small to be able to move this forward successfully decided not to progress any further.

**Braemar Resilience Group Update**

We await the decision on funding from SSEN. We expect that this is imminent ! Next meeting of BRG will be Monday 22 August and assuming that we are successful in gaining funding from SSEN - A Community engagement event will be planned to incorporate the following:

1 Outline of the ERPlan

2 Update on fundraising and SSEN support

3 Engagement /recruiting BRG volunteers  (tba) build on Braemar care

4 Decide who is buying what and how procurement is funded.

5 Choose / buy phones and radios. Agree storage and maintenance plan

6 VH to buy generator and trailer ( assuming a storage site is identified).

7 A table-top training exercise with the new ER team, Neil Cameron EPO Aberdeenshire Council, police and maybe a Ballater / Crathie representative ?

Although not directly linked to the resilience Group activities, Geva wanted a minute taken of conversations she has had relating to the installation of the new electric heating in council houses in Balnallan( after the removal of the fire places ) meters have not been installed and so new storage heaters cannot be used yet. She is in dialogue with both SSEN and Aberdeenshire Council on the matter.

**Ambulance** – Brian & Geva Village Hall Booked on 23rd August at 7pm – see Geva Blackett’s report.

**Communications and Engagement**

Over the summer we had the opportunity to source funding as a Community Council with E3 Hub in Aboyne this was to specifically support in strategies for Community Engagement / communications – the funding has already been used up this year – they can still help us with our social media presence if we wish. Further funding has been applied for and we may be able to tap into this early next year. We will keep in contact with Alison Pollock the manager at E3 Hub and she will advise of any future initiatives that may be of interest to BCC.

Connectivity and Engagement Pilot - We have also been selected to be part of this project being run by Aberdeenshire Council – further information has been requested on this and it is understand that initially they are offering items of hardware to Communities. We should find out more details at proposed meetings to be held around October in Inverurie.

1. **Report from Aberdeenshire Councilors/ CPNA update**

**Cllr Sarah Brown** – Report provided as follows:

**Red squirrel signs**

Aberdeenshire Council have previously stated the position with regards to signage as reported in June. I sought further clarification to check if it would be possible to erect signage on private property that would be visible from the road, by the site the squirrels are crossing between the wooded area and the caravan park.

I have received confirmation that provided the signs are not distracting to drivers and are not blocking sightlines then there is no issue for signage on private property which is visible to drivers. Therefore, if the caravan park wanted to erect signs within their grounds for example that would be ok.

**Speed monitoring**

After the last BCC meeting in June, I visited the area of concern on the A93 to take photos of suitable street furniture that could be used to attached monitoring devices.

Roads have confirmed the first survey was set up in July and should now be completed, the second survey will likely be set up early the week beginning 15th August.  Speed survey sites are, the same location as the original survey carried out by the church in 2018 and the location suggested as requested further up the A93 which is of concern due to traffic not slowing when entering the village.

The results of both surveys will be sent to Aberdeenshire Council Road Safety unit and local Police for discussion.  Once the results have been reviewed and discussed, the Senior Roads Engineer will get back in touch to provide a summary of the results and any agreed actions.

I will share this information with BCC as soon as it is available. Both surveys should have a weeks’ worth of data for traffic in both directions.

 **Repeating 30mph signs on the A93 through Braemar**

Roads Officers have confirmed that a road with regular street lighting has a default speed limit of 30 mph unless signs indicate otherwise. According to the *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016*, the entry to a 30-mph zone must be marked by a "30" sign on both sides of the road, but no repeater signs are permitted within the zone. This is on the grounds that it might be confusing if some roads had repeater signs and other urban locations did not have.

When no signs are available, drivers should always assume a speed limit of 30 mph and revert to this. Aberdeenshire Council do install repeater signs within a 20mph and 40mph speed limits as per the regulations.

If there is an issue with speeding, Aberdeenshire Council would encourage anyone to report this to Police Scotland on 101 as this is an offence which can only be enforced by Police
Scotland.

 **Recycling waste bins in the village centre**

I have received confirmation from the Assistant Waste Management Supervisor that the dual waste and recycling bins in Ballater were funded by sponsorship from J Oils and not Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Council have confirmed if the community/there is a funder for bins to be purchased in Braemar there would not be a problem citing the bins in Braemar village centre, but Aberdeenshire Council would not be responsible for any damage to the bins.

The Assistant Waste Management Supervisor has highlighted some difficulties experienced with these types of bins as they are constantly contaminated with rubbish and at times inappropriate waste. Largely dual bins can result in the bin being an extra litter bin. If the bins were not contaminated Aberdeenshire Council would also only be able to empty them once a week when the trade recycling lorry is in Braemar, and this would be the same for Ballater.

**Campervans parked overnight in Balnellan Car park**

Aberdeenshire Council have confirmed that campervans and light goods vehicles are permitted to park in the car park and can occupy more than one bay, provided it is necessary and
done so in a considerate manner. However, owners of such vehicles should not be sleeping in the vans overnight. Enforcement of this rule is very difficult in practice, and unfortunately there is very little Aberdeenshire Council can do to that end.
Furthermore, if there was a way of effectively enforcing this, then the question of where offenders would be displaced to arises, such as ending up in places like verges where road safety and environmental issues could arise.
With regards to refreshing car park lining, and surface markings and signage, formal inspections are undertaken by the local road’s teams. The Marr Roads Team will action this as soon as time and resources allow.

**Area Bus Forum**

The meeting of the next Marr Area Bus forum is Thursday 3rd November from 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Alford Hall, Upper, Alford.

Any queries can be raised to Madelyne Simpson madelyne.simpson2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

If anyone wishes to attend but cannot access public or private transport, Aberdeenshire Council can arrange transport to and from the meetings by contacting Local Bus Services on 01467 538138 at least 4 working days prior to the Forum

The principal objectives of the Forums are to:

* discuss and review supported and commercial local bus services
* provide community and bus operator awareness of public transport needs and developments
* allow informed public scrutiny of existing and proposed service provision
* deal with requests for public transport infrastructure (bus stops, shelters etc)
* consult on public transport policies and proposals

The Forums are open for attendance by:

* all local Community Councils
* local business representatives
* youth groups
* senior citizen groups
* disabled interest groups
* Councillors
* Community Transport providers
* operators of commercial and supported bus services
* bus users
* any other individuals or groups expressing an interest in public transport

[Area Bus Forums - Aberdeenshire Council](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/public-transport/area-bus-forums/)

**Molly McIntosh – has agreed to attend the meeting on behalf of BCC**

**Cllr Geva Blackett** –

**Traffic lights** on Invercauld Bridge still not working. I have spoken to SSEN direct, and the paperwork has now been completed but they have yet to give a date to link it all up. They know we are not happy. I have also raised the issue of power cuts and the impact on the lights. There’s no plan to instal a battery back-up system and at the moment, in out of office hours, you ring 101, tell the police and they tell the council… Whether that’s the right way round given the current pressures on the police is another matter…

**MPI, Crossings and Roads** - I had the Head of Roads up in Braemar during Recess. We discussed the MPI re the crossing and also the speeding and the squirrels. As I write this report, I am waiting for him to come back to me before pursuing the MPI further, but he is aware that if we don’t like what he says, we will continue with the MPI. I also asked the Roads Policy Manager for an update on rolling out the 20mph policy and here is his comprehensive response

 “On 26 November 2020, Infrastructure Services Committee approved a new policy on speed limits.  In relation to 20 mph speed limits, this is as follows:

“We will, in urban areas, move towards 20 mph speed restrictions being the norm while maintaining a network of strategic routes with 30 mph speed restrictions.”

In order for this to have the maximum impact on driver behaviour, a “Big Bang” approach was planned, with preparatory work undertaken in parallel across all areas leading to an Aberdeenshire wide launch with a significant publicity exercise.  However, subsequent developments have necessitated a review of our plans.

On 1 September 2021, the Scottish Government published a Shared Policy Programme with the Scottish Green Party.  This includes the following item:

“All appropriate roads in built up areas will have a safer speed limit of 20 mph by 2025. A task group will be formed to plan the most effective route for implementation.”

The task force has been set up and involves input from local authorities, so although the Scottish Government plans are still under development, we are aware of the options under consideration.  The outcome is likely to be similar although not identical to that arising from the Aberdeenshire policy but the legislation and statutory guidance that councils are required to follow to achieve this may be significantly different.  It would clearly not represent best value to run two separate parallel programmes leading to the same policy objective, so we are currently awaiting more detail on the proposed new Scottish Government legislation and guidance before planning the best way forward.  Being part of a Scotland-wide programme will, however, bring two significant advantages for Aberdeenshire.  The launch publicity influencing the impact on driver behaviour will be far in excess of that which could be provided by a single local authority and the Council is likely to receive Scottish Government funding to cover the implementation costs.

The task force has been considering possible criteria for future legislation and statutory guidance for the implementation of a national 20 mph speed limit policy.  Transport Scotland has now asked all Scottish Local Authorities to provide information on roads meeting potential criteria.  This will take the form of lists of roads and GIS overlays.  Funding has been provided for the work to be undertaken during the current financial year.  This is a significant exercise and we are currently making the necessary arrangements to carry it out.

We will be keeping members posted on these developments but have not yet decided whether this should be through a transport update to ISC or an alternative method.”

Subsequent to his email we have agreed a Bulletin Report to ISC will be most appropriate in the first instance.  After this has been circulated to ISC members, it may be appropriate to advise other Councillors through the ward pages in view of the widespread interest in the topic.

**Gareth – noted that he has had conversations with a resident who lives on the Castle side of the village and the speeding issue is exactly the same at this entrance to the village as it is on the Caravan park entrance from the Southside.**

**Bus Transport** - The online meeting re bus transport had to be cancelled but I have had a discussion with CNPA heritage horizons (lottery funded) and they will be bringing forward some consultations shortly

**Gairnshiel Bridge** east of Gairnshiel Lodge to Ballater will be closed for 2 weeks from 22nd August but I have been PROMISED the road will be open by Games Day. Anyone wishing to attend Lonach should go via Logie Coldstone. There will be a further closure for up to a month in the autumn.

**Pedestrian Access Balnellan** - Request from resident regarding pedestrian access on the lane past Balnellan House: I have spoken to Malcolm Scott and to Building Standards (who ordered the erection of the fencing). The lane itself has serious debris – including nails – still there. No attempt has been made to clear it or repair it. It is a hazard from pedestrians (including dogs) and cars alike and until that has been rectified, I am afraid I cannot sanction removal of the fencing. The bins have been moved, there is no reason for them to be on the lane at all.

**Housekeeping around the village** - Los of issues in the village with lack of white lines, potholes etc – some of which were reported three years ago. Janelle Cark the Area Manager is coming on Tuesday to discuss my concerns, BCC Sec will attend too. Hoping the weather doesn't mean a last minute cancellation...

**GP Cover** - I organised a meeting with the Chief Exec of NHS Grampian attended by Brian Wood, Dr Cruickshank, Doug Anderson and myself (SAS and AHSCP officials were online as was Alexander Burnett MSP’s Office Manager) – We firmly made the case for a GP to be in the village when Dr Cruickshank finally retires (not that we want him to but…).

**The AHSCP Strategic Needs Assessment** focus group meeting in Braemar is on Tuesday 6th September in the village hall from 12-2. I will have to leave other meetings to be there but consider this a priority. I hope attendance will be good!

**Ambulance** - Following our last meeting with SAS it has been agreed the community council will host a meeting with First Responders and other village volunteers in the village hall at 6pm on 23rd August to discuss the upskilling plans

**Public Toilets** -  I have had an email from someone who regularly visits Braemar & discovered that the disabled toilets are locked overnight. No access can be had using a disabled radar key., which is a national locking system allowing disabled access.
This is a huge problem for disabled persons who visit Braemar with conditions such as Crohn’s disease etc There seems to be an electronic magnet type lock fitted that does not release with a radar key. I am aware that the motorhomes / campervans cause concerns regarding mess etc but we cannot discriminate against the disabled. I have raised this with the Area Manager but felt this should be brought to the community council’s attention too.

**CNPA**: Nothing to report

1. **Other Organisations**

**BCL – Report submitted by Simon Blackett. Doreen Wood attended and answered questions relating to BCL.**

**Castle**

Castle works going well.   Still lots of ground works for next year.  Hoping to reopen next summer. One more scaffolding tour on 9 Sept. Plans progressing towards setting up new operating co and appoint new manager.

**Housing** now has planning consent.   Now looking for funding to take to next stage.  No plans to take down buildings before winter.

Next **Auchtavan** Open Day 11 September.

**Deeside Way** extension works not acceptable so working with Nat Park to improve plans.  Plans being developed to improve current network of paths.

**BTG – Sarah Hubbard**

**Braemar Paths leaflet** - This great new leaflet is now in circulation, copies can be collected from Cranford.

**Website** - If you are a member of the CBP (Cairngorms Business Partnership / Visit Cairngorms), you do not need to do anything in order for your business to be added to the website, we can move your entry across for you. If you are not a member of CBP, please contact Sarah Caird and she can give you log in details for you to create your own entry. You are responsible for keeping this updated with at least one photo please.

**Events** - A gentle reminder to contact Al (alastairhubbard@gmail.com) with details of any events in Braemar or Crathie that you are organising. This is helpful to locals to avoid possible clashes and for visitors when they are planning their trip.

**Visitor Cabin** - Plenty of space for visitor-related leaflets, please feel free to add yours (and keep them topped up..!) One more board to be put up, this will be the History Group walk and additional interpretation.

**Where to Eat Guide** - This is updated every month and is available for you to print out on the first day of each month (go to the Eat and Drink page on the website for the link to the pdf).

**Blooming Braemar** - Plants from Aberdeenshire Council will be arriving soon and we will be planting up the barrels to ensure the village looks lovely over the coming months. If there is a planter near your business, we would really appreciate it if you could water it and make sure it is free of litter.

**Bunting** - We have purchased a more heavy duty bunting to brighten the village over the summer. Many thanks to Braemar Community Council, Braemar History Group and Braemar Royal Highland Society for their sponsorship towards this.

**Braemar Nature** - Funds are running low in the 'pot' for purchasing food for the birds and squirrels at the wildlife hide in the Creag Choinnich woods. I would like to find a way for folk to make a donation towards this, possibly with QR code? If anyone can give me advice on this, it would be much appreciated!

Many thanks to the lovely volunteers who keep the feeders topped up, I know how much visitors and locals alike enjoy watching the wildlife at the hide.

**East Cairngorms #findyourlight project** - We received additional funding to carry on until the end of June for our East Cairngorms promotion (find out more and check out the themed Trails on Visit Braemar <https://braemarscotland.co.uk/east-cairngorms-trails/> ).

This has been a great success, receiving thousands of hits through our social media and many articles written in national press and publications.

**Link Path from Lion's Face path to Brig o'Dee** - Work has started on the path which is fantastic news; it should be completed by the end of the summer. Thank you to those of you who gave feedback, this was sent to the CNPA.

**Jubilee weekend** - We organised a Ceilidh on the Saturday of the Jubilee weekend and it was very well attended by locals and visitors. Many thanks to Angus and Hugo Macpherson for their wonderful piping, Marilyn Baker for, again, doing such a brilliant job as Caller and to all those of you who very kindly provided baking and raffle prizes. This was part of a super weekend, starting with the lighting of the Invercauld beacon on the Thursday, followed by the Exhibition launch on the Friday in St Margaret's (the exhibition will run over the summer and is well worth a visit!) The weekend was rounded up with a wonderful Street Party at the Games Park. Fantastic to see the whole village coming together over the weekend and we were blessed with lovely weather.

**FIFE Arms** – Lorraine Grant spoke on behalf of the Hotel and confirmed that a Literary Festival is planned to take place from 7-9th October. An exciting event for the village, more details to follow. Many venues around the village will host sessions.

1. **Planning Update**

Ardmohr Glenshee Road Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YQ

Ref. No: APP/2022/1331 | Received: Tue 14 Jun 2022 | Validated: Thu 30 Jun 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision

Erection of Dwelling House

Fife Arms Hotel Mar Road Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YN

Ref. No: APP/2022/1396 | Received: Wed 22 Jun 2022 | Validated: Tue 28 Jun 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision

Alterations to Surface Water Drainage

The Duke Of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion Princess Royal Duke Of Fife Memorial Park Braemar Ballater Aberdeenshire AB35 5YX

Ref. No: APP/2022/1573 | Received: Fri 15 Jul 2022 | Validated: Tue 26 Jul 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision

Erection of Street Lights

No comments or objections are noted for these applications.

1. **Police Report**

No Report Provided this month

1. **Correspondence**

**Documents relating to the Tour of Britain event.** Road Closures. How do we communicate this with the wider community. We decided that maps should be placed on the community notice boards detailing the times of the rolling road closures along the route.

**Health and social care partnership meeting** 6 September – Village Hall – only a few spaces left !

**Scribe fest Conference** – content looks good – Brian will check his availability and the topics available..

**Greenspace Initiative** – should we initiate something ? It was agreed we should talk to the Nature Group.

**Funding** – Community Action Plan Projects ? can we tap into this funding ? We agreed that we would look at this along side the Community Action Plan.

**Marr Area Bus Forums** – Already discussed in Aberdeenshire Councilors – Reports Molly will attend the meeting in Alford on 3rd November.

**Society Bridges** – Wheel Chair Access. BCC to follow up with BCL. Geva will send an email to CNPA on path maintenance around the Society Bridge. Brian requested that BCL need to issue a statement on what Bridges, Paths and areas they own and maintain around the community. Lorraine Grant took the action to check what the status of ownership and maintenance is on the Invercauld river bridge.

**Foot access down Banellan Lane** – Discussed in Geva’s report. BCC to write to Malcolm Scott requesting the lane be tidied up and made safe for Pedestrian use.

**Letter from Bridgette Hammond Change of use planning** – seeking view point on any application for change of use on B&B’s in the village. BCC would look at any change in use individually and on its own merits, however the starting point would be to object to any proposed change of use.

1. **AOCB from Council Members**

Potential Co option of Stuart Glover on to the Council – All Community Councilors voted in favour of this. Stuart will be co-opted on at our September Meeting.

1. **Date of Next BCC Meeting**

It was noted that Brian would not be present and Alistair would take the chair.

Monday 19th September at 7.30pm

Venue Braemar Primary School