

Braemar Community council

Approved Minutes

Monday 19th April

Attendees

Community Councillors – Alasdair Colquhoun, Aimi Blueman, Shaila Daniels, David Sherrard, Jackie Maclean, John Torrance, Elliot Perkins

Aberdeenshire Councillors – Geva Blackett, Paul Gibb

Group Representatives – Sarah Hubbard (BTG), Brian Wood (St Margaret's Church), Doreen Wood (BCL), Liz Robertson (Braemar Buzzard), Angus McNicole (Invercauld Estate), Doug Anderson (Ambulance steering group), Fergus Mutch (SNP candidate as an observer),

Member of the public – Rod Garvie

Apologies – David Frew (Mar Lodge Estate)

Minutes from Feb Meeting

Proposed – Aimi Blueman

Seconded – Dave Sherrard

Matters Arising from Minutes

Community Housing Scheme – At the February meeting Braemar Community Housing scheme asked if Braemar Community Council would act as applicant on their behalf for the planning application in order to save 50% on the planning application fees (in this case to the sum of £3000). After discussion and vote the community council agreed that they had no objections to the plans and could there for act as the applicant for the planning application.

The housing Scheme also asked if the community council would apply to the community hydro fund for the additional £3000 to make up the sum of the planning application fee. After discussion and vote the CC agreed that they would apply, this application was unsuccessful.

Reports from Aberdeenshire Councillors

Geva Blackett – Gave update on the situation with the ambulance, reported that the main issue we face is inappropriately crewed vehicles being sent out and response times to Braemar. Currently looking at ways for community volunteers to work round those limitations based on other world-wide models. Geva has had discussion Alexander Burnett MSP, and Paul Gibb is in the loop with Peter Argyle being regularly briefed. It will be vital to engage promptly with whoever is elected after the election as some political steps may be needed at parliamentary level with the support of our MSP. A further report will be made at the June meeting, with the steering group hoping to meet in early June, a community council rep will be included.

Sunday Bus Service – reported that it was disappointing that the service is once again to be removed, especially after the petition in 2019. But acknowledged that it was always a use it or lose it situation, and with only 2.7 passengers per trip it was not good value. However, the main issue with the removal of the service is the complete lack of consultation with either Ward councillors or community council, and that this is especially disappointing considering one of our 3 ward councillors was involved with signing off the decision and didn't inform the other 2. These points are to be discussed at a meeting to be held on Tuesday 20th, notes from that meeting to follow. BCC having already written a letter to the council stating our dissatisfaction at the outcome have been prompted to write another letter to our 3rd ward councillor after the meeting on Tuesday 20th.

Community Housing – There is currently a bit of a funding gap and Geva is trying to persuade the council to part with £70,000 which has been raised through developer contributions in Braemar to help take the project from Planning permission to tender stage. Work is continuing on drafting up the allocation policy so that it best meets the needs of the community.

Invercauld Bridge – Everything is now in place for the work to begin on installing the permanent traffic lights at the bridge, but the contractors have said that it will be another 16 weeks until they can start work.

Paul Gibb – Also reported his frustration at the removal of funding for the 201 Sunday bus service, amidst £240,000 worth of cuts to the budget for supported services, and had hoped that passenger number would have been higher.

The clean sheet review of the service which was supposed to look at alternative solutions and seek alternatives, has as yet not been carried out. He also had hoped that there would have been a way for the budget which covers 6 days of buses to the village could have been spread out to cover the 7 days.

Paul also commented on the trial of the Demand Responsive Routes (DRD), as a possible solution to the problem. This prompted some discussion about the DRD trials and the fact that they were being held in Inverurie which is already served by other modes of public transport.

Paul stated that he would be asking why no alternatives have been offered or why there had been no consultation, at the meeting on the 20th. It is also noted the members of the CC feel that it is a shame that the council have wasted the last 2 years where viable solution could have been found instead of axing the service.

Paul has also continued to send out updates about the current Covid crisis, which have been very useful to many in explaining where we currently are and what restrictions are in place.

Reports from other Organisations

CNPA

Geva Blackett – reports that the new Local Development Plan has now been adopted and that this replaces the old document. The new development plan should now be used when deciding whether planning applications fall within the policy scope for agreeing with or objecting to planning applications.

Geva has requested that Ballater and Braemar CCs are included in traffic management communications, as well as councillor Gibb and other board members. She has suggested the creation of a WhatsApp group

for this purpose. Braemar CC had received an email, which was shared on social media about the traffic management measures that were put in place over the weekend of 17th – 18th April. Work on the CNPAs Parks Partnership Plan continues on Friday 23rd at the Board session after planning meeting. There will also be a 45-minute discussion on deer management and another on a regional land use partnership pilot, more information will follow.

Braemar Community Limited

Simon Blackett – Sent the following report,

Braemar Castle will re-open on 1st May for prebooked tours and aims to be open 5 days a week to the end of August. The carpark has been resurfaced and the Raising the Standard project is progressing but there is still a financial requirement to be raised to enable the project to take place. It is however hoped that the castle will close at the end of this season for major works to take place.

Community Housing project is progressing and recent discussions have delayed submission of the planning application but it is hoped to be submitted in the coming weeks, with Braemar Community Council as applicant. Work is ongoing with the allocation policy and BCL took ownership of the land on the 31st March, this includes the 2 sheds on the site.

Community Woodland is now under BCL ownership with recent additions including picnic benches, nature trail, fencing, bird/bat boxes and surveys.

BCL Website is now live and hoping to launch the new Community Matters website shortly, this will be promoted through the Buzzard and social media. There will be a small annual cost to pick up and further details will be provided in due course.

Auchtavan will hopefully host a couple of open days later in the Summer.

Invercauld Estate

Angus McNicole – Invercauld estate proposes to re-open Braemar Caravan park on 26th April 2021, but are still waiting for guidance on the re-opening of facilities, such as the toilet and shower block, which may impact their ability to take tents and Pod customers from that date.

Paul Gibb suggested contacting council team via email for more specific sector related guidance and questions about the rules on re-opening email – psmg@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The estate has just complete the beating up work in the CreagClunie woodland and have commenced this week with beating up the Meal Gorm area and are restocking the area North of Invercauld House that was felled a few years ago. In total just under 40,000 trees, mainly Scots Pine to be planted through these projects.

The Dee board have begun repairing the Riparian Trees that were damaged along the Clunie and Callater by snow melt in February, a lot of tubes and fences had been damaged in the resulting spate.

As we are now in the nesting period for ground nesting bird Angus has requested that members of the public are respectful of this and keep their pets on a lead whilst walking in the countryside.

On this point Alasdair Colquhoun also mentioned an incident locally of sheep harassment and also requested that members of the public are aware of the damage that pets can do to livestock in fields.

Mar Lodge Estate

David Frew –Sent the following report,

Work to extend the Linn of Dee and Linn of Quoich car parks has been completed with the Linn of Dee car park now able to take 150 cars and the Quoich Carpark able to take 30, this is roughly double the number for both car parks.

In addition to the doubling of the main carparks the estate still has the use of the overflow car park in the field just down from Linn Cottage which can hold a further 70 cars in required. The additional parking will only be used if the main carparks become full and there is a risk of roadside parking becoming dangerous and the Traffic restriction orders being implemented.

He also highlights that if the TRO is implemented then access for residents or those with legitimate business who need to proceed beyond the closure will of course be permitted to do so.

Even last year with the smaller capacity the closure order was only implemented a handful of time and usually only between 11am and 2pm.

Ambulance Group

Doug Anderson – In addition to the report on the ambulance Doug also gave an update on the progress of the complaint regarding single crewed ambulance responses. The case was referred to the clinical governance group for consideration to undertake a significant adverse event review. The outcome of the assessment was that the case did indeed warrant such a review.

The review was to be completed within 16 weeks but following a reminder from the family asking about the report they were advised that it had been delayed due to the current Covid crisis. A second reminder resulted in a new deadline for completion of the review by 14th May.

Doug has requested a copy of the report before the family is invited to ambulance HQ to discuss the outcome as it affects the whole of the Braemar Community. He will report back once they have had a chance to consider the findings.

Braemar Tourism Group

Sarah Hubbard - There is to be an engagement meeting on Wednesday evening for all the tourism providers in the village to share what there plans are for the upcoming season.

The village map is in the process of being refreshed.

Any leaflets for the new visitor hub should initially be dropped of the Sarah and then there after it is to be the responsibility of individual organisations to keep their leaflets topped up.

St Margarets Church

Brian Wood - All set to open on May 1st with the standard Braemar Exhibition.

There is also a display board in the church for all businesses in the village to advertise their services, this is a free service.

Planning Update

Approved

APP/2021/0149 Old Highland Society Office, change of use to community hub. Application submitted through BCC.

APP/2021/0395 Chapel Brae Cottage, Replacement door and windows.

TRE/2021/0016 Linn Cottage, Fife Brae. Tree works.

Pending

APP/2021/0479, APP/2021/0517, APP/2021/0516. Fife Arms modifications. The most significant is the addition of a door and steps within the internal courtyard.

APP/2021/0568, Temporary Mast on Morrone. To comply with upgraded Emergency Services Network while awaiting permanent replacement of the current mast; already approved (APP/2018/1077).

New:

APP/2021/0624 Braemar Mews Visitor Hub (Retrospective) installation of access ramp and 3 solar panels on roof to rear. Submitted through BCC.

APP/2021/0748 16 St. Andrews Terrace. Conversion of garage and roof alterations, to create third bedroom.

APP/2021/0805 14-16 Mar Road (Co-op). Erection of advertisements to align with current co-op branding.

APP/2021/0813 Deevie (Inverey Road). Alterations and extension.

The Community Council did not have objection to any of the new planning applications.

Police Report

There has been a lack of police reports since the February meeting, Geva is to send an email to find out why.

Community Council Elections

Braemar Community Council will have 9 vacancies which will be advertised for this years elections.

10th May – Notice of elections to be published, this is the start of the election process when there will be a press release and adverts will go up calling for nominations.

The Nomination forms will be available online from Aberdeenshire Council.

31st May – Close of Nominations

7th June – Ballot will be held in Braemar village hall from 6pm to 8pm if required.

21st June – AGM and announcement of new Community Councillors.

The secretary will email all those who have expressed an interest in joining the Community council.

Update on other issues

Resilience Plan

John Torrance gave a quick update on the resilience plan – a template for the plan has been formed and has been sent to the Janelle Clark and the EPO to the council for approval, both are happy with the format of the plan.

Most information for village groups has been filled out, waiting for information for the local estates, then need to form a Resilience group who will action the plan as and when needed.

Parking

Alasdair Colquhoun gave a brief update about how the plans for the Balnellan and Mews car parks are proceeding. In effect they have come to a stand still with the council officers not able to commit to when and if they changes will go ahead. Despite there being agreement on the Balnellan Carpark funding has now not been made available.

Paul Gibb stated that as an agreement on the Balnellan carpark and the Landscaping at the front of the Mews had been reached the council should honour their agreement.

Dog Mess in Creag Choinnich woods.

Correspondence received from Fiona Lawrence, Lead practitioner at Braemar Nursery, outlining an incident that has occurred in the woods in the area where the nursery have set up an outdoor learning area at the rear of the Mountain Rescue Centre. Having put up signs and roped off the area around the play area there is still an issue with dog mess along the path to the area, this has also resulted in someone cutting the rope around the area and throwing bags of dog mess into the area.

All agreed that this behaviour was completely unacceptable.

Discussion on whether or not there was anything that the council dog warden could do to help, perhaps with some persuasive signage to encourage people to pick up their dog mess.

Contact for dog warden is gillian.abel@aberdeenshire.gov.uk .

As the provision of the play area in the woods is supported by Invercauld estate it was asked if they would be willing to look at providing a more formalised area in the woods. Angus McNicole said he would speak to Ian Hill about the possibility.

On the same point about Dog mess in the wood Fiona and her daughter Amy have expressed an interest in reinstating the green dog walking initiative.

They have already been in touch with the council, all agreed that this would be a great idea and gave full support.

Correspondance

Letter from Clifford Eastmond from St John Scotland Charity – sent letter asking if Braemar community was in need of assistance with public access defibrillators. A reply was sent thanking him for his interest, but outlining what we as a community already have in place, the information on PADs to be sent to BRHS and Braemar Castle.

Email from Katie Henderson, Deeside Runners – Katie is taking over the organisation of the Lairig Ghru hill race this year and she wished to communicate how the race will be run this year and to ask if anyone had any concerns. The event is to be run in the same format as last year's event.

Email from Opportunity North East (ONE), asking for the CC and individuals to take part in their consultation survey for the next stage of the North East Adventure Tourism programme.

Reply from Richard P. McKenzie (Passenger Transport Manager) – letter was in response to a letter written by Braemar Community Council in relation to the removal of funding for the supported Sunday bus service. Letter outlined the reason Aberdeenshire Council have for the removal of funding as part of a wider budget cut to the funded services across the shire amounting to £245,000 of cuts.

The Braemar to Ballater service was ranked at 115 out of 124 services that were surveyed.

AOCB

None to report

Date of next meeting

Braemar Community Council AGM to be held on Monday 21st June, Time and location to be confirmed depending on restrictions at the time.