

Birse and Ballogie Community Council

Meeting in Birse Hall on 3rd February 2025

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: - Davie Winton DW; Eryn Inglis EI; David Williamson DMW (Chair), Duncan Caird DC; Paul Montgomery PM; Dave Bracegirdle DB; Cllr Yi Pei Turvey YT; Cllr Ann Ross AR, Graham Davidson

Apologies: Yvonne Allan YA;

2. Minutes of Meeting on 25th November 2024

These were proposed by DW and seconded by EI.

3. Treasurer's Report

Funds currently stand at £2037.36. There was no expenditure since the last meeting. The change in total is due to a small increase from bank interest.

4. Closure of Aboyne Bridge

Two open sessions had been held in Aboyne (14th Jan) and Birse (21st Jan) primarily for the council "bridges" group to explain their analysis of the "options report" and explain their preferred option. These sessions had been advertised on B2C2 email distribution list. An objective of this meeting was to understand community feedback at these sessions.

In order to focus discussion, DMW had emailed Donald MacPherson and asked the following questions:-

- Did the open session achieve his objectives?
- Were they well attended?
- What was the summary feedback?
- Was there acceptance of his way forward?
- What is the forward strategy now?
- What is the timeline?
- What can you say how you intend to manage the inherent risks and uncertainties moving forward
- What is the funding situation?

Donald MacPherson had reverted with the update that they were compiling a Q&A which they hoped to issue shortly.

Based on pre meeting enquiries and emails, B2C2 had anticipated attendance of up to 20 members of the general public at this session. In the event only Graham Davidson attended but he was able to share his thoughts. The discussion was wide ranging, open, honest and forward looking. The meeting was not aware of the

overall community response to the open sessions, the options presented and the council's preferred option. However within the meeting the consensus was as follows:-

- Option 1 – doing nothing was unacceptable
- Option 2 – the recommended approach was generally supported but there remained concerns about the risks expressed in the Options report.
- Option 3 – although potentially a next step if option 2 fails, there were concerns that insufficient work had been done particularly with respect to constructability to demonstrate this as a viable fall back.
- Option 4 – this option was not actively considered but could be an option if 2 fails to deliver.
- Option 5 – a new bridge, although attractive, seems undeliverable given cost, funding, timescale etc.

It was accepted that whilst the objective should be to restore a two way vehicular crossing, the restoration of some means of vehicle crossing ie single lane, traffic control and or weight controlled was seen as a minimum. The time taken to reach this point is of concern because meanwhile the community has been suffering significant inconvenience.

The timescale to implement the smallest scope of work ie Option 2 is a concern. In this context the consensus was supportive of the preferred solution and an early decision by Aberdeenshire Council to progress this. The concerns regarding the uncertainties and risks expressed in the options report would need to be addressed.

5. Emergency Resilience

There had been two weather emergency alerts (YELLOW WEATHER WARNINGS) since the last meeting. In both cases, the Resilience team had been put on standby but apart from a very short power outage no escalation of the emergency occurred.

The issue of maintaining communications during a power outage is an ongoing issue. The Resilience group had proposed to solve this through the acquisition of 8 higher powered radios to be distributed to the 8 groups. DMW successfully applied to Aberdeenshire Council for a grant to purchase these. Purchase was initially on hold because of some concern that these radios would function as required in this hilly and tree covered environment. Further trials were undertaken by DB and DMW, which had proved that whilst these higher power radios would not provide full community coverage, they would achieve coverage over a high proportion of B2C2. DMW will proceed with procurement when the "approved and ring fenced" funds finally appear in B2C2 account.

ACTION DMW

6. Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp

The WhatsApp group seems to be working well. Currently there are 59 subscribers and it appears to be proving useful in engaging the community to provide action on areas of concern. This has included removing fallen trees and assistance with snow problems, lost dogs etc.

7. Communications

a. Notice Boards

The new notice board for Ballogie has been installed by DB/ DMW. The old notice board was recovered and DB will attempt refurbishment. The intent is to position this notice board in the Potarch area. This would give us 3 community notice boards. DMW needs to distribute keys for the new notice board.

ACTION DMW/DB

b. Website/ Facebook

A website refresh by DC is in progress.

ACTION: DC

Helen Jackson continues to successfully operate B2C2 Facebook site on behalf of B2C2 committee. Helen's continuing support is much appreciated.

8. Police & Road Safety

a. Police Report

No police report has as yet been received but DMW will circulate if/when received.

b. Birsemore

There has been no change since the previous meetings. AR will update you once she receives a response.

ACTION AR

c. Cattie Burn to Shooting Greens Road

YT and AR have followed up on the road damage near the Cattie Burn bridge. Repairs are in the system with an estimated repair date of 22/02/25.

- d. **Speed limit on the B976 through Ballogie** - No change from previous meeting. This item is on hold pending the 20 mph review.

- e. **Talk on Digital fraud – at Finzean Hall Wed 16th Apr**

PC Mike Urquhart from NE crime reduction team has been in contact to offer to “community groups” a talk on digital fraud. Following on from the meeting Finzean CC have invited B2C2 to participate in their session. Notification of this has been circulated and further reminders will be sent ahead of the meeting. **ACTION: DMW**

9. Planters

Due to cost constraints and other issues Aberdeenshire Council will not be supplying for bedding plants for 2025. The location of all the B2C2 planters has been ascertained. Bulbs had been planted in some of these planters. However most planters appear to be in poor condition. B2C2 needs to consider purchasing new planters, bedding plants out of B2C2 funds. This requires further discussion at the next meeting.

EI, DB

ACTION: DMW,

10. B2C2 Committee Membership

DMW noted that the committee members all resided to the east of Birse Community Hall. Since Sarah Wright left the committee after many years service, the area to the west has not been represented on B2C2 committee in spite of repeated attempts to invite. B2C2 is geographically diverse, therefore it is important to have all areas represented on the committee. B2C2 has two vacant positions and is able to co-opt one individual to the committee should an individual put themselves forward and be approved by B2C2. DMW requested Graham Davidson to communicate within his circle and revert with possible committee candidates.

ACTION: Graham Davidson

11. Date of Next Meeting – 7th April at 1930 at Birse Hall