

Birse and Ballogie Community Council

Meeting in Birse Hall on 7th April 2025

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: - Yvonne Allan YA; Eryn Inglis EI; David Williamson DMW (Chair), Duncan Caird DC; Dave Bracegirdle DB; Abby Nicol, Louisa Bradford, Liz Bracegirdle

Apologies; Davie Winton DW; Paul Montgomery PM;

The committee was joined by three members from the public:- Abby Nicol, Louisa Bradford (Kincardine O Neil), Liz Bracegirdle. There were no councillors present at this meeting.

2. Minutes of Meeting on 3rd February 2025

These were proposed by DC and seconded by EI.

3. Treasurer's Report

Funds at 31.03.25 stood at £2645.71. Funds received were:- Annual Administrative Grant £579 and £2400 Communications Grant. The expenditure since the last meeting was £1800 for radios for Resilience Communication. Further expenditure on radios to use the full allocation of £2400 is anticipated. The annual insurance is also due.

4. Ballogie Nursery

On Friday 28th March, the last day before the Easter recess, parents of pre-school children had been advised that the Ballogie nursery was to be "mothballed". The term "mothballing" implies a short term closure applicable when the roll is low or zero. However the local demand for the nursery remains high. The meeting was lacking the key information and rationale behind this decision.

A number of actions have been taken prior to the meeting

- DMW had emailed councillors requesting more information
- DMW had emailed Alexander Burnett, who has written to council
- DMW had contacted the P&J and article re closures appeared on 4th April
- DMW had contacted Guy Haslam, chair of Finzean CC and the two CCs are working cooperatively on this issue.

At the meeting, none of the parents attending had had any meaningful contact with the council about future placements. At this time no explanation of the decision has been provided.

There is a further meeting planned for Thursday 10th at Finzean Hall to agree a forward plan of action.

5. Closure of Aboyne Bridge

On March 12th 2025, the announcement was made that Councillors had unanimously agreed an option which will see Aboyne Bridge undergo limited strengthening and repair to enable it to re-open with an 18-tonne vehicle limit. The £1.5-3million proposal approved by Aberdeenshire Council's Marr Area Committee on (Tues, Mar 11) will see vertical 'pins' being installed in the structure, with removal and replacement of the existing concrete deck. Members of the committee were told that the project is expected to take 22 months to deliver from the date of their approval (ie early 2027).

An article appeared in the Finzean "Rabbit" which suggested that work will not start until 2027. The possibility of such a late start had caused some concern within the community. The statement above contradicts that and it was confirmed that the origin of the statement lay in an earlier conversation at the Open Day.

It was agreed that a transparent schedule was necessary to be able to monitor progress.

this

ACTION: DMW To request

6. IJB Budget Proposals

Liz Bracegirdle gave an impassioned description of the work and situation within the care sector. She painted a very dismal picture. Of particular concern were the proposals to dramatically cut back Aberdeenshire Responders for Care at Home (ARCH), which is a 24-hour service for unplanned and urgent care needs. Liz had first hand experience of the huge value of this out of hours support. DMW was aware of the general issue from an email received from Donside Community Council alerting fellow community councils to the issue and requesting support. DMW undertook to follow up with Donside Council and Councillors to check status before deciding what supportive action could be taken in respect of ARCH.

ACTION: DMW

7. Emergency Resilience

There is an extreme fire risk at present. During the preceding period there had been no significant weather emergency.

The issue of maintaining communications during a power outage is an ongoing issue. The Resilience group has 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. A meeting is being held on 10th April to distribute radios and discuss protocols.

ACTION DMW

8. Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp

The WhatsApp group seems to be working well. Currently there are 61 subscribers and it appears to be proving useful in engaging the community to provide action on areas of concern. This has included lost dogs and sheep in the road.

9. Communications

a. Notice Boards

The old Ballogie 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

No new actions

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

10. Police & Road Safety

a. Police Report

A police report had been received for Q1 25 and circulated to committee members. Police Sergeant Garry Garrow is retiring from Police Scotland at the end of May after 8 years stationed at the Banchory Office.

b. Cattie Burn to Shooting Greens Road

YT and AR had followed up on the road damage near the Cattie Burn bridge. Repairs were apparently in the system with an estimated repair date of 22/02/25. No repair has been done as yet. DB to chase up.

ACTION DB

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

- d. **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**

11. Planters

All the B2C2 planters has been located, however most planters appear to be in poor condition. One resident had requested removal of the planter as it was an “eyesore”. The composition of B2C2 committee has changed in recent years and there is a somewhat less enthusiasm for maintaining these planters, given also the fact that the council is no longer providing plants. The meeting agreed to remove existing planters with the exception of those planters adjacent to DB, DW and EI properties, where they will be maintained by DB,DW and EI respectively.

ACTION: DMW/ DB to visit and remove as appropriate.

- 12. **Date of Next Meeting – 2nd June at 1930 at Birse Hall. This meeting also incorporate the AGM.**