

Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council

In Person Meeting

Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 7.30pm

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Present: Present: Vivienne Cree (Chair), Tina Peattie (minutes), Miranda Stevens, Giles Stevens, Councillor John Duff and Sally Wrath

1. Apologies for Absence

Fiona Gordon, Cllr M Williamson, Andrew B Wootton (Atholl Estates) and Alistair Smith (Heartland FM)

2. Minutes of Meeting of 7 November 2022 - Corrections

No corrections – minutes accepted.

3. Matters Arising:

a. Highland Action Partnership representative

VC advised no-one had shown any interest in this role at present. SW who was present at the meeting was given information on the partnership and will consider this role as it doesn't need to be a community council member.

b. Bridge of Tilt Hotel works inspection

No further updates received.

c. Repair to bridge over River Tilt

Cllr John Duff advised there were no further updates. The recent storms have affected the temporary coverings and will need looked at, but inspectors are aware.

d. Blair Atholl Branch Surgery

SW asked for any update on this and expressed the view that a Portacabin might work if the building is not suitable; she thought this might solve half the issue, with staffing being the other issue. VC stated that this issue is not, sadly, in our control. The community council (and other community members) had made a robust case in relation to this before Christmas and the matter had gone to a joint integration board for review; this meeting had asked for an equalities audit before going forward to NHS Tayside for a final decision. VC said she had not heard back in relation to this process; JD said he thought that the equalities audit had been carried out, but had no further information.

Action: It was agreed that VC should write again to the Practice Manager to ask for an update on the process.

Since the meeting we have received an update from the Practice Manager – “Things have been moving on in the background - I believe the equalities audit has been done and it is to be presented to NHS Tayside Board at their next meeting in February. Apologies for the delay but we have no control over the timings, this is being dealt with by P&K HSCP and the Health Board. Once I get further information, I will get back to you”.

e. CC outreach/publicity

VC thanked GS for the Facebook page which is working well and being used actively for the CC and the area. Information about meetings in the monthly magazines will be taken over by MS from next month. VC reported that the CC bid for funding for a website (via Heartland fm) had been unsuccessful but this is not an issue now that the Facebook page is working so well.

f. Village Hall Wi-Fi

FG has given advice to Neil Mackintosh in relation to this and there is now a letterbox, allowing the village hall to move forward on this.

Action: FG to contact Neil again to offer support.

4. Finance

GS advised that he has been in contact with the previous treasurer (Louise Fisher) and he hopes to be able to start paying people who require it soon. JD asked if we had received the CC £700 top-up from the council yet, but we were unable to advise further. JD also advised we need to check with the previous treasurer as to whether the end of year accounts were completed and who the bank signatories are. GS will report back to the CC.

Minute secretary payment was also discussed and agreed however this will be looked at again once the new treasurer has all the appropriate information and everything is settled.

5. New Projects for 2023 and Beyond

a. Active Communities Survey for CNPA

VC (on behalf of the CC and BAASI) has applied to CNPA for various projects in relation to paths, 20 mph speed limits etc. in Blair Atholl village, and including GS's suggestions in relation to Pitagowan. SW wondered if the bridges would also be looked at as there have been instances where people have tripped due to the difference in height of the bridges and the path below. VC said that if we are successful, this could all be addressed at the same time.

Action: GS to draft an email about signage to go to the House of Bruar and send to VC, who will then send it out in her name, on behalf of the CC.

b. Blair Atholl Action Plan

VC reminded everyone about the visit of Karen Derrick from VABS who discussed action plans. VC has now supplied her with contacts for local businesses etc. and expects the process to begin shortly. JD advised this is a great thing to do, giving us

clear and current data about the community and its profile which we can then use when we apply for funding in the future.

Action: watch this space!

c. Friends of Blair Atholl Railway Station

VC informed everyone of a new initiative she is launching to “Adopt Blair Atholl Station”, which, she hopes, might be transformed into a great community resource for use of different user groups, which might include a men’s shed/tools’ workshop and possibly even the Countrylife Museum, if this proved possible. There will have to be a site visit initially to see if the project is in any way feasible.

Action: The CC agreed to support this initiative.

d. A visitor centre for Nechtan, the Blair Atholl Pict

Ron Greer, local resident, has approached VC and asked if the CC might be interested in getting involved in a plan to bring Nechtan back to the village, to a new visitor centre. SW explained the story of “Nechtán” - a skeleton was found in a garden near golf course in the 1980s and carbon dating etc had taken place and believe the skeleton to be from around 300 to 400AD. Facial reconstruction was also completed and the skeleton was moved to controlled circumstances in Perth.

Action: Everyone found it an interesting idea but asked that Ron come back to the CC with a clear proposal before we give this project our backing.

e. Long-term Forest Plan for Auchanruie Forest, five miles west of Blair Atholl

It was agreed that no action is required as additional traffic already in the area, which is an ongoing issue in this area and the forest is not really accessible to the public so this will not affect the area more than it is already.

f. Plan for installation of vehicle-activated signs (VAS) at Calvine – planning work to begin in January

GS and MS advised that this is required urgently as there is no pathway next to the road and a few bad bends where traffic doesn’t get time to slow down without appropriate signage. JD advised of the planned areas coming down from the A9 and GS discussed how he felt they were required at the other end of the village.

Action: JD will go back to planning and try and add this area onto the current plans.

6. Reports from Other Community Groups

a. The Atholl Glens (TAG)

No official update however VC advised that Rhona Metcalfe the current chairperson of this group is standing down so changes will be afoot. SW advised that TAG need to display more information in paper format for people who don’t use new technology.

b. Resilience Group

GS reported that he had contacted the previous Resilience contact (Tony Dowson) but he is not yet clear exactly what his role will be.

Action: GS to ask Tony to pass on any important information to him so we can put this on the CC Facebook page. Also, GS will find out whether there is an updated Resilience File as the current one has not been updated since 2016.

c. Blair Atholl & Struan Initiative

VC advised that the current Sports Court (over 20 years old) is no longer usable and the BAASI is working out what to do next. A fundraising committee is now in place to try and raise the required funds to replace or reconfigure the court. JD suggested that the Community Environment Fund might be able to help.

d. Heartland FM

No update due to apologies from AS.

e. Cairngorm National Park Association (CNPA)

No update as ZMcD didn't manage to get to meeting.

7. Update Reports – Councillors

Three updates were given from Cllr John Duff:

1. Tayside Contracts Community Fund is open for funding and their community fund can help with paths and parks etc.

Action: JD will send information to the CC.

2. The Granfondo (Cycle Race Festival) is anticipated to take place end of July/start of August. It is a cycling road race from Perth, Aberfeldy, Pitlochry back to Blairgowrie area. Need to look at business, tourist and local impacts/benefits, but lots of impact too on local residents – though less so Blair Atholl.
3. Budget time is coming soon, planned date of 1st March 2023. At present there is a £28 million deficit at Perth and Kinross Council. JD wanted to make us aware as this affect local communities and there will be cuts to services, increased charges and job losses. VC advised we are happy to help any way we can.

8. AOCB

SW wanted to discuss the roads around Blair Atholl as there are a lot of potholes and cracked/broken paths in and around the area. Elderly residents have had accidents due to these not being filled yet. One pothole in particular is very deep and locals have thrown a sandbag into the hole just to try and fill it in a bit.

Action: JD stated he will look into these issues.

MS reported that she had received an email regarding the Fire Safety. The Fire Service is offering home visits to discuss potential safety risks, and will visit less able bodied/ elderly people as a priority.

Action: TP will advise the local church group to pass information on to the seniors and the residents who are not on Facebook.

TP raised the issue of the local cash line machine at the Premier Shop being out of order since November 2022.

Action: JD offered to take this up and look into any fixes as this affects local residents and tourists as it is the only cash line machine in the village. TP will pass information onto JD.

Update – the cash machine was repaired mid January 2023.

9. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 7.30pm