

Blair Atholl & Struan Community Council

In Person & Zoom Meeting

Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 7.30pm

MINUTES (DRAFT)

Present: Present: Vivienne Cree (Chair), Tina Peattie (minutes), Fiona Gordon, Miranda Stevens, Giles Stevens, Cllr John Duff, Cllr Zander McDade, Tony Dowson (Resilience Group) Carol Cassie, Jack Martin, Alastair Stephen and Carol Raeburn (Scottish Flooding Forum)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr M Williamson

2. Minutes of Meeting of 10 January 2023 - Corrections

No corrections – minutes accepted.

3. Matters Arising:

- a. Highland Action Partnership (HAP) representative
VC reminded everyone that we still do not have a representative on this and invited offers. Cllr ZMcD explained what the HAP does and how it is useful for funding opportunities. AS advised he would be happy to take this on board.
- b. Bridge of Tilt Hotel works inspection
Cllr JD reported that he is awaiting a further update after speaking to PKC who explained that an enforcement case had been opened regrading additional works that have been carried out. He will request an update and report back.
- c. Repair to bridge over River Tilt
Cllr JD advised that they are hoping to complete the works this financial year however they are keeping a close eye on any further damage. AS also advised there is a large tree near the bridge that could potentially damage the bridge further if we get any bad storms. Cllr JD will look into it.
- d. Blair Atholl Branch Surgery
VC said she had written to the Practice Manager to ask for an update and had been advised that the surgery would not reopen and that a notice will be put into The Quair and Pitlochry Life.
- e. Vehicle Activated Signs at Calvine
Cllr JD advised that works have started with power and poles being completed in March and installation taking place in April.

- f. Tayside Contracts Community Fund
Cllr JD advised there is a fund available to help with work required in area. Funds will be given by Tayside Contracts completing works instead of funds.
- g. Pot Holes in BA
Cllr JD asked where in village these pot holes re so he can look into the issue again. AS advised it was St Andrews Crescent and that some had been partially repaired however, they are bad again and more have appeared in the street.
- h. Blair Atholl Lade
VC advised that ABW would usually give an update however he wasn't at the meeting. There is a meeting being held on the 11th April with the council, SEPA and Atholl Estates to discuss options going forward. We are invited to attend however VC not available so AS will go instead as he knows about the Lade issues and had in fact sent photos of the damage to someone he knows who works in this area.
- i. Village Hall Wi-Fi
FG advised that she had been working with Neil Mackintosh on this; first step had been to secure a letter box and she has been in contact with Royal Mail who are working on adding the details to their system. Those present made various suggestions about funding opportunities. FG will continue to liaise with the Village Hall Committee.

4. Finance

GS advised he still trying to gain access to the accounts with help from the previous treasurer as they have been locked out of the bank accounts twice already. Payments are still outstanding which we are aware of and we will sort as soon as we can gain access. TD said he knew of a way of paying Christine Cheape for defibrillator batteries in the meantime and would share this with GS after the meeting.

5. New Projects for 2023 and Beyond

- a. Active Communities Survey for CNPA
VC stated that she had heard nothing back regarding the funding for paths around the park, in spite of writing for information.
- b. Blair Atholl Community Action Plan (CAP)
The first meeting of the steering group took place on 8th March; the CAP is being aided and supported by Karen Derrick from VABS (Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey). A questionnaire will be sent to ask questions about what people would like to see done in the area and what they liked about living in the area. VC expressed concern that another questionnaire from Live Active might be going around the village around the same time – she will find out more.
- c. Friends of Blair Atholl Railway Station
A site visit took place last week as some locals had asked whether BA station could be used for community use and gain some funding to renovate it. Unfortunately the building has reached such a bad state of repair only one room could be accessed. VC

said that the next step will be to get a 'conditions report', as only then will we know whether this is at all viable. Cllr ZMcD asked what the aspirations were for the building and VC stated that ideas included a new home for the museum, a rehearsal room and a repair workshop. Cllr ZMcD stated we should try and avoid lifts due to costs and suggested affordable housing upstairs. Various suggestions were made about funding, including the Railway Heritage Trust and the lottery. VC said that she is already working with a local group in Dunkeld and Burnam who are trying to do something similar with their station. Cllr ZMcD stated that pre-Covid, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) had worked in this area to tidy up around the train station. This may be a potential source in the future after the CAP has been completed. Cllr ZMcD advised it would be good to bring it up to standard and bring it together with other areas and projects in the area by looking at the wider surrounding area. VC advised she was aware that this was the situation at Pitlochry station in the past.

6. Reports from Other Community Groups

a. The Atholl Glens (TAG)

FG reported that she received a communication from TAG to advise that they were looking for volunteers to help out and that they may need to disband. TP advised that she was now part of the group and the next meeting will be on 28th March to discuss options going forward.

b. Resilience Group

VC advised that GS is the CC representative on the BA Resilience Group, chaired by TD. Because TD was with us at the meeting, he gave a verbal update of the group's activities and also shared a copy of the community resilience handbook which is currently being updated. TD asked for CC members' views about whether they should replace their generator; this was agreed by all present. GS asked a question about a recent missing person. TD said that PKC was dealing with this and if they needed help, they would let him know. TD also asked that if anyone is interested in becoming part of the resilience group, they should let him know.

c. Blair Atholl & Struan Initiative

VC reported that the Basil Death Trust has given BASI £3,000 to lift the current carpet on the sports court (it is now 21 years' old and past its life). It is hoped that play will still be possible on the surface underneath. Another £3,000 was granted to a group based at the school for a consultation project about establishing a new sports' court at the school. Live Active is supporting this project.

d. Heartland FM

No update from AS.

e. Cairngorm National Park Association (CNPA) Board

Cllr ZMcD advised ballot papers had been posted out for this, and we have a local candidate in Blair Atholl. Everyone was advised to vote.

7. Update Reports – Councillors

Updates from ZMcD:

Council tax rise is 3.9% which is lowest in Scotland and we have secured £50,000 for a Pitlochry feasibility study that will be done this year and that is with a view of potentially going into next year's capital budget if there is a positive outcome and being located in the school area and we got a one-year reprieve on library and leisure facilities. We need to use these services to try and keep them open. Although the services mentioned are in Pitlochry they do affect Blair Atholl and neighbouring communities as the children and adults use these facilities e.g. library etc. Removed cut that was due to be completed on the festival theatre and the ranger service and Blair Atholl has 3 separate ranger services (that all work together) and they do a great job. We've been piloting a committee in Kinross shire in the last year to 18 months where decisions are made at community level rather than PKC and 3 other areas have now been chosen to have the same committees and Blair Atholl and surrounding areas have now been chosen. Extra road safety officer in the area to help with changes to speed limits etc, money for schools to use during strike action.

Other issues such as roads during the new year season in the surrounding area and it turns out that the roadside gritter was removed last year and now changes are in place to make sure roads are done in the areas that require in.

FG asked about the road up to the rifle range which used to be gritted however ZMcD advised we are now at the end of the route. This causes issues and now they don't grit on bank holidays however these policies are under review. GS asked what the policy is of ploughing the snow onto the pavements and then not being cleared, ZMcD said he was not aware of the actual instructions the gritter drivers are given.

Updates from JD:

1. No cuts to teachers or classroom staff.
2. JD will check the funding for rangers as it is only for 1 year although ZMcD stated permanent so we will get an update on this.
3. The Granfondo (Cycle Race Festival) is anticipated to take place Friday 4th August. It is a cycling road race from Perth, Aberfeldy, Pitlochry back to Blairgowrie down through Scone and back to Perth. It was a difficult decision to make as it can affect local areas however it is a world cycling championship and will be televised. We are still looking at routes within Pitlochry and lots of communication will happen with communities. It should not affect Blair Atholl too much. MS asked if there are going to be consultation meetings in each of the areas and focus groups.
4. The UK Government have allocated additional funding for houses with electricity only. Entitled to additional £200 which has already been paid by the looks of it.
5. The capital budget has saved Perth Leisure Pool and the Dewar Centre which has indoor bowling and ice rink which has been paused for a review. The savings that Active Leisure might have to make may mean closing parts of the pool. We will know more at next meeting.

8. AOCB

- a. VC noted that the post office and convenience store is now being managed by a new person, and the flat above the shop is up for sale. She said she had

advised Cllr MW of the situation regarding the family who now need accommodation.

- b. Flooding: CR raised concerns about the need for a river tract device as part of the Flood Action Plan. TD suggested that he and CR should take this up after the meeting; he said that Atholl Estate has a good plan in place to assist in any issues. TD will speak to the estate manager and try and get an answer for CR's concerns.
- c. Two emails from the local community: firstly, a gentleman who offered to help with the tennis courts, passed to John Charles for action; secondly, Heather Perry emailed about the very poor condition of the disused Struan primary school. The house next to it shares the same septic tank. Cllr ZMcD stated that this has now been attended to and made safe so MS will pass on the information.

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