

## **Boat of Garten and Vicinity Community Council**

### **Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 April 2021 via Zoom Conferencing.**

#### **1. Record of attendees and Apologies received.**

**Community Council Members:** Brian Tolson, Caroline Holroyd, Alan Bennet, Valerie Fairweather and Kathryn Gillings.

**Ex Officio:** Willie McKenna and Muriel Cockburn

**Members of the Public in attendance:** Lucy Ford, Nicole Eddy-Evans and Anne Goodall.

#### **2. Minutes of Meeting of 08 March 2021**

The minutes were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting by Alan Bennet and seconded by Valerie Fairweather.

#### **3. Matter arising from the Minutes**

- a. **Proposed Phone Mast** – Brian informed councillors that he had written regarding the proposed phone mast near the steam railway sheds but at this point had not had a reply. He will continue to pursue. **Action: Brian Tolson**
- b. **Boat Hotel Planning Application** – Brian informed the council that according to the Highland Council website this is still pending.
- c. **Reopening the CNPA** – In last months meeting Liz Henderson had promised that she would pass the council a document summarizing the plans for reopening the park. This has not been received yet so will be chased up.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **5. Guest Speakers – Lucy Ford (Conservation Engagement Officer, CNPA) & Nicole Eddy-Evans (Boat Resident)**

The Councillors had received a briefing document prior to the meeting detailing the proposal which is broadly about allowing designated spaces around the common areas of the village to be allowed to grow into wildflower areas. Lucy further explained the concept of green spacing and rewilding. Grassland being allowed to change naturally to encourage biodiversity.

Lucy also explained that part of her role was to discuss the idea with the Highland Council to gain cooperation from them so that grass cutting routines could be adjusted. She clarified that if the community council was to agree to the proposal going ahead this would not affect all areas. Areas where grass verges have to be cut for line of sight for

drivers for example will always be kept cut and tidy for safety reasons. Other examples of this are pathways.

The proposal is to trial a number of small areas in the village this year. Nicole is part of a small group of residents who are championing this idea, she is also a parent and expressed the opportunity for learning that these areas provide. Last year a few wildflower areas naturally developed as cutting was limited during the pandemic and also residents actively encouraged it. An example of this is on Grampian Crescent.

Councillors expressed their points of view on the proposal. All councillors were very much in favour of trialing it this year. It was felt that as long as the areas were defined and that the concept was well communicated to residents and therefore people were engaged in the idea then it would be widely welcomed.

Alan asked if the grass is simply going to be allowed to grow or whether it would be seeded. Nicole said that this year it would be allowed to grow to see what happens. In the meantime, the group are researching what is native to the area and may consider seeding the following year if the concept is popular.

Brian asked if the group had any plans to involve the local school. Nicole and Lucy confirmed that this was the idea as soon as Covid restrictions allowed. Lucy also stated that Park Rangers were an asset that could be used to facilitate learning with schools eg. Bug hunts.

Muriel highlighted the need to work with the cooperation of the Highland Council on this to ensure the designated areas were not cut by them. Lucy confirmed she was doing this and also working with organisations to get advice on managing the ground for the right things to be encouraged to grow.

Brian summarised the discussion and expressed the councils view which is very much in favour of the proposal. He re-emphasized the need to provide clear communication to residents and suggested an article in the next BOG Standard. Caroline also suggested some simple wooden signage in the wildflower areas so that they are easily recognizable. Lucy agreed and said she was also planning to create some fliers that could be put through resident's doors near the wilding areas. Lucy has agreed to email Councillors with examples of these and the signage they will use.

As a final point, Nicole introduced the concept of a seed library which is as it sounds – a place where gardeners can exchange and share seeds. The proposal is to place one near the noticeboard on Grampian Crescent. The group have a local joiner who is happy to make a library which is approx. the size of a bird house and this would be used. The Council agreed to this too.

## **6. Treasurers Report – Alan**

Our general account bank balance has come down from £2416.97 to £667.26.

We had 3 items of expenditure, annual insurance for the Community Council at £86.00, printing of April's BoG Standard at £479.00 and Highland Council's charges for the supply, installation and removal of the festive lights and tree. We also received income from one BoG standard advert of £15.00.

Two comments on the expenditure, a) we have to pay upfront for printing but we don't receive advertising income until after distribution. This means our next statement will be healthier as the advertisers income does cover the printing costs. b) our bill from Highland Council was a couple of hundred pounds more than expected, this may be down to vat but I have asked for further details. What it does indicate is that the expenditure we incurred this year is not sustainable and therefore it is something we have to consider going forward.

One final comment on our position, is that the bank balance of £667.26, does include £600.00 earmarked for the 'community' benefit.

There were no transactions on the environmental fund and therefore our overall position is not too bad.

#### **Treasurers Account**

Balance at 02/03/21	£2401.97	
Balance at 05/04/21	£667.26	
Credits this period:	£15.00	Advertiser in BOG Standard £15
Debits this period:	£ 1749.71	Printing April BOG Standard £479
		Festive Decorations & Tree £1184.71
		Annual Insurance £86.00

#### **Environmental Account**

Balance at 12/10/20	£3829.82
Balance at 13/11/20	£3829.82
Credits this period:	£0
Debits this period:	£0

Alan plans to have a discussion with Kevin (BOG Standard Editor) on what our options are going forward. It is acknowledged that with fewer businesses advertising at the moment that the situation is a little tight between income and costs of the BOG Standard. However, it is an important form of communication in the village.

It is also planned that Kevin and James (Assistant to Kevin for the BOG Standard) will be putting together some guidelines for anyone submitting articles and images for the magazine to make editing a little easier.

Caroline made the Council aware that our Zoom subscription is due to renew in June and we are not sure whether we will be able to meet in person at that stage. The subscription was funded by VABS last year. Brian suggested we approach VABS again to see if funding is still available and Muriel informed us that guidelines on holding Community Council meetings will be issued shortly by Highland Council.

**Action: Caroline Holroyd**

## **7. Planning Matters**

There are 2 planning applications on the Highland Council website, one of which relates to the community housing trust. These applications haven't appeared on the weekly summary that we receive. Both appear to be relating to the Community Housing Trust. Brian asked all Councillors to view them and also asked Muriel to follow up the issue if they don't appear on this week's summary.

**Action: All Councillors**

## **8. Items of business which the Chairperson has directed should be considered**

Following Ken Aitkens recent resignation from the Council, Brian expressed the Community Councils thanks to Ken for his contribution over the last year and a half.

**Cyclists Update** – Brian has tried to contact several cycling organisations for advice on what can be done to improve/ educate cyclists in the village with particular emphasis on the problem of cycling on pavements. Unfortunately, he has had no response so is now trying the CNPA. We are still awaiting the Highland Council to provide timescales on the implementation of the 20mph speed limit through the village that has been agreed.

**A95 Kinveachy** – Local residents are considering next steps in this issue.

Full fibre broadband Rollout – Aviemore and Grantown are getting full fibre broadband but Boat isn't. Brian has posed a few questions to BT on the matter and will inform the Council once responses are received.

**Crows** – A couple of residents have contacted a member of the community council asking what, if anything can be done about the number of crows (rooks etc) that congregate in the village. The residents were particularly concerned about the nuisance element they present in terms of noise, soiling of washing, cars etc.

Brian recalled that this issue was part of the village debate about 3 years ago and made it into the top 20. At the time, there was no clear consensus of opinion and in fact was 50:50, for and against, so no action was considered. After researching the issue it is very evident that even if consensus was gained within the village, the hurdles to overcome are extremely high before any action can even be considered. For instance, a licence is required and certain criteria met and police involvement etc.

Brian asked Councillors for their opinions on the issue. It was acknowledged by many that the birds can be a nuisance and noisy especially early in the mornings. Old houses in the village have often had issues with the birds nesting in chimneys too. Councillors acknowledged that certain things can be done to 'deter' the birds within individual gardens, for example, there are high pitch devices that can scare the birds but these do impact other wildlife as well. Guards can be placed on bird tables, but these are not totally fool proof.

The Community Council had asked the RSPB Abernethy for their official response on the issue but as yet a response has not been received. **Action: Caroline Holroyd**

The Community Council does not believe that there is a consensus of opinion in the village, based on the discussion that has taken place with residents so concluded that residents would need to determine what measures they would like to take and were able to implement within their own properties.

**RSPB 60 Year Vision** – Having considered Uwe Stoneman's presentation during the last meeting, all Councillors agreed to supporting him to organise a open public meeting when covid restrictions allow.

## **9. Reports**

**CNPA** – Willie offered help and support with the cycling issue mentioned earlier in the agenda.

**Police** – Police report received and distributed before the meeting. No comments highlighted.

**NHS** – Muriel informed Councillors that patients are due to be transitioned to the new Aviemore Hospital by September. The ambulance station have been allocated more staff and have recruited an apprentice technician from the local area.

## **10. AOCB**

- Alan proposed that Caroline become a signatory on the bank accounts following Ken Aitkens resignation. Councillors agreed.
- The Council discussed the ongoing challenge of short term lets in the area and that the availability and increased cost of them is impacting on people's ability to work in the area. The average property rental price has increased by circa £300 pcm in the last year which is very significant for seasonal workers.
- The Community Council would like to thank Kevin and everyone involved in the creation of this month's BOG Standard which is excellent.

## **10. Date of Next Ordinary Meeting and Annual General Meeting – Monday 14 June 2021**

The meeting closed at 20.25