

# BERRIEDALE and DUNBEATH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Dunbeath Community Centre on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7.30pm

- **Present:** Neil Buchanan, Francis Allan, Donna Matheson, Jenna Irvine, Andrew Jarvine (Cllr.)  
Members of the public: John Gunn, Frank Sutherland, Anne MacBeath, James MacBeath, Angus MacInnes
- **Apologies:** None
- **Minutes:** John Gunn was not listed as being present in previous minutes.  
Minutes were approved by Donna and seconded by Francis.
- **Financial Statement:** The latest financial statement was circulated to all present. No changes from last month.
- **Matters Arising:**
  1. **Highland Council road repair:** In addition to the restrictions on the amount of tar the roads area manager can order, Andrew Jarvine stated that the latest update he has regarding this is that there is a minimum equipment to proceed with these repairs in addition to the new machines for painting white lines were purchased by the Highland Council, however they do not meet health and safety standards and must be returned. There is still no indication of when the repairs of Highland Council roads will take place.
  2. **John O Groats Trail:**  
There has been no communication or updates from JOG Trail. It was stated that Kenny McElroy is now the trail manager.
  3. **Phone box, Dunbeath harbour:**
    - a. A letter had been sent to Dunbeath Preservation Trust about the siting of the phone box outside the ladies' toilets. A reply had been received from Randal MacAuslan stating this matter was currently on hold – no further update.
    - b. It had been suggested there is a leaflet stand for people to collect and leave leaflets – ongoing
    - c. The advertising that is currently in the phone box has faded due to the sun light; this will be replaced – Neil will arrange for this to be reprinted – no further update.
  4. **Dunbeath Broch:** Road signs for Dunbeath Broch have still to be agreed with Visit Scotland – no further updates.
  5. **Berriedale Brae Realignment:** It had previously been highlighted to the community council that there is very little soil on the surface of the embankment of the new brae. This has resulted in very little growing on it and debris blowing on the road when there is a strong wind. Anson MacAuslan had followed this up with RJ Macleod

and he emailed Jenna stating that *RJ Macleod were aware of the rivulet and aim to work on this in September. The slow growing vegetation and little soil on the bank was a deliberate design to reduce the need for ongoing maintenance and that the Ecological Clerk of Works Angus Spirit suggested wildflowers.*

6. **Footpath on Old Brae, Dunbeath:** New crash barriers were previously installed, the old crash barriers were removed, and the holes were not refilled. This has left multiple holes on the footpath along the brae which is used regularly by pedestrians and school children. Upon investigation it was discovered this job has been signed off as complete and all efforts to highlight this as not complete has been ignored. Andrew is going to follow this up – no update yet.
7. **Dunbeath Strath Project:** Neil stated that where is gorse overgrowing the path to the Broch from Dunbrae. He has spoken with the landowners, and they have advised they will be removing the gorse and installing a fence.
8. **Small wall at Dunbeath Harbour:** The blocks in the small wall separating the carpark and harbour in front of the toilets is crumbling. This has previously been brought to the attention of the Highland Council and the road department and harbour department will not take liability for this. Andrew said he brought this to Malcolm Macleod, Executive Chief Officer as both the roads and harbour department fall under the Infrastructure, Environment and Economy section.
9. **Berriedale broadband:** The broadband signal in Berriedale has poor connection. Jenna had received an email from Anson MacAuslan which showed an email trail between Alexa MacAuslan and Openreach. There are no further updates regarding the improvement of this service. It was stated there is work in the county taking place with Openreach and City Fibre. Frank stated that work took place on the pavement in front of the Heritage Centre and the completed work has left a soft finishing to the pavement.
10. **A9 speed limit/no overtaking:** The speed of some traffic on the A9 travelling through Dunbeath is a concern and that the stretch of A9 from Knockglass Road to Braemore Road is dangerous for overtaking. It was stated that daily there is near misses of accidents due to speed, overtaking manoeuvres. John recently received a reply from Transport Scotland stating this area does not meet the criteria for a speed limit. It was agreed we would enquire about no overtaking on this part of the A9. Jenna sent a reply to John's letter regarding this. No reply has been received.
11. **Bridge at Portormin:** The footbridge crossing the river on Portormin Road is no longer fit for purpose due to the walkway corroding. The Highland Council have been notified and they have installed barriers on either side to restrict it being used. Neil advised that the Highland Council are going to pay for the materials to repair the footbridge and Dunbeath Estate will complete the repairs. Progression of this work is awaiting a structural report from GMR Henderson.

12. **Playpark:** The playpark in Dunbeath is in need of upgrading, due to equipment being unsafe for purpose being removed.
- a. Jenna previously informed everyone Dunbeath, and Berriedale Development Trust were looking at taking this forward, however due to the lease being in possession of Dunbeath Community Centre they will need to drive this forward. Both organisations are liaising with each other at moving forward.
  - b. Francis provided an update to the progress of this being on hold due to queries about the lease which is ongoing.

13. **A9 through Berriedale and Dunbeath: It was brought to the attention of the community council that** that some signage entering Dunbeath from the north and south were not visible due to plantation. The cat eyes installed on the A9 passing through Newport appear to have been stuck down with an adhesive and they are easily removed with passing traffic. The pavements along the A9 in Dunbeath, especially between the end of Knockglass Road to the Mains Cottages are in poor condition. They appear not to have been swept resulting in them being covered in debris from the road, grit and from the recent chippings from the poorly painted white lines. This is making the footpaths not suitable for everyone to use. There is water on the A9 outside The Old Police Station to Knockglass House, which remains there on dry days. There seems to be an issue with surface water from the Knockglass Road entrance to the Houstry junction. Jenna has previously emailed Bear Scotland regarding this and to date has had no reply.

14. **RBS service:** It was highlighted that the Royal Bank of Scotland mobile van has not been in Dunbeath on a regular basis. Jenna informed everyone that she had spoken with RBS after the last meeting, and they explained they had staff illnesses and were unable to cover these. They stated they have been advertising for further employees but have not been successful.

● **Correspondence:**

1. John had received an email from SSE with an evaluation form for funding received for the flower project. John was asked if he could complete this as he was taking the flower project forward and has all the relevant information.
2. Neil had received a request from Allan Tait at CVG for the Community Council to act as a referral agent for Caithness Foodbank. It would also request an individual to come to Wick/Thurso to collect the food parcels and a local collection base. This was discussed and member of the community council felt they would find it difficult to find time to dedicate to travelling to collect the food parcels. John stated that the Dunbeath & District Centre have the sharing shack which is open to everyone and that there are no referrals needed for this and no data on individuals is collected. Neil is to reply to Allan to let him know the Community Council would act as a referral agent but would not be able to carry out the process of collecting the food parcels and Neil will highlight that the Sharing Shack is available for everyone and open from 8.30am-3.30pm Monday – Friday.
3. Neil received a reply from Mr Perente, which he read to everyone present.

- **AOB:**

1. A discussion took place regarding the previous representation at the last BOWL panel meeting. Neil stated his intention was for Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council to be withdrawn from the meeting to make it non quorate. Frank asked Neil why he had a mandate to remove BDCC from the meeting. Neil initially refused to answer the question. Angus explained that being a community councillor Neil had to supply each question with an answer. Frank followed this by stating Neil was aware there was a complaint lodged to the BOWL panel regarding him sharing an application. Neil replied that he had produced the mandate to withdraw BDCC members from the BOWL panel at that meeting as he felt due to one member [of BDCC on the panel] being on an organisation that was applying for funds, resulting in BDCC missing out on a vote due to the member having to declare a conflict of interest. Frank stated that there have been previous complaints made regarding Neil approaching people. Neil said he accepts he should not have shared an application with members of the BDCC and stated his reasons for this. Angus suggested that we think about going forward if there are other panels that members of BDCC are requested to join that this is and how to ensure the Berriedale and Dunbeath area is represented in full.
2. Frank and John stated how they were disappointed with the objection letter the community council submitted to the Highland Council for Dunbeath and District Centre's planning application for a new building. They stated that they felt there were mistruths in the letter, one being the opening time of the centre.

- **Date of next meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 at 7.30pm

- **Private meeting:** Members of the public were thanked for their attendance. It was stated the next part of the meeting was to discuss membership of the Community Council and BOWL funding.

1. **Membership of the community Council:** Following on from a public request for more members to join the community council, there was a request to join from two members of the community, Anson MacAuslan, and Trevor Filshie. Two further people lodged in interest but had not yet confirmed if they were wanted to join, Ian Cowie and Angus MacInnes. It was agreed that Anson and Trevor would be welcomed onto the Community Council. Andrew advised the community council that they can co-opt a third member to bring the committee to its full number of members. Neil/Jenna will speak with Ian and Angus to request if they would like to proceed with their interest as there is one space remaining.
2. **BOWL fund:** It was stated there is funds remaining for each community council area and each community council has been asked to decide how these funds are used. It was discussed that these should be made available to locally. Further discussions will take place at the next meeting and further information from David Shearer will be gathered as to how much funds is remaining.

- Members of the public left and a private discussion took place.

**Meeting closed at 9.20pm**