

BERRIEDALE and DUNBEATH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Dunbeath Community Centre on 3rd October 2022 at 7.30pm

- **Present:** Neil Buchanan, Francis Allan, Donna Matheson, Anson MacAuslan, Angus MacInnes, Jenna Irvine, Andrew Jarvine (Cllr.)
Members of the public: John Gunn, Frank Sutherland, Anne MacBeath, James MacBeath, Angus MacInnes
- **Apologies:** Trevor Filshie
- **Minutes:** Minutes were approved by Francis and seconded by Donna.
- **Financial Statement:** The latest financial statement was circulated to all present. Only change from last month was the added interest.
- **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. Andrew stated that a Highland Council road in the Newton area of Wick has been repaired, including the structure of the road. Andrew took details of local roads that individuals present felt were among the worst in the community, road to Balnabruich Croft, Braemore Road, Smerral Road, Portormin Road.
 2. **John O Groats Trail:**

It was stated that Kenny McElroy, trail manager has been in touch to introduce himself. It was agreed that we should invite Kenneth to a community council meeting.
 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 provided an update that this work has now been completed. This will be removed after meeting on 7th November 2022 unless there is further information.

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 provided an update stating the Highland Council informed him that they were unaware of this. Upon discussion it is thought the holes that were left has now filled with debris.
7. **Dunbeath Strath Project:** Neil stated that he has submitted a funding application to Caithness and North Sutherland Fund for the path along Dunbeath Strath.
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 – no update, Andrew will follow this up.
9. **Berriedale broadband:** The broadband signal in Berriedale has poor connection. There are no further updates regarding the improvement of this service. Neil has sent an email to Maree Todd.
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. A previous reply from Transport Scotland stated 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 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.
12. **Playpark:** The Dunbeath Community Centre and Berriedale and Dunbeath Development Trust are in discussions.
13. **A9 through Berriedale and Dunbeath:** There were various issues brought forward to the community council regarding maintenance of the A9 through Berriedale and

Dunbeath. An email highlighting these was sent to BEAR Scotland, reply outcome below

- a. Signage entering Dunbeath from the north and south were not visible due to plantation – work has been completed. This will be removed after meeting on 7th November 2022 unless there is further information.
- b. 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 - has been passed on to sub-contractors and will be reprogrammed.
- c. 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 – has been passed on to sub-contractors and will be reprogrammed.
- d. There is water on the A9 outside The Old Police Station to Knockglass House, which remains there on dry days – work has been completed and this has been resolved. This will be removed after meeting on 7th November 2022 unless there is further information.

14. **RBS service:** It was highlighted that the Royal Bank of Scotland mobile van has not been in Dunbeath on a regular basis. RBS were contacted 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. The service has been operating as normal since this. This will be removed after meeting on 7th November 2022 unless there is further information.

15. **Flower project:** SSE sent an evaluation form for funding received for the flower project. John is completing this.

16. **CVG/foodbank:** 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. Neil is to reply to Allan Tait.

- **Correspondence:**

1. Neil stated another resident from Berriedale had approached the community council regarding concerns of housing in Berriedale. This will be removed after meeting on 7th November 2022 unless there is further information.

- **AOB:**

1. **Dunbeath & District Centre:** There was various discussions of the letter of objection Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council submitted. These discussions had previously taken place at previous Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council meetings. It was advised that the conversations were no longer relevant as all

supporting and objections have now been submitted and it is not beneficial to be repeating these discussions.

2. Affordable Housing: There was discussions around affordable housing and the lack of 3-4 bedroom houses available in the community which is preventing families moving in/back to the area. If this was to be ventured there would need to be evidence that there is a need for affordable housing in the community.

- **Date of next meeting:** 7th November 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 remaining BOWL funding.
 - 1. Membership of the community Council:** Anson and Angus were asked to temporarily retire from the meeting room. It was thought that the procedure of co-opting members on to Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council meeting last month was done incorrectly due to information on the Highland Councils website. Andrew reviewed this information and discovered the information available on their website is out of date. He had access to the correct information, and this was conducted correctly. Neil, Francis, Donna and Jenna all voted yes to Anson, Angus and Trevor being co-opted on to the community council.
 - 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. Neil is liaising with David Shearer and will arrange a meeting with David and the Community Council on how to move this forward.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm