



Berriedale & Dunbeath

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Dunbeath Community Centre on 7th November
2022 at 7.30pm

- 1) **Welcome, Apologies & Conflict of Interest :**
 - a) Present: Neil Buchanan, Francis Allan, Donna Mathieson, Anson MacAuslan, Angus MacInnes, Trevor Filshie, Andrew Jarvine (Cllr.)
 - b) Members of the public: John Gunn, Frank Sutherland, James MacBeath
 - c) Apologies: Jenna Irvine, Anne MacBeath

- 2) **Opening Remarks:** Neil welcomed and thanked those present for attending the meeting.

- 3) **Action Log:**

- 4) **Approval of Minutes:** Angus MacInnes was named in the minutes as a member of the Community Council and a member of the public. He was removed from a member of the public. Minutes were approved by Francis and seconded by Angus.

- 5) **Police:**
 - a) **Police Report:** A police report was received this month stating patrols have been carried out reducing in anti-social behaviour. Angus said the report was not acceptable as an informational report.

 - b) **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. Still no reply has been received. Trevor stated that the speed on this section of road is ridiculous. It is believed that a

speed limit won't make a difference. Angus asked could we get the use of the double rubber strips which collect speed data. He also asked if previous information has been gathered for Dunbeath could we get access to this data.

6) **Communities & Place:**

- a) **Playpark:** The Dunbeath Community Centre and Berriedale and Dunbeath Development Trust are in discussions. An agreement has been met and this is progressing
- b) **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. Neil is unsure what we are going to do regarding this.

7) **Education & Learning:**

8) **Health & Social Care:**

- a) **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. Remove after meeting on 05th December 2022

9) **Infrastructure, Environment & Economy:**

- a) **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 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 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. Andrew stated that we are now heading into winter maintenance so

minimal road repairs will be carried out if at all. He has asked that the Highland council looks at how it operates the road repairs, don't just give reasons why they can't repair the roads. Andrew says they need to look at solutions so the roads can be repaired. Angus asked why they aren't doing anything and using the excuse winter is coming? Andrew was unable to answer this. Andrew says the council says that it has seen an increase in claims for damage to cars due to the conditions of the roads but the costs are acceptable. Andrew is trying to get the structure changed to enable smaller divisions so that hopefully it will get the attention it requires.

b) 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. No update available.

c) Phone box, Dunbeath harbour: 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 Ranald MacAuslan stating this matter was currently on hold – no further update.

It had been suggested there is a leaflet stand for people to collect and leave leaflets – ongoing

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.

d) Dunbeath Broch: Road signs for Dunbeath Broch have still to be agreed with Visit Scotland – no further updates.

e) 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. It has been confirmed that the holes have

been filled in naturally with debris and weeds.

- f) **Dunbeath Strath Project:** Neil stated that he has submitted a funding application to Caithness and North Sutherland Fund for the path along Dunbeath Strath. Neil updated the B&DCC that more information is required for the next meeting on 26th January 2023.
- g) **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. Andrew confirmed this is a Harbour issue and is on the programme of works to be completed but had no further information.
- h) **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. Maree Todd has replied to Neil, she has suggested that we contact Radio Signals to see if they are interested in doing something. Neil will get in touch with them
- i) **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. The Engineers structural report has now been issued and procurement of the required materials is in progress. The work is scheduled for December 2022 provided the materials are here.
- j) **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

- i) 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.
- ii) 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.

k) Winter Maintenance – Bear Scotland & Highland Council:

- l) Planning Applications:** It was brought up that there have been some issues with planning applications of late, S Cameron has had to move the position of his proposed new house because of these. Angus also said he has had dealings with the planning team regarding his application. There is no-one available in the Wick office as anyone working within the planning department are all working from home.

10) Performance & Governance:

11) Property & Housing:

- a) 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. Neil said there was a family moving into Ordgarth, he believes it is a family with 2 children that are moving in. Neil is going to ask how many applications there had been for this property.
- b) Ukrainian refugees:** Neil said that there are 4 Ukrainian refugees in Dunbeath. They are living in property owned by Jasmine Grant. The child is being looked after at school by Julia. Neil asked that should we meet any of them that we give them a warm welcome. Anson said they had tried to offer people shelter within Berriedale but without the infrastructure they are not wanting to move to Berriedale.

12) Resources and Finance:

a) **Financial Statement:** The latest financial statement was circulated to all present. There was no changes this month.

b) BOWL Money

i) **Flower project:** SSE sent an evaluation form for funding received for the flower project. John is completing this. This is complete an item will be removed after meeting on 05th December

ii) **Your Cash Your Community:** Neil explained that the balance remaining from Bowl will be done as a community funding. A meeting was held prior to the Community Council meeting this evening and the decisions agreed were passed to the public. Any member of Berriedale & Dunbeath who wish to apply but are not a member of constituted organisation will be made an associate member of the Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council for the duration of the Project.

13) Correspondence:

14) Any Other Business:

a) **Dunbeath Old Road Hairpin Bend:** John Gunn asked would it be possible to get signage for the hairpin bend warning of possible traffic in the middle of the road/priority signage. This is due to the road being narrowed and a near miss John had while traveling up the brae, when a car traveling down the brae came round the corner at speed.

b) **New Agenda Format:** The new agenda format was discussed, and it was agreed going forward this is the format we will adopt. Minutes to be aligned with the agenda

c) **New Agenda:** Anson asked if the new agenda would come into effect from the next meeting and it was agreed it would

d) **B&DCC Minutes:** A discussion was held as to, could the minutes be made available to the public prior to the meeting, this is them being made available prior to approval. It as agreed that so long as they are watermarked as draft, they could be made available on the website and or Facebook. It was felt this could entice more people to attend the meetings.

15) Date of next meeting: 5th December 2022 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 20:56 hrs