December Meeting of Banchory Community Council

14th December 2020, 7:30pm via Zoom

Present: David Conroy (Chair), David Milner (Vice Chair), Lynn McNab (Treasurer), Viv McKie (Secretary), Harry McNab, Andrew Marshall, Mary Lennox, Chris Luby, Maggie Dornan, Tony Tullett, Cllr Ann Ross, Cllr Rosemary Bruce

Guest Speakers from the Banchory Skate Park Project: Russ Crichton and Bruce Skinner

Apologies: Linda MacPhee, Alistair Murison, Christopher Milligan, Cllr Eileen Durno, John Wills

Councillors' Report

NHS Grampian and the Health and Care partnership have been working with Inchmarlo care home to provide help and support during the recent outbreak of Covid 19. The crown office and procurator fiscal are currently investigating this outbreak so it would be inappropriate for our councillors to comment further at this time.

Council is coming to the end of the session on Friday 19th December.

There has been an increase of fly tipping in the area, this can be reported via the council website.

The Banchory Singers, of which Cllr Ross is an honorary President, held an online concert yesterday. Virtual rehearsals have carried on throughout the year and they have also opened up these sessions to the community through sing a long sessions and reaching out to care homes.

A 9 year old Sprocker dog, Alfie, has gone missing along the Deeside way near the sawmill. Posters are available to print and all information is on Cllr Ross's Facebook page. A reward is now being offered for his return.

Cllr Ross refers back to last month's discussion on the return of Car Park charges in January. Cllr Durno had mentioned she was on record as being against the return of these charges. 'However Cllr Ross wished to highlight that at the meeting of a cross party council group (The Recovery Reference Group) that Cllr Durno's group had not raised an objection to the reintroduction of the car parking charges when it was discussed at a meeting of The Recovery Reference Group (a cross party council group).

It has been a tough year for everyone, however there have been positives. The community have come together to upgrade paths, provide online craft groups and so on. Aberdeenshire council also continued with all their usual meetings and consultations online. Live Life Aberdeenshire staff were all redeployed to help in hospitals, care homes and similar setting and were extremely helpful. No Aberdeenshire council staff have been furloughed, and all have done well being redeployed to help with the pandemic.

In the absence of Cllr Durno there is no update to the Hunter Memorial.

Guest Speakers on behalf of the Banchory Skate Park Team.

We were joined by Russ Crichton and Bruce Skinner to provide us an update on the Banchory Skate

Park Project. They have submitted an application to the Mid Hill Wind Farm for Funding.
At this point the lease negotiations have been completed with the council and full planning permission has been granted. The project has been put to tender on Public Contracts Scotland. Other than the very successful Movie Night held in the Town Hall in January, no trips or events have been possible in 2020 due to covid restrictions.

The target budget is £264k including VAT. Various funds and investors are interested in the project, but further fund raising is still required to cover third party contributions to funds, lighting, project management and VAT. They have approached local funding streams to help with this.

Banchory Skate-park Group are managing Community and Council Interface and delivering the 3rd party contributions fund raising.

Alan Jones Associates have delivered the feasibility study, planning application and tender- they will be requested to complete major funding applications and project management of the skate park build. The turnaround time for funding applications is very swift, and they are confident they can meet the timescale they have set.

The youth group have handled the design and development of the Skate-park Concept, with some support from Russ Crichton and Mike Ellington. At the last AGM some S5 group members were voted onto the committee and moving forward will be the face of the project.

Assuming disposal of common good land and securing of major funding streams, it would be hoped to have the project break ground around Easter 2021 and complete July 2021. When completed this will be a free resource catering to a wide section of the community. The existing park was well used over lockdown. Under normal circumstances, people will travel some distance to use this facility. Contests or 'jams' help in the past have attracted visitors from as far afield as Carnoustie. The park will be open 24/7. At this stage, it hasn't been possible to secure the funding or the technology for solar power lighting, however all the trunking will be laid for future use. Any future lighting installation will require a new application.

Ongoing Maintenance will be handled and organised by the Skate-park Group.

The local community policing view is that having a safe area in the centre of the village to draw young people would be a great bonus, as they are currently likely to congregate by the river. The group carries £5 million public liability insurance.

Spaces for People update

A meeting between the BBA and the Council was called to discuss the space for people changes. IT was unanimously agreed to remove the bollards from Banchory High Street apart from the pinch point outside Tease coffee shop. This will be continue to be monitored. The 20mph limit will remain as this has proven popular. The signs for this were removed in error, however Cllr Ross contacted the Roads department and they were immediately reinstated.

Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising

With minor amendments for clarity, the November minutes were proposed by Mary Lennox and seconded by Maggie Dornan.

The AGM minutes were proposed by David Milner and seconded by Maggie Dornan. This stands as formal adoption of the end of year accounts.

Planning

During this stage of the meeting, David Conroy lost internet connectivity and was unable to participate further in this evening's meeting. As the host of the Zoom account, Viv McKie stepped in as emergency chair.

This month has been mostly householder applications. Banchory Lodge have applied to extend their outdoor dining area.

A few complaints have been made regarding the affordable flats under construction on the A93 opposite Morrison's supermarket. The first, allegations of unsafe working practices, we have refereed to the Health and Safety Executive. The second, a query over the height of the build, has been refereed to the Area Manager who approved the application for this building.

We are aware of an upcoming application for a hotel and residences near Inchmarlo Golf course. Although this is technically outside our community council area, we have been one of the main objectors to this project as a large development would have a signifiant impact on Banchory Town. As we have done previously, we may invite the developer to speak to us at a future meeting. Our history of objecting to the Braehead development also sets a precedent.

As a relevant side note, Fughdee West Community council has now been dissolved into two councils. Inchmarlo Glassel and Brathens community council and Fughside community council.

At this point Harry McNab left the meeting due to a conflict of interest, and so was not party to and paid no part in the following discussion.

Mary Lennox has prepared on our behalf an objection to the development in the Upper Lochton area. Although the closing date to submit this has now passed, it is customary for community councils to ask for an receive an extension so that these objections can be discussed at a meeting. Such an extension has been granted. Sufficient objections from the local community already ensure that this application will be brought before the Marr Area Committee. Continuing with our objection as well ensures the community council will be given speaking rights at this committee meeting. Our objection considers the application not only in isolation but also the impact of developing that area of Banchory at all prior to improvements to the access road, specifically a roundabout. This is written into the Master Plan. Last year we as a community council objected to a larger development on this site , and the area committee agrees with us that this was too dangerous a junction. There is a concern that a smaller application may be an attempt to circumvent this requirement. We do not object to building and development on this site in general, as it is in the area development plan, we simply wish to ensure that the junction is made safe first.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Mary should submit the objection on our behalf.

Harry McNab rejoined the meeting at this stage.

Correspondence

The Banchory Fly contacted us looking for a 300-400 word space filler. Viv McKie put together a short piece on our response to the Covid 19 crisis, our current activity and how to join the community council.

We also had come communication through from Marr Area Office regarding holding physical

meetings. Community Council work is not excempt from any restrictions, and so we should not be holding any meetings physically. Until restrictions are greatly lifted, we should carry on with virtual meetings only.

The office of Alexander Burnett MSP has reached out to express interest in sitting in on our meetings as an observer. HE is also keen for us to bring him any concerns, especially any Scottish Parliament matters.

Maggie Dornan and David Milner met with Fran Getliff of DeesideCAN to discuss the rewilding site on Mount Street. The area in question is quite large and may need more than volunteer work with manual tools. It has been clarified that the land belongs to Scottish Water, who support us in principle but would like to see a proposal for what we plan to do. No work can take place until Spring. Some desirable plants are already on the site which should be preserved. The award winning greens keeper from Banchory Golf club has also agreed to come and assess the area for us. The next stage would then be convincing neighbours to the site. These areas are always polarising as some people do prefer the manicured look. There is also a concern that some solutions may end up introducing non native plants to the area. Cllr Ann Ross was able to advise us on how to go about this, after the successful introduction of bee friendly beds alongside the road in Crathes. As a project it also has the potential to bring the community together.

Treasurers Report

The balance in the Treasurer's account is £3473.94.

The y2k checking account stands at £231.51.
The y2k business account stands at £3011.41.

The Banchory Branch of our bank will be closed mid February 2021. Although alternatives have been offered such as internet or phone banking, these are not suitable as we require a double signature on cheques. The nearest branches will in future be in Stonehaven or the city centre. While the current treasurer is able to travel to these branches, it is worth looking to the future and considering that any later representatives may not be able to do so. There is also a strong argument for supporting banks that do have high street branches in Banchory. The Bank of Scotland currently have a branch on the High Street we could use. This will be considered further.

The current balance in the Mid Hill Wind Farm Fund is £15,612.12.

David Milner and Chris Luby both have declared an interest in the Banchory Skate-park Project and will not discuss this application.

Fred Olsen only guarantee £5750 next September. Additional RPI payments will come in but the value of these is uncertain.

The skate-park are looking for funding of £25,000 from the wind farm. The Banchory Community football club £12,000, Banchory Green Power £2,500, and BDI on behalf of Taiko Drumming club £1000. The BDI application needs further clarification as if granted the BDI would be unable to apply for funding for anything for a further calendar year.

Historically we have never had such large requests for funding. We have at no stage indicated or guaranteed a level of funding to these projects. In the previous years we have received a much higher level of funding from Fred Olsen than anticipated, this is not certain in the future. We are concerned about emptying out the account entirely, bearing in mind that we will have no further

payments in guaranteed until the autumn. It would be very unfortunate to receive further requests fro community funding and have nothing available.

We also have to option to top up the account from our own CC funds, and will receive a small 4 figure sum from the council as our annual grant. We are also still considering repurposing the money in the Y2K account.

David Milner has suggested we form a committee to discuss any future applications. At the moment applications come in to Lynn McNab as Treasurer, who fact checks these. The applications are then circulated for discussion to the Office Bearers, and then brought before the community council as a whole.

There is a time constraint on the Skate-park application in that they are hoping to secure their funding early in 2021. After discussion, it has been decided that Lynn will return to the Skate-park team and offer them £5000-£6000 and all other decisions will be deferred to the January meeting.

Social Media and Future Officer

No volunteers have come forward yet to shadow an officer role and the social media group has been quiet. Chris Luby has expressed his intention to run for an Officer role at the next AGM.

Alison McLeod is going to send through a copy of their social media policy for us to look at, adapt and adopt as necessary.

Community Representatives

The police report has been circulated by email. There has also been an increase in antisocial behaviour especially around Bellfield park. The Police have asked that if you wish to make a report, you do so as soon as possible , ideally during the incident, with as much evidence as possible. Time, car make and registration, any photographs or videos. It is also helpful if the person reporting can be available to make statements and give evidence. This can be done online or via the 101 non emergency number. Anonymous reports can be made via crime stoppers on 0800 555 111 or again online. Cllr Ann Ross is working alongside the police to tackle this. There are not many facilities for younger people to meet even during regular times, and covid 19 has made this worse.

AoB

During these more online times, it is more important than ever to encourage community involvement. Our Zoom meeting are, like our physical meetings, open to the public. Raising awareness is proving difficult so we will make a further effort to utilise the noticeboard in the village and our Facebook page to advertise our meeting dates and the agendas. The article in this edition of Banchory Fly also asks people to get in touch with us for these details if they are interested in attending.

Harry McNab enquired about a consultation on the need for increased allotments. Cllrs Bruce and Ross were not aware of this but will investigate further.

The meeting concluded, with the next meeting scheduled for January 11th 2021 at 7:30pm via Zoom.