

ASSOCIATION OF CAIRNGORM COMMUNITIES

Representatives meeting held at Blair Atholl Community Hall on Tuesday 19th May 2015

Attendees

Roger Clegg, Convener	Kirriemuir Landward West CC	Kate Adamson	Carrbridge CC and Carrbridge Ahead
Valerie Emmett	Kingussie & Vicinity CC	Jane Tansley	Laggan Community Association
Alasdair Colquhoun	Braemar CC	Donald Isles	Blair Atholl & Struan CC
Tony Thompson	Mount Blair CC	Graham Fraser	Newtonmore & Vicinity CC
Alison Fielding	Boat of Garten CC	David Kinnear	Kincraig & Vicinity CC
Jane Angus	Ballater & Crathie CC	Stewart McGlashan	Blair Atholl & Struan CC
Simon Blackett	Braemar Community Ltd.	David Sherrard	Braemar Community Hydro
Nick Mardall	Marr Area Partnership	Stephanie Wright	Cairngorms Learning Partnership
Karen Derrick	VABS	Kelly McIntyre	Community Shares Scotland
Gregor Rimmell	Highland Council & CNPA Board	Kate Howie	Perth & Kinross Council & CNPA Board
Brian Wood	CNPA Board	Lee Haxton	CNPA

Apologies

Ailsa Schofield	Kingussie & Vicinity CC	Liz Cowie	Ward Manager, B&S
Patricia Grant	Kirkmichael & Tomintoul CA	John Grierson	Aviemore & Vicinity CC
Yvonne Birnie	Aviemore & Vicinity CC	Maggie Lawson	B & S Community Transport
Gordon Riddler	CNPA, BRD	Ian Moffett	KCDC
Deborah Quinn	Strathspey Railway	Simon Welfare	Cromar CC
Lindsay Robertson	Tomintoul	Janelle Clark	Aberdeen Council
Dave Brown	Kincraig & Vicinity CC		

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (17th March 2015)

- (i) Add Donald Isles to the list of apologies.
- (ii) 5. Note the correction to the Etape Royale Cycle Event.
- (iii) 9. Correct spelling: *dualling* not *duelling*.

The minutes were then approved as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising:

None.

3. Finance

RC reported the directors have accepted the CNPA's grant offer to cover the expenses of the meetings for the 2015/16 year.

4. Community Shares Schemes

(a) Community Shares Scotland (Kelly McIntyre)

Ms McIntyre outlined the value of community shares schemes for enterprises serving a community purpose, and the role that the organisation, Community Shares Scotland, plays in supporting and advising community groups.

She provided examples of where community shares have been used to finance different projects: community buildings, shops, renewable energy initiatives, community transport schemes, heritage projects.

Key points:

- Share schemes do not have to make a profit
- They are member based
- Members are allowed a maximum of £100,000 investment

- Regardless of the amount of investment each investor has only one vote
- The schemes usually offer to pay interest, but only sufficient to attract interest of investors
- Shares are non-transferable but can be withdrawn. The organisation has to decide what percentage of shares can be withdrawn in any one year.
- The schemes have only minimum regulation, but are registered with the Finance Control Authority and are governed by the FCA's rules.

The benefits are:

- They provide long term capital from patient investors
- They can attract further funding and leverage, grant funders are often more willing and supportive of projects if they include community shares
- There is community governance and operation
- Investors are able to claim income tax relief on their investment (EIS tax relief currently 30%). This can be a big incentive for investors.

Key factors for a successful share offer are (i) a well-thought out business plan for a project that is viable, profitable and sustainable, (ii) community engagement, (iii) good governance is well defined with clear legal rules of conduct etc., (iv) the share offer document is accurate and informative. Community Shares Scotland is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the Carnegie Trust Fund until March 2017 and has two staff. They provide training, support and advice and can also provide awareness road shows.

DTA Scotland also delivers the scheme.

Two societies registered under the 2014 Act, support and provide funds for community share schemes: Cooperative Societies (Bona Fide) and Community Benefit Society (BenCom)

(b) Braemar Community Hydro (Dave Sherrard)

DS provided a brief history of the project's development since 2013 for a 100KW hydro scheme on the Corriemulzie Burn that runs into the R. Dee on the NTS Mar Lodge Estate. The new hydro is on the site of a historical scheme.

The community group has taken out a 40 year lease for the site with NTS; they have agreement to feed the electricity into the national grid at an agreed tariff with SSE. They have appointed a contractor, who has already completed the design phase. Construction is anticipated to start in September 2015 and be complete and generating electricity by September 2016.

Braemar Community Hydro launched a community share scheme for £150,000 in March 2015 to pay for the design phase of the hydro scheme. The funds were raised from 45 local investors within 10 days of the share offer launch. BCH has now launched a second share offer to raise £650,000 to finance the construction phase. Copies of the share offer booklet were distributed to those present at the meeting. BCH needs investment of £300,000 by the end of June in order to be able to commence construction and, if need be, they will raise the outstanding £350,000 through a bank loan. The income generated by the hydro is anticipated to be sufficient to pay (i) the rent of the land, (ii) to pay back over 20 years all the capital invested by community shareholders, (iii) for a Community Fund, estimated at £7000 a year. The BCH Board is currently devising the terms under which this fund can be distributed to other community groups and projects.

5. Community Resilience (Stewart MacGlashan, Blair Atholl and Struan CC)

The Blair Atholl and Struan area covers 200 square miles and has only about 800 residents, with many living in very remote and isolated spots. A community resilience group was set up in 2012 following difficulties encountered by residents, principally prolonged power cuts, in the previous two winters. Between 30 and 40 people are part of the group and they meet two or three times a year. Initially they set about identifying perceived risks and how to respond to specific incidents, to identify and prioritise persons at risk, how to prepare in advance for emergencies and for cooperation with emergency services, and how to mitigate unforeseen incidents. The principal risks are deemed to be long term power outages, effects of severe weather, road closures, missing persons, catastrophic events.

The community council area has been divided into five zones, each with a coordinator. They have established a database (spreadsheet) of people's contacts, listing those with useful skills and resources, e.g. farmers with tractors who could clear roads, FWD vehicles, temporary accommodation, chainsaws, plus those with skills such as in engineering and building skills, and care of the elderly, etc. They have also established rapid reaction and deployment of resources networks. Their systems were tested on three occasions in the last winter. Local knowledge of the area proved very important, especially in supporting emergency responders when requested to do so. Funding is being used to prepare a generic guide for each household with contacts and suggestions of useful items likely to be of help in an emergency. The team is also preparing household emergency packs such as survival blankets; wind up radios and torches, etc.

They are raising additional funds to purchase defibrillators and other emergency equipment boxes to be placed at key points in the community, and organising first aid training courses. On occasions when the A9 is closed, lorries and cars often have to park in the village

and so the Community Hall in Blair Atholl has been identified as a temporary refuge, SSE is supplying a generator and there is a team prepared to make refreshments for the stranded motorists. Kate Howie reported that the Scottish Government has a community resilience section and that the Perth and Kinross and Highland Councils plan to bring all the communities together along the length of the A9 to identify temporary refuges along the route.

Jane Tansley alerted the meeting to the SSE resilience fund, the deadline for applications is the end of July. Simon Blackett reported that in Aberdeenshire there is a wild fire reaction group, with a list of lands and estates providing expertise and resources to support the emergency services. He suggested that the resilience directory should also identify persons with expertise in dispatching injured deer quickly and humanely in case of such accidents on roads. Kate Howie mentioned work being done by pupils at Pitlochry High school to devise an app showing the locations of defibrillators in the area.

6. Highland Perthshire Communities Partnership – Broadband Project (Kate Howie)

KH provided a brief overview of progress:

The Highland Perthshire Community Partnership is made up of ten community councils. They have devised a plan for rural community Broadband to serve those areas which will not be part of the BT fibre Broadband scheme. The Community Broadband Scotland's offering has many hurdles to be overcome; so they have looked at other schemes, including the Laggan scheme which they think is excellent and their plans are based on the Laggan model. The community based scheme will offer customers 10MB for less than the cost currently charged by BT. They have a list of potential subscribers. There are three line-of-site masts between Struan and Dunkeld and they are awaiting connections by BT, who are proving to be quite obstructive. The Partnership is also considering the inclusion of WiFi receivers in laybys; Transport Scotland is cooperating with the idea as they draw up their plans for the dualling of the A9.

7. Reports from representatives attending external meetings.

- (i) The next Cairngorms Deer Advisory Group (CDAG) meeting is scheduled for the week following the AOCC meeting.
- (ii) Cairngorms Leader: Roger Clegg and Kate Adamson are on the Advisory Board, which is due to meet on the 25th May. It had been hoped to launch the new Leader funding scheme in June, but this has been delayed until the autumn awaiting guidance from the Scottish Government and finalisation of the new IT systems. £2.9 million have been allocated to the Cairngorms National Park area. It was agreed to include Leader funding on the agenda of the next meeting.

8. CNPA Update

Lee Haxton circulated the latest update and spoke to it. He briefly reported a Local Energy Scotland meeting he had attended. Seed corn funding is available to communities for renewables projects. He suggested that AOCC should submit an application for funding to identify potential sites in communities. This was agreed. It was also agreed to invite Jamie Wilkinson, the development officer to the next AOCC meeting. Lee Haxton undertook to make the contact and pass on the invitation. Alison Fielding reported that the Cairngorms Nature Festival event, which took place in Boat of Garten, has been filmed and will be broadcast on BBC's Landward programme on Friday 29th May.

9. AOCCB

- (i) Jane Angus asked if any surveys have been done into the predation by buzzards on nesting waders. She also expressed concern about the presence of pine martens and their predatory effects on small birds. A brief discussion followed. Lee Haxton undertook to speak to Will Boyd Wallace, CNPA about a possible speaker on the topic for the next meeting. It was suggested that a representative of the RSPB should also be invited to speak. Simon Blackett commented that SNH is aware of the problems.
- (ii) Val Emmett reported a recent ticket pricing change by Abellio, who have the new franchise for rail transport in Scotland. Their new discount system will result in considerably increased prices when compared to the discount scheme run by the previous franchise holders.

There being no other business, Roger Clegg closed the meeting with thanks to Blair Atholl and Struan Council for hosting the meeting and to the team who prepared and served the lunches and to the speakers for their interesting presentations.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 16th September 2015 at the Lecht starting at 10.30 a.m., with a planning reps meeting in the afternoon.