



BALLOCH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14

SUMMER 2004

EDITORIAL

There are several misconceptions about Balloch. One that I hear quite often is that most people who live here are elderly retired folk who are financially well to do. Well my experience is different so I checked the latest population census (exciting life I have). When you look at the composition of the population of Balloch, it indicates that we have 4% more 0-14 year olds than the Scottish average and 3.6% more than the Highland average. Those in the 65-74 age range number 1.7% less than the rest of Scotland and 2.2% less than the Highland average. Most of you reading this will have glazed eyes by now and I apologise but what I'm trying to say is we have a higher percentage of children than the average for Scotland and the Highlands. Now ask yourself, what facilities do we have for them?

Looking back through old Community Council Minutes (I really must get out more) shows that a recurring problem in Balloch has been young people gathering on corners with nothing to do but make a noise or cause damage. This situation has not changed. We have new streetlights on Culloden Road thanks to some young residents who had more energy than sense. The Community Council has made a start in giving the youth of the village a bit of a focus. Susan Van Der Vlies organised a very well attended 'Youth Café' and she has included a comprehensive report in this Newsletter.

Some young people who want to construct a mountain bike track also approached us. They did not seek finance or someone to do it for them; they only wanted a letter of support. They were quite happy to use their own initiative to progress their plans. What we did was write a letter of support and arranged a meeting with the Forestry Commission. This meeting was very positive and several suggestions will be investigated. You may have seen an article in the Inverness Courier about their existing track near the bus turning circle. This is one option being considered.

From what I have seen of the youth in the village and the outstanding talent displayed by the students of Culloden Academy, I am convinced that the overwhelming majority are going to make great adults. There will always be a few social inadequates who struggle to find their place or direction. We should not label all young people as idle troublemakers. Would you be prepared to invest a little of your time in assisting our youth to organise their own events like the Youth Cafe/Dance, or the initiative to construct a bike track? If you want to be a participant and not a spectator please get in touch, either way the Community Council will want to hear your views.

Finally, those of you who use the Community Woodland will have noticed that we have had a tidy up of the area. Old dumped garden waste and litter has been removed. While clearing up, a person stopped to recount an incident they witnessed earlier this year. They saw a man walking to the Woodland with a large box. The man, realising he was being observed, muttered some abuse and proceeded into the wood. The person, returning from their walk, noticed the box lying in the Wood. On looking inside, they found it full of empty beer cans. Someone had bothered to carry a box of rubbish several hundred metres to dump it in our Community Woodland. Difficult to understand.

Enjoy the summer.

Ian Williams
Chairman

Speed Survey

As part of the Safer Routes to School project 2 traffic surveys were conducted in the village.

You may have noticed the two black wires across the road at the school and also outside 33 Culloden Road.

The first survey at the school showed an average speed of 32 miles per hour and indicates that some caution was being taken in the area around the school. The second survey revealed an average of 39 miles per hour, which is clearly an unacceptably high speed. As a result of this Northern Constabulary, took enforcement action but have not revealed how many people were caught.

We found the results quite interesting and are able to highlight when the peaks of traffic are and the average speeds for each hour during the day and night. This information should help the police catch the offenders.

It would appear that the parents taking children to and from school are travelling in excess of the speed limit as these times show a high average speed. This also applies to the periods when people are travelling to and from work. We believe that Northern Constabulary may be taking enforcement action again soon and the message we would like to give you is:

Do not speed in Balloch !



Some Words of Advice from Community Constable Kinnaird.

- Persons acting in a disorderly manner in public places - please inform the police if you have any concerns or complaints.
- Security - please ensure that your house is left secure if you are going away on holiday, and inform the police so that the property can be placed on the vacant property register.
- Young persons drinking in public places - again please inform the police so the matter can be dealt with.
- Bogus callers/suspicious persons - if you have any doubt about persons calling at your door (door-to-door salespeople etc.) ask for identification and under no circumstances let them into your home. If you are still not satisfied, call the police.
- Abandoned vehicles/fly-tipping - if you see anybody involved in this, and they have a motor vehicle, please try to obtain the vehicle registration number and inform the police.

Balloch Playgroup

Balloch Playgroup meet in the community hall Monday - Thursday from 9.30 - 12.00 (school terms)
We cater for 3 - 4 year old children, offering a wide range of different activities, covering various themes. These include topics on pets, growing, seasons, transport etc.

There is a committed team of staff who help to make the children's time at playgroup fun and educational.

Highlights of the year include visits from the fire brigade, the police and learning road safety with the lollipop lady.

There are spaces for enrolment for 2004/2005. Please contact Mrs Christine Taylor on 794315.



Plea from 1st Balloch Guides

Is there an enthusiastic person out there who is willing to come along and help run the local guide unit?

We meet on a Wednesday night at the Balloch Community Hall.

For more information please call Lillian Riach on 790191.

Also is there anyone willing to start up a Rainbow Unit, which is aimed at 5-7year olds? Please contact Lillian.

Nexfor and Climate Change

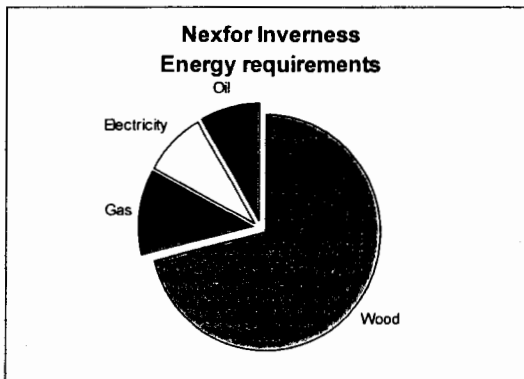
Everyone is aware that greenhouse gas emissions are having an effect on our climate, and may have serious consequences for the earth's future. Carbon dioxide is generally regarded as the chief culprit, and burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil are the main sources of this gas.

Nexfor, as major energy users, are members of the UK Climate Change Levy scheme. The UK leads Europe, if not the world, in tackling CO₂ emissions, and Nexfor are set challenging annual targets by the government for reduction of fossil energy usage.

A major part of Nexfor's energy requirement is for heat – to dry their wood flakes from the normal wood moisture content of about 50%, down to around 8%. To evaporate this amount of water (about 500 tonnes per day!) requires a huge amount of energy as you can imagine. However, Nexfor are in the fortunate position of being able to use wood residues from their process to provide the major part of this heat. We have no wood waste – all our scrap board, our broken logs, the wood dust extracted from processing – is burned for heat energy.

Wood is a renewable fuel. Since growing plants require carbon dioxide, all the carbon dioxide emitted in burning wood is absorbed by the next growth of trees in the forest. In a country like Scotland, where for every tree cut down at least one new one is planted, burning wood has no overall impact on global carbon dioxide levels.

There's more good news. Because trees take carbon dioxide out of the air, every sheet of board that Nexfor makes reduces the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. In fact, every sheet of Sterling Board contains the equivalent of almost twice its own weight of carbon dioxide. So we feel we are in a unique and privileged position – using a renewable resource, and having a beneficial effect on global warming.





**The
Highland
Council**

*Comhairle nan
Eileanan Siar*

The Highland Community

Balloch Community Newsletter

Councillors Report

I am happy to report on improvements to the public transport service an additional bus shelter has been installed on Culloden Road, and we are soon to have a Sunday Bus Service from Balloch to Raigmore Hospital. Timetables will be distributed as soon as available. This service will be for a trial period of six months and the usage monitored, as the service has been requested by the community, I hope take up will be such that it can become a permanent service.

I am not happy to report on the spate of vandalism we have experienced in Balloch recently with Lampposts knocked over, signposts uprooted, and other mindless acts. It obviously has not been made aware to the culprits that their actions cost all of us money, their parents as well as everyone else, as the council has to rectify the damage all adding to the council charge.

Over the next period further traffic calming measures incorporating a 20mph zone will be implemented in Balloch, particularly around the Balloch School area, the outcome of joint efforts of the Balloch School Board the Community Council and Councillor.

I would make a plea for motorists to observe the additional safety measures when they are installed, it has been noted that some motorists have driven over the pedestrian crossing at Balloch Stores whilst pedestrians are using it; obviously unaware that when pedestrians are on a crossing they have right of way.

With regard to the new street lighting installation works on Culloden Road Balloch, necessary because of the condition of the old lampposts. I would wish on behalf of the Highland Council to thank the residents who assisted the workmen in their endeavours by allowing the storage of materials on their property.

It has been noted that although the reinstatement of the pavement and road surface has been carried out to the required standard. A resurfacing of both pavements and roadway will be required in the near future, it has been requested that this be an item on the next years programme of works.

Regards

Cllr. Bob Wynd

Councillor Robert Wynd M.C.M.I., M.Inst., T.A.

Balloch Ward

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YOUTH EVENTS IN BALLOCH



In response to concerns from various quarters about the lack of things for the youth of Balloch to do locally, Balloch Community Council put on a Youth Café at the end of April, in the village hall. We were very pleased that around 50 youngsters came, and although there were some things that they would have changed (adults will never get it right!), the overall opinion was very positive. We asked them to fill out questionnaires as they left about that particular event and also what they would like to see done for the future. The main point to emerge was that it was somewhere for everyone to go and meet their friends, and they would like this to be a regular event with different things put on e.g. karaoke, live bands, quiz nights & outdoor activities.

The Community Council would like to drive this idea forward, hopefully having an event every month. However we do think that it would be better if the youth of Balloch had a say in the organisation of these events - which are, after all, for their benefit not ours! - so we are looking for 3 or 4 teenagers to help form a sub-committee of the Community Council. Anyone who is interested or would like more information can contact Susan Van Der Vlies on 790815. We would also like the views of parents and, hopefully, a volunteer or two to help us as well - contact Susan please.

INVERNESS YOUTH FORUM

This is in the process of being set up and will be a group of young people aged 14-25, making things happen for the youth of Inverness-shire.

What will it do?

It will do whatever the young people of Inverness-shire want it to do - it will give them a voice in the community, making sure that adults are listening & taking them seriously - it gives them the chance to make things happen that are important to them and it gives them the chance to have new experiences, develop new skills and have a good time.

How can they get involved?

They can be on the Forum itself, which will have 22 members from all over the area, or they can go to the events organised and give their ideas and opinions to forum members. Susan has details, or you can contact Madeleine Holmes (Youth Participation Development Worker with Highland Council) on 07795 304941.

YOUTH OF BALLOCH - GET INVOLVED!

Balloch Social & Outdoor Bowling Club

We formed a company limited by guarantee last year and applied for charitable status.

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 14th July in Balloch Village Hall at 7.30pm

Members are urged to come along to hear about our progress and to make vital decisions in order that we can achieve charitable status and make applications to the charitable funding bodies. If you were a member of the club but have not joined the company please return your membership forms as soon as possible.

We have had mixed responses to our fundraising efforts some have been well attended and some not so. Two social events held in December, the Christmas Dance and the Hogmanay Party were extremely well supported and we will be running them again this year. A quiz night in January was also well supported. We need to raise a considerable amount of money yet from our community and we would like as many people as possible to attend the events we run. Please remember you don't have to be a member of the club to attend our social events, which are normally advertised on the notice board at Balloch Stores. Thanks to everyone who purchased from the Yellow Moon Catalogue at Christmas. We hope to repeat this again this year, please continue to support us

The committee are continuing to work hard behind the scenes to obtain funding to build the green and clubhouse and there are many many hours of work being put in to secure grants to enable the project to be completed.

Please keep reading our notice board for updates.

Balloch Village Fete

Balloch Social & Outdoor Bowling Club is taking the lead role again to organise the village fete.

Saturday 21st August 2004 from 11.30am

Organisations, clubs and individuals are invited to take stands at this year's event.

As a major change, following a review of last year, we have decided to cut down on some outgoings which means that groups and clubs who are fundraising may keep all that they make on the day for themselves. Some groups or organisations may wish to take a stand to create awareness and their participation would also be welcomed. For businesses taking stand space a donation is still expected.

We would like anyone willing to participate to contact Lorna Condie, 46 Wellside Road, Balloch. (01463) 794609

A lesson learned from last year is that we need many more helpers on the day to set up and clear up therefore we would appreciate if you are able to assist in any way that you contact Lorna as soon as possible, particularly if you have skills we could utilise.

We hope to have a similar line up of attractions to last year and at present we are trying to get some more arranged.

Please watch the notice board at the shop for up to date information.

BALLOCH OVER 60'S CLUB NEWS

The Balloch Over 60's Club continues to prosper and with new members joining us the past season has been enjoyed and new friends made. Sadly we have lost two of our long serving members, Peggy Brown and Margaret Cousins and they will be sadly missed.

Our two outings were again a success with visits to Spean Bridge and Shin Falls both followed by High Tea at Tomatin and The Priory respectively. A Burn's Luncheon at Tomatin and our usual Christmas Lunch at Cawdor were very well attended and proved very popular.

As with all organisations changes must take place from time to time and at this year's AGM both our Treasurer Mrs Inglis and myself as Secretary had to hand over the running of the Club owing to personal commitments and, in my case, moving away from Balloch. Whilst we will both remain on the Committee it will not be in such an active role. Mr George Mudd has kindly offered to fill the Secretary's position but as yet there have been no offers for the Treasurer's job. Please consider offering your efforts for this worthwhile means of helping in Balloch.

We start our new season on September 8th at the Village Hall, opening the meeting at 2.30pm with another visit from the Balnain Duo. Come along and meet some new and old friends. Your welcome is assured.

Frank Nunn.



THE MOUNTAIN BIKERS OF BALLOCH BY CHRIS CARD

'The Mountain Bikers of Balloch are a group of around 15 students aged 12-18 years who reside in Balloch and Culloden, who are endeavouring to further their interest in the sport with the aid of a local jumps spot.

We contacted the Community Council seeking help with our project and were delighted to gain their support through a letter of endorsement.

On meeting with Jack Mackay of Forest Enterprise we discussed several issues, including an area to site the project. We would greatly appreciate the community's opinion on a site next to the bus turning circle. As well as this site being geographically ideal, it is local, provides good access and is currently in no form of use.

We hope this project would introduce new levels of fitness within the youth of Balloch and keep keen cyclists off the road.'

DOG LOVERS - BE NEIGHBOURLY.

What does it take to remove your dogs' mess?

Use old plastic shopping bags to pick up your dogs' mess.

Please show respect and consideration for everyone.

REMOVE YOUR DOGS' MESS.

There are plenty of bins in the area to dispose of your dogs' mess.

Keep pathways and private property clear of dog fouling.

Balloch will be a happier, cleaner and healthier place.

