

Buckie Area Forum

Minutes of the BAF Meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday 23rd November 2022

Present: Christine Allan (CA), Colin Burch (CB), Susan Chalmers (SC), Ian Collacott (IC), Alistair Farquhar (AF), Michelle Good (MG), Iain Grieve (IG), Sue Lane (SL), Gordon McDonald (GM, chair), Linda McDonald (LM), Cllr Marc Macrae (MM), Kevin McDermott (Moray Council, KM), Tracey Rae (Moray Council, TR), Cllr Ben Williams (BW)

Apologies: Dawn Brodie, Willie Chisholm, Ernest Kopp, Jim Murray, David Pirie, Leah Rossvoll, Morag Stewart

The meeting was opened at 7pm by GM, who welcomed new members, and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 21st September were approved (EGM – proposed by CA, seconded by AF, Ordinary meeting proposed by SC, seconded by CA).

Matters arising: No items other than the Hub, detailed as a separate item below.

Chair's report/Buckie Hub: GM updated members on progress on the community winter hub – now known simply as the Hub. This is a joint venture between BAF and FAB DTSG (Findochty and Buckie Development Trust Steering Group). It offers a service to all residents in the Buckie High School catchment area. The aim is to provide a warm space where residents may get advice and support on a range of issues from external agencies, as well as hot drinks, and signposting to appropriate services such as food and clothing banks. A six month lease has been signed on a property at 17 East Church St (a former shop). This may be extended by mutual agreement on a monthly basis, if required. Public Liability insurance has been obtained. A significant amount of internal work, including decoration and minor electrical and non-structural alterations has been completed. This has been mainly coordinated or done by Kevin McKay. Tradesmen who have done work have charged for materials but not labour. GM expressed the sincere thanks of BAF, and reported that the names of those who have helped in this way are currently displayed on a whiteboard in the Hub, with plans for a more permanent display. As a consequence of this help, less money than expected has so far been spent. Furniture has been acquired (some owned by BAF and previously in storage, other items donated). The Hub has been laid out with a comfortable area where visitors may relax and have hot drinks/chat. An office area behind the main shop offers a quiet and confidential area which is expected to be available to external agencies providing support and advice on benefits, jobs and any other appropriate services. One laptop PC has been purchased, and several tablets owned by BAF will be available for use in the shop. Three further PCs or laptops (used) have been promised, once they have been reformatted for use.

BT engineers have connected a landline and wifi router, and internet will be freely available for visitors. Charging facilities for mobile devices will be provided. Toilet

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facilities are available, although restricted space means wheelchair access may not be possible. The intention is to ensure that a minimum two volunteers are always present (meaning there is no PVG requirement). KM noted that Moray Council is running a training course on Vulnerable Adults (Tuesday 6th Dec 130-4pm online. Vulnerable Adults training input. Contact karen.delaney@moray.gov.uk).

The Hub opened its doors on Tuesday 22nd November. Current opening hours are 10 till 4 on Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday (the Salvation Army provides a similar service from 11 till 3 on Wednesdays). GM reported that approximately 20 people have offered to work as volunteers, and an ad inviting volunteers to contact BAF will be placed in the local newspaper next week, as well as on the BAF website and Hub Facebook page. There is a need for weekend or evening opening – anecdotal reports show that some potential users are in full-time employment, and still in need of support due to low income. Some potential volunteers who also work can only help in evenings or at weekends, and the plan is to open one evening per week as soon as this can be arranged.

There was considerable discussion on various aspects of this plan, with very helpful suggestions as well as questions. MG reported that Portgordon Community Trust has a similar project, PODS (Portgordon Open Doors). She asked if advice leaflets were available (TR can provide these, and also provided a link for download <https://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/moray>) CB raised the issue of stigma for users of the Hub, and there was a general discussion on this and issues of confidentiality and safeguarding. The BAF executive had previously agreed to provide Cullen Community Council with a sum of up to £500 for receipted expenditure on their warm space project in Cullen Community Centre. There was unanimous agreement that this should be offered to all CCs within the BAF catchment area. Secretary will contact these groups to inform them of this offer.

There was discussion of likely uptake of the Hub service, with reports from CB and CA of a reduction in numbers accessing their services. GM pointed out that this is perhaps to be expected at this early stage, and what we provide should be shaped by what users need – in an ideal world, uptake of what we offer would be zero. MG asked if previously active community groups such as knitters might be able to meet in the Hub – in principle, this was thought to be a good idea. There was discussion of how “genuine need” could be assessed. Referral from other groups e.g. Moray Food Plus will be a useful measure. It was emphasized that volunteers at the Hub are neither expected nor asked to give advice. Their job is to point users to the right agency for expert advice and support.

GM reported that the BAF webpage will be split to show both the current community event calendar, and Hub information.

Secretary's report: no items of note.

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Treasurer's report: The REGEN group has £14106-55p in its account, BAF has a total of £10619-54p in the bank. BAF balance comprises:

BAF money:	£4313.90
LOIP money:	£6284.89
FAB DTSG:	£20.75

GM pointed out that the REGEN group hasn't met for over 2 years, and requested that the account be renamed as BAF number 2 account – this was agreed.

Locality Plan Buckie: TR gave an update. An event with partner agencies was held several weeks ago. A report has been submitted to the monitoring group on the basis of those discussions and community input. Gaps in the plan have been identified, and this may allow community groups to identify issues they might be able to address. Funding for LOIP may be available through the Cost of Living Community Anchor Fund. The finalised plan will be launched at a coffee morning on Wednesday 7th December at Buckie North Kirk Hall (10 till 12) – all are welcome to attend. The structure of any subgroups required to deliver aspects of the plan will be considered in the new year.

Moray Area Forum: No meetings have taken place.

AOCB: There was some discussion of the remit of BAF, and the fact that some local community groups are unaware of the fact that it covers a much wider area than simply Buckie town. GM reported a discussion with Cullen Allotment Association – the group is trying to raise funding for a polytunnel, and would be willing to devote space to growing fruit and vegetables for BAF to distribute in return for some financial input – to be discussed further. MG reported on the use of polytunnels by Portgordon Community Trust. There was discussion of the merits of online vs face-to-face BAF meetings, with various views expressed. GM thanked attendees for their valuable input, and closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

Date and time of next meeting: 7pm on Wednesday 20th March 2023. An earlier meeting to discuss Hub activity may be called.