

Balloch Village Trust

www.ballochvillagetrust.com

Chairman's Report

September 2012

1. Introduction

The past year has been marked by the usual ups and downs common to all. The disappointment of being unable to re-register community interest in the field has, to some extent, been counterpoised by the completion of the woodland map and installation of way markers – very tangible assets. The Board has also organised the first Carols at the Christmas Tree; set up a new website; and continues to work on the development of the Community Woodland. They have also taken a long-term approach to planning ahead by compiling a Development Strategy.

2. Development Strategy 2012 – 2027

The Board has now compiled and agreed a 15-year development strategy to provide direction for BVT.

3. New registered address and company secretary

The previous registered address and company secretary was MacLeod & MacCallum, Solicitors. However, this attracted a considerable annual charge for little resultant benefit. The Board agreed to terminate that arrangement and appoint Susan Williams as Company Secretary and to register the company address as 59 Culloden Road.

4. Community Right to Buy

- a. **Field at school** – this was registered under the Community Right to Buy in June 2007 by BVT and due for re-registration by 8 June 2012. An enormous effort was made by several members of BVT and supporters to gather signatures and up to date supporting documentation for re-registration. However, upon application for re-registration Scottish Government advised us that Balloch was now included in the Inverness Settlement Zone and considered urban. This precluded a registration under the current Community Right to Buy legislation. Highland Council Planning Service advised us that, in fact, Balloch was included in the Inverness Settlement Zone when the Inverness Local Plan was adopted in March 2006.
- b. **Chapelton Woods** – the inclusion of Balloch in the Inverness Settlement Zone excludes the option of registering a community interest in this.
- c. **Scottish Government** - is currently consulting on Community Right to Buy in [The Future of Right to Buy in Scotland](#). This may lead to changes in legislation that would allow urban communities to register a community interest in land and property.

5. Numbered way markers in Culloden Wood

The work to provide numbered way markers throughout Culloden Wood has been a partnership with Balloch Primary School, Balloch Community Council,

and Forestry Commission Scotland. Many thanks to the volunteers for giving their time to install the markers. The Culloden Woodland map, showing all the numbered locations, is now for sale at the Scotmid shop. This was printed with support from a Highland Council Culloden & Ardersier Ward Discretionary Budget grant of £300.

6. Balloch Community Woodland

Discussions with Balloch Community Council concluded with agreement that there was no significant advantage in changing ownership of the Community Woodland and would incur unnecessary expense. It was agreed that BVT will manage the woodland on behalf of Balloch Community Council and local people. Work is currently under way on a woodland management and improvement plan.

7. Carols at the Christmas Tree

The first Carols at the Christmas Tree on 22 December 2011 was attended by about 70 people with very enjoyable singing. Many thanks to all involved for their help and support. The mulled wine and mince pies were particularly welcome. Thanks to Tesco for contributing the mince pies and to Culloden Baptist Church for providing the musical accompaniment.

8. Web site

BVT now has a new web site at www.ballochvillagetrust.com. All Minutes and news will be published on it. It also contains some of the historic archive material collected over previous years – a work still in progress. Feedback is very welcome.

9. Membership

The current membership of BVT is 24. Balloch has a population of about 1300 people so more members would help it to be more representative. The current Board has agreed to remove the requirement for a £1 joining fee so you can now join for no charge. Please consider becoming a member and encourage friends and neighbours to do likewise.

10. Looking forward

The Development Strategy 2012 – 2027 provides direction for the coming years with the immediate priorities to increase membership of BVT and to finalise the Community Woodland Management and Improvement Plan.

11. Finally

The Board recognises the support of the current membership and other supporters for which it is grateful. We extend our thanks to all who have helped in various ways over the past year and look forward to working with you and for you in the year ahead. Thank you, also, to the current Directors for their support and endeavour over the past year and in particular to Susan Williams for her work as Secretary and to Ian Thomson for his work as Treasurer.

Charles Stephen