



# BCT UPDATE

## Birse Community Trust

ISSUE 4 Reporting on JULY – DECEMBER 2000

## A New Initiative

AN IMPORTANT NEW INVOLVMENT FOR BCT during the period covered by this newsletter, has been taking forward its proposals to safeguard the Finzean Old School buildings and put them to new uses that benefit the local community.

The two 19th century buildings were run by Aberdeenshire Council as an Outdoor Centre from 1964, when the current Finzean Primary School was built, until June 2000, when the Council closed the Centre and decided to sell the site on the open market. However, in response to local concern over the fate of these historic buildings and after local consultations on its proposals, BCT has persuaded the Council to give BCT a long term lease of the buildings.

BCT's proposals involve two purposes for which the location and design of the buildings are very well suited: converting the smaller building into a Community Trust office and local archive and converting the larger building into rentable office space for up to five local businesses. Both these uses will meet important existing needs within the community. One reflection of this is the firm interest in the office units that the Trust has already received from several home-based businesses in the parish.

For BCT itself, the lack of a Trust office has become a key constraint on its operation and development. The scale of the Trust's involvements and the increasing number of local members now involved in running it, mean that the Trust needs a single base where people can work together and all have ready access to the Trust's filing and record systems. The office will also make it easier for

more people to become involved with the Trust's work and for the Trust to undertake a wider range of local projects. The crucial challenge now for the Trust, is to raise the money needed to undertake the conversions.

In December, around fifty people were able to attend the BCT Trustees' and Patron's first annual reception for those most closely involved in working for the Trust and representatives of the Trust's main partners. In a short address at the Reception, Alan Campbell, Chief Executive of Aberdeenshire Council, explained that BCT "is exactly the type of local community initiative which Aberdeenshire Council wants to encourage more widely throughout our area. The Council congratulates the Trust for establishing a very successful track record as a pioneering local community business."



Photo by Anke Addy

Looking south over the Finzean Old School Buildings towards Peter Hill. BCT's proposed office building is on the right. The wood smoke in the middle distance is the kiln at Finzean Turning Mill being fired up.



Photo by John Anderson

During the Remembrance Day Service in November at Corsedarder, the Reverend Jack Holt, parish minister and BCT Chairman, was presented by Eileen Bailey with BCT's completed Book of Remembrance about the 34 men named on the parish War Memorial. Copies of the Book are now on view in Finzean and Birse Churches.

## BCT

Birse Community Trust, BCT, is a local community business "to promote the common good of the inhabitants of Birse parish and deliver wider public benefits".

Everyone on the Electoral Registers for Birse parish is a member of BCT and responsible for electing the Trustees who run BCT on behalf of the community. BCT is a company limited by guarantee, a recognised Scottish charity (SC28220) and government approved Local Rural Partnership.

The Trust's inaugural AGM was in February 1999 and during its first two years, BCT has taken on an expanding range of projects to address local issues and capitalise on local opportunities. BCT's role in developing and implementing projects as a community business complements the roles of the Finzean, Ballogie and Birse Community Associations that cover the parish and represent the views of the community. BCT is guided by the issues identified by the Associations and works in full partnership with them on its projects.

BCT's Trustees are Rev. Jack Holt, Robert Dinnie, Alison Farquharson, Ken Hall and Joanna Strachan. Its Patron is local member and Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, Angus Farquharson.