

BCT UPDATE

Birse Community Trust

ISSUE 5 Reporting on JANUARY – JUNE 2001

Establishing a Base

BCT'S PROJECT TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE of the Finzean Old School buildings and put them to new uses that benefit the local community, took two major steps forward during the period covered by this newsletter.

By the end of June, BCT had successfully negotiated a long term lease of the site from Aberdeenshire Council and had also heard that it had been award a grant for the project from the Scottish Executive's highly competitive Rural Challenge Fund. With the lease starting in August, BCT is poised to submit planning and building warrant applications to allow the conversion work to begin this autumn.

The main building will become BCT's much needed office and also make available office space for up to 4 other local businesses. BCT has already been donated an impressive array of office furniture by oil companies and others and in due course, BCT's office facilities including photocopying, scanning, e-mail and internet access, will all be available for use by members of the community.

The former cookhouse will become a room where people can work on BCT projects and will include a reference library of material about the parish. Connected to this, the building with the former boys and girls toilets will be converted to house BCT's local archive and artefact collections. There are already strong indications that the existence of this safe repository will lead to the donation to these growing collections of further old documents and other historical items of local interest.

Other aspects of the Old School Project will include collecting the memories of those who were pupils there before it closed as a school in 1963. Having BCT's base next to the current

Primary School, also offers tremendous scope to build on BCT's existing partnership with the School. This already includes, for example, joint management of the School Wood, project visits to BCT's mills and souter's shop and the links BCT developed during the first half of 2001 with the school's first enterprise project, Finzean Forest Photography (see photo below from one of their cards).

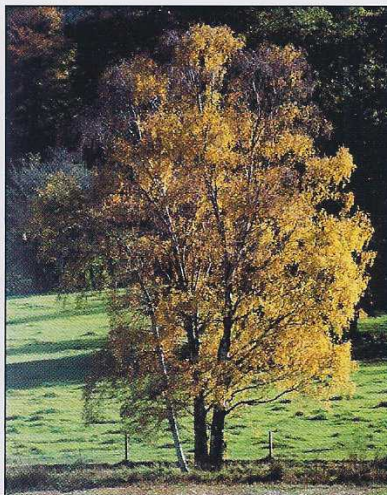


Photo by Finzean Forest Photography



Photo by John Anderson

The parish's Community Games in June were a great success and, like the first ones last year, attended by over 200 local residents. The Games are co-hosted by BCT and the Finzean, Ballogie and Birse Community Associations with funding from BCT. The photo shows the winners of the 2001 Women's Sprint. Left to right: Carolyn Christie (2nd), Ann-Marie Lloyd (1st), Claudia Burgess (3rd).

BCT

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 the parish is a member of BCT and responsible for electing the Trustees who run BCT on behalf of the community. The Trust is a limited company, Scottish charity (SC28220) and government approved Local Rural Partnership.

The Trust has now been going two and a half years and has taken on a wide 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 local Community Associations and Community Councils that cover the parish. BCT is guided by the issues identified by them and works in full partnership with them on its projects.



The main Old School building where BCT will have its office (far left).



The 'cookhouse' that will become BCT's project base (above left).

The building which will house BCT's local history collections (below left).