



# BCT UPDATE

## Birse Community Trust

ISSUE 8 Reporting on JULY – DECEMBER 2002

### A Successful Bid

DURING THE PERIOD COVERED BY THIS NEWSLETTER, BCT bid successfully on the open market to buy Birse Church Hall and the half acre parking area south of Birse Church.

BCT's purchase of the Hall is an historic local development and involved months of preparation. BCT's offer included funding from the Scottish Land Fund, Aberdeenshire Council and BCT's two key local partners in this project, the Ecumenical Trust for Birse Kirk (ETBK) and Birse Area Community Association (BACA). BCT's bid was also fully supported by the parish's three Community Associations and two Community Councils.

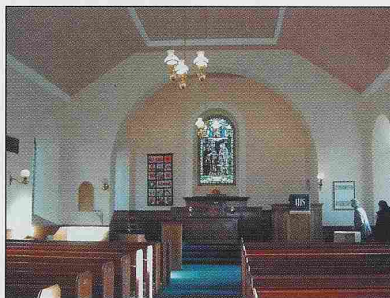
Now, with the help of further funding from ETBK, BCT is poised to submit a bid to try and purchase Birse Church as well.

The Church, Hall and parking area are being sold by the Church of Scotland as part of a wider rationalisation of its properties in the ecclesiastical parish of Birse & Feughside. When it first became clear that these properties were going to be sold, there was a very high level of concern in the community. As a result, Birse and Ballogie Community Council carried out the first of what developed into a series of local consultations over the future of these buildings. The outcome of all these consultations was a very clear and strong mandate that BCT, working with ETBK and BACA, should try and buy both the Church and the Hall on behalf of the community to safeguard their considerable local importance.

The Church, which is an historic listed building dating from the 18th century, is a core part of the cultural heritage of Birse parish and also of wider religious significance as one of the earliest sites of Christian worship on Deeside. The Hall, while of considerable value to the use of

the Church, is also essential to local community life in the Birse Area.

BCT's successful purchase of the Hall means that the Birse Area Community Association will be able to use and develop the Hall as their local community hall and a centre for the increasing level of community activity in the Birse Area. The Hall will now be renamed Birse Community Hall and, as a relatively modern and compact building with low maintenance requirements, is potentially well suited to this vital role.



The interior of the historic Birse Church.



Birse Church Hall viewed from the north with Birse Church behind.

### 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 been going 4 years and has taken on an increasingly wide range of projects on behalf of the local community. 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 'Home Team'

THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS some of the expanding group of members who work part time for BCT on a regular basis to help implement its projects and manage its administration. From left: (back) Jane Bennet, Doug Gray, Ian Hector, Robin Callander, Eileen Bailey; (front) Wendy Hector, Tricia Heldman (BCT Co-ordinator), Dorothy Dinnie.

Long standing team members missing from the photo are Stan Moyes and David Duncan (who operate the Finzean Mills), Paul Chapman (natural heritage project) and Alison Bell (Souter's Shop project). Other members and local businesses also carry out work for BCT, but on a less regular basis.

BCT's five Trustees are Jim Gordon, Robert Dinnie, Guy Haslam, Pam Taylor and Lynne Gordon.