



BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of BCCC meeting, held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater
Monday 12th January 2026 at 7pm

Present: James Anderson - Chair (WJ) John Bannerman - Vice Chair (JB) Richard Frimston- Secretary (RF) Jennifer Davidson- Asst Secretary (JD) Ellie Kinghorn - Treasurer (EK) Linda Drever (LD) Simon Mearns (SM) Lewis MacDonald (LM) Jo Croll (JC) Kate Allum (KA) Bill Braid (BB)	Apologies Cllr Geva Blackett (CGB) Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Scott Peacock (SP) Weston Main (WM) Martin Ellison (ME)	Also present: Paul Gibb (PG) - CNPA Ron Drever (RD) - Eagle Eric McQueen (EM) - BCE Ray Riddoch (RR) - BCT Rob Whitson (RW) - Balmoral factor Cat Houston (CH) - Marr Dougal Morgan (DM) Andrew Webster (AW)
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1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Rob Whitson the newly appointed Balmoral Factor. Apologies had been received from Cllr Geva Blackett, Cllr Sarah Brown, Scott Peacock, Weston Main and Martin Ellison.

2. **Appointment of Cat Houston as Associate Member**

BCCC agreed to appoint Cat Houston as an associate member. RF proposed, JB seconded. JB welcomed Cat.

3. **Emergency Services Report** - Received from Sergeant Allan Masson and circulated to members.

4. **Approval of minutes of December 2025 meeting and matters arising**

The corrected date for the Halls AGM is **27 January 2026 at 7.30pm.**

A member of the public had raised the issue of publishing minutes earlier. JB will produce proposal for BCCC consideration.

5. **Conflicts of Interest**

None registered, any conflicts will be noted as they arise.

6. **Action Tracker**

6 - Bus stop relocation (6) - RF chasing NESTRANS for survey results.

134 - 7 Bridges (134) - no update.

135 - Queens Rd (135) - Drain re done.

136 - Wheelchair/pushchair access (136) - Await Traffic survey results Jan 2026.

139 - Disabled parking bays (139) – SB continues to chase - AbCo low priority. Await traffic management survey - NESTRANS Jan 2026.

141 - Cinder path (141) - To be completed Jan 2026. KA raised an issue of concern from members of public regarding the use of Motorised vehicles, electric scooters and scramble bikes. Bollards may be an option. WJ to raise with Sergeant Allan Masson, who had previously advised this should be reported to the police.

143 - Fire risk Ballater and Crathie (143) - RF and KA to arrange to meet with Fire service for update.

146 - Old Line crossing, A93 Eastfield. Update from SB - Options being considered by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. WWCT will consider options and subsequently consult with local community, stakeholders plus BCCC by Feb/March 2026.

147 - Crathie school 20pmh flashing sign - CSB chasing, no update.

7. **Sub-Committee Reports**

Housing & Planning

- Planning matters - BB summarised current planning applications to BCCC members.
- WJ declared a Conflict of interest - Craigendarroch water treatment plant.
- APP/2025/1893 - Application for formation of 10 wildlife ponds by British dragonfly society. CNPA Call-in. FIG view is that it is a move in the right direction and to look at larger scale in terms of holding water. It can only have a positive impact. BCCC are supportive. RF to write to support application. RF suggestion to CPNA - could there be options to hold back more water. JB/RF to expand Dee resilience strategy group.
- H1 - No update.
- Planning applications - JB explained if a member of the public considers that a building does not conform to the approved plans a complaint can be made to The Planning Enforcement Team, there is a specific form available on AbCo planning website. DM would check future applications and red flag any issues especially if within the flood plain. For example, a new local business

was not advised by AbCo planning department to carry out flood planning for electrics, flood doors etc. RF enquired, what is CNPA criteria for call-ins? PG will notify. SM suggested BCCC should perhaps review its own criteria to assess applications.

Flooding Issues Group

- Prior to this evening's meeting FIG have circulated to all community councillors a draft response to the SEPA consultation on the River Basin Management plan Rev 4. We request approval of the response and also approval to contact Braemar and Mid Deeside community councils to propose a joint reply to this consultation. This consultation can be found online, and we would encourage everyone in the community to reply with their own thoughts in order to demonstrate that the community is fully engaged on this topic.
- There is an article in the P&J today which could be interpreted by some that we are suggesting the HB bund could provide protection from a Storm Frank type flood - the journalist has misspoken. As we have explained many times, the HB Bund provides some protection from High Frequency flooding. This a positive step but we should keep things in perspective - it will not protect the village from a Storm Frank type event. Also, we are uncomfortable being referred to as heroes - we are group of concerned local residents, trying to do our best for our community.
- Next CBEC meeting on local flood defences is planned for 26/02/26, it will be a joint meeting with CBEC, CNPA and FIG.
- FIG hope to meet soon with the new Balmoral factor (Rob Whitson) to present our FIG work streams and identify areas where we can work with the estate on issues related to the dual challenges of increasing flooding and drought within the Dee catchment. RW advised it is a high priority on His Majesty's list.
- The Community council approved the above request made by FIG on their response to the SEPA consultation on River Basin Management plan Rev 4, including contacting Braemar and Mid Deeside CC to propose a joint reply.
- RR - Suggested a public letter from FIG to P&J re Storm Frank article. Agreed.

Resilience Group

- Ballater & Crathie Rest Centres - LD - With recent heavy snow conditions the main function was to set up and maintain rest centres. Snow warden scheme is available through AbCo however an online snow clearing course must be completed. Council employees were asked to volunteer to clear snow.
- JB - Priority to keep rest centres clear of snow where possible.
- LD - Wished to thank Golf club staff who volunteered to clear snow however were advised they could not use GC equipment on public paths and roads.
- LD - Contacted Co-op every day for update on supplies. Volunteers delivered prescriptions to those unable to collect. JB - As a rural community personal responsibility and resilience are key with help given to those less able. WJ

detailed lack of Grit areas available and less resources available in Ballater and Braemar for clearing paths and roads. EM - Would it be a good idea to have more local information available. JC - Issued on social media.

- KA - Thanked co-op staff for keeping the store open during challenging times with no heating in the co-op for some of that period. RF - Our wider community does extremely well in responding to challenges.
- RD - Suggested issuing an Eagle article ahead of the winter period to include relevant seasonal information on preparation, resilience and personal responsibility. Agreed this was a great idea.
- Defibrillators - BB updated on situation re temperature inside Defib cabinets. Proposes to install thermometers. 4 cabinets are heated however 1 at Sheridans butchers is not connected to mains electricity therefore unheated.

Economy

- RF – No further news on Station, chasing Tim Stephen.
- Phone box must be used to retain services.
- Great to see new businesses in Ballater.

Roads & Paths

- SM thanked Council workers and contractors for all their hard work under heavy snow conditions. SM and LD to investigate volunteers for snow warden scheme with help from GB.
- Craigendarroch information panel damaged - To be re-instated.
- Very boggy section at Cambus O' May section - Various options to be explored and quotes for work to be sought.
- Craigendarroch Cairn - Local contractor to be contacted for quote as skill and expertise required for repair.

8. **Crathie issues** - None reported.

9. **Other Reports**

Aberdeenshire Council

Cllr Sarah Brown - Report circulated to BCCC – summary:

- A93 Tullich crossing (Deeside Way): Reported that the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (WWCT) is considering options to improve the road crossing over the A93 east of Ballater, with community and stakeholder consultation expected in February/March.
- Station Square bollards and lights: Raised concerns regarding repair delays to a damaged bollard initially classed as “No Action,” and confirmed ongoing work by officers to recover costs from the responsible party. Latest update

(Jan 2026) noted the Council is awaiting full contact details from the responsible individual before the recovery and repair process can proceed.

- Petition - winter/all-season tyres for school transport: Provided a detailed update from Marr Area Committee (16 Dec) outlining that current home-to-school transport contracts under the DPS (expiring May 2028) do not require winter or all-season tyres. Implementing this requirement early could incur significant costs and would require agreement from all operators to avoid contract breach. The Committee agreed to refer the matter to the Education and Children's Services Committee for further consideration, with a request for additional supporting information

Cllr Geva Blackett – Report circulated to BCCC - summary:

- Pass of Ballater closure: Reported that, following discussions and joint effort with Tim Stephen AbCo, trees were safely removed without damaging the carriageway, allowing the road to reopen.
- Community food donations: Confirmed that annual venison and pheasant donations from local estates were distributed to over 200 people, including both sheltered housing complexes in Ballater and additional individuals in Ballater and Crathie not supported by the hardship fund.
- Aboyne Academy cooking project: Advised that a new initiative involving estates and chefs will support 18 young people at Aboyne Academy to learn to cook using venison mince, running until the end of March, with the aim of building longer-term resilience and potentially expanding across Marr academies.
- Recent snow event: Noted strong community response and praised the efforts of snow plough drivers, estate workers, contractors, farmers, local shops, and Care/NHS staff.
- Concerns over online behaviour: Highlighted that social media commentary has at times been unacceptable and stressed that while political views are valid, rudeness and personal abuse are not.
- Snow Warden scheme: Confirmed schemes receive some free grit, but suggested insurance requirements may deter community councils from participating.
- Council funding allocations: Reported concern that Aberdeenshire is the fourth lowest funded per capita in Scotland, with COSLA's funding formula not reflecting rurality, and noted limited success in influencing allocation changes.

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Paul Gibb - report circulated to BCCC - summary:

- The new Cairngorms 2030 Community Fund is an investment in communities. This year, communities won't just have the opportunity to apply for money, they will design the whole process to hand out £1 million from start to finish. A

paid panel will shape how Cairngorms 2030 Communities Fund is invested across the Cairngorms; people who live in and who have a passion for the Cairngorms National Park are being invited to design an exciting new community fund worth £1 million.

- It would be useful for someone this side of the Park to apply. **Closing date 15/2/26.**

The link for those interested is <https://cairngorms.co.uk/grants/cairngorms-2030-communities-fund>

Community Action Plan – Recreation, The Hub, Economy, Environment

RF - Great work done by EM reviewing CAP. JB - Short term delivery plan useful. Ongoing.

Community Support, Affordable Housing, and Assisted Living

Nothing to report.

Ballater Community Trust

No updates. Next meeting **12/1/26.**

Ballater Community Enterprise

- Caravan Park is currently closed for winter - ongoing maintenance and improvement works
- EM advised that Robbie, Park manager, had helped to clear significant snow fall from the Fire Station area to allow emergency vehicles exit and access.
- Full Planning has been approved for the bike store. Completion currently on track for end April 2026. Weather dependant.

Halls

BB issued update - What's on - Victoria & Albert Halls, Ballater.

AGM 27/1/26 7.30pm

Ballater Golf Club

Nothing to report.

CAN

Progress report issued to BCCC – summary:

- Ballater can - 9 members. Next meeting 18/2/26. Contact Ballatercan@gmail.com
- Litter pick **17/1/26 13.30.**
- Tree planting Balmoral estate 19/11/25 cancelled due to snow. To be rescheduled.
- Oak tree rejuvenation - 30 on hill with protection. 20 new seedlings currently in nursery to be planted Autumn 2027.
- School projects ongoing.

- Toolbox - Aboyne Mid Deeside Community shed welcome Ballater and Crathie members. DIY support, tool access.
Contact **aboynecs.org 01339 885222**

The Hub

- KA detailed that due to the continued support of Ade and volunteers the deficit had been reduced by less than half from £23000 (2024) to £11000 (2025). BCT will cover this deficit with the aim to reduce further. The current agreement is in place until next year.
- The Hub is a fantastic community asset. Plans for Eagle article supporting The Hub and detailing exactly what resources would be lost if it did not exist.
- Fundraising is ongoing with more ideas welcomed.

10. **Correspondence**

- Email from local resident offering thanks to Golf club staff for helping community clear snow.
- JD - It was agreed that BCCC would not contact the person on behalf of AbCo who advised and apologised they had accidentally damaged the bollard in station square. AbCo to follow up if they wish to pursue.

11. **Finance** No change.

12. **AOCB**

- Christmas lights/The Greens - KA - Issues with power on the greens for Christmas 2025. Planning for a permanent Christmas tree ongoing.
- 5 trees have been condemned on The Greens with removal planned for February 2026. Planning is underway for the planting of 10 new trees.
- Library - LD - Opening the library on Saturdays from 11am - 2pm is working very well. Variety of requests. Worthwhile to the community to open on Saturdays, manned solely by volunteers.
- Joint statement by Aberdeenshire Councils for Equitable and fair funding. WJ - Chair BCCC will sign the Joint statement.

The meeting concluded at 20.15

**The next meeting will be held on 9th February 2026 - 19.00 to 21.00
Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater.**