

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCCC)

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Minutes of BCCC meeting, Village Meeting held at Quarry Studios, Crathie on Monday
13th October 2025 at 7pm

Present: James Anderson - Chairman (WJ) John Bannerman - Vice Chair (JB) Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF) Ellie Kinghorn - Treasurer (EK) Jennifer Davidson (JD) William Braid (BB) Linda Drever (LD) Jo Croll (JC) Simon Mearns (SM)	Apologies Cllr Geva Blackett Scott Peacock Eric McQueen Kate Allum Lewis MacDonald	Also present: Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Paul Gibb (PG) - CNPA Ben Addy - Moxon Studios Jamie Kinghorn - Moxon Adam Streeter-Smith (ASS) - CNPA Access Officer Martin Ellison Ron Drever Ann Miles Weston Main Members of public
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1 Welcome and apologies by JB - WJ detained in Ballater. **JB** introduced Ben Addy of Moxon Architects and took the opportunity to thank him for use of the Quarry Studios for the Crathie meetings of BCCC.

2 Ben Addy - Moxon Architects - Riverside Path & Bridge

Ben Addy presented a detailed plan regarding the preliminary work undertaken to design a bridge to cross the stream at the edge of the golf course on the Riverside Path. The path would follow behind the existing bund without encroaching on the golf course, cross the bund and zigzag back to the level to cross the stream. The bridge spans 13.8 metres, approximately 1.5 metres above the current temporary bridge. It would be essential to ensure robust abutments to withstand a potential Storm Frank flood, but at the same time ensure that the bridge structure posed as little obstruction as possible to the flood waters. This would mean an open deck to the bridge and to the handrails.

While the concrete abutments would appear large during construction, these would be concealed by rocks and earth landscaping. **WM** pointed out that the bridge would be used by dog-walkers, so a steel mesh might not be the best form of decking material. **WJ** suggested that the middle section might be solid wood. **BA** made clear that if the footpath to the west of the bridge was flooded then the bridge would not be useable,

but it should withstand flooding water. The bridge would be 1.5 metres wide so suitable for wheelchairs & prams, but cyclists would be encouraged to dismount. **WJ** was concerned that the zig-zag approach to the bridge over the bund might result in walkers taking shortcuts, but **BA** was sure that path construction and landscaping would discourage this. **BA** suggested that a pre-application for planning could be made to Abco in the next few months, which would allow information to come forward for full planning application to be made thereafter. **ASS** asked who would own & maintain the bridge. **JB** suggested that ideally a Memorandum of Understanding would be agreed with CNPA for maintenance of the path generally. **BA** said that funding would be easier to obtain if planning were in place. **ASS** believed that CNPA would look favourably on supporting the work as the Riverside Path is one of the community core paths. **RF** suggested that the Community Trust might take on ownership of the bridge if Golf Club did not wish to do so.

JB passed chairmanship duties over to WJ.

3 Adam Streeter-Smith - Access Officer CNPA

ASS reported that funding for cinder path had been secured, and a contractor would be appointed subject to Community Trust approval. There were still issues to be resolved with various landowners. **RF** reported that there would be diversions on the path during November when work was being undertaken. There were also questions regarding the type of signage at either end of the path, though BCCC agreed a simple 'Pass of Ballater' and 'Ballater'. **ASS** reported that work was also ongoing on the 7 Bridges Walk, including the damp section at Posties' Leap, the bank erosion below the Bridge of Gairn and the steps at Gairnshiel junction. A review of core paths had been completed at end of August, to which BCCC had contributed, which might result in new core paths for Ballater and realignment of existing paths. CNPA would come back to CC with result of review in the Spring. **SM** reported that only one core path had been added in Ballater: Pass of Ballater to Sgòr Buidhe and back through Abergairn. CNPA would have to take on board any concerns about local wildlife e.g. capercaillie population on such walks. **RF** asked about the extension of the Deeside Way to Ballater. **ASS** reported that CNPA were in talks with landowners to identify a possible route, but there were several issues to be considered: riverbank erosion in places, the aim of any extension and its accessibility, signage, how to promote the path etc. **ASS** pointed out that the Deeside Way was not a long-distance path like the West Highland Way or the Great Glen Way however was more likely to attract walkers to complete shorter local sections. **CSB** pointed out since some Stagecoach buses now had cycle racks more cyclists may be encouraged to complete sections of the Way. **RF** thanked **ASS** for his assistance with the cinder path project as well as for the update on the core path review.

RF said there were still concerns about Distillery Brae, despite signage at the Balmoral Car Park to encourage use of the Easter Balmoral bridge. However, **ASS** understood that many people parking at Balmoral would approach the Cairns walk via

the Balmoral Castle gates before proceeding along the South Deeside Road. Also, many people head to Distillery Brae to park to avoid fees at Balmoral. **SM** asked **ASS** if there had been any effective signage in CNPA area to encourage walkers and cyclists to respect each other's use of pathways. **ASS** would investigate but CNPA prefers that there should not be a proliferation of signs. **CSB** and **ASS** agreed to set up another teams meeting to discuss the various issues around cars and parking at Crathie.

4 Approval of September 2025 minutes

5 Conflicts of interest would be raised as and when during the meeting

6 Action Tracker

There had been a negative community response to the repairs undertaken on Queens Road. However, the repairs had not been intended to be a final solution but had been a temporary use of spare material to make the roadway safe. **CSB** suggested that information needed to be made public. **SM** thought that the cairn on Craigendarroch required the professional supervision of a drystone dyke builder as volunteers might do more harm than good. **WJ** would pass on contacts. It was suggested that Royal Guard might be approached to transport materials to the summit. **JD** had contacted Tim Stephen regarding the vegetation inhibiting vision at the crossing at Eastfield of Monaltrie, a regular visitor and experienced cyclist had submitted a concerning account of fast cars approaching whilst trying to cross. Abco roads replied that nothing could be done at this time. **CSB** indicated that a feasibility study was being undertaken by Sustrans about the possibility of a bridge-crossing. **JC** commented that electric cars made it very difficult to hear traffic approaching. Although signage is there to warn drivers, few take heed.

7 Sub-committee Reports

Housing and Planning

A Planning

BB reported there had been 3 planning applications in the last month: garage on Braemar Road; dwelling house in Bridge of Gairn and dwelling house at Lary. **WJ** reported that he had been asked to clear the roadside banking at the Gairn junction as that had been made a condition of the second house planning application - conflict of interest declared.

B H1

Roger Laird has left Scotia and Angus McNicol has not been able to provide any real news of progress on H1. **WJ** suggested that BCCC should be looking at other potential developers of the area for housing.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

FIG have prepared an article for the next edition of the Eagle which summarises the 10 years since Storm Frank. Prior to tonight's meeting a draft has been circulated to

all community councillors and if no objections it will be forwarded to the Eagle team. The article concludes with the following paragraph:

"The harsh realities are that Ballater is very likely to flood again, no one knows when and how badly, and it may never be possible to completely protect Ballater from a Storm Frank type event. So please, if you live in the flood zone be prepared with a personal evacuation plan, never ignore a SEPA Ballater specific flood **Warning** and try to install engineered property level protection for your property. This should help to shorten the recovery time post flooding."

All agreed with article contents.

Local Defences

CBEC have successfully completed a LIDAR survey (A Lidar survey uses laser pulses to measure distances and create high-resolution 3D maps or models of the surface of the earth) of the river in the vicinity of Ballater. On the day of the survey, conditions were ideal and this additional, up to date data, will be very useful. Further riverbank survey work is planned this week. This is all part of the CBEC phase 3 works to establish what if any additional flooding resilience can be achieved locally in the short term. The results of this work are expected early in the new year.

Catchment level

On behalf of the BCCC, mid Deeside CC and Braemar CC, FIG will be attending a meeting of the Dee resilience strategy group early December.

The newly recruited CNPA project manager will be at this meeting.

The Dee Resilience group will be looking at the pros and cons of all the different ways of holding back water in the upper catchment and making recommendations to government on how best to work together as communities, land managers and agencies to tackle the dual climate change challenges of flood and drought within the Dee catchment.

Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that the issue of hot water supply at the Halls during an emergency had been resolved. Nominated coordinators would be able to use gas hobs in the hut to boil kettles and transfer to vacuum flasks to deliver to halls. The Starlink system had been set up on a practise run and would cost £5 monthly subscription which BCCC would fund. It can be upgraded rapidly as & when required. **JC** pointed out that the recent Storm Amy had resulted in the Vodafone network being knocked out for a day. **JD** reported Tullich area had no power for almost 24 hours.

Economy

RF was pleased to report that the public phone box was once again operational at the Halls and urged the public to use it. He had written an article for the Eagle to encourage use. It requires 52 calls per annum to be maintained by BT. **RF** had been in touch with Tim Stephen following the closure of VisitScotland at the Royal Station. He had been assured that they would 'keep the lights on'. **JC** made clear that The Rothesay Rooms cannot be responsible for the library when they are open and there

are no librarians present. **LD** reported that she has volunteers willing to be in the library to assist during the hours when Rothesay Rooms are open, but discussions are required with Abco as to how to operate this. **RF** will speak with Abco about how to extend opening hours of Library beyond 15 manned hours. **RF** to include **LD** in discussions. **JC** confirmed that Stones and display boards are now on the station platform. **WJ** had received a phone call from regular Hilton timeshare visitor, very disappointed to see the closure of the tourist information office and restricted access to the Station.

Roads & Paths

SM had received correspondence regarding the signage for voluntary parking charges, which were confusing as they were situated under signs suggesting parking is free. **JC** reported that not everybody is able to make a payment using a mobile phone or QR code. **CSB** was asked to find out how much income the parking fee might generate. **WJ** remarked on two Facebook issues regarding parking on pavements in the village. **CSB** said that such infringements could be reported on the Aberdeenshire council website. Links to make these reports should be on community page.

8 Crathie Issues

Currently, Crathie does not have a permanent council member. **WJ** suggested Anne Miles might like to return, but she felt that she had already completed her time at BCCC.

9 Other Reports

Abco

CSB had submitted a report to the BCCC. The 20mph speed limits were installed in September, and a further review will take place to discuss extensions or changes to the limits. Marr Area Committee had received a petition requesting that winter or all-season tyres should be fitted to school vehicles in the upper Deeside area. Further information has been requested by the committee. **CSB** also drew attention to the Aberdeenshire Community Hospital Review which will determine how Abco will deliver Community Hospital health care and linked community health and social care. There will be drop-in sessions at Aboyne Community Centre on Wednesday 5th November at 3-7pm. **JD** advised that the survey and drop-in sessions are being promoted within the Community.

Cairngorm National Park Authority

Paul Gibb would be attending the Dee Resilience Group meeting in December.

Community Action Plan

RF reported that the Hub was now on winter hours. Book sales had been very good in raising funds for the Hub. Cycle storage would hopefully be open at the caravan park in the spring. Thrive had been a success for the village, with cafés being busy. The car park at Monaltrie Park had worked well. **SM** said it had been an excellent event for young people. **JC** said it puts Ballater on the map and **WJ** said it encouraged people to

come to the village for the bike festival, then return to enjoy the village facilities for cyclists.

Ballater (Royal Deeside) Ltd - Ballater Community Trust

AGM would take place on 21st October in the Mike Sheridan Room. All welcome.

Ballater Community Enterprise

EM submitted a report on the caravan park. Busiest season with excellent feedback highlighting helpful and friendly staff, high standards of cleanliness and beautiful riverside location. Improvement works over the winter will include redecoration of toilet/shower facilities, road resurfacing, tree planting and installation of CCTV to improve security. A further £50k had been added to the self-assurance fund and £37.5k had been donated to BCT with a possible further donation after the December financial year-end. Discussions are at an early stage with Abco to explore the possibility of creating a campervan Aires at Monaltrie Park to generate future income to transform the Park into a wider community asset. Contracts are now in place for the adaptive and standard Bike Storage Hub, located within the Caravan Park. Anticipated opening April 2026.

Halls

BB reported that the visit to Albert Hall by their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla had been a great success.

Ballater Golf Club

Nothing to report.

Ballater School

The school newsletter had been circulated to BCCC. Attached.

Climate Action Now

SP submitted a report. **RF** thanked Scott for all his work on the cinder path.

There will be another Home Energy drop in event as the September event proved successful with 28 householders seeking advice. The Allotments project is back on the table. Aboyne and Mid-Deeside Community Shed have confirmed that they welcome Ballater & Crathie residents to join the Shed and make use of DIY advice and tool access. Ballater CAN has been working with School Gardening club in their flower & veg planting.

Other

Bruce Lawson had asked **RF** to highlight that the Ember bus service to Dundee via Glenshee would stop in Ballater from 1st October. It is possible to book on the app ten minutes before arrival to ensure bus will stop for passengers as it is not allowed to use the Stagecoach bus stops. Up to 2 bikes can be accommodated on board. There are currently 2 services per day.

10 Correspondence

BB had been asked about who had responsibility for the lighting in Monaltrie Park which seemed to be loose. **WJ** suggested contacting Andy Wimbush and the football club.

A complaint had been filed against the whole BCCC which would be dealt with by Marr Area.

BCCC Marr had issued details re Adopt a Grit bin scheme for those which Abco consider no longer meet the essential criteria to be maintained by them. If the local community do not adopt these bins, then they will be removed. BCCC did not feel this would be a practical and cost-effective exercise.

11 Finance

EK had received a letter suggesting that BCCC might still have an account with Virgin Money, which she would investigate.

BCCC currently has sufficient reserves for itself and for the resilience fund.

12AOCB

WJ will represent BCCC at the Remembrance Service on Sunday 9th November in Ballater, while either **WJ** or **JB** will represent BCCC at the Remembrance Service on 11th November at Crathie.

The meeting concluded at 21.00

The Next meeting will be held on 10th November at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater