

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&CC)

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Minutes of BCCC meeting, Village Meeting and AGM held at 7pm at
Albert Hall, Ballater on Monday 9th June 2025

Present: James Anderson - Chairman (WJ) Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF) Ellie Kinghorn (EK) - Treasurer William Braid (BB) Jennifer Davidson (JD) Scott Peacock (SP) Calum Halhead (CH) Jo Croll (JC) John Bannerman (JB) Lewis Macdonald (LMD) Linda Drever (LD)	Apologies Cllr Geva Blackett Kate Allum Simon Mearns Valerie Stoddart (Ballater Primary School) Mike Hadley Weston Main	Also present: Ray Riddoch - Community Trust (RR) Steve Johnson - The Hub and the Halls Trust Sgt Allan Masson - Police Scotland Eric McQueen - Ballater Community Enterprise Ltd Gordon Riddler - the Halls Trust Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Paul Gibb - Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Matthew Hawkins - CNPA Ade Scripps Cat Houston Atholl Bowman - the Halls Trust Martin Ellison Ron Drever Lucille Verot
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1 Welcome and apologies by WJ He welcomed the excellent turnout for the AGM.

2 Emergency Services Report

Sergeant Masson reported minimal reported crime, the majority of which had been committed by one individual currently awaiting trial. Mountain Rescue call outs had been quiet in first quarter of year, but there would be more to report in next meeting. He thanked the community for their patience and support during the closure of the Royal Bridge for police investigations following the tragic death in the river Dee

earlier this year. Alex Kane has now settled into the Police house in Braemar, ensuring a police presence in upper Deeside. Sergeant Masson had received event management and traffic management plans from Scottish Orienteering for the event at the end of July and was happy with their plans. **JB** asked if there would be a police presence during the registration process. Sergeant Masson replied that it would not be under police control but he would make officers aware of the event, along with Mountain rescue. While the BCCC had concerns about the large number of people in the village at a busy time, it was noted that this would be good for the village. **JB** also asked if Police Scotland were happy with the Emergency Procedure Plan currently being discussed with Fire Scotland and Abco. Sergeant Masson had recently attended a meeting with Fire Services and Mountain Rescue to discuss emergency evacuation procedures in the event of large scale wildfires. **RF** asked Sergeant Masson if the parking issue on Distillery Brae had been resolved. Sergeant Masson replied that it was very much a case of public education to understand what double red lines and a clearway meant. He had also ticketed drivers who had parked on the carriageway at the Burn o' Vat.

3 Approval of Minutes of June 2024 AGM and Minutes of May 2025 meeting.

4 Conflicts of interest would be declared as and when they arose during meeting.

5 Action Tracker

No major changes to any issues. AECOM had a stall at recent Farmers' Market to discuss bus stop proposals and would continue to engage with local businesses.

Community Action Plan Annual Reports - Recreation, the Hub, Economy, Environment, Community Support, Affordable Housing, Assisted Living

RR reported a successful year in so many areas. Thanks due to Philippa Franks for her work. The Community Trust sought to help where they could in areas such as playground improvement project, cinder footpath, Hardship fund (where support from Oil Club was so important), closure of information centre in Old Royal Station building.

RF thanked Kate Allum and Steve Johnson for their work on the Hub with Ade Scripps. Regarding the economy work was ongoing on banking issues and the VisitScotland information centre which shared space with the Library. CNPA has been helpful in this area. **RR** commented it was important to persuade Abco to not act simply as a landlord in terms of the Old Royal Station. Abco had to understand the community importance of the Old Royal Station Building and that a 'To Let' sign visible for any period was not helpful. The Library is currently manned two and a half days a week. The Community Trust **cannot** fund the Royal Station building as the combination of energy costs and rates runs into thousands of pounds. **JC** pointed out that it was a huge space to heat & light. A commercial solution must be found.

RF reported that he would be meeting with CNPA to discuss their next Local Development Plan for the next 10 years along with Ray Riddoch and Eric McQueen. This Plan will be the template for all future planning decisions so very important to identify all areas of potential development.

JB reported that the Community Council Flooding Issues Group (FIG) continues to work with Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue and SEPA to set up a local response to potential flooding. Scottish Flood Forum will visit on 28th June with their information van regarding property level protection along with advice to local tradespeople interested in taking on this type of installations. Thanks to John Morrison for coordinating this visit. Thanks also to Tom Flynn in his work with CBEC to examine ways to deal with flooding defences at local level. Discussions with CNPA are starting as to how they might support FIG going forward. **JB** introduced Matthew Hawkins from CNPA who is currently working on Cairngorms 2030 which consists of 22 projects, covering People, Transport and Nature. Regarding Nature they have been looking at management of water in response to extreme weather, whether it be flood or drought. They are currently working on the upper catchment area from Invercauld to Mar Lodge, seeking to allow the river to reconnect to its natural flood plain. CNPA is working with local community groups such as FIG and hope to be able to offer the technical support required to find the best way forward using the CBEC report, with FIG sharing the results with the community. The Upper Dee is a pilot area for the Scottish Government to look at resilience to climate change and the CNPA audit will look at nature-based solutions. CNPA is currently advertising for a project manager for this work. **RF** pointed out that FIG currently also has meetings with Braemar and Mid Deeside Community Councils to share flood information and represent the three communities.

SP reported on 4 areas which Community Action Network support under the Community Action Plan:

Home energy savings which will also include water-saving in the future;

Allotments - there is an article in the current Eagle issue, page 59, to determine any local interest in this;

Tool Box - a project to share tools & equipment within the community. While storage had been an initial problem, now looking at alternatives, including the app, Library of Things, which might be useful to share all sorts of equipment & tools;

Transport - while a car-sharing club had proved uneconomic, there is an interest in possibly purchasing a community bus for future use.

CAN may be contacted by e-mail at ballatercan@gmail.com.

RF reported that work was ongoing in Community Support and Affordable Housing (H1), while John Burrows was working on Assisted Living.

6 Sub-committee reports

Housing and Planning

A Planning

Nothing to report.

B H1

RF reported that Scotia were in talks with CNPA.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

All updated in Community Action Plan report.

Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that they are nearing a solution to storage of gas canisters to provide hot water during emergencies.

Crathie Resilience Group

CH reported that he was still seeking assistance to run the Crathie group.

Economy

Update in Community Action Plan above.

Roads & Paths

SP reported that 30% of full cost of cinder path would be met by CNPA. The remainder would come from Paths for All and the Ian Findlay Trust which were still awaiting decisions from Transport Scotland. Total cost will be in the region of £138,000. Until the funding is in place, the tendering process remains on hold. **RF** had submitted a report from BCCC regarding the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limit in Ballater which is due to be discussed by Abco on 10th June. **SM** had contacted Murray Swapp at Aberdeenshire Council regarding a near miss on the Deeside Way between a pedestrian and a cyclist to seek a solution to shared usage of the route.

7 Crathie Issues

Nothing to report.

8 Finance

Annual Finance Reports for BCCC and Ballater Resilience Group. **WJ** proposed approval, **RF** seconded, all approved. **EK** asked that William Meston be thanked for auditing the accounts.

9 Correspondence **RF** thanked Jennifer Davidson for her assistance in dealing with correspondence. **RF** proposed and **JB** seconded that Jennifer should be appointed assistant secretary.

10 Other reports

Abco

CGB had submitted an email report circulated to BCCC. **CSB** reported that bollard in Station Square would be repaired.

Cairngorm National Park Authority

Paul Gibb reported on the new Action Plan for CNPA and indicated that he would send a link to **RF** for submission of views. The draft would be due in early 2026.

Community Action Plan

See above

Ballater Community Trust

See above

Ballater Community Enterprise Lt (BCE)

Eric McQueen introduced himself as chairman of the board running BCE which had been running the caravan park since 2012. There are 100 pitches available and at

current occupancy levels, this results in a footfall of around 60,000 people in the village each year. The turnover is around £500,000 per season, allowing around £70,000 to be donated to the Community Trust plus other local charities as well as ensuring reinvestment in the park and ensuring that the park can self-insure. The park often gains 5-star reviews and this is very much due to the team welcoming visitors and maintaining high levels of cleanliness in all facilities. There is a demand for further expansion and BCE is discussing with local estates and landowners the possibility of developing motor home Aires (low-cost parking spaces with possibly limited facilities).

BCE is also looking at renewable energy sources to reduce costs and carbon footprint.

Halls

Gordon Riddler reported that the Halls committee is now moving on from refurbishment to improving usage of the halls. A younger cohort of trustees had been recruited. There is now a shared hall management role. Booking has been streamlined, and the cleaning team is superb. Social Media and website all being improved. Facility enhancement is expensive but have tried to minimise increased costs to users. This year celebrates the 150th anniversary of the construction of the Albert Hall. There will be a formal dinner to celebrate on 10th October and an afternoon tea on 19th October combined with an extensive calendar of events.

Gordon Riddler invited Steve Johnson to talk about the role of the Hub within the Halls. The Hub costs £40,000 pa to run, but with the help of Kate Allum and Ade Scripps, this had been reduced to a running deficit of £20,000. The Hub is an excellent resource for local information. To increase its role, it will now be open daily 10-5, with useful drop-in events and information. There will be a fundraiser for the Hub on 27th June - Bingo at Ballater Golf Club.

Ballater Golf Club

Nothing to report.

Ballater School

Nothing to report.

Climate Action Now

SP reported that a new company, Mygroup, would be used to collect blister pack recycling. However, still waiting for planning permission from Abco for large storage box in rear car park. Litter pick on 8th June had been well attended. They had worked along the riverbank and data would be given to the River Dee Trust. **SP** had collected a stainless-steel sink from the riverside. A bale of hay had also been found. Pollinator project has been suspended.

11 AOCB

JC reported that she had contacted **CGB** regarding a bus tour passenger who had fallen on pavement across from Wilkies, requiring a taxi to return to base. **JC** would also raise with Simon Mearns.

The meeting concluded at 20.10

The Next meeting will be held on 14th July 2025 at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater.

Approved