

BALLATER & CRATHIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCCC)

www.ballaterandcrathiecommunitycouncil.com

Minutes of BCCC meeting, Village Meeting held at Michael Sheridan Room, Ballater on Monday 8th December 2025 at 7pm

Present:	Apologies	Also present:
James Anderson -Chair (WJ) Richard Frimston - Secretary (RF) William Braid (BB) Jennifer Davidson- Asst Secretary (JD) John Bannerman - vice chair (JB) Linda Drever (LD) Ellie Kinghorn (EH) - Treasurer Scott Peacock (SP) Simon Mearns (SM)	Cllr Geva Blackett Lewis Macdonald (LMM) Jo Croll (JC) Martin Ellison	Cllr Sarah Brown (CSB) Paul Gibb (PG) - CNPA Ron Drever (RD) Eric McQueen (EM-BCE) Athol Bowman Ray Riddoch (RR-BCT) Weston Main (WM) - Ballater Golf Club Angus McNicol (AMN) - Invercauld Estate Gavin Miles - Director of Planning & Place, CNPA

1 Welcome and apologies by WJ

2 Emergency Services Nothing to report.

3 Minutes of November 2025 were approved with amendment of Climate Action Now to Climate Action Network.

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

5 Action Tracker

AECOM had put proposals for Mobility Hub out to comment and RF urged as many people as possible to respond. Results would be passed on to BCCC in January. RD said he felt the survey was weighted to accept the Mobility Hub. It did not appear possible to register shades of disapproval of the proposed Mobility Hub. JD had pointed out to AECOM that proposed signage had not been fully implemented in the illustrations and that this should be addressed (no 6). RF reported that one drain and the sink hole had been repaired on Queens Road, but there remained issues with another gully.

CSB had raised question of re-surfacing of Queens Road and repair of other gully but had no response yet - retain no 135 on AT. The pavement survey (no 136) would not be

completed until the AECOM Mobility Hub survey had been completed. **SP** and **RF** had put considerable amount of effort and work into repair of cinder path, which should be finished by January 2026. Regarding no 143, **CSB** had contacted Area Commander of SFRS considering report showing a 79% increase in wildfires in Scotland this year. As Ballater provides a wildfire response unit, she sought assurances that the community would still have fire service cover in the event of wildfires. He assured her that the main fire engine was no longer required to accompany the wildfire response vehicle on call outs and that improved deployment of volunteers would ensure cover for all areas. **KA** and **RF** will meet with SFRS in the Spring to explore how BCCC might further support the service, e.g assistance in obtaining 2 smaller appliances rather than one large appliance. The increase in wildfires is a concern of CNPA and although local byelaws might reduce number of fires caused by visitors, this is not the only cause of wildfires in the area. Work would continue to integrate the work of SFRS with local estates and other volunteer bodies. **CSB** would continue to ask about a feasibility study regarding a bridge over the A93 at Eastfield (no 146).

WJ invited Gavin Miles, Director of Planning & Place for CNPA to address the meeting. He highlighted the launch of the Cultural Heritage Fund, which would have grants of £2,500 to £10,1000 available up to February 2027 for various events and groups. The Partnership Plan would be started in 2026, and the Local Development Plan would be at the evidence report stage. CNPA would be asking communities to identify land and what might happen on that land to the benefit of the community. Sadly, he had not been able to get an update on the future of the Old Royal Station. He had met with the Deeside Resilience Group, under Rachel Halliwell, to push through projects to improve the resilience of flood and drought management. **RF** expressed frustration at the lack of progress on the Old Royal Station, however thanked Linda Drever and her team of volunteers who had opened the library on Saturday 6th December 2025 from 11am to 2pm, this will be ongoing. **LD** reported 42 visitors in the first Saturday. At present, the availability of the library had been reduced from 45 hours to 15 hours, so an extra 3 hours on a Saturday was a real bonus.

Sub-committee Reports

Housing and Planning

A Planning

BB reported that there had been 3 planning applications - 2 for forestry access on Abergeldie Estate and 1 for an outbuilding to be built in garden of The Bothy, Glengairn.

B H1

AMN reported that all had gone quiet regarding Scotia. As Scotia would be in default in late summer of 2026, Invercauld had already started to explore alternative housing plans for the land, initially with an affordable housing provider. **BB** reported no response from Scotia to emails from BCCC. **RF** asked Gavin Miles what would happen

to sites which had featured in earlier development plans but where the development had failed to come to fruition. Gavin Miles agreed that it was probably wise for Invercauld to start looking at alternative solutions, but sadly, this often meant that the likelihood of a successful outcome might be reduced, either in terms of amount of housing or likely profitability of the development.

Flooding Issues Group (FIG)

JB and **RF** have shared recent meetings on behalf of FIG and BCCC (and Mid-Deeside and Braemar Community Councils). On 13th November **JB** met with the Dee Catchment Partnership Steering Committee to present the FIG work streams and work with CBEC. On 27th November, **RF** spoke on behalf of FIG and BCCC at the Abco Infrastructure Services Committee Meeting. As he was not able to attend in person and was not permitted to speak via TEAMS, this was a difficult presentation made over the telephone. However, **CSB** felt that he had been successful in making clear the lack of support for Option 3A in the local community combined with improving relationships with officers. On 8th December, **JB** attended the Dee Resilience Strategy Group, chaired by Grant Moir of CNPA, bringing together stakeholders to evaluate how to work together to mitigate the dual climate change challenges of flood and drought. The Dee Resilience Strategy Group will look at the pros and cons of all different ways of holding water back (smoothing the flow) in the upper catchment and making recommendations to Government on how best to work together as communities, land managers and agencies to tackle the problems.

Ballater Resilience Group

LD reported that the SSEN donation of a battery pack had been received. This would allow members of the community to recharge phones etc in event of a power cut. She had also been approached for assistance in the setting up of Cromar Resilience Group. Coordinators from Ballater Resilience Group had undertaken a tabletop training exercise with Amy Blooming of Aberdeenshire Council, in which 2 AI-generated scenarios allowed coordinators to respond. Both were successfully completed and had previously been implemented by the resilience group.

BB is contacting other CCs to locate publicly accessible defibrillators so that a map might be generated which could be posted on information boards.

Economy

RF welcomed the opening of 2 new businesses on Bridge Street. He also urged everyone to use the public phone box to ensure its continued provision. It is hoped to arrange a meeting with the new factor of Balmoral Estate in the New Year and that Balmoral might be encouraged to write an article for The Eagle.

Roads & Paths

SM thanked **CSB** for her assistance in ensuring that the grit bin at Sluie Mhor would be retained. He also reported that fallen trees had been removed on footpaths round Glenmuick House. Ken Gibson was seeking quotes for repairs to signage and boggy areas on footpaths around Glenmuick House. A boggy section of the path at Glascorrie was also under review. A vandalised fingerpost on the 7 Bridges Walk was also to be repaired. **SM** asked **RF** to raise the issue of a possible footpath in the field on the Dalliefour straight. **JB** reported that a preplanning application for the bridge designed by Moxon Architects for the riverside footpath had been submitted. A request had been received for an otter survey report, prior to a full planning application being made.

7 Crathie Issues

RF had reported to Tim Stephens that the Distillery Brae remained an issue with parking on the clearway and verges still occurring. **CSB** was concerned that the flashing 20mph signs on A93 in Crathie (currently not working) might be removed as the plans showed the parking road in front of the school as a 20mph zone. She would return to Abco to ensure that this did not happen.

8 Other Reports

Abco

CSB is still chasing Abco to repair the bollard in Station Square as costs can be recovered from person who knocked it over. **CSB** asked if the ongoing issue of Aboyne Bridge closure affected Ballater. **WJ** suggested that BCCC should ask Mid Deeside CC and Birse & Ballogie CC if there was anything that BCCC could do to offer support. At present, increased traffic on the Dinnet Bridge, particularly of heavy logging lorries, raised the real concern that Dinnet Bridge might be next to fail. **JB** pointed out that Aboyne Bridge was a complex problem. The design, construction and materials used were all a result of the time it was built in 1939. Athol Bowman reported that much of the building work was completed with substandard material and not by the initial building team, who had all been recruited to the war effort. **SP** asked if there was an update on the closure of the Pass of Ballater, but **CSB** had no further information, other than it was hoped to take far less than 6 weeks to rectify the fallen trees. **SP** was surprised that there had not been concern about increased logging trucks going through the village rather than through the Pass of Ballater.

Cairngorm National Park Authority

See reports above.

Community Action Plan

Nothing to report.

Ballater (Royal Deeside) Ltd - Ballater Community Trust

RR reported that final meeting of the year would take place on 9th December. There were vacancies for directors and applications had been received, but more would be welcomed. £121,000 had been disbursed to various village events, clubs etc over the

last year. **RR** also thanked **BB** for all his work in maintaining the defibrillators in the village.

Ballater Community Enterprise

EM reported that caravan park closed at end of November and was busy throughout the month. Improvement works over the winter will include redecoration of toilet/shower facilities, road resurfacing, tree planting and installation of CCTV to improve security. Discussions are at an early stage with Abco to explore the possibility of creating a campervan Aires at other locations in the community. The Bike Storage Hub had been submitted for planning permission, and it was hoped to be completed by March 2026.

Halls

BB reported Halls continue to be well used and busy. AGM would take place on 27th January 2026.

Ballater Golf Club

WM reported that successful bingo evenings held at the Golf Club had raised over £10,000 for various causes over the year. The next evening on 19th December was for Glenmuick Church.

As a provider of 20 full-time and part-time jobs in the village, the Golf Club is keen to ensure that it remains financially viable, while reliance on membership fees and green fees can leave it vulnerable to economic fluctuations. To this end, Ballater Golf Club will seek to gain planning permission for a development of 12 low-density motorhome pitches on the site of the current putting green. The putting-green currently generates an income of £400 to £500 while costing more than that to maintain. It has been suggested that a motorhome site would generate over £40,000 for the golf club as well as generating income for the village and other businesses. At present, Ballater Caravan Park can turn away 15 motorhomes daily at peak periods. By offering the site at the golf course, this would ensure that tourists remain in the area in a managed fashion, rather than informal roadside camping. **EM-BCE** added that Ballater Caravan Park was supportive of this initiative and would be willing to offer any advice and assistance. **WJ** expressed a conflict of interest as he had submitted a quote for landscaping work and **JB** also reported membership of the golf club committee. **RF** suggested that BCCC should listen to what the community would like to happen. Ballater Golf Course was an important amenity to the village. Athol Bowman asked if the Golf Club had identified another potential site for a small putting green.

Climate Action Network

SP submitted a report. While some workstreams are being discontinued, others had been identified. The installation of a weather station on Monaltrie Avenue had been suggested as a good source of data for the school in climate change studies. **SP** in talks with **AMN** to identify potential sites for allotments.

9 Correspondence

RF was able to report that a letter of complaint to Marr Area Committee regarding BCCC had been dealt with and there would be no further action. **CSB** had reported fly-tipping at Provost Craig Road car park, and it had been removed.

10 Finance

EK reported that finances were healthy. **RF** suggested investment in a new website for BCCC.

11AOCB

RF reported that a new resident, Dot Hines, had offered her services as a harpist to any local charity event.

The meeting concluded at 20.35

The Next meeting will be held on 12th January at 19.00 to 21.00 hours in the Mike Sheridan Room, Ballater

Approved