

Birse and Ballogie Community Council

Meeting Online on 15 December 2025

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

1. Attendees

Present: - Dave Bracegirdle (DB), Cllr Ann Ross (AR); Eryn Inglis (EI); Sam Colley (SC); David Williamson DMW (Chair), Cllr Yi-pei Chou-Turvey (YCT), Davie Winton (DW)

Apologies:- Duncan Caird (DC)

2. Minutes of Meeting on 27th October 2025

These were proposed by DB and seconded by DW.

3. Treasurer's Report

DW confirmed that funds remain largely unchanged from the previous month at 30.09.25 stood at £3103.14.

4. Ballogie Nursery

Whilst there is no confirmed threat to Ballogie Nursery, the concern is that we might expect a further attempt to mothball or close in summer 2026. In anticipation of this, there have been further discussions with AR, SC (Chair of PTA), DMW and Guy Haslam (Chair of Finzean CC) to maintain alignment on this issue. SC reported on the campaign to market Ballogie nursery in the wider area, hold open days and coffee mornings to ensure higher numbers in the coming year. Guy Haslam has sent emails with explicit support and contribution from B2C2 and the PTA Chair, to the director of education to understand the current position. A clear request was that any decisions are ultimately taken by elected councillors rather than as an operational decision by the Director of Education. Parents have in early December submitted their nursery preferences. The directive from the Scottish Government on mothballing and closure of schools was expected in the near future. An Education sub committee meeting will be held at the end of January where Guy Haslam will attend and speak on behalf of the Ballogie Nursery. DMW is out of the country at that time.

5. Aboyne Bridge

The latest Aberdeenshire Council communique on the bridge status was disappointing news. Further investigation on the bridge since the repair scope was approved revealed more issues and therefore a need to revise the forward plan. YCT's understanding is Aboyne Bridge's retains its position on the priority list. Regarding the budget, officers and councillors are working on it, and YCT stated her intention with support of her colleagues on the administration group to allocate sufficient funding to progress work on this bridge. At this moment the proposed forward plan is however

unknown and this is critical to the budget allocation. The expectation is that a further public meeting will be held in early 2026 to explain the position and the proposed way forward.

ACTION YCT/ AR

DMW raised the issue from resident David Simpson. QUOTE “Having to manage our life around the bridge's closure to traffic, is proving very time consuming, costly and very hazardous. To compound that, the road and pavement between St Mary’s Well house and the bridge has not being maintained over the period since the bridge closed. The path is becoming more difficult to navigate due to it being over grown with weed/nettles and people are starting to walk on the road at this dangerous bend also the salt and grit on the roadside has been there since last winter causing drain blockages. I would have thought that the bridge and the small length of path at the south side of the river should be kept to the standard of that of the north side. Is it possible you could advise on how we get the said pavements kept in a reasonable condition?” UNQUOTE YCT had been on the bridge during the previous week and noted that extra grit bins had not been added. YCT stated that she will follow up with the officers to promote actions to assist the communities across the bridge to cope with the situation.

ACTION YCT

6. Parking/ Congestion at Potarch

As discussed in previous meetings, on certain days during this summer’s hot weather period, the Potarch area attracted a very large number of visitors. Local resident Tracey Stanton raised the concern initially about the number of parked cars, which were blocking access to her property whilst also restricting access up the road to Shooting Greens. It was agreed that AR would follow up and a meeting had been arranged with the Principal Landscape Services Officer in mid November. This meeting was called off due to snow. A second attempt is planned for 8th January.

ACTION: AR/ DMW

7. Potarch toilets

The provision of adequate toilet facilities is seen as an essential element for the Potarch green amenity. The permanent toilet block at Potarch has been closed for a significant number of years. AR had facilitated engagement with the council with a view to discussing a way forward to explore whether the “permanent” facilities can be re-instated at some point in the future. A response had been received and as things stand Aberdeenshire Council is unlikely to action any reinstatement. The main issue appeared to be a problem with electrical equipment condition and obsolescence. Based on the possibility that there may be avenues the Community council may be willing to explore that the council might not consider, DMW had requested details of the existing block ie construction drawings, details of the electrical system and supply, water supply etc.

ACTION AR/ DMW

8. Emergency Resilience

A Resilience leads meeting was held on 28th October. The Resilience Plan has been updated and the key table with local coordinators identified key distributed using the community email addresses during November.

9. Information Request – Motorhome and Campervan Overnight Parking

Aberdeenshire Council approached B2C2 Chair to provide some informal local input into the issue of the provision of overnight facilities for motorhomes and campervan. The Aberdeenshire Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan (STIDP) was finalised in 2023. One of the recommendations in the STIDP was to consider the provision of new and varied facilities for motorhome and campervan users in Aberdeenshire, particularly around the concept of 'aires' - lower cost, less formal facilities – to provide choice and to encourage more responsible overnight parking. There was no previous awareness of this plan amongst the B2C2 committee but the general view was that there was no fundamental opposition to this. Should such an aire proposal be resurrected in future, B2C2 would expect some input.

10. Grit Bins

B2C2 had previously been informed that grit bins would no longer be maintained and may be removed. EI had previously indicated that her immediate area in Marywell wished to retain and maintain the local grit bin. The deadline of December 19th was highlighted and EI would follow up if interest remained.

ACTION EI

11. Neighbourhood Watch

The WhatsApp group seems to be working well. Currently there are 76 subscribers and it has proved to be useful in engaging the community to provide action on areas of concern.

12. Communications

a. Notice Boards

The old Ballogie notice board was recovered. DB has completed refurbishment. The intent is to position this notice board in the Potarch area probably on the toilet block. This would give us 3 community notice boards.

**ACTION DB/
DMW**

b. Website/ Facebook

DC continues to maintain the website.

No new actions re Facebook. Helen Jackson continues to successfully operate B2C2 Facebook site on behalf of B2C2 committee. Helen's continuing support is much appreciated.

13. Police & Road Safety

Nothing to report.

14. Community Hospitals

AR reiterated her belief that community hospitals are in the heart of our community and that we need to maintain a watchful eye on any proposals which may threaten them. No further action required at this time.

15. Westhill & Echt – Aberdeenshire Council Funding Share

Westhill & Echt CC are leading a campaign to secure more equitable funding for Aberdeenshire. They specifically asked for our support to a prepared statement on this. It was agreed that we can support this as it stands. AR provided some explanation of the role of COSLA and the negotiation. DMW undertook to pass on these observations to WECC.

ACTION DMW

16. NESCCC

There is a group of North east Community councils who are trying to slow down and frustrate certain renewable energy developments in the area. B2C2 has not attending either of the two meetings held in Stonehaven. There has been limited B2C2 discussion on windfarms as this is not seen as a hot issue for this community. There is an understanding that more renewable energy development is in the wider national interest.

17. Next Meeting – Monday 9th February 2026 at 1930 Birse Hall

18. Proposed Future Meetings – all 1930 at Birse Hall

- 9th Feb 26
- 20th April 26 ...previously 13th April
- 29th Jun 2026 (AGM) ..previously planned for 15th June
- 31st Aug 2026