

Birse and Ballogie Community Council

Meeting at Birse Hall on 20 April 2026

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting

1. Attendees

Present: - Dave Bracegirdle (DB), Sam Colley (SC); David Williamson DMW (Chair), Eryn Inglis (EI); Yvonne Allan (YA); Cllr Yi-pei Chou-Turvey (YCT)

Apologies:- Duncan Caird (DC) Davie Winton (DW); Paul Montgomery (PM)

2. Minutes of Meeting on 9th February 2026

These were proposed by DB and seconded by SC.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer DW was not present but had provided a report. The funds were down during the month from £3470 to £2382. This was partly due to our commitment to make necessary expenditure on the defibrillators at Ballogie and Birse Hall totalling £490. The main expenditures were:-

- Insurance £67.88
- Annual Data Protection £47
- Defibrillators £490
- Hall Hire £180
- Microsoft 365 subscription
- Wix website - £142

Given the Aberdeenshire Council directive on Administration grant DMW and DW have generated a budget for 2026/27. This budget was tabled and approved.

4. Aboyne Bridge

DMW updated the committee on the developments since the two drop in sessions were held in Birse Hall (29 Jan) and Aboyne (4 Feb). Tim Stephen had previously made an offer of a meeting with B2C2 committee. However DMW attended an MDCC meeting attended by Tim Sephen on 26th Feb. At that meeting, there was a general consensus that there were significant advantages if all the interested parties in the bridge issue worked together to provide Aberdeenshire council with a single community focus point. Subsequently DMW had met with MDCC Martin Odgen and Fix Aboyne Bridge (FAB) group on several occasions to discuss how a single grouping might work and to develop and agree terms of reference. The outcome of these meetings has been to generate draft terms of reference for a group known as ABAC (Aboyne Bridge Action Committee). The proposed primary objectives of ABAC were:-

- a. To provide a forum for MDCC, B2C2, FAB and other community groups to work together, to cooperate, and ensure consistent messaging with a view to achieving the best overall outcome.
- b. To achieve and maintain alignment, discuss issues and where possible reach agreement.
- c. To mitigate the impact of the closure until such time as the crossing is reopened.
- d. To gather feedback from the community and pass such feedback to the council on mitigation and proposals.
- e. To monitor the performance of Aberdeenshire Council on all matters regarding the bridge closure.
- f. To provide the council with a single point of contact for the council in connection with the Aboyne Bridge.
- g. In respect of delivering a solution to the closure of Aboyne Bridge, to coordinate actions to advance and facilitate the solution on behalf of the local community.

The proposed membership of ABAC would be:-

- Mid Deeside Community Council (MDCC)
- B2C2
- Fix Aboyne Bridge Group (FAB)
- Aboyne Business Association
- MDCC Local Place Plan (LPP)

The draft TOR was be discussed further in a meeting with Tim Stephen planned for Monday 27th April. DMW undertook to keep the B2C2 committee informed on further developments. DMW was willing to continue representing B2C2 on ABAC although was aware of the forward potential workload in ABAC. DMW was very willing to step aside from this role should any of the committee wish to become involved.

5. 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 or later. Last year the threat to “mothball” the nursery was averted late in the process due to a council decision to await the reissue of guidance by the Scottish Government. This guidance was issued in December 2025. Further discussions have been ongoing with AR, SC (Chair of PTA), DMW and Guy Haslam (Chair of Finzean CC) to maintain alignment on this issue. There was also a collective desire to improve the current nursery offering at Ballogie Nursery. The director of Education and Child Services will put forward a revised Aberdeenshire Temporary Closure guidance for Primary Schools and Early learning and Childcare settings at a council meeting on April 30th. Without understanding the content the new guidance it was decided that we should take the opportunity to speak at the debate to ensure that the issues facing Ballogie Nursery and Finzean school were considered. Sam Colley will represent this group at that meeting.

ACTION: SC

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. 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 was planned for 8th January but due to snow it was held online. The notes and actions from that meeting are still awaited and DMW agreed to follow up. In view of the time elapse, DMW proposed that a further meeting to discuss the way forward will be requested.

ACTION: DMW

7. Potarch Toilets

The provision of adequate toilet facilities is seen as an essential element for the Potarch green amenity. These are currently provided using a Portaloo. The permanent toilet block at Potarch has been closed since 2010. The issue was discussed in depth at the previous meeting and we now understand the status. There were no immediate ideas about how this could be taken forward.

8. Local Place Plans (LPP)

The possibility of B2C2 generating a LPP was discussed. It was agreed that we should keep this under review. A suggestion was made that Ballogie Association had been developing plans and that B2C2 should liaise with them on this matter.

ACTION SC/ DMW

9. Emergency Resilience

There had been no major incidents in the previous period. In November there was a drill to test out radio systems. In the event this test was not entirely successful. It was useful in highlighting deficiencies. It was agreed at the time that the drill be repeated but this has not happened. It was agreed that we need to test our systems in the "quiet" period. DB took an action to organise a repeat test in the coming period.

ACTION DB

10. Defibrillator Maintenance

B2C2 has three defibrillators in the community. Aberdeenshire council have been clear that we should not use the Administrative Grant for maintenance of defibrillators. New pads and a new battery had been purchased for the defibrillator at Birse Hall. 2 sets of pad had also been purchased for Ballogie. B2C2 will continue to seek funding for these replacements.

ACTION DMW

11. Birse hall

A commitment had been made to secure the hire of Birse Hall for future B2C2 and ad hoc Resilience Group meetings.

12. 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. EI had concluded that the most pragmatic solution was for the local residents in the area to organise grit placement on a good neighbour basis.

13. Neighbourhood Watch

The WhatsApp group seems to be working well. Currently there are 79 subscribers and it has proved to be useful in engaging the community to provide action on areas of concern.

14. Communications

a. Notice Boards

The old Ballogie notice board was recovered. DB has completed refurbishment and installed this notice board in the Potarch area on the permanent toilet block. B2C2 expressed their appreciation of DB's efforts.

b. Facebook

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.

c. Website

The old B2C2 website has been discontinued. This old website was very difficult to maintain and the technical support by Scottish Tech Army had been discontinued. It had previously been agreed that given the fact that the costs associated with generating and maintaining a website were admissible under the administrative grant that B2C2 should generate a new website using a WIX subscription. DMW had taken out a WIX subscription. A new website is under development.

ACTION DMW/DC

15. Police

B2C2 had been approached by Sergeant Pete McAndie, who had recently taken up a post at Banchory Police Station. Pete had been invited to this meeting but had declined because of shift duty. B2C2 had received the Marr Community Policing Team winter 2025 report and this was distributed to the full community email listing. The single comment on this report received from the community was positive as was the general opinion of B2C2 committee.

16. Road Issue

Re Road Issue at Birsemohr, AB34 5EP, this defect has been logged in the system. It has been given a 'Programme' rating and has an estimated repair date of 05/09/26

17. Westhill & Echt – Aberdeenshire Council Funding Share

Westhill & Echt CC, who are leading a campaign to secure more equitable funding for Aberdeenshire, had provided a recent update. Progress on this had been affected by the imminent Scottish elections. Basically no significant progress to report at this stage.

18. Next Meeting and AGM – Monday 15th June 2026 at 1930 Birse Hall

19. Proposed Future Meeting Timetable – all 1930 at Birse Hall

- 15th Jun 2026 (AGM)
- 24th Aug 2026
- 2nd Nov 2026
- 11 Jan 2027