

**BENHOLM & JOHNHAVEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&JCC) Minutes of Meeting**

**Business Meeting No 480 Wednesday 10th September 2025 7.00pm – In Person Meeting at the Village Hall**

**Present:** Michael Bennett (MB) Chair, Charis Duthie (CD) Treasurer, Linda Duncan (LD), Carol Hutton (CH), Maureen Sangster (MS), Susan Madden (SM)

**Aberdeenshire Councillors:** Cllr George Carr (GC), Cllr Alison Evison (AE)

**Members of the public:** 3 attended meeting

Agenda Item		Action
1. <b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTIONS</b>	MB welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. <b>APOLOGIES</b>	None	
3. <b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING No 478</b>	MB went through Minutes of last meeting for accuracy. MS proposed approval of Minutes & LD seconded.	
4. <b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	<p><b>a) Outstanding Actions from Minutes 479 that are not on the agenda:</b></p> <p><b>Interim Election for new members of B&amp;JCC</b> – MB reported that 4 people have applied to become members of B&amp;JCC and so far, he can confirm that Aberdeenshire Council have received three completed applications. No ballot will be needed. This is very positive news for B&amp;JCC and all going well our new members will join us at our next meeting.</p> <p><b>Community Payback Team</b> – LD has been back in touch with Lesley Robertson but there has still been no response. Cllr. GC said that he had requested that the Community Payback Team come and clear the weeds from the pavement along the edge of the A92 and is awaiting a response. MB is now going to get in touch with Kincardine &amp; Mearns Area Manager Tim Stephen to see if he can help to move this along.</p> <p><b>B&amp;JCC Website</b> – MB reported that one of our potential new CC members is keen to take this on.</p> <p><b>b) Community Policing Report</b></p> <p>MB shared relevant sections with those present at the meeting. MB suggested that this could be put on our website in the future.</p> <p><b>c) Roads &amp; Safety</b></p> <p>MB reported that Mairi Gougeon had written to Aberdeenshire Council asking them to consider the request from B&amp;JCC for a 40mph speed limit on the A92 from Benholm Mill to Balandro Loan. The response from Aberdeenshire Council was that it does not meet with the criteria for a 40mph zone. The Councillors were asked to explain what the criteria were – GC said that there was a points system in place which looks at exits, schools etc. He said there was an Aberdeenshire Council Policy in place for speed limits – MB asked if he could be forwarded a copy. GC &amp; AE said that Arbuthnott Community Council were pushing for a 40mph speed limit on a stretch of road in Arbuthnott and it would be worthwhile getting in touch with them. AE stated that work was to begin soon on reducing the speed limit to 40mph at the top of Gourdon following a push from Gourdon Community Council to get this in place. MB said perhaps it would be a good idea for local CCs to come together to discuss road safety issues. AE said this had been attempted before. A resident suggested that perhaps it would be better to have 40mph from Bervie to avoid all these changes in speed limits. MB will contact other CCs to discuss further.</p>	<p>(MB)</p> <p>(LD) (MB)</p>

	<p>There have been two accidents on this stretch of road recently – one at the corner before Lathallan and one at the top of the road this morning which has knocked down the road signs and tourism signs for Johnshaven. SM asked who would be responsible for putting them back up. GC said it would be Aberdeenshire Council, but it would also involve insurance company of driver.</p> <p><b>d) Transport</b></p> <p>LD reported that Aberdeenshire Council are to provide a shelter at the bus stop on New Road – it will not be a completely covered shelter as there is not enough room, but it will be a canopy type which will provide some protection from the elements. LD also reported that the Bus Development Fund have given permission for the request made by B&amp;JCC and Mill of Benholm Enterprise to move the bus stops at Benholm Mill to enable the X7 bus to stop and this is expected to be delivered within this financial year.</p> <p>LD has booked to attend the KDP Rural Transport Workshop on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September at Viewmount, Stonehaven.</p> <p><b>e) Grant Application Updates</b></p> <p>CD reported that she is planning to submit an updated application to Tullo for the War Memorial Garden and wall repairs following on from extensive work trying unsuccessfully to get funding from other organisations as recommended by Tullo. An application is also being submitted for the proposed village storage facility at Wairds Park initially for architect’s fees and planning permission costs.</p> <p>MS has now spent the Tullo grant money awarded to the Friends of the Cemetery group and shed is being put up this week. Once work is completed a final report will be submitted to Tullo.</p> <p>Badminton Club Grant from Tullo is almost all spent and new sessions are to start in October. Following the success of last year’s sessions the adult sessions which are paid for will be used to fund the children’s classes which are free.</p> <p>Winter Warmer Lunches still have some money left over but this will be used to cover this year’s lunches.</p> <p>Railway Steps and Herd Crescent Fencing – work is due to commence on this project.</p> <p><b>f) Conservation &amp; Infrastructure</b></p> <p><u>Northeast Convention of Community Councils</u> – MB read out a unified statement regarding concerns over renewable energy projects and major energy infrastructure in Aberdeenshire, Angus &amp; Aberdeen City and asked B&amp;JCC if they agreed with the statement. Everyone agreed with the statement. There is to be a meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 11.30am in Stonehaven Town Hall which MB will attend.</p> <p>LD reported that she had attended the Save Our Mearns meeting at Westerton Farm on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2025.</p> <p><u>Coastal Erosion Update</u> – MB reported that there had been a disappointing response to setting up a group to tackle coastal erosion issues with only two residents prepared to help. The consensus was to try to get a survey of the coastline done to identify areas which are of most concern. MB has looked at old photographs to try and compare what coastline was like before and where most erosion has occurred. A journalist from the Guardian has been in touch with B&amp;JCC regarding coastal erosion and she is writing an article which will appear in the Guardian soon. SM stated that she had previously sent old newspaper clippings to JB who had been looking into the Parkie Path area, and she will resend to MB. SM also suggested that B&amp;JCC should take photos of key areas now before the winter storms and then take photos in the spring to compare. It was thought this was a good idea. MB also suggested drone footage would be useful and would approach a resident who has a drone. CD asked if Aberdeenshire Council had a surveyor who could come out and survey the coastline – GC said to get in touch with Gavin Penman.</p>	<p>(MB)</p> <p>(LD)</p> <p>(CD)</p> <p>(MB)</p> <p>(MB)</p>
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	<p><u>Coastal Path Update</u> – CD stated that MERCHAT (Mearns Coastal Heritage Trail) have posted a Summer 2025 Update for the Kincardine section of the Coastal Path on Facebook. There has been progress with the development of NESCAT (The North East Scotland Coastal Trust) which now has charitable status. There have been several volunteer days recently which have been focussed on path maintenance and cutting back growth with scythes.</p> <p><u>Ship Hotel (Save Our Ship – SOS)</u> There has just been an excellent article published in the Scotsman on the plans to reopen the Ship Hotel as a Community Pub. The SOS group are making progress with their plans and there are going to be shares available for community members to buy.</p> <p><b>g) Good Housekeeping</b></p> <p><u>Cauld Well Steps</u> - CH expressed concern that there were no railings/handrails on the top steps leading down from Castle Street to the top of East Street/Cauld Well and no barrier at the top. She said that it made them difficult to navigate and they were dangerous with no handrail. She also thought there should be some form of barrier along the top to prevent cars mistakenly trying to go down there. SM pointed out that these steps had been like that all her life (over 60 years) and there had never been any rails or barriers at the top. They can get very slippery in the wintertime and therefore it would probably be better if there was a handrail at least on one set of steps. Cllr GC recommended getting in touch with Murray Swapp at Aberdeenshire Council.</p> <p><u>Weeds On Roadsides</u> - MB spoke about the state of the roadsides both along the edge of the A92 approaching Johnshaven and on the village streets. There are weeds everywhere and with no weedkilling by Aberdeenshire Council taking place the situation is getting worse, and many areas have now become overgrown and untidy. A member of the public said that she and her husband had cleared weeds and leaves from the side of New Road as otherwise the drainage at the side of the road becomes blocked and this causes water to go over the road which then ices up in the colder weather. Another resident stated that the right of way at Largies Steps from Seaview Terrace to Main Street was also in a state which was a shame as it had been cleared and replanted at considerable expense a few years ago but due to no maintenance work being carried out it is a mess again – he said it was a waste of money if there was no one going to maintain it.</p> <p><u>Cemetery Shed &amp; Friends of Cemetery Tullo Grant</u> – MS reported that she had purchased the shed and equipment with the Tullo grant money, and the receipts had been given to CD. She said that her brother Mike &amp; SM's husband David were putting the shed up in the next week now that Aberdeenshire Council had laid the slabs for it to sit on. MS was meeting Neil West from Aberdeenshire Council on Monday to discuss her plans and get his approval.</p> <p><u>Johnshaven War Memorial</u> - After Tullo rejected the grant application for tidying up the area surrounding the War Memorial and repairing the crumbling walls CD followed their recommendations to try elsewhere for funding. She contacted HAMP (Historic Asset Management Project) and the War Memorial Trust as recommended but both said they were unable to help with funding. Therefore B&amp;JCC are applying to Tullo again for funding in an effort to get this project completed. CD has completed the application form and has provided all the evidence that she has tried unsuccessfully to get funding from recommended possible sources.</p> <p><u>New CC Noticeboards</u> - LD &amp; CD have been looking at purchasing new noticeboards for posting information on – one for in the village and one for Benholm. CD to apply to Tullo for funding. The old noticeboards are falling into disrepair and need to be replaced.</p> <p><u>Road Signs on Main Street &amp; Seaview Terrace</u> - CH stated that several of the street signs have become very faded and are now virtually unreadable. She asked who should be contacted about getting these replaced. Cllr GC said to contact Tom O'Connor.</p>	<p>(CD)</p> <p>(MB)</p> <p>(MB)</p> <p>(MS)</p> <p>(CD)</p> <p>(LD)</p> <p>(CD)</p>
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	<p>MB to take photos of the faded signs. It was pointed out that these signs are important for visitors to the village to navigate their way around and for people to look at where their ancestors once lived.</p> <p><u>Back Road Kerb Changes</u> - MB reported that he had written to Aberdeenshire Council to suggest the proposed changes to the kerb at the end of Back Road going on to Balandro Loan to make exit easier for bigger vehicles. He had received an email back today saying no as there was a lighting column in the way. This was disputed and it appears that they have misunderstood the proposal. It was suggested that a site visit should be asked for to discuss this further. MB to reply and ask for a site visit.</p> <p><b><u>h) Community Resilience</u></b></p> <p><u>Village Storage Update</u> – CD has been putting together a funding application to Tullo on behalf of village groups to build a community storage building at Wairds Park. This application will cover the initial costs of getting an architect to draw up plans and to get planning permission. This would be followed by further fundraising to raise money for the building itself and a building warrant. At the moment nothing has happened with the proposal to sell the Masonic Lodge and Don Marr had no update on the situation.</p> <p><u>Allotments</u> - Nothing to report on the allotments. MB pointed out that he thought the lease for the allotments was for 15 years and that B&amp;JCC need to look at how much time is left on the lease.</p> <p><u>Community Resilience Conference</u> - MB to attend on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025 &amp; report back to B&amp;JCC.</p> <p><u>Grit Bin Removals &amp; Snow Warden Scheme</u> - following on from objections by CCs throughout Aberdeenshire Cllr GC stated that the proposals to remove grit bins from certain areas of communities has been paused. It has been proposed that consultation must take place with local communities. The consensus was that this whole scheme had not been thought through properly and that the decision makers had clearly not visited any of the areas that they proposed to remove grit bins from. Cllr GC said that there needs to be site visits and discussions with communities as one size doesn't fit all.</p>	<p>(MB)</p> <p>(MB)</p> <p>(CD)</p> <p>(MB)</p>
<p><b>5. CORRESPONDENCE NOT ON AGENDA</b></p>	<p><u>KDP Bulletin</u> – the latest KDP (Kincardineshire Development Partnership) Bulletin can be viewed on their website. SM stated that KDP have agreed to apply for funding to undertake a SCOTO “Press Pause”(Scottish Community Tourism) initiative in the coastal area from Catterline to St Cyrus. If successful once this had been carried out it would result in the development of a community-led tourism network with local museums, groups and organisations working together in a much more collaborative way to promote our local area and all that it has to offer.</p> <p><u>Ness Energy From Waste Facility</u> Following a period of closure for several months due to disputes Cllr GC &amp; Cllr AE reported that situation had now been resolved and the facility was now up and running again. During the period of closure non-recyclable waste had been going to landfill.</p>	
<p><b>6. TREASURER'S REPORT</b></p>	<p>CD reported that B&amp;JCC have £976 in our Current Account (bank charges £21.75) and £15,130 in our Savings Account (interest £21). Most of the money is ringfenced for CC projects – Winter Warmer lunches, Friends of Cemetery, Badminton, Website and Railway Path Upgrade. Aberdeenshire Council have used a different method of calculating our annual grant. They have also indicated the sorts of uses their grant should be put to so that there is transparency.</p>	<p>(CD)</p>

<b>7. ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL FUNDING SHARE</b>	<p>MB shared information from an email from Westhill &amp; Elrick Community Council which had been sent to all 71 CCs in Aberdeenshire Council Area. Westhill and Elrick Community Council propose a joint, non-political effort by all Aberdeenshire community councils to address the area's lower per-capita funding compared with other local authorities. The plan is to gather support, then hold a summit (before end of 2025) with all councils and local MSPs to press for a fairer financial settlement for Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. Each council may share local examples of how underfunding is affecting services, though this is optional. MB asked if B&amp;JCC members wanted to support this initiative and it was unanimously agreed to support the proposal. MB is to contact them and say that B&amp;JCC supports their idea and that we await further developments.</p>	(MB)
<b>8. PLANNING UPDATES</b>	<p>LD reported there were none to be looked at.</p>	
<b>9. NEW BUSINESS</b>	<p><u>Legal Status of B&amp;JCC – Unincorporated Association</u>  MB has been looking into this further as he has concerns about the legal status of CC. Cllr AE suggested that he gets in touch with the legal department of Aberdeenshire Council to discuss this further. The consensus was that CCs need to have more protection but it needs to be a less complicated process than it appears to be at present.</p>	(MB)
<b>10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	<p><u>Save Our Mearns Meeting</u>  LD attended the Community Meeting – Stop The Pylons at Westerton Farm on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September arranged by Save Our Mearns. This meeting provided an update on the campaign against the proposals to erect huge pylons across the Scottish countryside by SSEN and the plans submitted to Aberdeenshire Council to build a substation at Fetteresso forest and other associated infrastructure in the Mearns area. One real area for concern about the whole process is that the voices of the public are not being respected.</p> <p><u>LD Standing Down From B&amp;JCC</u>  LD has decided to stand down from her role as a full member of B&amp;JCC but she will continue as an associate member. Everyone on B&amp;JCC agreed with this proposal. MB proposed LD become an associate member &amp; CD seconded. LD will continue to attend transport meetings and will still represent B&amp;JCC at Tullo &amp; Twinshiels Funding meetings.</p>	
<b>11. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>	<p>A concerned resident reported that an Aberdeenshire Council grass-cutting vehicle had been observed going at high speed along Back Road beside the school. It was thought to be driving at a dangerous speed not appropriate for our village streets and especially in an area where there are children going to and from school. Cllr AE to bring this up at Area Meeting.</p> <p>Another resident stated that the thorny bush beside the village telephone box has become extremely overgrown again and obstructs pedestrians coming down Station Brae on to Main Street view of the road to cross safely. This bush has previously been cut down by volunteers but it is the responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council as they claimed it had been planted by them along with the bushes in the War Memorial garden and they were not pleased at volunteers taking action.</p>	
<b>12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	<p><b>Next Meeting:  CC Business Meeting 481 - Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.</b></p>	

Approved: ..... Seconded: ..... Date: .....