

BENHOLM & JOHNHAVEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&JCC) Minutes of Meeting
AGM No 49 Wednesday 11th June 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), Susan Madden (SM), Maureen Sangster (MS)

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

Members of the Public: 8 present

Agenda Item		Action
1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS	MB welcomed everyone to the AGM and members of B&JCC introduced themselves.	
2. APOLOGIES	Apologies from Craig Simpson & Alison Millard	
3. MINUTES OF AGM No 48 JUNE 2024	The Minutes of AGM No 48 were proposed by LD and seconded by CD.	
4. ANNUAL REPORT	<p>MB presented the Chairperson's Annual Report:</p> <p>First, I would like to pay tribute to our late Secretary, Joann Beattie who sadly died recently. Joanne was a determined promoter of Johnshaven heritage and served on the community council as well as other groups. Joanne will be missed by many.</p> <p>As I was preparing this report I was reflecting on what a fantastic place Benholm and Johnshaven is to live and work. Benholm and Johnshaven is thriving with individuals and groups that get involved in working for the benefit of both residents and visitors, e.g. Mill of Benholm Enterprise, Community Cafe, SHARK, Horticultural Society, RNLI, Coastal Path Group, Johnshaven Heritage Hub Museum, Wairds Park, Community Garden Group, Fish Festival, and of course the newly formed Save Our Ship group (the most well attended inaugural meeting I've ever seen or attended), and many more.</p> <p>Not forgetting the business that make Benholm and Johnshaven what it is, the Anchor Hotel, The Hidden Treasure Cafe, the Village Shop, The Lobster Shop, Starfish Studios and many more.</p> <p>We do have challenges of course, our working relationship with Aberdeenshire Council is at times tense, the sea is nibbling away at our coastline, the constant need to go with "cap in hand" for grants or other funding to get things done, persuading individuals to give time and energy to their community council is ever a problem, to name just a few.</p> <p>There are so many individuals, groups and organisations within our small community all contributing in so many ways in making this a vibrant community to be proud of and makes Benholm and Johnshaven such a special place to live and or work in. Given the state of the World outside of Benholm and Johnshaven we have a lot to be proud of and to be thankful for. We are so lucky to live here.</p>	

The current Benholm and Johnshaven Community Council came into being in September of 2024, following a change in the election procedure administered by Aberdeenshire Council, six full members were elected for 3 years, and two co-opted members were appointed, plus three Associate Members for specific areas of community work. The two co-opted members became full members following serving 6 months on the community council. One of these members subsequently stood down from the community council. Currently we have 6 community councillors out of a possible 9 and one will be leaving in September.

Acknowledgments

Thanks, on behalf of Benholm and Johnshaven Community Council to the residents of Benholm and Johnshaven, It's the people after all that make a community, so thank you.

I would also like to thank all members past and present of B&JCC for their hard work over the past nine or so months and for the support and advice they have given me as Chair, thank you.

Thanks, are also due to our ward councillors for attending our meetings and for the work they do behind the scenes to support the work of the community council and the advice they offer. Thank you.

A special mention of Johnshaven Primary School as having such a school in Johnshaven is so good for family life and attracting young people to live in the area. Worthy of note is the engagement of the school pupils of the school in putting up posters encouraging dog owners to clear up after their dog.

The community Councils work on encouraging dog owners to clear up after their pets is an ongoing issue and generally having little impact on a minority of owners. Despite providing a source of poop bags placed in the boxes around Johnshaven for use if necessary. We would like to thank Neil & Alyson Wilkie for stocking up these boxes diligently.

Achievements

As one community councillor wrote to me: "To be honest, just surviving is an achievement." I echo those words, but I hope over the remainder of 2025 and into 2026 we will do better.

We could be accused of taking on too much and I agree with that accusation if it were said, but who else is going to get things done!

Grant funding for a few B&JCC projects, including:

Christmas lights (over £8000 raised in last 5 years)

Winter Lunches (supporting Community Café Group in providing these)

Funding for tools and a shed for Cemetery (supporting the Friends of the Cemetery group)

Badminton for Juniors (supporting the initiative to provide badminton lessons for juniors)

Starting to source alternative Storage Facilities for community groups and applying for grants (supporting Benholm & Johnshaven Horticultural Society (Hortus), Fish Festival, Christmas - Lights Group, Village Hall and Football club).

Applying for grants to repair the wall around the War Memorial and Memorial gardens. Quotes sought for the work. Funding grants applied for to provide Steps on the Railway Path (at Wairds Park, Herd Crescent and repair Herd Crescent fencing).

The provision of Poop bags for dog owners to pick up after their dog and these are paid for by CC funds.

Planning Applications

We scrutinize and if necessary, respond to Planning Applications on behalf of the Community.

We objected to and assisted in preventing unsuitable planning permission for buildings which would have had a negative effect on Benholm.

We are supporting and helping to preventing irreparable damage to Fetteresso forest by SSEN.

Phone Box at Johnshaven

'Finally getting BT to reconnect our red Telephone box beside the shop as it had not worked for a number of years It still needs to be painted though.

The overgrown bushes adjacent to the phone box have been cut back. It is still an ambition of ours to remove the shrubs and have chuckies and planters placed there.

20mph consultation

The CC are asked to comment on this and other Aberdeenshire Council initiatives.

Speed Limits

The community council is working at getting a review and hopefully a speed reduction of the current 60mph speed limit on the A92 as it passes through Benholm and Johnshaven at certain locations.

Baron's Pade.is also on our list to have a speed limit reduction put in place.

Coastal Erosion

A meeting was organised to get interested residence, in particular those close to the seafront, in one room to begin the process of defending our little piece of coastline which is being nibbled away. A small group has been set up (yet to have its first meeting) to begin the more detailed planning to take coastal erosion and sea defences forward. While the meeting was well attended the repose from individuals to come forward to join the smaller detailed planning group was disappointing.

Benholm & Johnshaven CC are represented at various committees

- Tullo & Twinshiels
- Attending meetings of Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP)
- Attending Aberdeenshire Transport Forum.
- Attending Aberdeenshire Community Councils' Forum

- Attending CCs against the SSEN proposals.

Support for Other Groups and Organisations

The CC also supports other Community Activities e.g. the SOS (Save Our Ship) group, Community Garden, Coastal Path (erosion repairs after storm damage and prevention of further erosion), Community Café.

We also support our flourishing Allotment group and help with oversight (thanks also to Emma Elliot and Craig Simpson).

We assist with Planning Permission applications (e.g. playpark equipment in Wairds Park, which reduces the fee payable).

Not So Good:

Resilience strategy

Failed to continue and complete the good work that started on this.

Website

It was agreed at an earlier community council meeting to go ahead and create a website., while research has been undertaken no firm action to create a website has taken place. The question has been raised do we really need a website?

Poor attendance of Residents to our CC Meetings

Despite attempts at making our meeting more relevant and less intimidating residents see little advantage in attending our meetings which is a great shame. We need to do more.

Overhanging trees

Overhanging trees on New Road obscuring the road lighting and a hazard to high-sided vehicles. While one householder has cut back the tree on his land another landowner is still to do so.

Rights of Way

Utilising the Community Payback Scheme. Weeding, tidying up and re-varnishing the Rights of Way signs in certain locations. Despite our best efforts we still have no progress with the community payback scheme organisers.

A glimpse into the future

- Recruiting new full members is a priority over the summer months and into early Autumn.
- Using our ability to have associate members for specific projects is worthy of exploration aimed mainly at individuals that have specific skills and knowledge but do not have the inclination or time to take on full time roles within the community Council e.g. coastal erosion
- Complete more of our to do list.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Improve our communications with residents. As mentioned above it was decided some time ago to create a website, and that will be revisited. · Perhaps a newsletter to be distributed every three or four months might be worthy of consideration. · Increase our use of social media. · Work harder on recruiting younger people onto the community council. <p>I think that's enough, thank you.</p>	
<p>5. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS</p>	<p>CD presented the Treasurer's Report Financial accounts and activities of the Benholm & Johnshaven Community Council for the year ending April 2025.</p> <p>Financial Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total incoming resources for 2025: £5,305, up from £4,069 in 2024. ● Net movement in funds: £3,646, compared to £3,078 in 2024. ● Balances carried forward: £9,470 as of April 5, 2025. <p>Income Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aberdeenshire Council Grant: £697.00 (2025) vs. £554.00 (2024). The increase in 2025 is due to refund of Insurance for 23-24 (£97) ● Allotment Fees: £200.00 (consistent across both years). ● Tullo-related grant income includes Winter Warmer Lunches (£2,980), Badminton (£673), Cemetery (£754). <p>Expenditure Breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total expenditure for 2025: £1,659, up from £990 in 2024. ● Major expenses include CC Village Hall Hire (£513), Dog Waste Bags (£150), and CC Insurance (£165). The CC Insurance will be refunded by Aberdeenshire Council in our next Grant. ● Surplus for the year: £3,646, compared to £3,078 in 2024. <p>Grant Funds</p> <p>We have been very fortunate to receive grants from the Tullo and Twinshiels Community Fund for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winter Warmer Lunches, run by the Community Café group; ● Junior Badminton sessions, run by David Pittendreigh ● Tools and a shed, to support the Friends of Johnshaven Cemetery <p>In addition, over the past 8 years, we have spent nearly £9000 on Christmas lights, using funds from the Mearns Area Partnership and the Tullo and Twinshiels Community Fund, as well as a small contribution from CC funds. We are very grateful to these funders and all the volunteers who provide their help, support and enthusiasm to enhance our community. The accounts were proposed by LD and seconded by SM.</p>	

6. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR	CD reported that Pamela Gerard was to be asked to audit B&JCC Accounts. This was agreed by B&JCC.	
7. NEW COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS	MB reported that B&JCC were planning to try to recruit new CC members and to run a recruitment campaign over the next couple of months with the intention of holding an election in late July/early September. MB to discuss this further with Aberdeenshire Council. B&JCC propose to create and distribute a leaflet to all residents of Benholm & Johnshaven and to post on Noticeboards and via Social Media.	
8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS	Chair – MB to remain as Chair of B&JCC. Proposed by CD and seconded by LD. Treasurer – CD to remain as Treasurer of B&JCC. Proposed by SM and seconded by CH. Secretary – the role of Secretary needs to be filled as soon as possible. For the moment other members of B&JCC will carry out the tasks usually done by the Secretary until a new one is appointed. It is hoped that we might be able to recruit someone new who will be prepared to take on this role. MB to discuss situation of B&JCC electing co-opted members & associate members further with Aberdeenshire Council.	
9. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	Next AGM (No. 50) will take place on 10 th June 2026.	

Approved: Seconded: Date: