

**BENHOLM & JOHNHAVEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL (B&JCC) Minutes of Meeting**  
**Business Meeting No 477 Wednesday 12th March 2025 7.00pm – In Person Meeting at the Village Hall**

**Present:** Michael Bennett (MB) Chair, Joann Beattie (JB) Secretary, 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:** 10 attended meeting

Agenda Item		Action
1. <b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTIONS</b>	All CC members introduced themselves. MB welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2. <b>APOLOGIES</b>	Charis Duthie (CD) Treasurer, Cllr Tracey Smith (TS), Alison Millard (AM)	
3. <b>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING No 476</b>	MB went through Minutes of last meeting for accuracy. JB proposed approval of Minutes & LD seconded.	
4. <b>AWARD PRESENTATIONS</b>	MB presented awards from the Scottish Parliament to Rebecca from SHARK for Beautiful Aberdeenshire Environmental Award and to John Sutton from Wairds Park Committee to celebrate their centenary year.	
5. <b>PRESENTATION ON SCAMS</b>	P.C. Mike Urquhart gave an interesting presentation on scams and left information leaflets to be distributed via the Community Café. MB thanked P.C. Urquhart for his presentation.	
6. <b>B&amp;JCC CONSTITUTION</b>	After a period of time in discussion with Aberdeenshire Council regarding amendments by B&JCC to the wording of their proposed CC template constitution an agreement was finally reached. MB asked the members of B&JCC to adopt the new constitution and it was agreed by all. Carol Hutton, a co-opted member of B&JCC is now a full member – agreed by all. JB reported that Alistair Waiter (AW) had resigned from B&JCC.	(MB)
7. <b>TREASURER'S REPORT</b>	MB reported on behalf of CD that B&JCC have a balance of £9584. Of this sum, Tullo has funded: £2775 reserved for the website; £754 for the Friends of the Cemetery shed and equipment (none of this has yet been spent); £124 remains of the £673 Tullo Badminton Grant and £2980 is for the Tullo Winter Warmers Grant, of which £2896 remains. Thus, the B&JCC funds remaining are £3035. All the Tullo grant money for the village Christmas lights (£6332.40 over the last 9 years) has now been spent with an excess contribution of £96.78 from CC funds over the 9-year period. All the allotment holder fees have now been paid. We are grateful, as ever, to Neil Wilkie for purchasing dog mess bags and keeping the holders topped up. We think our CC is unique in providing this service for its community. The Bank of Scotland, in their wisdom, has decided to start charging us £4.25 per month in bank fees from March 2025. We have no means of paying this and are therefore looking to transfer our account to the Royal Bank of Scotland, which does not charge fees for its Community Benefit fund. This is a slow process but ongoing. CC Insurance: We are looking into ensuring that our insurance policy covers our liabilities. It is due for renewal on 1 <sup>st</sup> April. In theory, the premium will be reimbursed by Aberdeenshire Council.	(CD)
8. <b>GRANT APPLICATIONS</b>	CD is planning to submit applications from the B&JCC to the Tullo Windfarm for three projects by the end of this month: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fencing and steps for the Railway Path between the Community Garden and Wairds Park.</li> <li>2. Repairs to the walls of the War Memorial and renovation of its garden area.</li> </ol>	(CD)

	3. Village storage solutions.	
9. <b>PLANNING UPDATES</b>	<p>In January 2025 there were no planning applications for B&amp;JCC area.</p> <p>February 2025:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demolition of Porch and Alterations to Dwelling House – 1 Harbour Place, Johnshaven , DD10 0EY. Ref. No. APP/2025/0235</li> <li>2. Felling of 2 Elm Trees and 1 Beech Tree – Lathallan School, Johnshaven, DD10 0HN. Ref. No. TRE/2025/0015</li> <li>3. Erection of Dwelling House and Installation of Air Source Heat Pump – Plot 4 Old Brotherton Mill, Johnshaven. Ref. No. APP/2025/0131</li> </ol> <p>As AW has now resigned it was agreed that LD would look at Planning Applications online and pass information on to CH who will then check them out and report back to B&amp;JCC.</p>	(LD) (CH)
10. <b>ACTION POINTS &amp; REPORTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>10a Abandoned Vehicles</b> CH expressed concern about a number of vehicles that had been abandoned around the village. P.C. Urquhart was asked for advice and he said it was best to get in touch with the DVLA and Aberdeenshire Council to investigate further. In Scotland, abandoned vehicles become the responsibility of the local authority where they are located. If a vehicle is untaxed or has been declared as SORN on a public road, contact DVLA for enforcement.</li> <li>● <b>10b Dog Fouling</b> This continues to be a problem in the village. The woodland area on the old Railway Line behind the school is a particular concern as the school like to use this area for woodland projects and outdoor activities and dog fouling is a constant issue in this area. It has been suggested that the school put up temporary barriers after the spring flowers are past in the area which they want to use in an effort to deter irresponsible dog owners. Signs have been put in place.</li> <li>● <b>10c Coastal Erosion</b> There is to be a public meeting for residents in the Village Hall on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm. This is to be a meeting for just residents at this point to discuss their concerns and to put forward any ideas they have for a solution to this problem. Local councillors and other agencies like SEPA will not be in attendance and any discussions with them will be at a future meeting to be decided.</li> <li>● <b>10d Branches obscuring streetlights &amp; fencing on New Road</b> This continues to be an issue and Aberdeenshire Council have continued to do absolutely nothing to resolve both of these dangers to the community. JB reported that it is the law that streetlights should be kept clear of obstructions, and she stated that she will continue to contact Aberdeenshire Council about this until something is done. It was suggested by a member of the public that all Aberdeenshire Council do is pass the buck from person to person and nothing gets done. Cllr GC reported that enforcement orders were now going to be put in place by Aberdeenshire Council regarding the trees obscuring the streetlights and that the landowners will have to get the trees cut back. The dangerous state of the fencing and the now unprotected high drop down on New Road also continue to be a cause for concern with local residents. Aberdeenshire Council put up the fence and cut the grass on the bank in the past and it is therefore their responsibility to repair it – JB to continue to push this with council also.</li> </ul>	(CH)  (MB)  (MB)  (JB)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>10e Steps from Herd Crescent to Railway Path</b> JB reported that a ramp was now in place from the Beeches to the Railway Path giving good access from that side of the village put in place by Michael Fotheringham but that there was still a need for improved access from Herd Crescent to the Railway Path. This requires the landowner's permission, and it is thought the land belongs to Brotherton Estate. CD is to include this area in her grant submission to Tullo as part of the bigger Railway Path improvements project. Cllr GC said that he had met with David Alexander, Brotherton Estate and that he was agreeable to landscaping measures and improvements being made in this area and that it was a good idea for there being better connectivity to different parts of the village.</li>   <li>● <b>10f War Memorial</b> JB reported on behalf of CD that quotes had been sought for building work needed to repair the unstable walls around the War Memorial and that the repairs are to be included in the application being made to Tullo. SM reported that she had approached six landscape gardening businesses regarding improvements to the garden area and had got back quotes from two – others were not interested or said it was too big a job.</li>   <li>● <b>10g Storage facilities</b> As a result of the Masonic Lodge being put up for sale alternative arrangements need to be found for storage of community equipment and village Christmas lights. JB had contacted village groups and asked for a representative to attend a meeting to propose a solution. MB reported that there had been a poor response to this. CD has written an application to Tullo for funding to build storage in Wairds Park and John Sutton (JS) from Wairds Park Committee said that a potential area had been identified.</li>   <li>● <b>10h South Street houses</b> Cllr GC reported that he had spoken to landowner David Alexander (DA) about these derelict houses, and he reported back that DA had been in discussion with builders regarding these properties. There are some issues with Title Deeds, but this is being investigated by a lawyer. JB stated that she had previously been in touch with Land Registry and there were no deeds found and therefore the buildings revert to being owned by Brotherton Estate.</li> </ul>	<p>(CD)</p> <p>(CD) (SM)</p> <p>(CD)</p>
<p><b>11. UPDATE FROM ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCILLORS</b></p>	<p>Cllr AE reported that there had been several engagement sessions held in Inverbervie regarding the closure of the library and finding a way forward to ensure that library services will still be available to the community, but they will be provided in a different way. What this will look like has not been decided yet but there will still be a library service of some sort – perhaps ordering and picking up books locally. Aberdeenshire Council cannot afford to keep the buildings up and running and therefore they will be sold off. The bus stop on the A92 at the top of Gourdon is to be improved and lighting installed after three years of pressure from Gourdon CC to improve safety at the top of the village. Traffic orders to reduce speed limit into the village is yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Cllr GC reported that Aberdeenshire Council had agreed to apply a 10% increase in Council Tax for the year ahead with further increases to follow. Financial constraints mean that savings have to be made, and this will have a huge impact on the services provided throughout the authority.</p>	

<p><b>12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p>	<p>MS stated that suggestions that communities do more to help themselves is really just a way of Aberdeenshire Council passing the buck and they now do far less than they used to do in the village – the streets are dirty and covered in litter and weeds and nothing gets done. Things like repairing the fence and cutting back the trees just goes on and on and on with Aberdeenshire Council taking no responsibility whatsoever.</p> <p>Cllr GC responded that he believed the way forward was for communities to work in partnership with the Council to improve the village.</p> <p>MB reported that the bollards had been put in place between Seaview Terrace and Back Road but that it had been a botch job as they were screwed into concrete which had not fully set, and the workmen had to come back several times to fix them in place. This is a waste of time and money, and Aberdeenshire Council need to look at doing a better job in the first place. Examples of this occur over and over again and it simply is not good enough.</p> <p>MB has been looking into possible avenues of funding for problems caused by the effects of coastal erosion in the community and he asked the councillors why Aberdeenshire Council did not appear to have put in a bid for funding from the £1m put towards tackling coastal erosion in Scotland from the Scottish Government's Coastal Change Adaptation Programme. Moray has put in for funding for three projects and Angus has put in a request for funding for Montrose. Cllr GC said he would look into this further.</p> <p>MB stated that a number of residents had expressed concerns about services provided by Bervie Medical Centre, in particular with the EConsult system and the difficulty in getting an appointment to actually see a doctor. Residents feel that the service provided is getting worse and this is having implications on people's health within the community. LD and Cllr AE said that the Inverbervie Patient Participation Group (IPPG) were doing a great job and that it was very effective in making it clear that it was important to "get the right care in the right place" and this did not always involve seeing a doctor. Members of the public disagreed, and MB asked the members of B&amp;JCC if this was something they thought needed to be looked into further and the majority agreed that it was.</p> <p>The hut and polytunnel used by the allotment holders are situated on ground owned by the Masonic Lodge. Now that this is going up for sale these will have to be moved elsewhere. MB approached Aberdeenshire Council about the possibility of using unused garden land beside the Council flats next to the allotments, but the response was an emphatic no with no explanation whatsoever. MB asked if it would be possible to get an explanation and the councillors said they would look into it. There is not enough room to move them onto the allotments and the polytunnel in particular was well used by all the allotment holders. A member of the public who has an allotment said it would be a real loss and that it would be a shame if this led to getting rid of the allotments altogether. Suggestions were made to look for another green space in the area where they might be relocated but it was thought there wasn't much point to this if they were not beside the allotments.</p> <p>John Sutton stated that there was to be an Emergency General Meeting of the Wairds Park Committee on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March as they had been unable to get a Secretary and Treasurer. Anyone interested in taking on these roles must be resident in the area.</p>	<p>(MB)</p>
<p><b>13. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b></p>	<p>None</p>	
<p><b>14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p>	<p><b>Next Meeting: CC Business Meeting 478 - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.00p.m. in the Village Hall.</b></p>	

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