

**BOAT OF GARTEN AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL
(BoGCC)**

Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Monday 10th August 2026 in Boat of Garten Community Hall

1. Record of Attendees and Apologies Received:

Community Council Members: Kathryn Gillings (KG), Chair; Alan Bennet (AB), Treasurer; Lesley Taylor (LT), Secretary; Don Walker (DW)

Ex Officio: Muriel Cockburn, (MC), Member, Highland Council

The Highland Council: Jessica Boughey (JB), Community Support Officer, Renewables Engagement – Inverness & South

Members of the public: Helen Geddes (HG), Julie Kerr (JK), Scott Kerr (SK), Jackie Wilson (JW)

Apologies: Chris Carter, member of the public

2. Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 11th May 2026:

The minutes were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting by DW, seconded by AB.

3. Matters Arising

3a. Boat of Garten sign competition

DW gave an update on the project. DW has continued dialogue with J McIntyre and the size and construction have been decided with an approx cost of £4600.

DW has been in discussion with the Cairngorms Trust Community Led Vision Fund and with Highland Council Ward Discretionary fund. Both funds have clarified that they can only offer match funding.

AB highlighted that there would be an issue in BoGCC taking this project further as we cannot own assets. It was agreed that the Community Company could be the ones to take this project forward.

- **LT email Community Company to ask if they want to take the project forward**

JW reminded the meeting that a member of the community, Brian O'Donnell, produced a new sign a number of years ago. It was not used at the time as only 1 was produced.

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Emergency Planning - including Wildfires update

BoGCC received several emails from members of the community expressing concerns about the local wildfires, emergency planning and possible implications for the village.

There was wide ranging discussion about the scale of the fire, the challenges presented and the way ahead.

JW felt that not many lessons appeared to have been learned since the fires on the Dava last year. JW said that Health and Safety costs needed to be looked at in the context of a cost benefit analysis.

MC agreed and acknowledged how difficult a time this has been. She praised the efforts of all fighting the fire and those supporting the fire fighters. The challenges of our environment and burning peat were discussed. KG highlighted the very high temperatures of the peat burning underground.

MC clarified that the role of community councils is to act as a point of contact for the community and to highlight issues, not to try to solve them.

HG felt that it had been difficult to access good information. CNPA, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Highland Council and NHS were all putting out information.

JW felt that good information from 'nearer the ground' was needed.

There was praise for the contribution of Sandy McCook, chair of Nethybridge & Vicinity Community Council.

MC said that lessons had been learned about the need for a clear, central source of information and communication.

JK asked if Boat of Garten has an emergency plan.

AB/LT said that emergency planning had been discussed at the April 26 meeting and a starter plan, based on a government emergency planning template, had been drafted. It was scheduled for discussion at this meeting with a view to then sharing with the community company and the community hall committee for further input and wider community consultation.

It was agreed that the draft plan should be forwarded to the community company and the community hall committee to take forward the consultation process.

MC said that Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS) could also be part of the consultation process.

JK asked if the Community Action Plan would need to be updated as a result of lessons learned. It was agreed that this could be revisited as part of the consultation process on the emergency plan.

- **LT send draft plan to HG and community company**
 - **MC contact VABS for their input**

The issue of fire risk posed by Strathspey Railway, and the growth on the embankments lining Kinchurdy Road, was raised by a community member.

JW highlighted that any planning must also include actions to reduce the likelihood of fires getting out of control in the first place.

There was a general feeling that more pressure should be brought to bear for the proper maintenance of fire breaks. HG spoke about the need for lessons also to be learned from experiences across the world.

AB said that BoGCC had previously contacted CNPA and Seafield Estates, as the owners of the woods behind Deshar Road, in 2023 and 2020 to raise concerns about fire risks. Details of the responses can be found in the [BoGCC minutes of December 2023](#)

HG said that BoGCC had previously had funds to pay someone to maintain fire breaks around the village. Those funds are no longer available.

- **BoGCC to ensure all these areas are highlighted in the village emergency plan**

The way ahead...

MC said that The Highland Council are planning a review meeting with organisations involved and local communities. There is a lot of data which will be analysed.

There will be a special meeting of the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Councils Forum convened. AB asked that this be held in a venue large enough to allow a face to face meeting of participants.

SK suggested that the first Boat Talk of the new season could be on the fire, possibly involving more than one speaker. This could also allow for community consultation on the emergency plan afterwards.

- **HG to take this forward to the next Community Hall meeting**

JK spoke of a recent RSPB video which gives their perspective on the challenges the fire presented. There was agreement to share the link to this video:

[RSPB Wildfire Video](#)

6. Renewables and Planning

JB attended the meeting to outline her role with HC and to speak specifically about the 2 Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) which have been/will be sited in our area.

JB's team can support communities and community councils in their engagement with developers. They aim to help communities maximise economic benefits from their natural environment and resources.

The team has drawn up a [Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment](#) and some energy developers are starting to sign up to it.

JB then spoke about possible community benefits from the 2 BESS projects.

JB advised that the BESS A, sited at East Croftmore, is now operational. It has a capacity of 49.9 MW.

JB is working to establish who community benefits discussions should be with. She has written to Whirlwind Energy asking for a specific point of contact and is awaiting a response.

JB is working to establish where BESS 2, planned to be sited west of Aldon Lodge, is within the planning process. BESS 2 is much bigger with a planned capacity of 120MW.

MC asked if communities can ask for a community benefit figure they deem appropriate. JB said that this is possible but there are guidelines within a [Scottish Government working paper](#)
DW asked if any benefits would be index linked

- **JB to find out**

DW raised concerns about BESS and implications for fire within a forest setting.

AB asked, if the negotiations are successful, who would administer a Community Benefit fund. JB said that in her previous experience it had usually been the community council but outlined 3 options:

1. Community Council
2. A community company or development trust
3. Ask a third party such as [Foundation Scotland](#) or [First Impact](#)

JB could advise on how to allocate money if negotiations are successful.

- **JB to send letter template re community benefit for discussion at next meeting**
 - **JB to attend September meeting to support further discussions**

7. Reports

No reports received this month.

8. Finance

Treasurer's Report for meeting 10/08/26

Treasurers Account	£
Balance at 09/04/26	4744.12
Balance at 03/08/26	5427.26

Credits this Period 787.14 Highland Council admin grant.

Debits this Period 17.00 Bank service charges 4 months.
 40.00 Hall hires Apr & May meetings.
 47.00 Data protection reg. 2026/27
 104.00

Environmental Account	
Balance at 09/04/26	3961.75
Balance at 20/07/26	3944.75

Debits this period 17.00 Bank 4 monthly service charges
Credits this period 0.00

AB gave thanks to The Highland Council for payment of the admin grant.

AB has started the process of closing the Environmental account and amalgamating with the Treasurer's account to save on bank charges.

The Bank of Scotland asked for confirmation that Brian Tolson & Caroline Holroyd were no longer signatories or members of the Community Council. This was confirmed and the bank's amendment form was witnessed by SK as a member of the public at the meeting.

9. Planning Matters

No matters requiring discussion.

10. Correspondence

All covered within the agenda.

11. AOCB

None.

12. Questions and contributions from the public

All covered during the course of the meeting.

The date of the next ordinary meeting is 14th September 2026 @7pm.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Community Councils are comprised of people who care about their community and want to make it a better place to live. If this sounds like you, we would love you to join us! For more details please contact boatofgartencc@gmail.com

COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK WELCOME

The Community Council exists to see that the opinions of local residents are properly taken into account by official bodies and generally to foster local interests. Your opinions matter and we would like to hear any comments you have on what the Community Council does or does not do.

Residents are welcome at all our meetings and, subject to the guidance of the Chair, may contribute to all discussion. The Community Council is registered with the Information Commissioner in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Copies of agendas and minutes, besides those circulated to members, Highland Councillors & officials etc.; can also be sent to residents who have expressed an interest in the work of the Council. If you would like to be included in this e-mail circulation, please contact the Secretary at boatofgartencc@gmail.com.