

27 August 2025 CCA minutes

Present: David Gilbert (chair), Fred Trigg (vice chair), Ian Brown (Committee Member), Cllr Malcolm Johnstone, Chris Woodness (Nith Ward Officer), Oliver Wagner (Caerlaverock Estate), Alice Wilson (Barbour Hall), Diana Low (D&G Canine Rescue Centre) and 6 Caerlaverock residents.

Apologies: Anna Austin (Caerlaverock Estate), Chris Jackson (Treasurer), Suzanne McIntyre (NatureScot), Dave Pickett (WWT), Fiona Hinchcliffe, Rhona & John Carson, Rob Wells, Rosie Thorp, Tom Brown, Dougie Anderson.

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the 28 May 2025 meeting were accepted. Minutes are posted on the website.

Financial Position

Non-allotment income £5,413.38, all from motorhomes. Expenditure £4,937.60 (excluding a c. £2k invoice expected for the beacon). Major items: £2,000 donation to the Barbour Hall for new chairs, £1,560 for surface repairs at the Castle Corner site, £675 for five septic tank emptying, £372 for new sign at Castle Corner, the rest various sundry items. We therefore have around just over £22,000 in the bank. Allotments (held with CCA money for convenience but ring-fenced): income £87.88, expenditure £35.64, £2,178 in the bank. All-in-all a very healthy position for any community association. The accounts are published on the website.

General Reports

Community Police

The Police report arrived the day after the meeting. Most of the report is generic, the only part of direct relevance to Caerlaverock being the first item about the honesty box at Castle Corner (note this only covers 1 July to 28 August, not the whole 3 months since the last CCA meeting). DG added that there has been damage to the haaf netters sign on the Shore Road between Kelton and Glencaple. The haaf netters memorial has also been vandalised. DG is in regular touch with the Police and they are aware of both incidents. DG urged anyone seeing anything suspicious to contact himself and he'll give you the contact details, or just tell DG and he will pass it on.

Police report.

OFFICIAL



Community Policing Unit, Dumfries

Report to CCA

Officer submitting	PC Hayley Elliot
Date of meeting	

Area Crime Information and Notable Incidents: 01/07/25 – 28/08/25

No crimes of note to report.

Police are aware that there are ongoing issues with the honesty box at Castle Corner. Posters have been placed around the area to try to deter any further incidents and extra patrols will be carried out to show a police presence in the area.

Local Initiatives:

SUMMER EVENTS

Community Police officers have deployed over the summer months to a number of community events including

:Youth Beatz 3 day festival
:Guid Nychburris, Dumfries
:Annan Riding of the Marches
:Lochmaben Gala
:Lockerbie Riding of the Marches
:Langholm Common Riding

All events have gone very well and it is great to see the community out enjoying galas and traditions. Thank-you to all the organiser and volunteers involved! Still to come we have Sanquhar Riding of the Marche in mid August.

ESCOOTERS AND OFF ROAD BIKES

E-bikes and E-scooters are becoming increasingly common across Dumfries and Galloway, with some being used illegally and potentially causing a danger to other road users and pedestrians. We know this is of particular concern to residents in Annan, Lockerbie and Dumfries on public roads, pavements and cycle paths. Dumfries and Galloway Division has now trained our community policing unit to deploy with its use of SelectaDNA's tagging spray. The tagging spray will help officers as part of ongoing efforts to combat antisocial behaviour involving illegal use of off road bikes, motorcycles and e-scooters. The spray is aimed by officers at bikes, clothing and skin of any riders and passengers with a uniquely-coded but invisible DNA that will provide forensic evidence to link them to a specific crime. The spray is deployed as a very fine mist which does not cause any harm or damage to skin, clothing or property. The solution does not wash off surfaces, so can help forensically link offenders even after a passage of time

THE LAW ON E- BIKES

E-bikes can legally be used on public roads if they meet specific requirements. The motor should not be able to propel the bike when it is travelling to more than 15.5mph and must have a maximum power output of 250 watts. Vehicles that exceed these limits are motor vehicles and are subject to the Road Traffic Act, meaning the rider must hold a full UK driving license, have insurance, and wear an approved helmet.

E-scooters are not permitted on public roads, pavements or other public spaces, as they do not meet the necessary legal standards. Their use is only legal on private land with the landowner's consent.

For further information on the use of electric bikes visit: <https://www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules>.

If you have any information regards anti-social behaviour, the use of off-road, E-bikes or E-Scotter in residential areas or in circumstances that cause concerns, please contact Police Scotland on 101.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

If you have any events you wish Community Officers to come along to, please let us know
Email: NithsdaleCPT@Scotland.police.uk

D&G Council (including roads)

Roads meeting: DG reminded everyone about the public meeting in Hutton Hall at 10 am on Thu 11 September to discuss the state of the roads. DGC'S Assistant Director Transport and the DGC Roads Manager will be present.

Buses: Stagecoach have left the region but only announced this in March, when DGC's annual bus service procurement process began. Houston and McCall, amongst others, have thankfully stepped in and added extra services, while DGC have bought extra buses to cover routes that local operators are unable to cover. Problems remain with school runs and timings; DGC are working to solve these. If you're a regular bus user and have any issues, DGC need your feedback. DGC don't control all the bus services: SWestrans are only responsible for subsidised routes. Commercial routes are purely up to private operators.

Traffic Wardens: DG asked if there is any news. Cllr Johnstone said the application has gone to the Scottish Government so it is now up to Transport Scotland to look at it. It could be another 12 months. Meanwhile these matters remain the responsibility of the Police.

Whitesands Flood Protection Scheme: two drop-in public engagement sessions at the old Standard Building on Tue 2 Sep 1200-1530 and Wed 3 Sep 0930-1530.

Diana Low thanked local councillors for getting the huge pothole at the end of their road filled in time for the Canine Rescue Centre open day.

Cllr Johnstone brought up the questionable quality of pothole repair work when the jobs have been outsourced. Several councillors are pursuing this to make sure that whoever effects the repairs, whether DGC staff or contractors, do a quality job. Ian Brown asked that the road verges in the Blackshaw area be cut. Cllr Johnstone said junctions should be cut. Oliver Wagner says he will report back to farmers re verges. David Turnbull said there are two 6 ft drops off the side of the road between Bankend and Shearington, caused in both cases by a silage trailer coming off the road and taking the road with it. Cllr Johnstone suggested this, and any pothole issues, be brought up at the 11 September road meeting.

Nith Ward Officer Chris Woodness referred to traffic management in the town centre. A plan is being drawn up for improving road markings, signage etc. Many signs are only partly readable or are years out-of-date. Chris Woodness mentioned another recent change: responsibility for traffic management is now outsourced. Stuart Caven, Roads Manager, is the person to contact about any issues.

NatureScot

Suzanne McIntyre sent this report:

- All good on the reserve, busy, some days very busy. Although we have had a few issues with poor behaviour, mostly going well. Most difficult issue is that of human waste, we get this at Phyllis' regularly and I hear it's also happening at the campsite.
- The rubbish collection has been fine this summer. I did notice one full bin this morning (looked like campervan waste bag jammed in) but the others appeared to have been emptied.
- Schedule 1 species restriction was lifted 21st July. We think the Marsh Harriers bred successfully, from what we have observed we could have two young females, but not 100% able to confirm.
- We had to close the bird hide at Back O'Woods overnight and for a few weekends in a row in July, owing to the hide being used for drugs, but we have reopened since end of July and so far fingers crossed it's been ok again.
- Storm Floris didn't have any negative impact on the reserve.

WWT

Dave Pickett sent this report:

It is a busy time down here at Caerlaverock as we take advantage of the small window after the bird breeding season and before the geese arrive to get loads of work done.

We have diggers currently working on 2 parts of the site creating more wetlands and the more wetlands the more wildlife there is to see for visitors.

We have also started the renovation project on the Eastpark farmhouse. Over the next 18 months to 2 years, we will be bringing it back up to standard as a high-quality self-catering accommodation. When finished it should be able to sleep 14 people right in the middle of the stunning nature reserve setting.

We are also replacing the screening fence around the whooper pond that was flattened by Storm Eowyn . With that replaced, the whooper swans can be undisturbed for visitors to get the best view of them.

And just for note - the site and visitor centre will be closed next weekend, Sat 30 and Sun 31 Aug, due to staff shortages.

So, plenty of work is going on to keep developing the reserve. By the end of October most of this work will be completed so it would be a great time to visit WWT Caerlaverock to reconnect with the geese for daily events for the Wild goose Festival 18-26 October - including the Goose Breakfast event at the Boathouse on the Sat 18 and Sat 25th. Bird watching while eating a fine breakfast, what is not to like!

Historic Environment Scotland

Rosie Thorp sent this report:

Visitor numbers: 24,515 visitors since 1st April.

Site updates: busy summer season, which ends for us at the end of September. Opening times move to 10am-4pm from October. Ongoing works to the toilets, as we're experiencing some issues. Hoping to complete inspections of the outer staircase in the coming months

Events: spectacular Jousting took place 26th and 27th July. 3,649 visitors over the event weekend. It was great to have the WWT having a stall at the event as well

Caerlaverock Estate

Signs have been put up regarding the dumping of garden waste in Bankend. Scottish Power are working on underground cabling along the Shore Road / Howmains. New signage is in place at Castle Corner motorhome site. The existing small sign will also be changed as it is not a campsite. More fresh signage possibly at the Quay End too. The Estate are seeking permission from Historic Environment Scotland to replace Wardlaw trees that have fallen in recent storms.

Oliver's project is Nature Restoration and he is keen to open lines of communication with the local community. He had a short walk around Glencaple with a few locals, investigating whether nature-based solutions would be appropriate for local problems. For example, excess water on the road past the allotments could be partly helped by more hedgerows and ponds. A hot topic is invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. Oliver has set up an initiative – see posters around the area – whereby anyone out for a walk and spotting one of these plants can take a photo and upload it using the iNaturalist app. Oliver can then see where the plants are and take action.

DG has been told that the hedge at the junction of the Blackshaw road and the B725 is too high and needs cut back. Oliver said issues like this can be tackled any time and the Estate will get it sorted. Fred mentioned the incident on Wardlaw Core Path where someone slipped where there used to be steps. Oliver said it's the responsibility of the Council's Access Officers to reinstate the path.

Caerlaverock School

Mrs Skriven sent this report (MUGA is Multi-use Games Area):

- **Staffing:**
 - Teaching – Mrs Thomson / Mrs Caprani & Mrs McGinley (returns from maternity leave)
 - Non-teaching – Mrs Spence / Mrs Bonar / Mrs Jackson / Mr McQueen
 - Current School roll – P1-3 = 10 and P4-7 = 15 – Total = 25
 - 5 new P1s settling in very well
- **Community working / partnership:**
 - Community MUGA - The school would like to apply for funding via the Robin Rigg application form to improve the playing surface. This will be a big expense.
We would like to ask if the CCA is happy to support this application given that the MUGA is opened every day after school, the weekends and holidays for the local community. We will be in touch with David if the CCA are happy to support. Thank you.
- **Learning and Teaching / School events:**
 - P5-7 pupils are visiting Tongland Power Station this term with work linked to their topic.
 - P7 pupils have to apply earlier than usual for their secondary choice so there are a number of events taking place this term:
 - 1) 2x visits from Dumfries High School (DHS) Headteacher and House Captains
 - 2) P7 Play in a Day – drama event all day at DHS – with Brownhall P7s
 - 3) DHS P7 Open Evening
 - 4) DHS P7 Health and wellbeing Day

5) P7s Operation Safety Day

DG confirmed that CCA is happy to support the school's application for Robin Rigg money to improve the MUGA playing surface since it's available for community use every day after school and at weekends & holidays.

Barbour Hall

Alice reported that work has had to stop because bats have been found in the roof space. Despite this delay it is still hoped the work will be finished by the end of October as the Coastal Benefit Fund money is time-dependent. Meanwhile the Post Office is still operating twice a week at the Nith Hotel and Fitsteps has moved to the Crichton golf club. The Barbour Hall AGM is at 1830 on 10 September in the Nith Hotel. Everyone welcome. DG asked how the bats were missed. Alice said the project had been advised that a bat survey was not required. They will put bat boxes up in the hope that the bats will take to them rather than living in the roof.

Allotments

Rob Wells sent this report:

It's been a really good season - very productive with the wet weather / warm weather providing ideal growing conditions. The weeds in particular found it so.

The site is looking good and tidy. Please remember that everyone is welcome to come up and have a look round.

The veg stall that we hold every year has been great this year. We moved the venue to outside Gerry's Vintage on the Nith shop, and that seems to have helped. We have held three stalls over these last three weekends, and have raised over £130 in donations so far. The funds are ringfenced to the allotments and are used to help maintain the allotment site.

There is a stall this Saturday and Sunday - so do come and choose some fresh organic veg grown in the Parish. Choose what veg you want, and give whatever donation you feel is appropriate in the box provided.

Nith Inshore Rescue

No report sent.

Caerlaverock Kirk

The new Minister will be the Rev. Tim Linford. The Rev. Pam Bellis, our Interim Moderator, will take the Remembrance Service on 9 November. The Harvest Thanksgiving Service will be a joint service with Troqueer and will be held at Caerlaverock Church on 5th October at 9.45am.

DG has been organising the remembrance service for the last five years and would like someone else to step in and help. The meeting agreed that CCA will continue to pay for the wreath laid by the schoolchildren.

Hutton Hall

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, toilet refurbishments begin on 1st September; we hope they'll be finished towards the end of the month. The meeting agreed to DG's proposal that CCA donate £2,000 to the Hall. A sub-committee chaired by Lesley Grieve has been formed to develop the former bowling green into a community space; ideas still be worked out. Hutton Hall now has Wi-Fi.

Junior Football

No report. They are no longer allowed to use the school premises because it would have breached DGC rules and obligations that anyone working with children has to have the correct certification.

Canine Rescue Centre

Diana Low summarised the history of the Canine Rescue Centre. It was originally run by the National Canine Defence League (later known as the Dogs Trust) but was threatened with closure when the Trust opened a much grander rescue centre near Glasgow. Thanks largely to Lady Mary Mumford, local people were able to take over the existing site and the rescue centre was reopened in 2003. In the first year, with only a manager plus 1.3 staff, one charity shop and an annual income of about £100,000, they rehomed over 300 dogs. Now they have nine staff employed at the Rescue Centre itself, five volunteer trustees, 40 volunteer helpers at the Centre and six charity shops (Newton Stewart, Castle Douglas, Dalbeattie, Dumfries, Annan and Thornhill), one of which they own. Four shops have paid shop managers and the total number of shop volunteers is 110. Today, the Centre rehomes more dogs via social media than by direct contact. They have just bought their second shop, in Ayr, to better serve the West of the region, and took over the SSPCA kennels there. Their assets now total close to £2m so they are a medium-sized charity. It costs £500,000 a year to run the operation. Everything they have achieved is thanks to support from local people and the wider D&G community.

A worrying recent trend is three dogs that have come in from owners who had died. All three were in poor condition. One had to be destroyed. How to prevent situations like this? On a brighter note, their longest-staying dog has just been rehomed. The six feral dogs which hit the local headlines two years ago after through being dumped in a forest near Moffat are doing well and the first one has just been rehomed. The Centre is fast approaching rehoming its 5,000th dog.

In response to a query from DG, the Rescue Centre will put their events on the CCA website. Fred will link to their website from ours.

Any Other Business

Community Website

Fred is bringing the website up-to-date. He hopes to have it ready around Christmas.

Community Projects Update

Beacon: the new beacon has been installed and will see its first use on Remembrance Sunday. We were charged at cost, just under £2,000.

Quay End bench: the old, unsafe concrete bench on the corner of the quay end is to be replaced by a hardwood version to match one near The Boathouse. DG will be looking for volunteers to lay six 2' x 2' concrete flags to bolt the bench to.

Castle Corner sign: the new sign has been installed at the motorhome site. A similar, but smaller, sign will be erected at the Quay End to encourage good behaviour and donations.

Anyone with ideas for future community projects please contact DG.

Scottish Water and Tank Improvements

DG has learned from the Planning dept at DGC that the project has been delayed, for how long is not known. DG will let everyone know when Scottish Water's planning application is on the Planning dept's agenda.

Hutton Trust

No change. Money still available for local people on apprenticeships.

Other Matters

- David Turnbull brought up the subject of the non-existent path between the new houses and Glencaple village centre. DGC are now saying the path has not been constructed as it's on someone else's land. DG agreed it's ridiculous, one excuse after another from the Council. Meanwhile residents will be forced to walk in the road on dark morning and evenings. Chris Woodness said to bring it up with Karen Brownlie at the 11 September roads meeting.
- David and Sue Gilbert are holding a McMillan Coffee Afternoon on Saturday 27 September, 1400-1600 in Hutton Hall.
- Chris Woodness said that a Merchant Navy memorial stone from the region is to be unveiled at 1100 this coming Saturday 30 August in Dock Park.
- David Smith referred to the amount of fly tipping he's noticed in the last 2 days. Chris Woodness commented that the Police look for id amongst the rubbish. If it is on Council-owned land the Council will lift it. If on private land the clean-up job falls to the owner.

Date and Place of next meeting: 26 November 2025, Barbour Hall (to be confirmed)