

Minutes of Caerlaverock Community Association meeting held on 26 November 2025 in the Barbour Hall, Glencaple

Present: David Gilbert (Chair), Fred Trigg (Vice Chair), Ian Brown (Committee Member), Helen Clark (Committee Member), Ronnie Clark (Committee Member), Anna Austin (Caerlaverock Estate Manager), Cllr John Campbell, Chris Woodness (Nith Ward Officer), Alice Wilson (Barbour Hall), Karen Scriven (Head Teacher, Caerlaverock Primary School), Rosie Thorp (Historic Environment Scotland) and 14 Caerlaverock residents.

Apologies: Chris Jackson (Treasurer), Cllr Malcolm Johnson, Douglas Anderson, Kelly Currie, Maybeth Jamieson, Rona and John Carson, Suzanne McIntyre (NatureScot), Dave Pickett (WWT).

1. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

2. Financial Position

Non-allotment income £5,002.58, all from motorhomes. Expenditure £5,900.50. Major items: £2,000 donation to Hutton Hall, as agreed, for toilet renovation, £1,871 to Hutton Hall for unexpected additional work on the water heater in the toilets, £747.81 to buy appliances for the children's kitchen at the school, £675 for our share of septic tank emptying at Castle Corner, £364.04 IT costs and £154.90 for motorhome donation envelopes. The beacon came in at just under £2,000 and DG acknowledged the work put in by the galvanisers, the team who made the base and all other contributors. A plaque to this effect is on the beacon. We have £21,484.03 in the bank. Allotments (held with CCA money for convenience but ring-fenced): income £151.30, expenditure £0, £2,329.55 in the bank. All-in-all a very healthy position for any community association. The accounts are published on the website.

Draft 2025-26 budget: DG has allowed £8,500 for website, hall hire, first-aid course which we're still hoping for, fuel and grass cutting, mower servicing, and sundry items such as motorhome donation envelopes, remembrance wreaths, gas bottle refills, insurances, Castle Corner septic tank emptying and other works there and at the Quay End. DG suggests a sign at the Quay End, similar to the large one at Castle Corner, to influence motorhome behaviour. We will also pay for the base of the new bench. Motorhome income has held up well, despite the overall economic situation, but we should keep 1.5-2 years' money in the bank just as a precaution.

Officers and committee members

One change: Ian Brown is standing down.

3. General Reports

Community Police

The following report from the Community Policing Unit, Dumfries, was received after the meeting.

Report to CCA December 2025

Local Crimes of Note

On 09/11/25 an intoxicated male was reported as causing a disturbance on the Glencaple area, Police immediately attended and the male was arrested and suitably charged.

FESTIVE POLICING

The festive period is a busy time for all communities with an increase in social events, shopping, and family gatherings. This increase in activity can result in higher alcohol consumption, gatherings of diverse groups at social functions, higher volumes of people within licensed premises, and increased traffic on the roads at a time when inclement weather conditions can prove hazardous. In December the Community Policing team will be out and about supporting local festive events with a focus on high visibility patrols around licensed premises and tackling acquisitive crime. Officers will be making regular visits to licensed premises both on and off sales. By engaging with licensees, staff and patrons we aim to engage with our communities and provide visual reassurance to ensure everyone can enjoy the celebrations.

Additionally, the community Policing team have pop up events planned in Dumfries and at the Caledonian park where they will be on hand with purse bells and cables to hand out alongside offering crime prevention advice and an opportunity for the public to seek advice or ask questions.

Purse Bells / Cables : The small bells are attached to a purse by a cable and will ring when moved. Purse cables provide a security mechanism to attach a purse on a spring lanyard to a wrist or bag. The purpose of both items is to deter and prevent pick-pocket style thefts.

CYBER CRIME GUIDANCE

The effect of cybercrime can be extremely upsetting for victims, and not necessarily just for financial reasons. Victims may feel that their privacy has been violated, and that they are powerless. Unfortunately, as Scotland's reliance on technology grows, the cost and incidence of cybercrime is expected to increase. Cybercrime consists of criminal acts that are committed online by using electronic communications networks and information systems. It can be classified in three broad definitions:

1. Crimes specific to the Internet, such as attacks against information systems or phishing (e.g. fake bank websites to solicit passwords enabling access to victims' bank accounts).
2. Online fraud and forgery. Large-scale fraud can be committed online through instruments such as identity theft, phishing, spam and malicious code.
3. Illegal online content, including child sexual abuse material, incitement to racial hatred, incitement to terrorist acts and glorification of violence, terrorism, racism and xenophobia.

Typical Examples of Cyber Crime.

- Distributing viruses or posting confidential business information on the internet.
- Identity theft, where criminals use the internet to steal personal information from other users.
- Fake email, luring users to fake websites to take personal information e.g. usernames and passwords, phone numbers, credit card numbers ect.

TOP 10 TIPS

- Choose strong passwords and keep them safe.
- Protect your computer with Internet security software.
- Protect your personal information. Never give out personal information to anyone.
- Keep your computer current with the latest patches and updates.
- Make sure your computer is configured securely.
- Never open or forward chain e-mails.
- Online offers that look too good to be true usually are.
- Review bank and credit card statements regularly.
- If something sounds too good to be true or far-fetched, be sceptical about it. Research the information to see if it's a scam.

Cyber Crime Prevention Useful links For more information on cyber crime prevention please visit the websites below: <https://www.getsafeonline.org/> <https://www.cyberstreetwise.com/> <https://www.ecrimescotland.org.uk/>

Community Sergeant (Comments)

*** Should there be any events held in your local area such as coffee mornings that you would like PC Elliot to attend, please get in touch ***

D&G Council (incl roads issues)

DG updated Cllr Campbell: after the public meeting, DG pointed out to Karen Brownlie that annual visitor numbers to WWT, the NNR and the castle are in the tens of thousands. When deciding on their road maintenance policy, DGC should bear in mind the value to the local economy of three major tourist attractions all within a couple of miles. A separate issue is flooding at Kelton Bank. Conversation then turned to current outstanding issues. Cllr Campbell asked for assurance that all the following have been reported on the DGC website.

Comments from those present:

- One side of the road near Shearington has been repaired but not the other side, where the telegraph pole is leaning at 45 degrees.
- There is a similar problem up the Quay Hill, with the side of the road undermined.
- Traffic is still speeding through Kelton
- The road between Lilac Cottage & Bankend: part of the recent repair has disappeared, meaning drivers have to swerve onto the other side of the road to avoid a hole that is 3"-4" deep.
- Flooding near the college has been reported three times but still no action. Another speaker attributed the problem to the college having been built on a floodplain. The Council built the college so they are responsible for solving the flooding issue.
- There is talk of bringing in a crane by helicopter to rebuild the bridge at Kelton. The path from Kingholm Quay to Kelton is a Core Path but the stretch from Kelton to Glencaple is overgrown and cannot be used, in particular because trees are blocking the path between Glencaple and Conheath. Cllr Campbell to find out who is responsible for the trees.
- DG has made representations to the Council not only about roads but also about a rumour that the Quay End toilets are closing. Cllr Campbell said the latter was part of a response from a Council official asked to submit ideas for reducing budgets. It did not come from a Councillor, and it is Councillors who take these decisions. Chris Woodness confirmed that all every comment made, all statements from communities and all petitions are presented to Councillors who take the final decisions. A comment from a Council official does not in any way mean the proposal is set in stone.

On the subject of budgets, Chris Woodness explained DGC operate a "Contract and Tender Opportunities Programme", aka a [Community Benefits Wishlist](#), a scheme for local community groups to submit requests for up to £2k of support from suppliers who have a contract with the Council. When DGC go out to tender with major contractors, the work includes a request that they contribute back to communities, whether it's financial aid, volunteering time or equipment. For example, if it's a major build project and at the end of the project they have generators or building equipment eg scaffolding that they're not taking away, it's something they could offer up to the local community. If the community has something in mind they'd like assistance with, they need to apply. He wonders if Scottish Water have a similar scheme as they'll be carrying out a large contract in the community.

Our local Resilience Plan needs updated and Fred has offered to take it on. One point which could arise is major flooding: the Barbour and Hutton Halls could be used as temporary accommodation, and having Nith Inshore Rescue based here is a massive advantage. Plenty of people have 4-wheel-

drive vehicles, while others have radio systems. All this needs to be drawn together into the revised plan. We think that if the worst happened we could cope. DG has a meeting with the DGC Resilience Officer in January and Fred will join in.

DG expressed his disappointment that a planning officer recommended accepting the proposal to use granite for the surrounds of the new Glencaple septic tank, despite our fundamental objections. It is hard to see why a council officer chose to simply ignore a fundamental objection. DG thanked the Councillors for listening to the community and rejecting the use of granite.

NatureScot

Report received from NatureScot on 14 November:

Avian Influenza could become an issue, latest counts found 6 carcasses across the reserve (between Carsethorn and Browwell) and signs of another 6 – 8 sick birds. We have sent swab samples from 2 to Weybridge, expect it will be H5N1, but waiting to hear back. We will be monitoring over the next few weeks, and I will be able to give you an update by the afternoon of the 26th November. Susan Copeland will send an email to all wildfowlers today to give latest position.

With so much rainwater the paths are sodden on the reserve, and we are continuing to patch a couple of potholes at the car park entrance (longer term tarmac replacement for this section, hopefully before end of financial year, has been bid for, tarmac is super expensive).

Week around 5th November we had some fireworks/drinking activity on the reserve, apart from litter, don't think they caused too much harm, but this was despite signage to say please don't set off fireworks.

Update received on 26 November

We can confirm that the swab samples taken from Caerlaverock NNR tested positive for H5N1.

We surveyed the shooting zone today, 26th November, unfortunately the virus is having an impact, we found 35 dead barnacle geese and 4 sick barnacle geese, two of which were initially flying but after a while landed and didn't take off again. We have been receiving reports of significant mortality on the English side of the Solway (in the hundreds) and we are getting reports of an increase in dead birds along the north Solway east of Caerlaverock NNR.

Everyone should be aware of the biosecurity risks to dogs and the risk of transmission from this site to others. Please follow the biosecurity advice as provided by Scottish government and BASC, see links below. Given the escalation we are seeing, please keep yourself up to date with the latest information. Do not touch sick or dead wild birds when on site. There is no need to report dead or sick birds that you see on the Caerlaverock NNR as the reserve staff are monitoring and reporting on this, we will endeavour to keep you up to date with the situation at Caerlaverock as well as we can, but note, it is now appears to be a rapidly changing picture.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/avian-influenza-outbreaks/>

<https://basc.org.uk/avian-influenza/>

WWT

Dave Pickett sent this report:

At Caerlaverock we are facing challenges from the cost-of-living crisis. To meet these challenges we are making changes on the site. For the duration of the winter months, WWT Caerlaverock will open five days a week (Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10am to 4pm), instead of opening every day as we used to.

We are planning to return to seven day a week opening in the spring, but exact details and timing of this will be confirmed nearer the time. You'll also notice that our visitor centre looks a bit different. It is still the main entrance into the wetland reserve, with an admissions desk for members and paying visitors, but our cafe and shop is no longer open. It is going to take time to work through these changes so we ask for your patience and understanding.

What hasn't changed is the fantastic nature experience that visitors get at Caerlaverock, and amongst other improvements we have created more wetlands in the last year that bring more birds closer to the excellent viewing hides.

If anyone has any questions or want more information you can look on the Caerlaverock page on the WWT website, or email us at: info.caerlaverock@wwt.org.uk

Link to web page. <https://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/caerlaverock/changes>

Historic Environment Scotland

Rosie Thorp spoke at the meeting and helpfully also sent us her report.

- Visitor numbers since 1st April – 33, 958
- Planning works to resolve pothole works on road to Castle, expected to take place shortly
- Preparation work taking place for inspection of internal castle areas currently inaccessible
- Have received approval for a new Stonemason Apprentice position in our Dumfries depot (working on sites including Caerlaverock). Advert for this post is expected to go live in the next couple of months, and will share this once it's live
- Properties and Collections Strategy consultation live until 23rd January
 - *The draft Strategy sets out how Historic Environment Scotland plans to care for over 300 historic places, 43,000 objects, and five million archival records in our care. It explains why change is needed and outlines a new approach to managing these assets in a way that benefits people, places, and future generations. The Properties and Collections in our care face growing challenges, including climate change, rising costs and a shortage of traditional skills. At the same time, there are opportunities to do more with these assets, from supporting communities and local economies to enhancing learning and wellbeing.*
 - Everyone is welcome to take part in the consultation online <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/comms-media/pac-strategy/>
 - CCA have been invited to a stakeholder session regarding this on the 4th December in Dundrennan

Caerlaverock Estate

Anna reported that Oliver has been busy with the development phase of the Estate-wide nature restoration programme. He's visited all the tenant farms and neighbouring farms, mapping out where the work will take place, then revisited the sites with an ecologist. Work on funding applications has been underway in the past few weeks and the Estate hope for news on this in January or February so that the delivery phase can begin in April. Part of this project means we can use nature-based solutions to flooding issues, eg wetland corridors further upland to hold on to water better. This will help but won't solve the problem. We have applied for funding for a hydrology survey to get a professional view of whether what we suggest will help with flooding. Anna hopes to run a community event in February to show local residents what the Estate are planning. The other part of the project is tracking invasive non-native species eg Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. An app is available which anyone can use to record the locations of these species, then Oliver can calculate how much work would be involved in eradication. If the Estate can get funding, a Himalayan Balsam task force could be set up. The Estate has also been working with NatureScot on initiating a rust fungus trial as another way of controlling the species [the fungus in

question occurs naturally in the plant's native area and only affects Himalayan Balsam, growing on the plants' leaves and stems and thereby stunting growth].

Flood Management: Oliver and Sam have been looking at water flow on wet days. Channels have been dug to move water off the Chapelhill road into existing roadside ditches. If rainfall is severe, however, the water still comes down the road - so more work is needed on this, perhaps bigger drainage channels. Also, water landing on the Quay Hill cannot get away. Karen Brownlie of the DGC Roads dept is to visit and discuss what can be done. Everyone is encouraged to send the Estate any photos and videos of flooding. Finally, Anna said the Estate have purchased four Hydrosnakes @ £25 each – temporary inflatable flood barriers – which will be used to keep water off the roads at times of peak rainfall.

Gamekeeping: two dead foxes were left where the public were able to find them. This will not happen again.

Garden waste: a repeat of the plea to please not dump garden waste on the merse or next to drainage systems. It unsightly, and seeds from your garden plants end up on the NNR, a nature reserve. Anna wondered about a communal compost heap somewhere. Chris Woodness reminded us that DGC operate a garden waste collection service whereby your waste is put in a special bin and collected fortnightly. The householder must pay for a permit.

Caerlaverock School

Playground supervision is to be discontinued soon (DGC decision). School roll needs to be over 20. Currently 25. Two children attended this afternoon's Open Afternoon, one of whom will be joining the school now, the other will when old enough. At the end of this academic year, 6 will be leaving so we'll be down to 21.

MUGA (Multi-use Games Area): thank you to CCA who supported our request for £15,000 Robin Rigg money for MUGA repair. If there were a shortfall, Mrs Scriven asked if CCA might help with £1,200-£1,500 funding. Voices of support from those present, and DG agreed the committee will discuss it if and when the situation arises. If the surface continues to deteriorate, DGC might consider closing it and our only open space for safe ball play.

Mrs Scriven thanked CCA for funding the children's kitchen equipment. Nearly all the children want to be in the Cooking Club and the teaching had to be split into two blocks.

A Santa Dash will take place on Weds 3 December round the school grounds. Invitation to everyone to visit the school at 1030 for tea, coffee and traybakes in the lovely new kitchen. Proceeds to school funds.

Christmas celebrations take place in the school on Tuesday 16 December at 1800.

The Parent Council are funding blocks of four swimming lessons after school in the Annan pool. The school acknowledges the support from parents who see the advantages of sending their children to a small, rural school.

Cllr Campbell asked how many children in the Caerlaverock School catchment area do not go to the school. Mrs Scriven did not have the figure. The Cllr pointed out that this is often a problem for small schools.

Barbour Hall

The latest phase is nearly done but the weather is preventing the final handover (the final coat of render cannot be applied if the temperature is less than 6 degrees or if rain is forecast within 24 hours). We still have another 5 years of the 10-year renovation plan.

The changing rooms are now wind- and water-tight. The next phase is to kit them out as two separate spaces, one accessible from the main hall, the other from the outside. The latter will be a community space, perhaps of interest to the school and allotment-holders (there will be a kettle, sink and toilets). The refurbishment (to include new heating and lighting and redecorating throughout) will cost £25k and the Barbour Hall committee are actively fundraising. They have applied for Robin Rigg money and expect to hear if they've been successful in Jan or Feb (other sources of funding have been applied for too). Alice wondered if CCA would consider funding the shortfall if it became necessary. DG asked if those present would be happy to discuss this. Those present agreed they would. Chris Woodness mentioned that Coastal Benefit Fund money is available, and that the D&G Regionwide Community Fund gives grants up to £5,000; it and opens for applications in February, with decisions and fund-release by May.

The Barbour Hall re-opening event – the annual Christmas Fair - takes place on 6 December at 10 am (borrowing Christmas tree from the school).

Allotments

Nothing to report. A quiet time of year.

Nith Inshore Rescue

No report received.

Caerlaverock Kirk

DG thanked reverend Pam Bellis, for providing the Remembrance Day service.

Maybeth Jamieson sent this report:

Following the union between Caerlaverock and Troqueer at the beginning of 2025, services have continued in the Church on the first Sunday of each month. These have been well attended by local members plus visitors from Troqueer and elsewhere.

Our new Minister, Rev. Tim Linford, is now in post and is very keen to support the Caerlaverock area of his parish. He will take his first service here on 7th December.

Troqueer Church runs a food bank known as 'Storehouse' that is now available to anyone in Caerlaverock parish. We will add details of how to contact / access this lifeline to the Community Association website and the Caerlaverock Neighbours Facebook page.

There has been no change in the Church of Scotland's plans for the Caerlaverock Church building. We have no timetable for putting the building up for sale but, when is no longer available, it is likely that the Barbour Hall will be used for local services.

Hutton Hall

The toilet refurbishment is complete, mostly funded by National Lottery money but also by CCA with an initial grant of £2k followed by £1,871 when the hot water system in the disabled toilet had to be replaced. Fred expressed his thanks to CCA for this. There remains a lot to do inside but they already have Wi-Fi and a projection system and have begun to get business enquiries. Friends of Hutton Hall will receive discounted booking rates.

Bowling green: a sub-committee has been formed to turn it into a tranquil space. CCA has part-funded this; if OK with CCA, unspent money will be carried forward into 2026. The meeting agreed that this was fine.

Hutton Hall are limited in the grants they can obtain because they are not a charity. So they are considering applying for charity status. Chris Woodness commented that if they're looking at becoming a charity, there's currently a long-term lease between DGC and Hutton Hall. A lot of older properties out in the community are under consideration for Community Asset Transfer ownership. If it would help, to ensure Hutton Hall are future-proof, Chris would be happy to let the Council legal team look at the Hall's governance to make sure that this is available as an option at any later date, rather than have to restructure the hall's governance again. Fred to send the info to Chris. DG warned that a change in the controlling body might need a review of the current lease.

Junior Football

No report received.

Canine Rescue Centre

No report received

AOB

Community Website

CCA fund, host and manage three websites: CCA, Hutton Hall and Barbour Hall. The CCA website is not accessible ("accessible" meaning that everyone can use it, regardless of ability) and Fred is looking to improve it next year. For the first time ever, the Caerlaverock events calendar got more hits than the motorhome page. Fred encouraged anyone knowing of a forthcoming event to contact him to get it on the website. Motorhome donations: 21% are made via PayPal. DG commented that there's a QR code on the Castle Corner noticeboard that takes the user straight to PayPal. He'd like the same for the new, smaller board at the Quay End. Chris Woodness suggested a regular check that no-one has stuck their own QR code over the top of ours.

Community Projects (update)

Base for the new bench is still outstanding – DG has simply been too busy. All that needs done is some flags laid.

Scottish Water and planning consent

Already discussed.

Hutton Trust

The Trust is run by a member of DGC and the local community. It's an opportunity for youngsters on apprenticeships to get small amounts of money. They are looking for a new community member to join the Trust. Please contact DG direct if you could fulfil this role. Four meetings a year, half-an-hour each.

Any other business

For most of the year the War Memorial is overgrown. Years ago it was more open. Other War Memorials look smarter than ours. DG said the memorial was professionally cleaned three years ago at a cost of £1,000 but we can look at having it done again. Someone already does the weeding – voluntarily - but DG agreed it needs weeded more often. Weed blanket was re-laid and chips put down three years ago, after it was cleaned. The existing problem results from the height and depth of the hedge. DG will ask if it can be cut back from the stonework (he will liaise with Anna to see

who owns the land and what can be done). Once this conversation has taken place, we will need volunteers to do this.

Date and place of next meeting

Wednesday 25 February, Hutton Hall, 1930.