

Minutes of Caerlaverock Community Association meeting, 25 February 2026, Hutton Hall, Bankend

Present: David Gilbert (Chair), Fred Trigg (Vice Chair), Chris Jackson (Treasurer), Anna Austin (Caerlaverock Estate Manager), Cllr John Campbell, Cllr Malcolm Johnstone, Alice Wilson (Barbour Hall), David Pickett (WWT) and 9 Caerlaverock residents.

Apologies: Chris Woodness (Nith Ward Officer), Cllr David Slater, Rosie Thorp (Historic Environment Scotland), Rona & John Carson (Committee Members).

1. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

2. Financial Position

Income (all from motorhomes) £1,862.16. Expenditure £1,047.13 (Castle Corner septic tank emptying, service/repair of the Glencaple mower, IT costs, Christmas flowers for elderly residents and bank charges). Non-allotment balance is £22,299.06 so a very healthy position. Full statement is on the website.

3. General Reports

Community Police

No crimes have been reported in our area since the last meeting. Police are aware that speeding remains a concern and will continue to carry out speed checks and engage with drivers. The Police sent DG the following two generic reports on more general police matters.

January 2026 Police report



Community Policing Unit, Dumfries

Report to Caerlaverock January 2026

Officer submitting	<i>PC Hayley Elliot</i>
Date of meeting	

Area Crime Information and Notable Incidents:

It is encouraging to report that no further crimes have been reported in your area during the festive period so please pass on our thanks to the community for their continued cooperation and vigilance.

I am aware that speeding remains a concern in the village, I will continue to carry out target patrol speed checks and engage with drivers.

Local Initiatives:

Update on Policing Activities:

Festive Update

Throughout December Community Policing officers were deployed to a number of festive events, including well attended and community supports Christmas light switch ons. Crime prevention pop up events were held in Dumfries Town Centre and at the Caledonian Park in Gretna, and community policing officers deployed in high visibility to our busier high streets, whilst balances proactive patrols in rural areas.

We are pleased to report that overall, there has been minimal disorder in our towns, and a high level of positive engagement with our officers by those out visiting licensed premises. Police Officers in Dumfries were supported by the deployment of Taxi Stewards, who assist at the public at taxi ranks, and Street Pastors, in the weekend before Christmas.

Who are Street Pastors?

Street Pastors are trained Christian volunteers from local churches who work in partnership with the police and local authorities. They are deployed in teams of 3 or 4 to provide practical care and a listening ear to those who need it on Friday and Saturday nights, operating typically from 10 pm to 1 am.

The Street Pastors role is entirely focused on providing support and ensuring a safe environment. Their key activities include:

- **Practical Safety:** Picking up and safely disposing of bottles and glasses which could be used as weapons or cause injury.
- **Welfare:** Handing out flip-flops to women who are struggling to walk in high heels at the end of the night.
- **Assistance:** Helping people find taxis or other transport, administering simple first aid, and pointing individuals towards appropriate services.

Street Pastors are volunteers, not an extension of the Police, Licensed premise Security or NHS, however are a clear asset for all organisations to work alongside.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS)

The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) is a scheme that lets members of the public request information about a partner's abusive past. We can then share this information with someone who might be at risk of domestic abuse.

Police Scotland launched DSDAS on 1 October 2015 and since its launch, we've received over 35,500 applications and made over 19,500 disclosures.

You can make a DSDAS application if you:

- think you might be at risk of domestic abuse
- are worried someone you know might be at risk of domestic abuse

We'll only make a disclosure after we've considered all factors. We'll assess the threat carefully, and we'll decide if we need to share information to prevent a person from experiencing domestic abuse.

We may also speak to other agencies to help us make sure a disclosure is the right option.

If you're making the application on behalf of someone else, we cannot make the disclosure to you.

We can only make a disclosure to the person who is at risk to support and help protect them.

The police will act immediately if they think you or someone else needs to be protected from harm.

More information about the scheme is available on the [Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland \(DSDAS\) page](#) on our website.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Community engagement days will be organised in the near future whereby I will attend the village in our mobile police office to speak to anyone about any subject who wishes to come along. Dates to be confirmed.

If you have any regular coffee mornings/group meetings/clubs that you think it would be beneficial for the Police to come along to please let me know, we can discuss matters such as home safety, online safety, current scams etc.

CONTACT US:

Your local Community officer is: PC Hayley Elliot

Your Community Team Email: NithsdaleCPT@scotland.police.uk

Dial **999** for an **emergency** that requires urgent police attention.
For **non-emergency contact**, call **101**, the single non-emergency number.

If you have information about crime in your area and wish to provide it anonymously, call CRIMESTOPPERS on 0800 555 111.
Service users who are deaf or have a hearing impairment can contact Police Scotland via TextRelay on 18001 101 for non-emergency, or 18000 in an emergency.

To follow us on social media:

Facebook - DumfriesGallowayPoliceDivision

X - @POSODandG

For further information about Dumfries and Galloway Division or your local Community Policing Team please visit the Dumfries and Galloway section of the force website at:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/your-community/dumfries-and-galloway>

Should the Community Council wish to discuss any matters highlighted in the report, please contact:

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February 2026 Police report



Community Policing Unit, Dumfries

Report to Caerlaverock February 2026

Officer submitting	PC Hayley Elliot
Date of meeting	

Area Crime Information and Notable Incidents:

No Crimes of note to report.

Local Initiatives:

Update on Policing Activities:

CYBER CRIME

Cybercrime continues to increase in scale and complexity, but many online crimes can be prevented with small changes in your online behaviour and by developing good habits that don't require the assistance of an IT expert.

Our advice is simple to follow and reduces the potential of becoming a victim of cybercrime, making you less vulnerable, more confident and allowing you to use the internet safely.

Please share these online safety tips with your communities.

Your community officer can also provide bespoke inputs on cyber crime for all ages. Please just get in contact.

Tips to keep you safe online

These simple tips can make a big difference when it comes to keeping you safe online.

- Combine three random words to create a password and contains a mixture of letters, numbers and symbols. For example, applenemobiro.
- Consider using a password manager to manage all your passwords or save passwords within your browser of choice. Please note, this is not recommended for public or shared devices.
- If available, set up 2 Step Verification (2SV), sometimes called Multi-Factor-Authentication. This provides a second layer of security over and above a username and password.
- Avoid giving out your personal or sensitive details on online platforms, or on social media.
- Consider if the website you're on really needs your personal information, could you use more general information?
- Control your social media accounts – Review your privacy settings and be cautious of what you post, share and comment on.
- Make sure all devices have up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed and keep software and apps regularly updated.
- Regularly back up your data.
- Only download files and Apps from legal, trusted websites.
- Only open emails and attachments from known and trusted sources.
- Check the web address starts with https:// whenever you're asked to enter sensitive information online.
- Be cautious of internet chats and online dating – there's no guarantee you're speaking to a genuine person. Officers and staff can be targeted by criminals through social media platforms and via online dating services.
- Be extremely cautious if you're asked for money. Do not send money to someone you've never met.
- Look for the padlock symbol in the address bar when paying for goods or services online – it means the website is secure - however this doesn't always mean it's a legitimate site!
- Consider using your service providers' data such as 4G instead of using public Wi-Fi for banking. Don't connect to open Wi-Fi hotspots.
- Avoid using public Wi-Fi hotspots that are not secure or ask you for personal information to access it.

Keeping children and young people safe

The internet helps children connect with friends, learn new things and is an essential tool for education, but there are also dangers online and children can be particularly vulnerable. Talking to your child about the dangers online is one of the best ways to keep them safe as they navigate the internet. By understanding the risks and keeping yourself up-to-date on the latest technology, websites and social networks, you can help your child enjoy the internet safely and securely.



Neighbourhood Watch is a community led initiative to bring local people together to address crime and other community safety issues.

Part of the Neighbourhood Watch system is Neighbourhood Alert.

Neighbourhood Alert is a secure community messaging system which allows key information providers to email registered users with reliable, localised, targeted and timely Alerts on issues of crime, safety and resilience. This keeps local people informed about issues affecting their area in a timely manner.

Current information providers include Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Local Authorities and Get Safe Online.

Alerts provide the recipient with information to take a course of action, provide advice, provide information and include a point of contact for reporting.

The alert system is used to provide information on current scams, crimes, emerging issues alongside advertisement of community surgeries and engagement events.

To sign up to received alerts scan the below QR code and click 'I want to sign-up for alerts'. All you need to do is provide your email address and locality to ensure you received location specific information. It is complete free.

You can also sign up by visiting – www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/sign-up-for-alerts

Neighbour Alert



OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

If you have any regular coffee mornings/group meetings/clubs that you think it would be beneficial for the Police to come along to please let me know, we can discuss matters such as home safety, online safety, current scams etc.

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Becky Robson, Community Resilience Officer, spoke about her role with Dumfries & Galloway Council (DGC). The Scottish Government defines community resilience as “Communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders.” In other words: how would Caerlaverock cope in the event of a civil emergency? Examples of civil emergencies:

- Weather event – heavy rain, strong winds, named storms.
- National power outage caused either by a storm or by a freak national incident.
- Pandemic
- Cyber attack – organisations being unable to function due to being targeted.

Resilience to weather events, for example, might include knowing where to look for travel warnings, or tying everything down in the garden.

Power outages might include having batteries, candles, wind-up radios and torches in the home.

Local communities are encouraged to have a resilience plan specific to their community. David Gilbert (DG) is currently updating ours. The plan lists volunteers who can assist in an emergency, perhaps someone who will check on their neighbours to make sure they're OK. The plan also includes risks specific to the community, where local knowledge is written down and shared with DGC. Volunteers are covered by DGC insurance and are offered free training. Information is shared with the volunteers during an emergency.

Becky's role is to develop a working relationship with the community group so that in an emergency a) she can ring them and find out what's going on in their area and b) the group can provide her with updates which she can feed back to DGC's emergency centre.

The council emergency centre is located in an underground bunker behind the English Street HQ. It is the team's day-to-day office but in an emergency the Local Resilience Partnership are located there. The Partnership includes branches of the Police, Fire and Ambulance, NHS staff and DGC officials.

DGVOST (D&G Virtual Operations Support Team) is an online website used by the local resilience partnership to share real-time information with the public. The public can also contact DGVOST and input information to share with the bunker.

Four DGC duty resilience officers are on a rota and are available 24/7 in the event of a civil emergency. If you ever needed to contact them, ring the DGC main number 030 33 33 3000 and ask to speak to the duty resilience officer. Obviously call 999 in a life-threatening emergency.

Following Becky's presentation, DG described how he has been working with Becky, Anna, Fred and others to update our community resilience plan. In an emergency, Becky would phone our group and forward to the bunker any information we give her. The Caerlaverock plan will be on our website and will be shared with DGC. The plan will include:

- a list of people who have volunteered to help in any emergency
- key buildings eg the Estate Office could serve as the communications hub; Hutton Hall, the Barbour Hall, Nith Inshore Rescue and the Caerlaverock Estate Office could all be places where affected residents could come together and keep warm.
- Equipment generally available eg the two defibrillators.
- Other equipment that may be of use. There are plenty of tractors, trailers and 4X4 vehicles in the community, together with radios held by some groups, all of which could be called upon in an emergency.
- DG has some leaflets if anyone would like to produce their own home resilience plan. More available from DG in .pdf format.

- In the event of a serious power outage, Hutton Hall and Barbour Hall could be powered by standby generators if switchover switches were installed. Alice asked if DGC would help fund these switches. Becky to contact Scottish Power and let us know.

D&G Council

With reference to the many points which Cllr John Campbell took away from the last meeting: he has had acknowledgements that his queries have been received but has not been notified of anything being acted upon.

Potholes: DG said some pothole work has been done. Some of those present commented on the poor quality of the repairs. Alice said the Glencaple road still better than it was, even if repairs are only temporary.

Footpath to new houses: conversation turned to the continued absence of the footpath to the new houses. DG's understanding was that the houses were not to be occupied until the new footpath was in place, so the planning authority should make it very clear to the developer that they can build what they want but the houses currently under construction cannot be occupied until they build the footpath. Unless pressure is put on the developer causing them to not get their money, nothing will happen. There has been discussion about who owns the land where the footpath will be built but DG cannot believe this can't be easily resolved.

Quay End: DG pointed out that sandstone blocks are missing from the north face of the quay end. He's already drawn it to Chris Woodness's attention. Cllr Campbell to follow it up with Chris.

Quay Hill road edges: Alice commented on several stretches of the Quay Hill where the Tarmac ends at the road edge and there is a steep drop into the space below. Cllr Campbell says it's the Council's responsibility.

More on potholes: Alan Leech mentioned a Border TV programme on potholes which showed a sophisticated piece of equipment that cut out a square section of road and replaced the asphalt. It seemed to him to be a better system. Are the Councillors aware that there are alternative ways of doing it? Alan had seen this method being used by a private contractor on the road leading from the B725 to Caerlaverock Castle and wondered if there is any scope for rolling out this method more widely. Cllr Campbell said that various methods are being tried using different equipment and they have had a demonstration of this machine. He added that there are three ways of fixing a pothole depending on its severity. A quick fix can be followed by more permanent repair at a later date. Cllr Malcolm Johnstone assured us that they find the pothole situation as frustrating as we do, as do the DGC officials.

NatureScot

Potholes in the car park have been repaired. Wildfowling has finished and the merse is closed to allow birds to nest. For this reason, please do not exercise your dogs on the merse.

WWT

Increased costs and decreasing income mean the site has had to close till spring. The site costs a lot to run and has fewer visitors – hence less income – than other WWT sites which are close to large population centres. To cut costs, it was decided to remove the visitor centre, shop and food provision so the admissions desk is the only service available. Added to this, coincidentally, some staff were made redundant at the same time as others left so the site was being run by two people. Despite this being their busy period, they had no option but to close temporarily. Keeping the site open would not have affected the financial situation. During the closure, they seized the opportunity

to do improvement work on the ground. A new team is being recruited and the closure is very much a one-off, not to be repeated in future years. WWT remains very much committed to Caerlaverock and has long-term plans for the site but with a different structure and different income streams, including renovating the farmhouse to make it self-catering.

Historic Environment Scotland

Rosie Thorp sent the following report.

- Visitor numbers (since 1st April 2025) 37, 823.
- Pothole repairs have taken place along the road
- Castle closure 16th-20th March for essential maintenance. Grounds will remain accessible though there may be works vehicles and equipment. The visitor centre will likely remain open throughout this period, though this is still to be confirmed.

Events

- 'Caerlaverock Castle BioBlitz' 20th-27th April, 18th-25th May, 24th-31st August. This is an event led by our Site Steward, Zoe, to record and identify all insects, plants, fungi, trees and more around the castle. All are welcome to join, it's free to do so (only site charge is if you are entering the castle), and we'll be recording the data using the iNaturalist app (information posted on CCA website)

Jobs

- Roving Steward job, likely to be based at Caerlaverock Castle, has recently been advertised (and posted on CCA website) and application entry period has just closed.
- Stonemason Apprentice position expected to be advertised very soon, will share post for CCA website when it's live. This will be based at the Dumfries depot, and will involve some training up in Stirling (accommodation provided and travel costs covered), but most of the time will be at the Dumfries depot (in The Crichton) and working on local sites – Caerlaverock Castle and Sweetheart Abbey being the main ones.

Caerlaverock School

No report received.

Caerlaverock Estate

Anna described new ways of partnership working with the Council.

Tree work: the Estate's latest tree safety survey showed that some trees on the Estate needed felled and others needed dangerous limbs removed (all the red-listed trees have been done; amber-listed to follow over the next 12 months). Trees removed from the Shore Road just south of Glencaple will be replaced with 40 mixed broadleaves. The Estate and DGC have developed a new way of partnership working: where trees were the responsibility of DGC, the Estate employed the tree surgeon and the Council saw to traffic management.

Blocked culverts & drains: council road staff visited the Estate and were shown where we have problems with blocked culverts and drains. Estate worker Sam managed to clear a lot of the roadside drains by hand but there remained 6-7 places across the Estate where we needed a digger – and the Council are supplying this. Anna sees such partnership working with the Council as a positive step forward in improving things for the community. If anyone is aware of more blocked drains, tell Anna.

Other than that, the main thing the Estate are working on is the Estate-wide nature restoration project. Funding is being sought. The development phase is ending and the delivery phase begins in April. Once the funding position is clearer, the Estate will be holding a community event in one of the halls to explain the project. There will be parts of the project where people can get involved.

Saunas are becoming increasingly popular and Caerlaverock does not have one. Is there anyone locally who would consider going into business with the Estate to run such a facility? The Estate could put some of the investment in. It would benefit not only all the holiday lets in the area but also local residents. Anyone up for this please contact Anna.

Anna is aware of power works going on in the area, with overhead cables being put underground, part of an amenity project to bury cables in scenic areas.

Barbour Hall

Fairly quiet since the last update. The Robin Rigg application was unsuccessful but we are looking at other sources of funding to continue the refurbishment of the interior of the pavilion. We're considering how to use the community space (former changing rooms) - OK outside but derelict inside - and would welcome a brief consultation with members of the CCA about its use before continuing the work. CCA have agreed in principle to help with funding; Alice said they have to consider all the potential funding necessities and how to prioritise them. Alice will contact DG to discuss a possible consultation event.

The Hall is hosting the CEO of DGC on 5th March, part of her annual ward visits, looking at how we have used the funds they awarded us last year. That was part of the funding we received for the roof, ramps and render project. The kindlers were much appreciated. DG said the Community Benefit Team, who supply them, have raised the possibility of supplying logs. DG to investigate, the only potential issue being where to store them.

Allotments

No report received but a very quiet time of year.

Nith Inshore Rescue

No report received.

Caerlaverock Kirk

The new minister is in place.

Hutton Hall

Work on decorating the inside will start in the next few weeks. Fred praised Crown Paints who have saved them a fortune. Upcoming events: 11 March 1800-2000 a government-funded session on "Energy Outreach in Rural Communities", offering free, impartial and expert energy advice to homes across Scotland from environmental charity Changeworks. Fred thinks those most in need of advice may not have internet so may not hear about this session, so please promote it. Then on 14 March at 1900 (doors open 1830) a musical evening with John Caskie and Willie McRobert. The old bowling green is to be renamed the Caerlaverock Green. Work to improve the borders will start in spring.

Junior Football

No report received. Unsure if it is still active.

Canine Rescue Centre

Robb Masters, new CEO of the Centre (a part-time post), is now in post, allowing the trustees, who have been running the Centre since the Centre Manager left in spring 2025, to step back. A new kennel supervisor started in 2025, then a dog behaviour specialist was recruited, and now Robb has joined.

They are looking for a new Trustee to join the board. This increase in staff will allow them to move forward with the Ayr site which they bought last year. The Ayr site (an old SSPCA site) needs a lot of

renovation but should be able to accept its first dogs this year or next. The Glencaple kennel block has also undergone a small amount of renovation. 2026 Open Day is 23 May. The Centre is open 10-4 every day but unfortunately you will not be able to see the dogs; anyone interested in adopting a dog should make an appointment. Robb will make sure Jade, the events organiser, puts future events on the CCA website events calendar. Fred asked if they will take boarders again at any point. Robb said they'd done some welfare boarding, where owners have had to go into hospital, but are not looking at resuming traditional boarding. DG suggested the Centre make contact with the school as he was sure the children would be interested.

AOB

War Memorial

DG proposed a formal vote of thanks to the Estate for tidying the War Memorial area. As for cleaning it, the stone is grey granite and no amount of cleaning will change its appearance. It does have a few patches of lichen, and if anyone wishes to find a way of cleaning it cheaply then get in touch. DG has been in contact with the War Memorials Trust and any cleaning would have to be done by a competent, specialised contractor and would probably require scaffolding. DG suggested this is money we don't need to spend. David Turnbull says the appearance of the Memorial will probably improve anyway now that the bushes have been cut back.

Remembrance Sunday

a volunteer is required to organise it this year. DG will put something on the website and facebook.

Community Website

Fred is retiring in June and will have more time to revamp the website. CCA have received a lot of complaints about dog-fouling, both in the village and at the new bus-stop. The fouling has only begun occurring recently. DG said it is also an issue at Castle Corner. Fred offered to start an awareness campaign aimed at dog-owners. The meeting agreed. Fred asked if there is any Council funding for notices. The Councillors said the Community Safety

Community Projects (update)

DG still has to sort out a place for the bench at the Quay End, then acquire the flags and bags of sand.

Scottish Water and planning consent

DG has not heard from Scottish Water so will write to Scottish Water for an update on this major project. David Turnbull has seen people on site who looked to be from Scottish Water plus a contractor.

Hutton Trust

Alan Leech is now a member. They are continuing to pay out small grants. No other news.

AOB

Events: Barbour Hall race night on 21 March. Annual Caerlaverock Shore Clean-up on Sunday 22 March.

Funding: DG mentioned to Alice that although the Barbour Hall missed out on Robin Rigg funding, they can always approach CCA.

Cllr Campbell reminded Alice about the Regionwide Community Fund available via the Council. Open till 10 April. And the Coastal Benefit Fund available to all community groups, deadline 27 March.

Date of next meeting: 20 May Barbour Hall (nb not 27 May). Alice to check it's available.