



Ballater Flood Bulletin No 8: Wednesday 30th March 2016

1. Dates for your diary

Ballater and Upper Deeside Flood Response Get Together to Work Together Open

Day: Saturday 2nd April 2016, 10.30 am to 3.30 pm, Victoria Hall, Ballater – **all welcome.**

Participants Include: Flood Relief Distribution Point, The V&A Halls, The River Dee Trust, The Scottish Flood Forum, Deeside Churches, Foundation Scotland, Green Space Scotland & Aberdeenshire Council.

- The Get Together to Work Together Open Day is a chance to speak to a range of organisations to find out how you could get involved and what support is available from local **volunteers**, and grants.
- Come and see an exhibition of **flood protection products** that you could install in your property and find out about the Council discount scheme.
- Come and see the proposed plans for the **Ballater Old Station Restoration Project** and give your feedback and comments.

2. Updates

Questionnaire: Aberdeenshire Council Marr Area Office will be sending out (either by letter or email) a very short and simple letter and questionnaire to all residents in Ballater affected by the flood. The aim is to find out if there is any additional support and advice that the Council or partners should be providing. Copies will also be available in the Library or via Paul Hendy.

Aberdeenshire Council Ballater Recovery Plan: The plan outlines the actions for recovery that have been identified as priorities and details how these will be delivered. Reference copies are available for viewing in the Library or copies can be obtained via email: marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk An update on progress with delivery of the Recovery Plan is given as an Appendix to this Bulletin.

Report on Ballater Flood Public Information Meeting on 23rd March: A report summarising the key points that were discussed at the public event on 23rd March has been prepared and is available on the Ballater Community Website.

Aberdeenshire Council Flood Team Update: At the public meeting held on 23rd March, the Flood Team provided the following information:

- The flood defences around the golf course will be repaired in order to reinstate the original protection to Ballater. Aberdeenshire Council will complete this work in 2-3 months' time.
- A flood protection study is required to consider flood protection works to reduce the risk of flooding in Ballater from the River Dee. This was originally scheduled to be developed in the period 2021-2027 but will be brought forward and will now happen in the period 2016-2021.

Message from Davidsons Chemists Ballater: We are pleased to report that the building repairs are progressing as planned. Works have now been signed off and agreed with insurance contractors. We expect to commence full re-fit of the Pharmacy in late March and re-open by 1st May. Grateful thanks to our patients and local surgery for their support and understanding at this time.

Message from GP Surgery: Quick reminder: For those people affected by the flood who have had to move to temporary accommodation, please remember to let your GP surgery know where you are - even if it is another temporary move.

Scottish Government Flood Grants: Please note that applications for the Scottish Government Flood Grants (being administered by Aberdeenshire Council) are due to close on 31st March (at that time the Floodrelief email address Floodrelief@aberdeenshire.gov.uk will be disabled). Anyone wishing to apply before this date can do so online at: <http://bit.ly/SGfloodgrant> For more information please see: <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/apps/news/release.aspx?newsID=4391>

Ballater Flood – Housing Problems: Aberdeenshire Council Housing Options Team are aware that some residents of Ballater and the surrounding area who are currently in temporary accommodation following the December Flood may soon have to vacate the rented or temporary accommodation. If you are in this situation and are experiencing or threatened with homelessness please contact the Housing Team during office hours (8.45am – 5pm Monday to Friday) on 01569 768562. The Housing Options Team will be able to provide you with housing advice and assistance.

Advice from Aberdeenshire Council Housing Team about Private Sector Rentals:

- **Deposits:** Any households affected by flooding that are finding funding the rental deposit difficult, please contact Private Housing Team on landlordregistration@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or Tel: 01467 628491 or 01467 928492. Aberdeenshire Council has a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in place which may be able to assist in these circumstances.
- **References:** The use of references is at the discretion of landlords. Not all landlords take references but it is considered best practice to do so. References can come from a variety of sources and do not need to be from a previous landlord. Advice for both tenants and landlords can be obtained from contact above.
- **Tenancy Duration (short assured tenancy minimum period of 6 months):** This is set out in Scottish Government legislation. However, even though a lease is in place for a particular period of time this does not mean that the tenancy cannot be ended earlier by agreement of all parties. Landlords who are renting out their properties to people who have been affected by the floods may be agreeable to end the tenancy sooner.

Message from Paul Hendy, Scottish Flood Forum:

- The flood recovery advice surgeries held in the Ballater Library continue to be very well attended and will continue each week until the majority of people are back home. I would like to go on record to say a huge thank you to the Library staff for their valuable support over the past months. This next week sees the last day Christine Handsley is with us, her support has been invaluable to the smooth running of the Drop-in Centre and her local knowledge, and understanding nature has proved invaluable to my work. So a huge thank you to Aberdeenshire Council for releasing Christine it has been deeply appreciated.
- There have been quite a number of local people affected by the decision of the Integra Insurance Company to void their policies. Its good news that the Directors have agreed to help with the possible reinstatement of the flood damaged properties they previously insured, through an 'Ex Gratia' payment. I am still trying to find out more details about this and what it may involve. I suspect that what will happen is an assessment will be made to possibly negotiate a settlement and to this end I would advise taking the following course of action: Ask Integra if you can appoint an independent surveyor to draw up a costing of the repairs required to your property. Once a surveyor has completed a 'scope of works' it will put you in a position of

being able to negotiate a suitable settlement. Please be aware if you have any concerns or things are not working out please either e-mail, phone or call into the Library on a Thursday and let me know.

- Flooded and need a new kitchen: Howdens Kitchens are keen to provide support to those affected by the December storms at a substantial discount. They are offering the services of their design team (free of charge) and ensure that whatever you choose is at the lowest price. To this end I have negotiated a cash account solely for people affected by the recent floods to ensure you benefit from the greatest discount. What this means is that we order the kitchen through the Ballater account and you pay Howdens directly. They will then deliver and install if requested – this should benefit particularly people without insurance or those who are under insured. I have brochures and flyers regarding the latest Howdens discounts.

Message from Ballater Caravan Park: Following the flood in December 2016, the directors of the not-for-profit community company, Ballater Community Enterprise Ltd, have been working hard in conjunction with Aberdeenshire Council to secure a sustainable future for the park. This is important for the economy of Ballater as it brings in visitors who spend in the local shops and food and drink outlets. In addition BCE has made significant surpluses in the last three years which have been reinvested back into improving the caravan park and also distributed back into community projects through our parent charitable company, Ballater Royal Deeside Ltd. The V&A Halls roof repairs is just one example of a local project.

With finance provided by the Council, a contractor has now started work in clearing the park of the debris of destroyed caravans and it is expected that this work will be completed mid-March. Thereafter, the touring part of the park will be reinstated such that touring caravans can be accommodated as from early May 2016. We are indebted to The Prince's Trust, Hilton Grand Vacations, The Boy's Brigade and the Council for grant funding to enable this work to be carried out. As well as reinstating the touring section, we hope to improve the look of the park to make it an even more pleasing destination.

The static van part of the site will be cleared but not reinstated at this stage. During 2016, we will work closely with the Council and other appropriate organisations, particularly on matters such as flood defences, to ensure the longer term reinstatement of the static area. We hope that these developments, along with the opening of the golf club and Sheridan's butchers, will see the start of the regeneration of Ballater for visitors and residents.

3. Advice and drop-ins

Aberdeenshire Council Ballater Flood Response Team: From w/c 4th April advice with flood related issues and signposting to further assistance can be obtained via Marr Area Office Tel: 01975 564803 or email: marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Scottish Flood Forum: From w/c 4th April Paul Henty from the Scottish Flood Forum will run the **flood recovery advice surgery in Ballater Library every Thursday from 10 – 12 am, 2 - 4 pm and 6.30 – 8 pm** and he will do most property visits on Wednesdays. Paul provides expert advice and support regarding insurance claims, drying out properties, property repairs and any other questions related to flooding and its impacts. Paul can be contacted by phone 07747702299 or email paul@scottishfloodforum.org. Due to the numbers of people asking for his advice, an appointment system has been established so please contact the Library staff to book an appointment on Wednesdays with Paul, either by popping into the Library or call on 013397 55628. They will of course squeeze folk in between appointments if necessary but you may have to wait some time.

Deeside Inn Pop-in: Running on alternate Thursdays from 10.30 -12pm, the Deeside Inn will provide free tea and coffee to all affected by the recent events in the community, whether flooded or not. So join us while we chat, talk, and support each other. If you want some space to offload, to exchange ideas, or just to escape out of your house for a while, please

come along. While this isn't a church event, either David Barr or Vittoria Hancock hope to be around most weeks. The next dates are 7th April and 21st April.

Help with completing forms: Anyone needing assistance with filling in grant application or any other forms can ask the Ballater Flood Response Team in the Library, contact Susan McGregor, Aberdeenshire Council Community Learning and Development on Tel: 013398 86222 or Mob: 07827982250 to arrange assistance from a volunteer or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau (see below for more details).

South West Aberdeenshire Citizens Advice Bureau: The CAB have an outreach in Ballater at the Beaton/Craigie Room in the V&A Halls on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Please call Tel: 01224 747714 or email: enquiries@westhillcab.casonline.org.uk to book an appointment. The CAB provide advice on benefits, debt and money advice, work-related problems, consumer issues, relationships and housing. They also have specialist workers in Debt, Benefits, Pensions Guidance, Money Advice and Energy who will be pleased to guide you through more complex problems. In addition, they can provide support with filling in grant application or other forms (including those related to the flood).

Ballater Flood Relief Distribution Centre: They are operating out of the Church Street Car Park and will be open every Tues 10 am - 3 pm. For more details please contact Gillie Inglis on 07464435231. Anyone affected by flooding whether insured or not is encouraged to make use of this resource. Items distributed so far include sofas, beds, TVs, small kitchen appliances, crockery, cutlery, utensils, bedding and duvets, clothes – shoes, boots coats and jackets, pots and pans, food, furniture, baby items, new toiletries, socks and pants (for both children and adults), cleaning products and overalls etc.

Volunteers: Anyone wishing to volunteer please attend the open day on 2nd April (see details above) or contact one of the following:

- Gillie Inglis – 07464 435231 – to volunteer for Ballater Flood Relief Distribution Centre and via Hope Floats facebook page
- Calum Hislop, River Officer – calum@riverdee.org The River Dee Trust and Board are organising River Dee Bank Clear Up Days in Feb, March and April, please email Calum to volunteer

Library Opening Hours: April 2016: Any queries please call Sabine Muir on 013397 55628 or ballater.library@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday	10 am - 1 pm 6:30 – 8.00 pm
Wednesday	CLOSED
Thursday	10 – 12 am, 2 - 4 pm 6:30 – 8.00 pm
Friday	2 - 5 pm
Saturday	10 am - 12 pm

4. Sources of funding

Ballater Charitable Chiels Flood Fund: The Ballater Charitable Chiels continue to distribute funds to flooded households. The Charitable Chiels can be contacted on 07772668017 to make an appointment. They will also, depending on resources, be able to provide practical physical help with moving items from flood affected properties.

The Rotary Club of Aboyne and Upper Deeside: Ballater and Deeside Flood Relief Fund: The fund is available to provide assistance to the people and communities directly affected by the recent floods. Contact the Rotary by email: audrotary1010@gmail.com or Tel: 07724 144 355.

Ballater Flood Fund: Rev. David Barr and Rev. Vittoria Hancock are distributing funds to those in need following the flood from their Ballater Flood Fund. If anyone is in need of assistance please approach Vittoria or David directly, David's Manse number is 01339756111 and Vittoria's Rectory number, is 013397 55919.

Foundation Scotland – Flood Recovery Appeal – Aberdeenshire Fund: Financial support is available for (1) up to **£1000** for individuals or families who are suffering financial hardship as a result of the recent flooding and (2) up to **£10,000** for voluntary and community groups who are providing immediate relief to people, will be providing longer term community rebuilding projects, have experienced significant structural and or flood damage **or for groups responsible for ensuring prevention and community preparedness against future storm and flood damage** Further information can be found on their website: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/flood-recovery-appeal/apply-for-funding/> or contact the Grants Team on 0141 341 4960 or email grants@foundationscotland.org.uk

5. Community groups involved in flood recovery

Ballater Community Resilience Plan: John Bolton is chairing the Ballater Community Resilience Group which is currently developing a Community Resilience Plan for Ballater. This short plan will be a self-help guide to assist the community in coping with any emergency, not just flooding, prior to the arrival of Emergency Services. Once the plan has been completed it will be accessible on the Ballater Community website. Volunteers will be required to take part in emergency situations within the scope of the plan and anyone interested in being involved should contact John on 07710 544804.

Victoria and Albert Halls Committee, Ballater: The Victoria and Albert Halls, Ballater, provides a rest centre in emergency situations where evacuation is necessary. They have reviewed their facilities in the light of the recent experiences, and have drawn up a draft plan for the future including the need to install a back-up power generation system. They have started fundraising and are ring-fencing money for this purpose. Anyone wishing to donate should contact Willie Meston, Treasurer Victoria and Albert Halls – info@coilacriech.com Tel. 013397 55377.

Business Recovery Group: A group has been set up which includes representatives from Ballater Business Association, Visit Royal Deeside, VisitScotland, Business in the Community Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council and Cairngorms National Park Authority. If your organisation would like to be involved please get in touch with Richard Watt, Chair Ballater Business Association or Morna Harper, Aberdeenshire Council Service Manager – Business and Communities on Tel: 01224 665218.

Ballater Flood Group (BFG): Established by Ballater residents in response to the December Flood, to identify changes and improvements needed in response to the flood and to reflect community opinions. To date it has investigated short term alleviation/protection from future flood events and community flood alerts/information systems (information to be fed into Community Resilience Plan). The BFG was appointed by and reports to the Community Council. Community input is welcome: please contact Tony Cox (Coordinator) 013397 55625. coxscotland@btinternet.com

Ballater Support Group: A handful of Ballater ladies saw an urgent need to make sure that evacuees continue to feel supported, and do not begin to feel isolated. This is being addressed by trying to establish contact with a member of every household which has been affected by flooding, to see how they are bearing up; if their insurance company is treating them fairly; if they need volunteer help; and to pass on information about the sources of funding, professional help, and other donations available. Over 80% of flooded homes have had one visit, but, of course, many of the householders are not even able to visit their properties at the moment, far less live in them, so it's anticipated that many more visits will be necessary. If anyone feels able to pass on contact details of those who have been

displaced that would be most welcome. Details can be left with Linda Drever on 013397 56224, or by email at thedrevers@btinternet.com so that they can get in touch to reassure them that they have not been forgotten – it's not a case of out of sight, out of mind.

6. Information to be aware of

Flood Protection Products: Aberdeenshire Council retains a stock of a small selection of these products (eg. flood gates, vent guards and floodsaxs) and is willing to sell them to the public at cost price. The prices reflect the discounts available to the Council through bulk purchasing and are likely to be less than can be obtained by purchasing direct from suppliers. To find out more please contact the Flood Protection Unit on 01569 768517 or see: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/flooding/flood-protection-products/>

Scams and Rogue Traders: There has been a report locally of a scam where a flooded business received a letter from a furniture provider advising that their insurance policy required them to purchase replacement furnishings from this company. Please make sure that you check with your insurance company before committing to anything and when dealing with traders ensure that you get three quotes if at all possible. If you are at all suspicious get a name, contact number, type of vehicle and registration number and contact Aberdeenshire Council Trading Standards on 01467 628323.

Voter Registration and Flooding: The Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Office have provided the following advice:

Retain your existing registration details (name, address) and the poll cards that were issued last week by the Returning Officer would be issued to your permanent address. Providing you have your mail redirected to your temporary address, your poll card should reach you.

If you normally vote in person at your polling station you can continue to do so for the election on 5 May. You do not need your poll card to cast your vote – it merely serves as a reminder to you that the election is taking place and advises you of the date and time of the poll along with the address of your polling station.

If getting to your normal polling station is inconvenient you can apply to vote by post – go to www.voteaberdeenshire.org and download a form or telephone 01224 66 48 48 to request a form. Applications to vote by post must reach the Grampian Electoral Registration office (Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB15 5GE) before 5pm on 19 April 2016. They can be scanned and emailed to ero@grampian-ero.gov.uk but please do not leave your application to the last minute it is delayed in the post or the email does not arrive.

If you normally vote by post, your postal ballot papers will be issued by the Returning Officer to your usual address unless you tell us otherwise. If you have your mail redirected to your temporary address, the postal ballot paper will be redirected to you too. If you do not have your mail re-directed, we can update our records with your temporary address for the ballot paper to be sent to direct, but you must remember to change that address back to your permanent home address when you move back to your permanent home.

If it becomes clear that you are going to be living at your temporary address longer than originally expected, for say 8-12+ months and decide to change your address for your bank, utilities and other official correspondence, you might find it useful to register as an elector at your new address – especially as banks check the register when dealing with credit applications. You can update your registration details at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

If you have questions regarding registering to vote, please contact the Grampian Electoral Registration office on 01224 66 48 48 or ero@grampian-ero.gov.uk

SSE: We have been informed that SSE have a dedicated number assigned for customers who have had to leave their homes due to the flooding and any queries about cancellation of direct debit can also be done using this number: 0800 9121512.

Police: Until further notice, the public office at Aboyne will be open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm.

Waste: Households who still have flood damaged items to remove please call Wasteline (03456 08 12 07) for a free bulky uplift service. This does not apply to building and construction waste including plasterboard, laminate / wooden flooring or insulation. Households will have to arrange collection of that material privately. The Council are no longer uplifting flood damaged waste from businesses. Wheeled bins will be replaced free of charge for those lost in the floods. Businesses who receive trade waste and recycling services from Aberdeenshire Council may have charges waived for an agreed period due to the impact of flooding and should contact the trade waste team.

Sandbags – please remove from the street if no longer needed: Sandbags can be kept for future use by storing them in a dry environment unless they have been contaminated by sewage, deep floodwater or oil. If you cannot store them in your shed, Aberdeenshire Council can store them locally.

Insurance: The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has some useful information for those affected by the recent flooding at:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/News/Newsreleases/2016/01/Clearing-up-after-the-floods-latest-advice-and-information-from-insurers> Their document 'Responding to Major Floods' may

also be useful and can be found at:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/~media/Files/Documents/Publications/Public/2015/Property/Responding%20to%20Major%20Floods.pdf>

They provided the following update for residents and businesses concerned about increased insurance premiums as a result of the floods: Anyone who may experience difficulty in accessing flood cover at an affordable price should shop around as different insurers will assess risk in different ways. We would recommend speaking to a broker, many of which have specialist expertise in finding insurance for households at significant flood risk. The British Insurance Broker's Association runs a find a broker service, which can be contacted on 0870 950 1790.

It is also worth noting, for those who are experiencing difficulties with home insurance, the Government and insurance industry have been working hard to develop Flood Re to help safeguard access to affordable flood insurance for people living in high flood risk areas. Flood Re is a collaboration between the insurance industry and the Government and is currently planned to start taking policies on 4th April 2016. Because Flood Re will accept flood risk from insurers at subsidised fixed price rates, it should follow that market forces will cause prices to drop for customers who are increasingly finding it more difficult to obtain flood insurance. Further information on Flood Re is available at www.floodre.co.uk It is estimated that between 31,500 – 45,000 homes in Scotland will benefit from the scheme.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Housing assistance: 03456 081203 (open 24hrs)

Council tax: 03456 081201

Benefits: 03456 081200

Social Care line: 03456 081206 (24 hours)

Roads: 03456 081205

Wasteline: 03456 081207

Environmental Health Line: 03456 081207 (24 hrs)

Police: 101 or 999

SEPA Floodline 0345 988 1188

BT - To let them know you have been flooded out and cannot return to your home phone 0800 800 150. For BT Business Customers: 0800 800 154

Drinking water - Scottish Water: 0800 0778 778

Medical Centre and Prescriptions: 013397 55686. Medical prescriptions can be ordered from the surgery. A courier service for prescriptions to fetch prescriptions from Aboyne has been established. Repeat prescriptions - Please allow 5 days for repeat prescriptions. For those who have no medication over the weekend phone NHS 111 for advice

Scottish Hydro: 0800 300 999

Scottish Power: 0800 092 9290

Scottish Water: 0800 0778 778

SKY - 0800 0158 693 - you can contact them and they will put your contract on hold until needed.

Appendix:

Ballater Recovery Plan: Update on Progress (as of 23rd March 2016)

The Ballater Recovery Plan outlines the actions for recovery that have been identified as priorities and details how these will be delivered by Aberdeenshire Council, the community and other partners. Reference copies are available for viewing in the Library or copies can be obtained via email: marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk. The recovery plan sets out the recovery actions under five themes and the update below provides a brief summary of progress achieved on delivering these actions:

Residents

- Sluiermohr tenants returning to homes last week and this week.
- Tenders out for repairs to Council houses, contractors planned to be on site May and complete by Oct.
- Housing Team continue to give advice and assistance where possible.
- Scottish Flood Forum surgeries and advice ongoing.

Business

- Drop in centre event held to provide advice from Business Gateway and others on VAT, insurance etc.
- Events programme being developed.
- Caravan Park cleared and planned to be open by 1 May.
- Golf course open and work making good progress.
- Butcher shop open.
- Economic impact study carried out; draft complete.

Infrastructure

- Initial survey of river complete.
- Flood defences along golf club to be reinstated.
- Historic bridges have been assessed.
- Dee Street; liaising with utilities to reinstate damage to road.
- Open space adjacent to Fire Station; assessed and will be reinstated when appropriate.
- Road repairs complete and gully repairs ongoing.

Environment

- Damage to footpaths and core path network by floods has been assessed. Bid being prepared to go to Scottish Govt. to provide funding to repair damage.
- River network looking much better.
- Most sandbags removed and repairs ongoing.

Communication

- Flood Bulletin being issued regularly and distributed electronically and in paper format.
- Scottish Flood Forums surgery being held every Wednesday and home visits on Thursdays.
- Open day being held on 2 April at V&A Halls; flood protection products exhibition and advice on Council discount scheme, volunteering opportunities, consultation on Ballater Station plans.
- Service point has been open in Library every Wednesday but from the beginning of April, support will be accessed via Marr Area Office.