

# Braemar Castle

APPEAL





AN INITIATIVE OF BRAEMAR COMMUNITY LIMITED

# RAISING THE STANDARD IS A PROJECT OF BRAEMAR COMMUNITY LIMITED

OUR GOAL IS:  
TO HELP SUSTAIN  
BRAEMAR AS A THRIVING  
RURAL COMMUNITY,  
PROTECT BRAEMAR  
CASTLE AND ITS  
COLLECTION AND  
CREATE INSPIRING AND  
ENGAGING EXPERIENCES  
FOR VISITORS AND  
VOLUNTEERS

# INTRODUCTION & PROJECT OUTLINE

**B**raemar is a remote rural community located at the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. Fine hunting brought early royal patronage, and, across the centuries, the area has played a colourful and significant role in Scotland's story. The village now has a lively tourism industry with key attractions being the annual Royal Highland Gathering and Braemar Castle

The Castle is situated to the east of the village in the spectacular Royal Deeside landscape. The Category A Listed tower house was built in 1628. With its crenelated battlements, star-shaped curtain wall and dramatic backdrop, it has the romantic aesthetic of a Highland Castle.

Braemar Community Limited (BCL) is a Scottish charity that was established in 2004 to develop and manage projects for the benefit of local residents. In 2007 BCL took over management of the Castle to reinstate public access and ensure continuity of care for this historic architectural gem. The enthusiasm and volunteer effort this brought have established it as a popular and viable destination leading to a three-fold increase in visitor numbers. The building now needs urgent work to protect its structure, improve accessibility and ensure that visitor facilities meet the needs of the 21st century.

Raising the Standard is a 3-year project to protect Braemar Castle as an historic monument and move towards our aspiration of becoming a 5-star heritage attraction that offers more to visitors, volunteers and local residents. It will:

- completely rehaul the external walls of the Castle with a traditional lime wash
- improve the conservation and interpretation of the collection
- increase the Castle's capacity for visitor numbers
- develop a volunteer and training programme and extend the range of roles and opportunities available
- establish a programme of activities and events to appeal to a greater number of visitors.



**TO ACHIEVE THIS  
WE NEED TO RAISE  
£1.5 MILLION**

# RAISING THE STANDARD

**T**he community's success in establishing Braemar Castle as a popular and viable visitor attraction is indisputable and the impact has spread beyond the Castle walls. Braemar has become a thriving destination on the tourist route, attracting new businesses to develop in the village. The Castle has made a valuable contribution to community life by creating volunteering and learning opportunities and a vibrant events programme.

We know that to sustain this momentum we have to act now. We have sought the advice of experts and developed a plan of action. Our priorities are to repair severe defects in the structure and fabric of the building, improve visitor facilities and develop an expanded and engaging volunteer programme. Our Raising the Standard project has been launched to address these issues.

## Raising the Standard: the goal

**TO HELP SUSTAIN BRAEMAR AS A  
THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITY, PROTECT  
BRAEMAR CASTLE AND ITS COLLECTION  
AND CREATE INSPIRING AND ENGAGING  
EXPERIENCES FOR VISITORS AND  
VOLUNTEERS.**



# COSTS AND FUNDING

The anticipated costs of the Raising the Standard project are outlined below.

Item	Development Costs	Delivery Costs
External conservation work		£775,700
Other building and capital works	£5,000	£230,800
Interpretation and activities	£12,300	£203,900
Professional fees and contingencies	£131,300	£229,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>£148,600</b>	<b>£1,440,000</b>

The Development Phase of the project is underway, made possible by:

- £100,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and
- £48,560 from BCL resources.

We are now seeking funding for Phase 2 – the delivery of the project. We are actively working in strategic partnership with some significant funders including National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland and others; however our target is to raise an additional £500,000 to complete the funding package.



# A COMMUNITY MANAGED CASTLE

**B**y the early 2000s Braemar Castle was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain under private ownership and in 2004 it closed to visitors. The loss to the community and local economy was significant and one we felt necessary to address.

Braemar Community Limited approached the Castle's owner, Invercauld Estate and, in February 2007, secured a 50-year repairing and improving lease on the now leaky and deteriorating Castle. Between 2012 and 2018 we raised £468,000 that was used to undertake repairs to the roof and chimneys. More work is needed and the defective harling is now a major structural, as well as aesthetic, challenge.

The Castle is open to visitors from Easter until October. For the first 7 years it was staffed and maintained entirely by volunteers. Now the team comprises one full-time Castle Manager, seasonal staff and some 50 volunteers. Under community management visitor numbers have more than trebled from around 4,000 to over 13,000 with a further 25,000 visits to the grounds. There is a varied and adventurous programme of events which give marketing opportunities and enhance the Castle as a significant visitor attraction. The annual Jacobite Day (or Highland Fling) in July attracts over 800 visitors. Smaller, more intimate events such as Murder Mystery, Jacobite themed dinners and recitals take place throughout the season. Links with the local primary school are strong and pupils regularly take on the role of being Castle guides for a day.



# AIMS & OUTCOMES

The aims and outcomes of the Raising the Standard project are:

## Heritage conservation

- The Grade A listed Braemar Castle is protected and preserved
- The collection within the Castle is conserved and protected
- More people will have the opportunity and resources to learn about the history and heritage of Braemar Castle.

## Visitor experience

- The visual and aesthetic appeal of the Castle is even more stunning
- The Castle is readily accessible internally and externally to a wider range of visitors
- There is capacity to host a larger number of visitors
- The displays and interpretation are more accessible and better presented
- The grounds become an attraction in their own right
- An expanded and more varied events programme attracts a larger audience.

## Volunteering and skills development

- More trained volunteers undertaking a wider range of roles supported by a Volunteer & Training Coordinator
- Increased opportunities to learn traditional craft and stonework skills
- Improved capacity ensures long-term effective management of the Castle.

## Community

- Braemar Castle will be an exemplar community run asset that makes a strong positive contribution to the local community, culture and economy
- The community sense of pride and ownership towards the Castle is enhanced.

## Business goals

- Visit numbers and visitor satisfaction support the long-term viability of the Castle
- The Castle's heritage and benefits of engagement are shared with new partners and a more diverse range of audiences
- Braemar has increased appeal as a day trip and overnight destination as the Castle moves towards becoming a 5-star attraction.

## Contribution to local and area strategic objectives

Raising the Standard will contribute to achieving the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2020 and the priority actions of the Braemar Community Action Plan 2017.



# SINCE 1628 THE CASTLE HAS BEEN A FIXTURE ON THE ABERDEENSHIRE LANDSCAPE

1628

*Built by John Erskine, 2nd Earl of Mar, as a Hunting Lodge and to demonstrate his status and power as High Treasurer of Scotland and guardian to the young King James VI.*



1689

*Supporters of the deposed Catholic King James VII, (Jacobites) burn the Castle to prevent occupation by Government troops.*



1715

*The 6th Earl of Mar changes sides to support the Jacobites not the Crown and instigates the 1715 Jacobite Uprising in Braemar.*



1716

*The rebellion has failed and the Earl has fled to France. His title and lands are forfeited to the Crown.*



1732

*Mar Castle is sold to John Farquharson of Invercauld, Chief of Clan Farquharson, but remains in disrepair.*



1745

*The Jacobites are finally defeated at Culloden, John Farquharson leases the Castle to the Government and it is remodelled as a Redcoat garrison to keep control of the Highlands.*



# THE CASTLE – HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

**B**raemar Castle is a 5-storey turreted L-shaped tower house, originally constructed in 1628 as a hunting lodge by the Earls of Mar. It is one of the Castles of Mar in Aberdeenshire and has a Grade A listing. It sits within the Deeside and Lochnagar National Scenic Area. The Castle mound may well have been a stronghold preceding its construction with its position in the landscape already recognised for its strategic importance.

## Historical significance

Braemar Castle has international significance giving glimpses into the impact of the Union of the Crowns in the early seventeenth century. Although built as a hunting lodge, its location on the mound and imposing architecture also conveys a message of status and power. The fire in 1689 was a response to the occupation of the Castle by Government troops deployed to quash the first Jacobite Uprising. The defeat of the second rebellion in

1715, initiated by the Earl of Mar, led to the loss of the Castle to the Mar Earldom and its eventual sale to the neighbouring Invercauld Estate. It remained damaged until restored by the military in 1748 for use as a barracks following the Battle of Culloden to suppress any residues of the Jacobite movement.

The end of the lease to the army in 1832 enabled the Farquharson family to undertake a series of improvements to convert the Castle to a family home and ‘party house’ with expanded facilities for servants’ accommodation and entertaining. Wealthy socialites leased the Castle during ‘the season’. In 1961 the Castle opened to the public as a visitor attraction during the summer months, occasionally occupied by the Farquharson family during the winter.

1831

*The Castle is returned to the Farquharsons and conversion back to domestic use begins.*

1896

*Extensive renovations are carried out. A new kitchen and 11 rooms for servants are built linking the Castle and the curtain wall.*

1897-1922

*Princess Alexis Dlgorouki leases the Castle, sub-letting at times to other illustrious tenants.*

1922-1961

*The Castle is leased to a procession of distinguished tenants with occasional use by the Farquharsons.*

1961-2004

*One of the first NE Castles to be opened as a Visitor Attraction, used by the Farquharsons in the closed season. Eventually faltered and closed in 2004.*

2007

*Leased to the community of Braemar on a 50 year improving lease and re-opened in 2008.*

# THE TEAM

## **Braemar Community Limited**

Braemar Community Limited (BCL) is a community owned Scottish charity working for the benefit of local residents. It was formed in 2004 and has moved from strength to strength delivering or incubating several significant projects that include:

- the restoration of the Queen Mother's cruck framed cottage with hingin' lum
- at Auchtavan in Glen Fearder
- construction of new footpaths and bridges to create new pedestrian access routes
- the community garden, play park and nature trail
- St Margaret's Performance Arts and Heritage Centre
- initial feasibility study for the Corriemulzie Community Share Hydro Scheme – now a separate community benefit company generating income.

The company has 256 members most of whom reside within Braemar which has a population of 500. BCL current major projects are the development and operation of the Castle, an affordable housing project and Braemar Mountain Festival. It holds a 50-year lease on Braemar Castle with 38 years remaining.

## **Project Steering Group**

A Project Steering Group has been appointed by BCL to oversee the development and management of the Raising the Standard project. Its members are:

### **Trevor Garlick – Chair**

Trevor is a Director of Opportunity North East (ONE), a regional economic development agency, and a Director of Transition Extreme, a social enterprise that encourages confidence through sport. He is also a Braemar Community Councillor.

### **Ian Mitchell Davidson**

Ian has had a career as a senior member of the National Trust for Scotland team, and was Project Manager for the full re-harling and upgrade of Craigievar Castle. He is Visiting Professor at Robert Gordon University.

### **David Chandler**

David was a former senior partner with Deloitte in Aberdeen and is currently treasurer of Braemar Community Limited as well as several other local community organisations.

### **Simon Blackett**

Simon is the Chair and a founding director of Braemar Community Limited. He has been actively involved in the management of the Castle for over 20 years, initially as the former factor of Invercauld Estates and then bringing it in to community management in 2007.

### **Doreen Wood**

Doreen, along with Simon, has been at the heart of the Castle's success since 2007. For over 20 years, Doreen worked in programme-making for the BBC and brings communication, marketing and management skills to the project.

### **Georgina Errington**

Georgina is a graduate in Fine Art Photography from Glasgow School of Art. Following a career in commercial art and antiques in London she joined the Braemar Castle team as Operations Manager in 2017.

### **Nadine Stuart**

Following a varied career overseas in the Health Industry Nadine returned to the area and joined the team in May 2019. She has an MBA qualification and is the Project Manager for Raising the Standard.

### **Advisors**

The Steering group is supported in its work by Jura Consultants and The Prince's Foundation.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

**W**e are seeking contributions through direct grants, donations or participation (financially or otherwise) in the fund raising opportunities and events, to fund:

- Traditional external conservation work to Castle and curtain wall
- An all abilities access path
- Ground improvements
- Internal and external Interpretation projects
- Extended programme of volunteer training and opportunities
- Engaging activity and educational programmes

## To donate

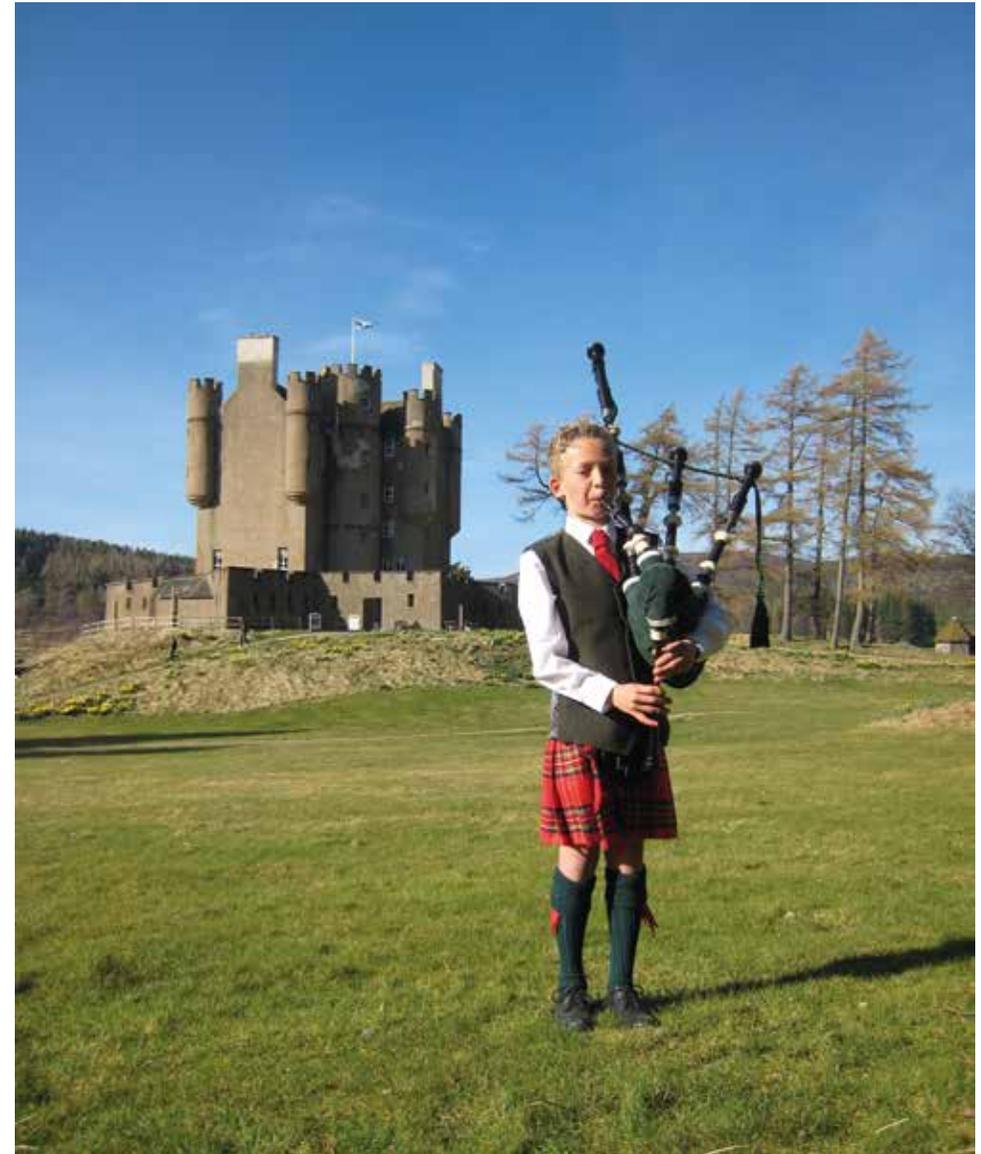
By online banking to Braemar Community Ltd., Ballater Branch  
Sort code 80 05 51 Account Number 06000407

By cheque posted to Braemar Community Limited, Braemar Castle, Braemar AB35 5XR

For more information or to discuss how you can contribute please contact:

- Dave Chandler – BCL Treasurer  
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- Simon Blackett – BCL Chair  
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- Doreen Wood – BCL Vice Chair  
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**Thank you for your interest in this project.**





[WWW.BRAEMARCASTLE.CO.UK](http://WWW.BRAEMARCASTLE.CO.UK)

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