

Birse Community Trust (BCT) and Birse Trading Company (BTCo)

Fire Procedure

Neither BCT nor BTCo has the equipment, expertise, or personnel to tackle a wildfire in the forestry that they own or manage. Both organisations therefore depend on the fire brigade and neighbouring estates to manage any fire-fighting operations. BCT and BTCo are, however, able to contribute by carrying out preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of wildfires and limit any potential damage, as well as performing immediate actions on discovery of a fire.

The BCT/BTCo fire procedure therefore focuses on these two aspects.

1. Preventative measures to be undertaken to reduce wildfire risk:

- a) Signage will adequately convey fire risk and discourage fire-lighting.

- b) When a high fire risk exists, BCT's manager or a volunteer will mount fire patrols in/around the Commonty Pinewoods, Slewdrum and Balfour forests. If possible, these are to take place at least once per day during busy spells (i.e. weekends, public holidays). If an attended fire, barbecue or open flame is sighted, a polite but firm request should be made to extinguish it, together with an explanation of the risk. The lighting of fires and barbecues in high fire risk areas is not considered "responsible" by law. If the request is refused, it may therefore be explained that the behaviour is outside access rights and that this may constitute an offence. If the BCT/BTCo representative is carrying sufficient water, an attempt may be made to douse the fire/barbecue/ignition source. However, BCT/BTCo personnel are not to put themselves at risk and threatening behaviour should be reported to the police.

- c) BCT/BTCo will arrange swiping of vegetation (e.g. bracken and gorse on tracks and verges) where its presence increases the risk of a wildfire spreading rapidly.

- d) BCT/BTCo will ensure that the main access tracks remain in useable condition.

- e) BCT/BTCo insurance will include cover for authorising fire-fighting by helicopter if necessary.

- f) BCT/BTCo will engage as required with any local wildfire prevention groups and initiatives.

2. Immediate actions on discovery of a fire by BCT/BTCO personnel:

- a) Unless a fire can obviously be extinguished easily, safely and immediately without risk of injury, DO NOT RISK FIGHTING THE FIRE.
- b) Note the location of fire, the size of fire and the potential threat to people and property.
- c) Dial 999 for the Fire Brigade and direct the Fire Brigade as follows:
 - **Fire in Slewdrum:** Rendezvous at grid reference NO 632 944 – Shooting Greens Car Park
 - **Fire in Balfour:** Rendezvous at grid reference NO 546 963 – Balfour Forest Main Entrance
 - **Fire in Commonty Pinewoods:** Rendezvous at grid reference NO 542 907 – Burnfoot, Forest of Birse

Get to the relevant rendezvous point and prepare to meet the fire brigade. Once the Fire Brigade arrives, they assume full command of the incident.

- d) **MEANWHILE:** Contact Ballogie Estate Office on 013398 86497, report the details and request fire-fighting and fire-control support as necessary.
- e) If the Ballogie Estate Office is closed/unresponsive, contact Malcolm Nicol of Ballogie Estate on 013398 84165 / 07876 441879 as soon as possible.
- f) Ensure that the following are informed urgently:
 - BCT Manager – Tel: 07894982277 / 01330 850 468
 - Doug Boyle (BTCO Director) – 07776 425814 / 013398 87191
 - Guy Haslam (BCT Chairman) – Tel: 07507118555 / 01330 850407