

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 JUNE 2020 (VIA ZOOM)

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mervyn Barr	Interim Chair	✓
Hilary Benson	Member	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Donald Davidson	Member	✓
Mandy Duggan	Member	✓
Chika Edeh	Member	✓
Becky Ferguson	Member	x
Daniel Hay	Minutes Secretary	✓
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Alan McCue	Member	✓
William Munro	Interim Vice-Chair	✓
Gordon Prentice	Interim Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Interim Secretary	✓
Ken Stewart	Member	✓
Raymond Swaffield	Member	✓
CLlr David Aitchison	Ward 13 Councillor	x
CLlr Iris Walker	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
CLlr Ron McKail	Ward 13 Councillor	x
CLlr Alistair McKelvie	Ward 13 Councillor	x

Item
<p>1 Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting, thanking everyone for attending. He welcomed Daniel Hay as the new Minutes Secretary, David Ritchie as the new Secretary and Gordon Prentice as the new Treasurer.</p> <p>Mervyn informed everyone of the arrival of Becky's new son and proposed a gift of £40 worth of John Lewis vouchers for Becky in recognition of her support to the re-establishment of WECC. This was approved.</p> <p>Mervyn thanked Malcolm Collie for his IT advice and recommendation that we carry on using Zoom for virtual meetings instead of changing to Microsoft Teams. Malcolm had attended the recent Garioch CC Forum meeting and has offered to assist other CCs which are needing help with setting up virtual meetings.</p>
<p>2 Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Apologies received from CLlr McKail, CLlr McKelvie & Becky Ferguson.</p> <p>Alan McCue declared an interest in item 5 (proposed Soutarhill development)</p>
<p>3 Approval of Minutes of Meeting 14 May 2020</p> <p>The minutes were approved by the meeting, subject to three minor corrections</p> <p>Proposed: Gordon Prentice Seconded: Heather Cook</p>
<p>4 Matters Arising (including update on assigned actions)</p> <p>1. <u>Review of draft changes to Constitution</u></p>

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	<p>The office bearers have done a recent review of the previously proposed changes to Constitution and Standing Orders and put in some more changes. The two docs have been circulated to members. The Chair asked members to look over them and revert with any comments. The secretary will then pass them to Alison Cumming in Area Office along with comments to help explain why the changes are being made.</p> <p><u>2. Approval of Secretary & Treasurer Job Descriptions</u> These were circulated before. There was no comments and they were approved as working documents.</p> <p><u>3. Approval of WECC Donations Criteria & Process</u> The Chair asked everyone to read the circulated Donations policy. It is now to be called Community Support Fund. Gordon thanked Hilary, Chika and David for their contributions to this document. Gordon would like to progress the first tranche of donations for approval this year in July, mainly dealing with the backlog from 2019. Approval was sought to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Spend up to £5000 on CSF donations in this financial year. This is 41% of the Bulletin surplus in the previous financial year. b) Maintain a permanent general reserve of £10,000 from WECC funds for any future projects and 'rainy day' situations <p>Both proposals were approved.</p> <p><u>4. Inclusion of Elected Councillors on Distribution Lists</u> Donald Davidson had queried why the 4 elected councillors had not been included in the recent member's survey re which virtual meeting technology we should be using. Becky had not included them because they are not eligible to vote. It was agreed they should have been included in the survey. David advised that he does not include the elected councillors when passing on info originating from Aberdeenshire Council that they will already be aware of. Cllr Walker confirmed that general process is ok.</p>
5	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p><u>Request from Cala Homes to discuss their Soutarhill site proposal with us</u> (Alan McCue left the meeting at this point)</p> <p>David had circulated the recent request from Cala Homes to discuss their proposal for the Soutarhill site with us. Cala has previously presented to WECC on it at May 2018, but most of the new WECC were not members then. The site has not been included in the proposed LDP 2021, but Cala could still submit a planning application and appeal to the Scottish Reporter if the Council didn't approve it.</p> <p>After some discussion it was agreed that they can do a presentation, limited to 45 minutes plus 15 minutes for question. David will check with Cala if they are ok for Thursday 25th June at 7pm</p>
6	<p><u>Police Report</u></p> <p>The Chair summarised the circulated Police Report for May, highlighting that there has been 2 domestic assaults, in the previous month. He has accessed info from the City Council website about reporting domestic abuse and it was agreed that this should be posted on our website and facebook page.</p> <p>David advised that when we resume meetings in Holiday Inn, our community police officer PC James Stewart will be attending the meetings if he can.</p>

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7	<p><u>Communications Group Update</u></p> <p>Daniel went over the kind of improvements that could be made to the website that would help to make it a ‘one-stop shop’ for Westhill. A meeting of the Comms group has been arranged for 23rd June. Daniel is recommending we have an Instagram page for posting photos, and put more info on facebook.</p> <p>Gordon recommended that our website should state what our main Aims and Purposes are, and define the area we cover. Also good to have all the community groups and local businesses listed on website. That would make it easier for us to consult with them in future. Alan queried what the hit numbers are for website. David will report that for next meeting. Daniel- a small team will be required to improve website and keep it updated.</p> <p>Daniel will prepare an updated report for circulation after Comms group meeting.</p> <p>Kate advised that no one knows the password for our facebook page, but it isn’t required to do updates or for Kate to give admin access to the group.</p>
8	<p><u>Planning Group Remit</u></p> <p>The remit circulated today for Planning subgroup is to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report key planning activity monthly at WECC meetings. 2. Check the weekly planning applications for Westhill and Elrick, reporting back to WECC members on any grounds for objections/concerns about individual applications. 3. Act as a named contact for both community and strategic planning applications. 4. Review LDP documentation at its various stages, formulating recommendations and drafting WECCs response to Consultations. 5. Liaise with other planning authorities and community councils where/when appropriate. 6. Check, report and make recommendations on Aberdeen City Council planning applications along the A944 corridor that could have implications for WECC e.g. housing/retail developments, drive-thrus, etc. 7. Complete tasks which are relevant to planning issues.eg articles for the Westhill Bulletin, road traffic assessment, questionnaires, planning consultations etc. 8. Monitor any changes within the planning system and advise WECC on their potential impacts. <p>David will update the Planning section of our website and ensure the links to LDP consultation are there.</p>
9	<p><u>Current planning applications of interest</u></p> <p>No new items of interest in last month. Status of the two items discussed in May is:- APP/2020/0684 – Full Planning Permission for Erection of 7 Dwellinghouses and a Convenience Store - Strawberryfield Road/Broadstraik Road.</p> <p>The WECC comment as agreed at May meeting has been submitted (see circulated doc). Mervyn had been contacted by a resident at Mason Lodge as to why he and his neighbours had not been included in the official neighbourhood notifications. This was because they were out with the 20 metre zone. Mervyn advised him he could still put in an objection. He and some of his neighbours are in the 7 Objections that have been published.</p> <p>Bruce Strachan in Planning Dept. had advised Mervyn that the LDP should not be treated as wholly prescriptive. Any proposed departure from LDP should be evaluated on its merits, in</p>

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	<p>comparison to the original LDP. Planning officers are likely to endorse the change at this site. As there has been more than 5 representations the application will be decided by Area Committee.</p> <p>APP/2020/0846 – Full Planning Permission for Erection of 4 Commercial Units (Class 5 and 6) with Associated Yard, Car Parking and Landscaping – Crescent Site, Prospect Road, Westhill WECC did not submit a comment on the number of parking spaces as the Roads Dept. had already raised that issue in their response.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p><u>Local Development Plan - Key Points</u></p> <p>The link to Garioch Settlement Statement is below (go to Westhill in index) http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/f14a62da-30d1-488d-9338-7b09e82360cf/resource/07027a19-c25c-4318-a7c1-e7782edc74d9/download/appendix-7d-settlement-statements---garioch.pdf</p> <p>This shows the 3 recommended sites for development are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Strawberry Field site that planning application has been submitted for 2. Burnland- 38 homes and commercial/retail uses 3. Former Blockworks Site at Elrick- 63 affordable homes <p>Diane advised that WECC have been involved in the LDP process since the start around 2 years ago. Ailsa Anderson is the Senior Policy Planner who has been supporting us very well. She will outline the process etc. at the LDP meeting on 18th June. The LDP will be for 2021-2031 so it is likely that developers will push for additional sites during that 10 year period. Iris explained that the change from a 5 year to 10-year plan was made following a planning review a couple of years ago.</p> <p>The Planning subgroup will draft a WECC response to the proposed LDP, to be ready for our 9th July meeting. Deadline for submission is 17th July (post meeting update- this has been extended to 31st July) Heather requested that support for the development of the core paths network round Westhill be included in our response. This was approved</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><u>Financials/Payment authorisation requests.</u></p> <p><u>Circulated Financial Report:-</u></p> <p>Matters Arising 14 May 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handover of files from David Ritchie completed on 1st June. • Treasurer’s Role Description: final draft submitted to Chair for approval • Changes to authorised signatories: Forms for Chair and Treasurer still being processed by RBS. Chika Edeh retained as signatory meantime in case of emergency/ies as mandate requires two signatories. CE will be replaced as soon as the other two have been approved. • Secure cloud-based file storage: a test area has been set up using Microsoft One-Drive [thanks to Malcolm] • Donations Policy [renamed “Community Support Fund”] and Application Form: final draft from the sub-group submitted for approval.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Statement of Accounts: the accounts for year to 31 March 20 presented at the May meeting and minuted have been independently verified without adjustment. They will be submitted for formal approval to the October AGM. Independent Verifier has decided to stand down after 10 years; a replacement will need to be recruited. <p>Financial Transactions in May</p> <p>Income: £1,386 from Aberdeenshire Council to cover 2020/21 Admin Grant and 20/21 Data Protection registration. Expenditure: None Outstanding Commitments: None</p> <p>Bank Balances at Month End: £36,240.93</p> <p>Available Funds: £14,956.37 after adjusting for the following specific funds:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">- Bulletin prepayments [Summer, Autumn & Winter issues]:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£15,561.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">- Covid-19 Fund:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">- Litter Campaign Fund:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£723.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">- “Community Support Fund”</td> <td style="text-align: right;">tbc</td> </tr> </table> <p>Donation Requests Pending: up to 10 requests for an unspecified total prior to June/July relaunch</p> <p>Gordon thanked David for preparing the annual accounts to 31 March 2020 (appended to May meeting minutes). The independent verifier Colin Currie has retired after 10 years of doing this. For transparency, Gordon would like members to nominate a new verifier to verify his work as he deemed it inappropriate to appoint this role himself.</p> <p>David has paid for Zoom annual licence</p> <p>Raymond requested that we purchase 16 new litter bag hoops at cost of £128 to equalise with the number of grabbers. This was agreed and authorised.</p> <p>There has been three applications to the Covid Fund, but they don't meet the criteria. The groups have been requested to apply to our Community Support fund instead.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Gordon for his debut as Treasurer and David for his work over the years and the efficient handover of finances to Gordon.</p>	- Bulletin prepayments [Summer, Autumn & Winter issues]:	£15,561.25	- Covid-19 Fund:	£5,000.00	- Litter Campaign Fund:	£723.31	- “Community Support Fund”	tbc
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12	<p><u>A944-B119 Transport Corridor Study Consultation-summary of WECC comments</u></p> <p>The WECC response as circulated was prepared by Diane, based on comments from members. The main themes were around need for more & improved cycle paths, public transport expensive and unreliable, need for an express bus that went direct into Aberdeen. Another concern is the traffic on A944 and that it will increase as the Countesswells development progresses and when football stadium is completed.</p>								
13	<p><u>Phoenix Fund Project</u></p> <p>Details of the Aberdeenshire Town Centres Phoenix Fund were circulated.</p> <p>It is a fund to help regenerate commercial and retail areas after the Covid-19 crisis, aimed at retail and service businesses. There is £10,000 available for Westhill. WECC can apply for this and co-ordinate a project. Mervyn & David have spoken to the shopping centre manager Ben Horsburgh (MJ Mapp employee) and he is keen to work with us on this. The ideas from this initial meeting have been circulated. Initially we just need to advise Council by 26th June that</p>								

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	<p>we wish to be involved with this. No other group in Westhill is likely to put themselves forward for it. A detailed project proposal requires to be prepared by 30th September. Emphasis will be to encourage residents to 'shop local'. Members agreed that we should pursue this project. More members will require to be involved as it progresses. It will be a good project for WECC to increase its profile on support to Westhill businesses, which bring jobs and prosperity.</p>
14	<p><u>Strategic Fund Project</u></p> <p>Details of the Garioch Area Initiatives Fund were circulated. Applications can be made for up to £5000 for projects under 4 themes- Improve appearance of towns, Healthy Communities, Strong Communities, and Safe Communities. Deadline for applications is 31st August. A possible project could be to improve/extend the path at sculpture site. Cllr Mckail had suggested before that a map showing all the walks in and around Westhill would be good. David suggested installing a Westhill map with street names index at the shopping centre, similar to the map board at Inverurie town hall. Initial volunteers to progress these ideas are Kate, Daniel, Hilary, Gordon, Heather.</p> <p>Iris confirmed that there is a separate Strategic Fund for projects which will be of significant benefit to the local area. Details of this fund are still being developed. Cllr Mckail article in summer Bulletin (page 11) gives brief details of these funds.</p>
15	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors Updates</u></p> <p>Reports from the four councillors were circulated prior to the meeting and are appended to Minutes.</p> <p>Gordon asked Iris if Landscape Services could initially cut a grass strip on verges to help with social distancing. Iris confirmed that is a priority. Mervyn asked if some areas could be left uncut to encourage wildlife. Iris confirmed this is being looked at.</p> <p>Mervyn asked Iris about the COVID Recovery Reference group and which services are likely to be cut or stopped. Iris advised the group will be meeting next week to start to determine these options. Mervyn advised that Ron McKail had visited the recycling centre and suggested that we thank the staff for the excellent work they are doing. Diane will draft a thank you to be published on our Facebook. Re the schools going back on 11th August, Iris advised there is a lot going on in background to prepare and parents are being well informed. Childcare will be an issue, but this is being looked into.</p>
16	<p><u>Cancellation of Hanging Baskets and Westhill in Bloom</u></p> <p>David just wanted to clarify that both of these annual projects have been cancelled for this year but that has not been minuted yet. A new co-ordinator for the Hanging Baskets will be required as John Imrie does not wish to continue running it.</p> <p>In place of Westhill in Bloom, there will be an article in Bulletin advising residents they can send us photos of their gardens. The best ones will be published in Autumn Bulletin, with three £20 prizes to be awarded.</p>
17	<p><u>AOB - Mervyn</u> said it had been suggested we set up a WhatsApp group for urgent messages. David will create this, he already has most members mobile numbers</p>
18	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting-</u> 9th July, 7pm via Zoom</p>

Meeting ended at 9.35pm

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Councillor Reports to WECC June 2020 Meeting

Councillor Iris Walker

Arnhall Moss

Dialogue continues between Aberdeenshire Council, SEPA and Scottish Water to try to improve water quality in the ponds. All parties are looking at the various drainage systems that run through the Denman Park/Arnhall Moss. Ken is doing a great job keeping an eye on the ponds and reporting as necessary.

Community Council Forum

I attended the online Community Council Forum last week where Mervyn, David and Malcolm represented WECC. There was a good turn out of Garioch community councillors and it was good to hear all the good work going on despite lockdown. Not all groups are meeting online, some carrying out business via email.

Fire raising in Carnie Woods

On Tuesday a resident reported evidence of camp fires at the base of trees in Carnie Woods. This has been passed to Scottish Fire & Rescue to assess and respond. Ken has also separately reported some fly tipping.

Community Council Scheme of Establishment

A report on the outcomes of the public consultation discussed at full council last November was to be reported back to full council at some point. Due to C-19, the 8-week consultation period has not commenced but community councils will be notified when this is able to progress.

Covid Recovery Reference Group

Aberdeenshire Council are expected to agree on Wednesday 10th June to set up a Recovery Group made up of officers and councillors. Assessments will be carried out to look at the impact on residents, businesses, infrastructure, environment etc and out of these assessments will come a balanced, affordable recovery action plan. This recovery plan must have residents at the heart of it and I am sure we will all share as much information as we can and seek feedback as we go along. Business as usual for the council will not be an option and some services will be cut or stopped altogether.

Landscape Services

Within Landscape Services, there are 180 individual members of staff, employed in a variety of occupations and roles. Most of these are not currently doing their normal day jobs. Most have been redeployed to carry out critical services. Some staff have been assisting Waste services to ensure that weekly collections can continue. Other staff have been redeployed to assist in cemeteries. Burials have been significantly increased with the latest figures sitting at 33% above average, but were much, much higher in April. Some staff are at home. Like all employers, the council has symptomatic or shielding members of staff and members of staff who have to look after family members and cannot be at work. Scottish Government guidelines were very clear that grass-cutting is not an essential activity. Landscape Services are trying to navigate a way through all of this complexity. The service recognises the importance of grass cutting and associated work. No one is happy at this situation nor does anyone want to see our communities become untidy (although we are also being lobbied to leave some of the areas uncut as residents like seeing the wildflowers and natural habitat). Now that restrictions are eased slightly, grass cutting in cemeteries and other areas will be ramped up over the

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next few weeks, but it will be phased and it will be prioritised particularly as regards verges where safety is crucial.

Cllr. Ron McKail.

Re- Opening of Westdyke Recycling Centre.

The opening of Westdyke was in my view, a very successfully planned operation. From booking a timeslot to getting rid of my garden waste the arrangements went like clockwork.

According to media reports similar success was not apparent in other local authorities.

Wondered if WECC were of a similar view that the reopening was a success and that an email message of appreciation to the Waste Management team at Westdyke could be considered. The team at Westdyke receive very little thanks from us public (as one of the staff mentioned to me) Hence this suggestion of a 'Thank You Note'.

Grass Cutting (Lack of) Complaints.

Majority of complaints during past month have referred to the grass not being cut and Westhill's public areas being a 'mess'. This situation is about to change however the reasons why the grass has not been cut (unless related to road safety and cemeteries) relates to:

i) Gov. policy. Councils only carry out work which is essential. We've signed up to this policy for safety/health reasons.

ii) The majority of Landscape Services staff have been redeployed to other jobs such as grave digging; Bin lorries; road safety priorities.

iii) Shortage of vehicles to transport staff whilst maintaining social distancing. Not possible to have a crew of several members in the one vehicle.

iv) Staff sickness (during the pandemic) is an issue.

Whilst many of the emails received on this issue have been critical it is interesting that once there is an understanding of the issues the response has been more compliant.

Garioch Area Budget. Discussion Item.

At the most recent Garioch Area Committee the strategic budget funding allocation was an item for discussion.

The other ward councillors in Garioch are likely to be sharing this with community councils in their ward. In previous years the majority of funding has gone to other ward areas.

Westhill has benefitted financially but to a lesser extent.

Should shovel ready projects be in the pipeline for WECC?

Criteria for projects is that it fits the Council's 11 priorities and is a project unlikely to be funded from other council budgets. Is WECC considering making an application?

Cllr Mckelvie

The Council is currently managing expectations of many parent's in our Community who had planned to utilise the Govt's new 1140 hours/per annum Nursery Care. The initial planned launch in August this year, has been interrupted by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Govt plans have been revised, with a postponement of the launch in to 2021. Aberdeenshire Council has in its preparations over the last 2 years approx., been able to develop the ability to deliver this in its own facilities, despite not being able to finalise constructions/extension work, but had given a commitment to commence in August as had been planned.

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However, the Gov't has revoked the requirement to offer 1140 hour care, for now and this appears to have an unintended interruption impact on funding for Private Nurseries. Discussions with providers and Gov't continue as a number of private providers are organised to implement the new hours, and had communicated this to parents and staff. Social distancing and staff availability were an important part of the deliberations and the decision to revise the date of the launch, but it is causing some concern for many Westhill parents.

We have approx. 120 Private Partners in Nursery Care in the Shire, all of whom may or may not be affected by this development.

Council Officers and volunteers across the Services continue to provide funding or assist in delivery of meals to school children who have entitlement to free meals. The Council has continued with its commitment by providing an alternative to parents, where Emergency Childcare arrangements provide a small monetary sum to parents, to ensure their children get a meal daily. This applies to a number of families in our community.

Around 300 Aberdeenshire children attend the various School Hubs, where their parents deemed to be essential workers. Both Westhill Academy and Primary provide this for our community, operating extended hours, to accommodate parents working hours.

Cllr David Aitchison

Response to Covid 19 remains the priority for all council services.

Our Household Recycling Centre has reopened and staff have reported that the resumption of a limited service by appointment went very well. The service provided is now to be extended allowing twice-weekly trips for cars, pick-ups and car-derived vans carrying bagged general waste and garden waste.

From Wednesday June 10 cardboard and glass will be accepted and from Monday, June 15 this will be extended to all usual waste materials – including mixed recycling, bulky items, oils, wood and metal. From June 15 there will no longer be a requirement for waste to be bagged.

Residents will no longer be assigned to a bay, but are instead requested to take their materials into the correct skips while maintaining physical-distancing. The number of people visiting a centre at the same time has been limited to make sure this is possible.

The rules on physical-distancing remain and only one adult should unload a vehicle unless two adults are needed for heavy items.

Staff will be unable to assist with any unloading and there will be no pedestrian access and no children will be permitted outside vehicles.

The decision to re-open some of the facilities has been taken in accordance with Government guidelines and is based on measures being put in place to protect both visitors and staff.

The Education Service is working to put in place everything necessary for a safe reopening of schools in August. This is obviously a mammoth task with consideration having to be given to a huge range of issues. Plans are being prepared for each individual school and councillors are to be updated as plans take shape. The Scottish Governments early decision not to resume until August should allow for a considered and safe return to school for pupils and staff. The way classes and education are delivered will of course be very different and a challenge for those involved.