

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 9 JULY 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	✓
Daniel Hay	Member	✗
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	✗
CLlr Iris Walker	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
CLlr Ron McKail	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
CLlr Alistair McKelvie	Ward 13 Councillor	✓

	<u>Item</u>
1	<p><u>Welcome and opening remarks</u> Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting, thanking everyone for attending. Permission was granted to record proceedings</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u> Apologies received from Chika Edeh, Daniel Hay & CLlr Aitchison. No Declarations of Interest</p>
3	<p><u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11 June 2020</u> The minutes were approved by the meeting, with no corrections Proposed: Ken Stewart Seconded: Raymond Swaffield</p>
4	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any comments on re-drafted Constitution? - No comments. David will pass them to Alison Cumming in Area Office with comments to help explain why the changes are being made. 2. LDP Training 18th June – completion of other CC Training? - The responses from Planning Team to our queries on 18th June were received recently & circulated. 3. CSF Applications/Approvals– this meeting, item 11 4. Appointment of Independent Verifier for the accounts to 31st March 2021 - any suggested candidates? 5. Update on schools re-opening – Shire Cllrs this meeting

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	<p>Actions Update</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vouchers For Becky/outgoing Secretary – completed 2. Bulletin Manager Role – in progress – <i>delayed due to Bulletin publication</i> 3. Public thanks to recycling centre staff – completed on 12/6 (FB 65+ likes) 4. Post Helpline details for domestic violence – completed 5. Update Planning Section of Website/links to LDP consultation – completed 6. Changes to Accounts/Authorised Signatories – completed 7. Set-up of Micro-soft One-Drive – <i>in progress</i> 8. Initial notification to Council of interest in Phoenix Fund – Completed 9. Members’ What’s App Group formation – completed
5	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA) Newsletter- they have launched a Community Spirit Award to recognise individuals or groups who have provided a brilliant service to those in need during the pandemic. Closing date for nominations is 17th July. Mervyn proposed that we nominate the Men Shed, Community Church, SensationALL, Darren Cocker from the Westhill Coronavirus Community Support Facebook page and the Westhill Covid-19 Support Facebook page.</p> <p>Help for Older People- Garioch Community Planning organised a call today which Willie & the local churches attended, to hear about a project being run by Banffshire Rural Partnership that involves doing shopping for older people and they are also organising afternoon teas for them. Can Westhill do something similar? Heather Cook advised that members of the Senior Citizens Club are contacted regularly to check they are ok and an afternoon tea delivery was done for them recently. There will be other older people who would benefit from similar help. Mervyn will circulate the details provided by Willie to see if anyone has any ideas around how WECC could be involved. Rotary could get involved too.</p> <p>Ron passed on a press release re Aberdeenshire’s early learning and childcare funding arrangements. David will post it on website</p> <p>Bedding Plants- Landscape Services have given us 170 summer bedding plants (begonias & geraniums). David has given 30 to Trinity Church and planted 10 in the baskets attached to the Compass Info board at Denman Park. David has organised to plant 130 in the shopping centre garden area tomorrow morning. Ken will be helping. More help would be good.</p>
6	<p><u>Police Report</u></p> <p>No Police Report received due to Sergeant Kearney being on leave. The August report will cover 2 months</p>
7	<p><u>Environmental Group Update</u></p> <p>Report from Raymond has been circulated. Key points are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organised Litter Picks still on hold; several individuals have continued to carry out picks on a personal basis.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotary Club are keen to get involved in the litter and dog poo problem and are interested in possible education options that could help reduce offending - There has been another pollution event in the Denman Park Ponds. Ken is in contact with the Council, Sepa & Scottish Water. <p>Raymond has some concerns that the insurance cover requires us to have a written risk assessment for litter picking and to have given some training to the volunteers. Mervyn has previously done a risk assessment for the Christmas lights and can help to do one for the litter picking.</p> <p>Mervyn would like a planting plan to be developed for the future, maybe instead of some of the hanging baskets.</p>
8	<p><u>Communications Group Update</u></p> <p>No report received & Daniel not present.</p> <p>Kate reported that the Comms group had a call last night with a website designer John Reid. Chika had previously been speaking to him in late 2018 and John had attended the December 2018 WECC meeting. A new website was not developed then, but the Comms group are keen that this is looked at again. David advised our current Wordpress website was developed in 2015 and there is limited scope for major improvements to it. There has been a large reduction in site visits in recent years. Visits have been: - 2017-17k, 2018- 8k, 2019-5k.</p> <p>The Comms group will be completing a survey supplied by John Reid that will give him an idea of what we would be looking to achieve from a new site. We want ours to look more like the Inverurie & Banchory sites.</p> <p>Daniel is keen that we have an Instagram page as well, for photos etc.</p>
9	<p><u>"Walks around Westhill" – walking routes/signage around the town.</u></p> <p>A pre-read from Mervyn has been circulated</p> <p>Ron recommends that the paths network in and around Westhill be promoted to encourage more walking. A Westhill Walks & Bike Rides map could be put on website etc.</p> <p>Iris advised the Council have got a local Walks/Bike ride map. See https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/11478/walkitbikeittryit-westhill.pdf This could be updated and displayed at shopping centre.</p> <p>Westhill Bike Club have a Facebook page with a selection of local routes https://www.facebook.com/Westhilllocalrides</p> <p>There could be Council funding for signs for the paths network.</p> <p>Sub-group to follow up on this project will be Gordon, Heather, Hilary, Kate, Willie, Daniel, Ron</p>
10	<p><u>Planning Matters</u></p> <p>A - Significant Applications from Weekly List- nothing in past month</p> <p>Updates on the 2 items discussed in June are:-</p> <p>APP/2020/0684 – 7 houses and Convenience Store at Strawberryfield Road/Broadstraik Road- Has not yet been approved</p>

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	<p>APP/2020/0846 – 4 Commercial Units at Prospect Road.- this application has been approved</p> <p>B - Cala Soutarhill Proposal WECC had a zoom call with Cala on 25th June and Cala sent a detailed response to our queries on 6th July which has been circulated. Mervyn pointed out that as the proposal is for more than 50 houses, before Cala can proceed with a planning application they will firstly have to submit a Proposal of Application Notice (POAN). This would require Cala to consult with WECC and hold a public consultation event. Diane advised that the planning dept. are still saying the site would be for 49 houses, but Cala are insisting it would be 70 houses. Mervyn is recommending we stay impartial, and the Planning sub-group wish to take same line.</p> <p>Noted that the current water pipes work near the site is upgrading of the water reservoir at top of hill.</p> <p>It was agreed as general WECC policy that we should not make a formal comment on any site proposal until a POAN or a planning application has been submitted.</p> <p>C - Local Development Plan Diane is working on a response to the proposed LDP, then will pass it to planning subgroup for their comments, then to all members. The response requires to be submitted by 31st July. The planning subgroup will then look at the Aberdeen City LDP and submit a response to that by 31st August. We have concerns over the size of developments at Countesswells, at Maidencraig on Langstracht and possible expansion at Prime 4.</p>										
11	<p><u>Financials/Payment authorisation requests</u></p> <p>Financial Transactions in June:-</p> <p>Income: £67; comprising £62 for Bulletin advertisement plus bank interest of £5. Expenditure: £1,365: comprising honoraria to David Ritchie and Becky Ferguson; reimbursement of expenses incurred by Raymond Swaffield and David Ritchie; plus return of unused portion of a pre-paid advert for 2020 that has been cancelled Outstanding Commitments: Honoraria for one month [secretary and minutes]</p> <p>Bank Balances at Month End: £34,942.46 comprising: Main Account: £12,713.38 Bulletin Account: £22,229.08</p> <p>Available Funds: £4,189.99 after adjusting for the following specific funds:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">- Bulletin prepayments [Autumn & Winter issues]:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10,157.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- General Reserve</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Litter Campaign Fund:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£595.47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Covid-19 Fund:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- Community Support Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,000.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>Contribution from Bulletin – Summer Issue: estimated to be £1,719 (based on expected income of £8,949 and estimated costs of £7,230)</p> <p>Covid-19 Fund Application- Gordon advised that an application has been received from the Citizens Advice Bureau that met the criteria for the maximum award of £1000. The CAB had</p>	- Bulletin prepayments [Autumn & Winter issues]:	£10,157.00	- General Reserve	£10,000.00	- Litter Campaign Fund:	£595.47	- Covid-19 Fund:	£5,000.00	- Community Support Fund	£5,000.00
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	<p>applied to the Aberdeenshire Council Resilience Fund but were not successful. The WECC award of £1000 to CAB was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Community Support Fund Applications – the CSF sub-group met on Tuesday evening to discuss the applications received recently. The list of proposed awards has been circulated. There is 6 applications with requests totalling £6,640 against a notional budget of £2,000. The recommendations are that the requests from Scouthall Playgroup and Skene Heritage Group can be met in full. The requests from Westhill Bowling Club, Elrick Primary Parent Council & Denman Playgroup can be partially met. Total for approval is £1790. This was approved.</p> <p>Westhill Tennis Club had applied for cost of courts repainting/cleaning, but it is possible that the Council may agree to cover this cost as per the terms of the lease. It was agreed that the decision on level of support to Tennis Club can be deferred until Council position clarified.</p> <p>There was some discussion on the level of membership of some of the groups and their longer term viability. Gordon gave assurances that an appropriate level of due diligence was applied when the CSF sub-group were reviewing the applications.</p>
12	<p><u>Phoenix Fund Project</u> A draft letter to send to stakeholders and a list of some suggested activities were circulated. Intent is to go round the shops etc. with the letters and ask to speak to the managers if possible. Ben Horsburgh is helping us to prepare a list of the shops etc.</p>
13	<p><u>Garioch Area Initiatives Fund and Strategic Budget Fund</u> Mervyn had prepared a document with details of the 2 funds and some suggested projects. Looking for suggestions for other suitable projects. Iris advised that criteria for the Strategic Budget Fund is going to be discussed at a Council meeting on 14th July.</p>
14	<p>“Carnie Woods-Community” This is a facebook page that is now aiming to form a steering/management group for Carnie Woods. The group would try to take forward some improvements in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. Ken is willing to participate in the steering group as the formal WECC Rep.</p> <p>Mervyn had suggested to Iris that application to the Strategic Budget Fund could be made for repairs to the boardwalks. Iris had advised it would not likely be approved due to the City owning Carnie Woods. Iris has spoken to the ranger Ian Tallboys about possibility of a Community Asset Transfer. The issue is woods management expertise and they would need an income stream for maintenance work. We should let the steering group look into this. Iris has covered Carnie Woods in her report.</p>
15	<p>Ward 13 Councillors Updates</p>

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	Reports from the four councillors were circulated prior to the meeting and are appended to Minutes.
16	<p><u>AOB</u> – Mervyn advised that Daniel wishes to stand down as Minutes Secretary due to time pressures from a recent job change along with his continuing involvement with the Comms Group.</p> <p>Mervyn thanked Daniel for his past and ongoing contributions and announced that David had kindly offered to stand-in as Secretary until another volunteer Minutes Secretary could be found. (No one present could take on the role and it was agreed that paying an external candidate to do it wouldn't work well).</p> <p>Mervyn proposed that Daniel be paid the related Honoraria until the end of June and that thereafter it should be paid to David until further notice. This was unanimously agreed.</p>
17	<u>Date of Next Meeting-</u> 13 th August, 7pm via Zoom

APPENDIX

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr Iris Walker

Carnie Woods

Over the years, I have had many issues raised about Carnie Woods which you will know is owned and managed by Aberdeen City Council. The ranger for the city has always been very responsive when contacted and has actioned a number of things where possible. Over the last few months, local residents have been in touch with a variety of issues including litter, access and boardwalk maintenance. After discussions with the ranger again, we agreed to try to set up a steering group of interested residents who could put together an action plan, perhaps access funding or volunteer to help maintain the woods which so many of our local residents enjoy. We were aware that a community Facebook page for Carnie had been set up previously and the page admin had been in touch with the ranger some time ago. I have been able to speak to her and she was happy to put out a call for volunteers to try to populate a steering group. We then plan to meet with the ranger to discuss ideas. One of the actions of any future plan would be to repair/replace the damaged boardwalks. This is estimated at £50-£70k. There is a commitment from Aberdeen City to do the work but it is likely to be in a phased manner. Litter picking co-ordination is likely to be on the action plan too.

LDP/Cala

I received an email from Cala with much the same information sent to WECC following their presentation a number of weeks ago. I attended that presentation very much in listening mode and when asked for a response to their email yesterday, I advised that I would not be commenting as the site is not included in what is Aberdeenshire Council's settled view of the next LDP but look forward to the outcome of the current consultation.

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ATM

There is no further update on a replacement ATM at the shopping centre at this time, but Co-op are surveying customers over the next few weeks on the viability of having a free-standing ATM in their store.

Kings Foods

The new JK Fine foods project (ex-Royal Bank unit) has commenced and will go on for approximately 16 weeks with an expected opening of sometime in October, ready for Christmas.

Cllr David Aitchison

Council services continue to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic while some, for example landscape services and grass cutting, are slowly recovering and resuming.

The newly established council Recovery Reference Group, which I sit on, meets weekly to steer the ongoing recovery plan and deal with the many issues arising. As well as the response phase the group is also looking at how services will be delivered in the short, medium and long term.

Strategies for delivery of Early Learning & Childcare and return to school scenarios have been established and Community Impact Assessments will be undertaken to guide future policies.

There will undoubtedly be changes to the way the council operates and delivers services and I will update future meetings as and when strategies are developed.

Cllr Alistair Mckelvie

As the Education Service, Head Teachers, etc. are heavily involved in the reintroduction of our children into mainstream/class learning, the current distancing guidelines are proving challenging. This will apply also to our Nursery children, (if at all possible), and it is the issues with space that will dominate the numbers of children that can be accommodated in each of these types of premises.

In accordance with Govt guidelines the Service has to plan to utilise all available 'venues' that could be utilised for Education. In some instances this might include village or church halls, and in Westhill this may include Ashdale Hall, and the current Community space within the Academy, if 2 metres is the required distancing space come August 12th, when kids return in revised formats. Hopefully the Govt will be able to reduce this to 1 metre, or zero, if the continuing drop in Covid cases is realised.

This will potentially impinge on the Community Groups that utilise these facilities on a

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regular basis, and they will no doubt be anxious to get back into a normal routine, where possible. The Health and Wellbeing of our Community is enhanced by the activities of these groups, some voluntary, some are part-time self-employed.

Currently the Service is revising the need to maintain two School Hubs in Westhill, over the summer period, perhaps in anticipation of parental holidays, or employment issues, etc., as currently we have both Westhill Primary and Academy accommodating a number of essential workers children.

Good to see our landscape services returning with rough cutting of the overgrown grassed areas on the Drive, as the staff return from redeployment in other roles supporting the Ccil's COVID response.

Cllr. Ron McKail

Garioch Area Committee Strategic Budget.

At next week's Garioch Area meeting an item for discussion is the Strategic budget. Wondered if WECC were up to speed by having a 'shovel ready' project in the pipeline?

Aberdeenshire Council's Financial Position.

At our most recent Council meeting the financial position was an agenda item and of concern is that come March 2021 the deficit in our funding could be in the region of £30 million. By March 2022 it could be doubled unless of course decisions are taken by councillors to make adjustments to our spending plans. Watch this space.

Covid-19.

Recently attended a meeting where Covid-19 was on the topic for discussion. Some of the issues are likely to impact on some members of the Westhill community.

1. Young people including those with disabilities will experience difficulties in finding employment.
2. Businesses being asked to contribute to the furlough scheme could result in redundancies.
3. Hospitality employment has been adversely affected.
4. Digital poverty in regard to home schooling.
5. Foodbank stats have shown a dramatic increase in referrals.