

## APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11 MARCH 2021 (VIA ZOOM)

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mervyn Barr	Chair	✓
Hilary Benson	Member	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Donald Davidson	Member	✓
Mandy Duggan	Member	✓
Becky Ferguson	Member	✗
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Alan McCue	Member	✓
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
David Ritchie	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	✗

**Members of Public-** Freda Imrie, Audrey Findlay, Julie Moffat, Justin Reid

<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Welcome and opening remarks</u></b></p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, with a special welcome to the four members of public present Permission was granted to record the meeting.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b><u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>Apologies received from Becky Ferguson, CLlr Aitchison, CLlr Mckelvie No Declarations of Interest</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b><u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were approved, with no changes. Proposed: Ken Stewart , Secoded: Raymond Swaffield</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b><u>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Set-up of Micro-soft One-Drive</b> – Ann Overton at Area Office has provided Gordon with a letter of comfort re WECC legal status that can be provided to Microsoft. Gordon will pass it to Malcolm.</li> <li>2. <b>Tractor snow clearing- how is it prioritised?</b> CLlr Walker advised that the tractor drivers don't have a defined route. They work round the town unless directed by supervisor. Mervyn proposed that for next winter we identify the side-roads that should be prioritised and advise the Council. Item held over till Sept Meeting. Negotiations to continue in the meantime.</li> </ol>

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3. **Phoenix fund in hibernation** - Mervyn advised that nearer the summer months we will work with Ben Horsburgh on how best to spend the £1600 of funding left to spend.
4. **Role description for Shopping Centre Manager Ben Horsburgh as business rep in WECC** - Mervyn has sent draft to Ben. Ben is keen to create a Westhill Traders Association, an ambition that WECC support.
5. **Membership update, proposal for co-opted member**- Mervyn advised that Audrey Findlay would like to re-join WECC. David advised that the proposal to co-opt Audrey at the 8<sup>th</sup> April meeting will be sent to members by 25<sup>th</sup> March. The co-option needs to be approved by two-thirds of members present. David advised that Justin Reid is keen on joining as well. Justin is a 20 year-old law student with a particular interest in planning.

### 5 Correspondence

1. **Request from Fergus Mutch (SNP candidate in Aberdeenshire West) to speak at our meeting** – It was agreed that as WECC are non-political we could not allow a single candidate to speak on policies at our meeting. We could organise a full hustings but there could be issues with that. Members are asked to read the 2015 draft WECC Policy on Maintaining Political Neutrality that has been circulated this week so that it can be approved for inclusion in our Standing Orders.
2. **Complaints from two residents about political bias in Bulletin article**- There has been two complaints that Cllr Aitchison’s article in winter Bulletin included a political statement because he stated that he was “*pleased that the handling of the [Covid] crisis by both the council and Scottish Government has been viewed positively.*” Both complainants allege that in praising the Government's efforts on Coronavirus, Cllr Aitchison has brought national politics into the domain of the WECC, which should only be concerned with local matters of interest or benefit to the community. Mervyn had advised Cllr Aitchison about the complaints. In his response Cllr Aitchison pointed out he had praised both the SNP Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire's Conservative/Liberal Democrat/Independent controlled Council, and that it was a fair and balanced comment. As a member of the Bulletin Editorial Board, Mandy Duggan commented that neither herself nor editor David Ritchie had concluded that the article had a political statement. After full discussion the unanimous view of elected members was that the statement held no political bias. It was agreed that Mervyn should advise both complainants to that effect. Mervyn will ask Cllr Aitchison if he is ok to share with the complainants the response he sent to Mervyn.
3. **Phase 2 Review of Scheme of Establishment- consultation closes on 14<sup>th</sup> April**- David advised that we need to review the proposed amendments. AC have arranged a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March for all CCs in the Shire to go over them. David, Mervyn and Willie will attend this, then review the changes and report back to next WECC meeting.

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	<p><b>4. Inspiring Aberdeenshire awards - nominations close date 5<sup>th</sup> April-</b> Detail on this has been circulated. Nominations can be made by individuals or groups like WECC. David advised that he intends to nominate the Men Shed for the Covid-19 Response Award for their work in organising manufacturing of face shields when there was a shortage. Other proposals were for David Cowie for setting up the Winter Resilience Facebook page, for our own Environmental Group, for David Ritchie and Heather Cook for all their work in the community over many years.</p> <p>The nominees were requested to prepare a synopsis of their activities and Mervyn will submit the nominations on behalf of WECC</p> <p><b>5. Public Toilets in Westhill-</b> Resident Jim Leith has written to Mervyn about lack of public toilets in Westhill Town Centre, where 1 million cars plus thousands of pedestrians visited last year. Jim is proposing a pod be installed, similar to one in Peterculter. Cllr Mckail advised that Greggs and M&amp;S allow non-customers to use their toilets, although neither are currently in use due to the pandemic. This will be discussed with Town Centre Management and then further at the April meeting.</p> <p><b>6. Leddach Grange Residents Association Dissolution-</b> Gordon advised that the secretary of the Leddach Grange Residents Association has advised us that this group is dissolving. Their constitution decrees that their funds should be passed to WECC so we will get £327 in due course.</p> <p><b>7. Benches in Denman Park-</b> Heather Cook considers there should be more benches in Denman Park so will prepare a proposal on this and it will be discussed at April meeting. Mervyn made a call for other ideas for projects or improvements for the next budget year, by April meeting.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b><u>Police Report</u></b></p> <p>As circulated and appended to minutes. Current priorities are community reassurance, drugs and road safety. Significant drop in Public Nuisance incidents, all were youth annoyance and anti-social behaviour calls. Mervyn advised that those who were concerned about nuisance behaviour shouldn't hesitate to call the police on 101</p> <p>There is no statistics in the report on shoplifting incidents so David will check if they can be included.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b><u>Environmental Group Update</u></b></p> <p>Report from Raymond has been circulated, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have decided not to restart our Organised Litter Picks in March, as it is still not clear that the COVID Restrictions will be lifted. Consultation with The Rotary Club Litter Picking Group has established that they are of the same mind. In effect, our organised picks will remain on hold until we get an "all clear" to continue safely.</li> <li>• We are continuing to encounter difficulty in getting the Council to empty our bin based at the Tennis Courts. This is now filled from the litter collected by the ongoing collections. (now been emptied)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been contact from a resident requesting litter bins to be installed at Hillside Play park after substantial bottles and litter seem to be deposited there frequently. We have responded explaining the problems in achieving this.</li> <li>• We will circulate our Safety Advice Document to all volunteers on our list, prior to the first Organised Pick, and request that they read and agree to follow the advice.</li> <li>• Ken has been making good progress in our Environmental projects. In the last month, although still in lockdown, many encouraging developments have transpired. We have had involvement in with the Orbital Trail preparation and held a very useful meeting with Ian Mitchell, ASC Landscape Services, regarding the planting initiative. Ian also provided helpful advice regarding the Bee and Butterfly pollinator initiative.</li> <li>• Ken has had a very positive response from Aberdeen and District Beekeepers Association to our article in the Bulletin. They thanked WECC for our interest and help in educating others regarding the pesticides which are killing the bees and butterflies. Ken is going to pursue this contact, as it will be useful to have expert help at hand</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Orbital Trail Project (Gordon Prentice)</b>  <b>Trail Development :</b>          Lawsondale- Fallen trees have been cleared from the path. Ineos have given permission for this waste wood to be removed. A large litter pick has been done in the wood, clearing years of accumulated rubbish.          Carnie- work on improving both entrances/exits at Carnie is due to start next week          Hill of Keir- no progress has been made with the farmer on this sector other than another communication drafted. Our proposal is for 3 stiles supported by relevant signage requesting responsible behaviour.          It is hoped that the Trail will be effectively ready for use by 1<sup>st</sup> April.          Briefing notes are being drafted to send to 26 landowners</p> <p><b>Funding Update-</b> AC's Area Manager confirmed that our request to carry over unspent funds [£3,017] from the £4,000 GAC Strategic Fund allocated to this year has been granted</p> <p>Gordon advised that he has been in correspondence with Ashdale Development about a lane off Hillside Rd that could give access to the countryside. Ashdale want to sell all the lanes in Westhill that they still own so there may be an option for us to buy this lane.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Health and Wellbeing Group Update</b>          Mervyn re-iterated the Terms of Reference, which was endorsed at a group meeting this week :-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To understand and raise awareness of health and well-being issues relevant to WECC area</li> <li>2. To make links with the health and social care partnership, service providers, 3rd sector organisations and clubs.</li> <li>3. To engage with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Locality Planning process.</li> <li>4. To set a programme of topics, speakers, articles etc. relevant to the identified health and wellbeing issues.</li> </ol> <p>Following the Mental Health and Mindfulness article by Julie Moffat in spring Bulletin, Julie will be requested to write article in summer issue on Exercise linked to Mental Health. There will also be an article on Melanoma, linked with Melanoma Awareness Week. Autumn issue article will be on Diet and Obesity.</p> <p>The Westhill Strategic Needs Assessment flagged up Drugs &amp; Alcohol problems, though this does not feature in the HSCP Locality Plan.</p>

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	<p>There will be some outreach work with key players in network, e.g. the Practice Manager at Skene Medical Group, the Garioch Community Planning officer, Garioch Location manager and local Community &amp; Learning workers. We will make them aware of what we are doing and give them some contact details. Next group meeting will be late April.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b><u>Planning Matters</u></b> (Diane Priestly)  <b>Application APP/2020/2249</b> – erection of 63 affordable dwelling at the old block works in Elrick- Not yet decided by AC.  The bathroom supplier advert trailer in field beside A944 has now been removed</p> <p><b>National Planning Framework 4-</b> The Planning group submitted their consultation comments in February.</p> <p>Diane has attended a few online meetings recently:-  <b>Circular Economy webinar</b> on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb. David has circulated the slidepack on this. It looked at the National Planning Framework 4, local authority planning functions, LDP processes and Local Place Plans. A Circular Economy is about buildings designed to be adaptable and built using recycled materials.</p> <p><b>Climate Change Café</b> on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, run by Aberdeen Climate Action. This included debate around developers being able to appeal against planning decisions, but communities cant.</p> <p><b>Town Centres webinar</b> on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. David, Iris &amp; Ben attended this. The speakers shared ideas and tips to help develop towns and communities,</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b><u>Financials</u></b> (Gordon Prentice)  <b>Matters Arising from 14 February meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Support Fund:</b> sub-group vacancy ongoing. Two payments made- to Men’s Shed and Westhill Girl Guiding. Winter Resilience Group has withdrawn its application for the time being, releasing £298.</li> <li>• <b>Cashflow Forecast:</b> still pending</li> <li>• <b>Bank Account Switch:</b> Area manager has written a general letter of comfort to describe WECC’s legal status, although it has come too late for this application, so untested. May be worth testing with Microsoft.</li> <li>• <b>Projects:</b> £1,600 for Planting Scheme approved in December added to schedule.</li> </ul> <p><b>Financial Transactions in February</b>  <b>Income:</b> £5,435, comprising Bulletin prepaid advertising income.  <b>Expenditure:</b> £6,354, comprising £2,055 approved last month plus £3,539 paid to Bauer Radio [Phoenix Fund] and £759 paid to Orbital Trail suppliers.</p> <p><b>Outstanding Commitments:</b> £6,900.83; comprising Spring Bulletin printing invoice of £5,890. Chair will be submitting £520 expense claim for the Planting Scheme project and Secretary has submitted £490.83 expense claim for February/March honoraria plus website annual renewal and Bulletin postages. These costs were approved.</p>

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	<p><b>Spring Bulletin Contribution:</b> expected to be around £3,000 on income of £9,424 from 114 advertisers. One invoice for £190 from winter issue remains unpaid.</p> <p><b>Bank Balances at Month End:</b> £25,179 (after cheques cleared)</p> <p>Gordon re-iterated that we should be thinking about strategic project-planning to assist with budgeting and cashflow management for the next financial year. Members are requested to consider if there is any projects they would like to pursue and bring their ideas to the April Meeting.</p>
12	<p><b>Integration of Community Resilience Resources</b></p> <p>Mervyn advised that it would be good to have a kind of ‘Westhill Voluntary Action’ group. This would help to harness the evident goodwill in our community e.g. Westhill Resilience, Rotary, and the 1700 people who signed up to the Westhill Winter Resilience Group on Facebook created by Dave Cowie. Mervyn will organise a meeting with Dave Cowie and David Dent of Rotary to discuss the concept. It would be a similar set up to the Westhill Resilience Group formed to reduce social isolation of the elderly during lockdown. The front cover of spring Bulletin has the umbrella logo for the WRG and shows the 6 organisations that are in it.</p> <p>For ‘Westhill Voluntary Action’ we could publicise the list of local groups who do voluntary activities and show the contact details for those interested in volunteering to use. In terms of sustainability, WECC would be facilitating volunteering but not managing it.</p>
13	<p><b>Planting scheme/Hanging Baskets</b></p> <p>Mervyn advised that a meeting has been held with some Rotary members to outline how they could help with planting etc., and with Landscape Services for advice on placing of the barrel planters, types of plants etc. Mapp are ok for us to tap into the water supply at living wall.</p> <p>The barrel planters have been delivered and are stored at Broomfold. Two additional ones have been ordered for placement at the sculpture alongside the WOT.</p> <p>The advice on hanging baskets is that the type of petunias that we have mainly used before are not good unless they can be dead-headed regularly. The plants should get a liquid feed every 2 weeks so Perfectshine have been asked if they can do this as part of their watering programme.</p> <p>We may see if holes can be cut on side of the baskets to allow planting there as well as on top, We will only put up around 30 baskets instead of 60 that were put up previously.</p>
14	<p><b>Ward 13 Councillors Updates</b> No circulated reports, points raised at meeting:</p> <p>Only Cllr Walker was still at meeting at this point as Cllr Mckail had to leave at the break</p> <p>Iris attended the Town Centre webinar last week. Westhill has not benefited from previous Town Centre project funding rounds as no project has been planned in time to apply for funding. More time is going to be allowed to prepare project bids and larger sums should be available from Scottish Government. We can start thinking about projects like toilet pods and seating at Denman Park suggested earlier in this meeting</p> <p>Revised lane markings are going to be applied at the Tesco roundabout later this year.</p> <p>Following the public transport consultation in late 2020, there should be improvements made to the Westhill to Aberdeen bus corridor</p>

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	Speed checks were done in 4 locations in February. Some motorists were spoken to and a few were fined. The beacons at the pedestrian crossing on Hays way near Dunecht Road may get replaced by LED lights, of the same design placed on Westhill drive a few years ago.
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Close of Meeting</b> Meeting closed at 9.45pm <b>Date of Next Meeting- 8<sup>th</sup> April, at 7pm , via Zoom</b></p>

### APPENDIX

#### GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE

**Community Council: Westhill and Elrick**  
**Reporting Period: 1-28 February 2021**  
**Previous Reporting Period: January 2021**

**Current Policing Priorities:**

Our current priorities have changed in response to emerging crime patterns and are as follows:

1. COMMUNITY REASSURANCE – Hi-Vis patrols to protect vulnerable locations, deter and detect crime and provide community reassurance during lockdown.
2. DRUGS – Intel gathering and disruption tactics to target those dealing drugs and related violence.
3. ROAD SAFETY – Preventative measures and enforcement action to ensure our roads are safe to use.



**Crime Overview and Explanation:**

CRIME TYPE	CURRENT PERIOD	PREVIOUS PERIOD
Assault	1 crimefiles	3 Crimefile
House Breaking	0	0
Public Nuisance	10 incidents	20 incidents 2 Crimefile
Road Traffic	6 crimefiles 18 incidents	5 crimefiles 18 incidents
Drugs	0	3 Crimefile 1 incident

*Assault – Includes all recorded instances of violence.*

*Housebreaking – includes all break in's to domestic and commercial premises, including attempted break in's.*

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*Public Nuisance – All youth annoyance and calls in relation to anti-social behaviour.*

*Road Traffic – all calls in relation to Road Traffic Offences (speeding, illegal parking, obstruction etc.).*

*Drugs – all reports incidents in relation to drugs dealing and use.*

This reporting period has seen:-

Assaults – One assault which was a mother on child.

Housebreaking – 0

Public Nuisance – Significant drop in numbers with 8 of the calls regarding potential Covid breaches. 2 residents admitted to having friends round prior to police arrival and were given suitable advice.

The other 2 calls related to youths gathering and throwing snowballs.

Road Traffic Offences 1 of the crimefiles relates to a driver caught under the influence of alcohol, another 1 relates to a driver caught speeding and the rest relate to drivers caught driving with no insurance and/or MOT.

The 18 incidents mostly relate to cars stuck in the snow, minor road traffic accidents and parking issues.

Drugs – 0

### **Significant crime/issues within your community:**

Nothing of note

### **Planned Community Policing Activity/Advice:**

This last few weeks have seen a large number of varying types of fraud reported across Scotland and Garioch is no exception to this. Whilst none have been reported in Westhill it is worthy of making local residents aware of this social media message:

'Insp Gareth Hannan is urging Garioch residents to be aware of an increase in frauds that have been reported in the last few weeks. These have taken various forms but ultimately have resulted in victims transferring money or disclosing bank details. Insp Hannan states, 'No legitimate company will ever phone or email you and ask for bank details or for you to transfer money. If you receive such a correspondence then it is highly likely to be fraud and you should not engage.'

Further information about protecting yourself from fraud can be obtained on the Police Scotland Website.'

Normally we would have a week of action tackling speeding and anti-social behaviour in Westhill but due to us remaining in Tier 4 this was not done in February. We will continue to patrol the Westhill community tackling youth annoyance. Various youths have been traced as a result of these patrols and this is being supported by the residents calling in ongoing issues. We will continue to take robust action to target these individuals.

On 20 February speed checks were done in Westhill with 16 drivers warned regarding their speed and 2 fined for speeding.

On 26 February speed checks were done in Westhill with 7 drivers warned regarding their speed

### **Conclusion:**

We have received quite a number COVID breach related calls during the review period. We continue to attend and deal with these incidents appropriately.