

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 8 APRIL 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, Frances Scott, David Dent, David Cowie, Aileen Swaffield

1	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.</p> <p>The planned presentation on Community Action Plans will now take place at May meeting as due to last minute personal circumstances our Guest Speaker is unable to join us tonight, and we look forward to welcoming her to our next Meeting.</p> <p>Permission was granted to record the meeting.</p>
2	<p>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Apologies received from Hilary Benson, CLlr Aitchison, CLlr McKail</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest</p>
3	<p>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11th March 2021</p> <p>The minutes were approved, with no changes.</p> <p>Proposed: Ken Stewart , Seconded: Raymond Swaffield</p>
4	<p>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set-up of Micro-soft One-Drive – Malcolm is waiting on response from Microsoft to his last correspondence. He will find out the cost of a subscription if we have to go down that route. 2. Phase 2 Review of Scheme of Establishment- The proposed changes have been reviewed by Mervyn, Willie and David. There is nothing controversial or unacceptable. Lessons have been learnt by AC from our experiences in 2018/19 that has led to major changes in how

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	<p>complaints about Community Councillors will now be dealt with and how unacceptable behaviour in meetings may be addressed.</p> <p>3. Public Toilets- Currently visitors and shoppers are expected to use facilities in shops and cafes, but not everyone is aware of their locations and users often feel embarrassed to leave without purchasing something. Mervyn has been speaking to Ben Horsburgh, Centre Manager. It is likely that a “retail pod” will be installed on the grass area near Greggs and be occupied by Timpsons to provide a shoe repair and dry-cleaning service. Water and drainage services will need to be provided for that so a public toilet “pod” could also be placed near there. Possible suppliers and estimated costs are being reviewed by Mervyn and Ben.</p> <p>4. Ideas on projects for next financial year- Mervyn reminded members they were asked to think about possible future projects. Heather has suggested additional benches and a shelter for Denman Park. Denman Park ponds need to be cleaned out. Iris suggested that we look at putting these suggestions and the shopping centre toilet into a package that could get government funding from the major Town Centre Improvements fund. The shopping centre owners may be able to apply to that fund for general improvements, like restoring the fascia.</p> <p>SSEN have announced a 2021 fund for projects with particular focus on helping vulnerable or isolated people. Deadline for applications is 10th June. Applications can be for projects up to £20,000.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council have advised that contractors appointed to undertake house refurbishments may be able to support small community projects by the donation of materials or assistance with practical work. Mervyn suggested we could apply for the ‘pocket’ garden opposite Tesco to be restored as it has become overgrown.</p> <p>Gordon recommended that we review the possible projects and possible funding sources for them. It was recognised that we need to hear the presentation on Community Action Plans and include our deliberations from that in our thinking for 2021/22.</p> <p>Mervyn asked members to prepare project briefs with rough costings for May meeting.</p> <p>5. Inspiring Aberdeenshire Awards update- Mervyn advised that on behalf of WECC he has submitted nominations as follows :- Lifetime Achievement Award - for Heather Cook, Raymond Swaffield and David Ritchie Beautiful Aberdeenshire Environmental Award – for Raymond and Ken Stewart Inspirational Volunteer Award- for Heather, Ken and Dave Cowie David has nominated the Men’s Shed for the Covid-19 Response Award for their work in producing face shields in 2020.</p>
5	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>David advised that there is no new correspondence of note that isn’t covered by other parts of agenda.</p> <p>Following the debate at March meeting about political bias in Bulletin article, our policy on Maintaining Political Neutrality has been circulated for members to review. It was agreed that no changes are required.</p>

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	<p>The role description for Ben Horsburgh as the WECC *Commercial Rep has been circulated as Ben is now a WECC Associate Member. This is primarily a liaison role to help facilitate WECC's ability to comment on and influence the following aspects of Westhill Town Centre:- Health and safety, vandalism, litter control, provision of facilities & signage (e.g. toilets), aesthetics of buildings & green spaces, floral displays, communication with Westhill Traders Association (tbc) and to promote footfall.</p> <p>Quarterly meetings between WECC office bearers and Ben will be held to discuss current activities and salient issues.</p> <p>*Gordon suggested that the role title be 'Town Centre Rep' instead of 'Commercial Rep'. Gordon also suggested that the role could include cultivation of relationships with other parts of the local business community. Cllr Mckelvie advised that a few years back he had tried to set up a local traders group but there was little support for it. Change of name was agreed, as was Gordon's second proposal in principle.</p> <p>Mervyn has spoken to Ben about shoplifting at the centre. Ben advised that in his view more can be done collaboratively to combat it. More discussions to follow.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><u>Police Report</u></p> <p>As circulated and appended to minutes.</p> <p>Current priorities are anti-social behaviour, drugs and road safety.</p> <p>Significant rise in Public Nuisance incidents, all were youth annoyance and anti-social behaviour calls.</p> <p>Fraud numbers are now included in the report.</p> <p>Three out of the four reported Assaults are domestic related, so Kate will re-post the domestic abuse helpline details on facebook.</p> <p>There has been no police presence at WECC meetings since Steve Middleton retired two years ago. The community police officer is James Stewart and the monthly report is compiled by Sgt Graeme Allan. David will contact them to ask if either of them could attend one of our meetings in next few months.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><u>Co-options of Audrey Findlay and Justin Reid</u></p> <p>David formally advised members of the co-option proposals on email of 24th March and provided brief details on Audrey and Justin. Audrey wishes to return, having previously been involved since the late 1980s, initially as a Shire councillor. She was WECC Chair or Acting Chair for most years from 2011 till 2017. Justin is a 20 year-old law student.</p> <p>Co-options require approval by two-thirds majority of CC members present and voting.</p> <p>The voting results of the 13 members present were:-</p> <p>Audrey Findlay- 9 for, 4 abstentions</p> <p>Justin Reid - 12 for, 1 abstention.</p> <p>Audrey and Justin are now co-opted. Mervyn welcomed them on board to WECC.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><u>Environmental Group Update</u></p> <p>Report from Raymond has been circulated, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have now decided to restart our Organised Litter Picks on April 24th, as have The Rotary Club Litter Picking Group on 10th April. We will support each other at each pick.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminders of the restart has been sent out to all WECC volunteers, along with the “Simple Precautions Advice Sheet”, with a request that they read and abide by it. Some printed copies will be available for anyone unable to read the digital copy. • We have responded to a few complaints from residents about an increase in litter, dog poo bags and the state of the Denman ponds. • A request for information on disposal and provision of litter bags and areas covered by our group was responded to. • We have had a request to establish the owner of the small field on the North Side of the A944. The resident would like permission to enter the field to remove the considerable amount of litter that has accumulated. Councillor McKail was quickly able to obtain permission for us from the Farmer. • The environment group would like to thank, Tesco, Home Bargains, David Cowie and members of the Winter Resilience Group for their kind donations of Bee Bombs and wildflower seeds. • We are hopeful of obtaining help to rotovate the areas prior to planting. We have purchased an auger drill to make holes in the soil which will assist with the planting of the spring bulbs, later in the year. • Raymond created posters and David has printed and laminated them to create weather resistant signs, which will mark where seeds have been planted and avoid mowing. • Ken has been in touch with Steve Gray and Ian Mitchell, seeking advice on our hopes to enhance Denman Park and the Ponds and now await their response. • Ken has face-lifted the 12 Barrels that were purchased, and they are now ready for the next stage of getting them placed and planted up.
8	<p>Orbital Trail Project (Gordon Prentice) The signposts are now installed. Map and route description being prepared The main community launch event is likely to be the publication of a centre page spread in the Summer Bulletin, published late May. £1,500 of the £14,000 funding is uncommitted, but the plan is to deploy this on stiles, signage and boardwalk at Lawsondale. Maintenance of the newly hewn routes at the Golf Club, Broadshades and Lawsondale Woods will be undertaken by volunteers. A new WhatsApp group has been established with 11 members signed up. Feedback on the work at the entrances/exits at Carnie Woods has been excellent.</p> <p>Landowner engagement- A further briefing note was sent to all 24 residents and landowners mid-March eliciting nine submissions/objections by return. Those that complained of a lack of consultation have already received a reply setting out the sequence of events from our first engagement on 21st October. However most of the concerns were around unacceptable behaviours and loss of privacy. Examples cited were dogs off leads being aggressive to residents and animals, dog fouling, litter, confrontational behaviour, road and verge maintenance, the perceived danger of blind summits and mixing people with traffic.</p> <p>The project team has taken advice from officials at Aberdeenshire Council, including the Outdoor Access Officer for the area, and composed a response that we intend to send after this meeting. The three residents of Sclattiebrae are the most vociferous, and with whom most people have most sympathy, so we have added an additional paragraph and proposal to specifically address their concerns and issues. The draft response has been circulated to members and it was agreed that it should be signed off by Mervyn.</p>

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10	<p>Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)</p> <p>No significant recent planning applications.</p> <p>Local Development Plan- the LDP has now been submitted by AC to Scottish Government for Examination.</p> <p>On 30th March Diane attended a Reporters Guide to Planning Appeals & Development Plans. The point about communities not being able to appeal planning decisions had been raised. Various voluntary groups have tried to get amendments made to the Planning Act 2019, but without success.</p> <p>Diane emphasised that if we are going to be working on a Community Action Plan then we need to seek suggestions from residents. Some guidance on how to do that is expected to be part of the presentation by Caroline Smith at May meeting.</p>
11	<p>Financials (Gordon Prentice)</p> <p>Matters Arising from 11th March meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims to Aberdeenshire Council to recover project spend: made and received <p>Financial Transactions in March</p> <p>Income: £18,281, comprising £13,353 from AC - £5k for Phoenix Fund with the balance for reimbursing WoT project spend. In addition we received £4,880 Bulletin advertising income plus £45 for scaffold hire for the year plus £3 bank interest.</p> <p>Expenditure: £16,670, comprising £7,850 on WoT project, plus Bulletin printing and Secretary's expenses approved last month.</p> <p>Outstanding Commitments: £714; comprising previously approved expenses on Town Centre Planting Scheme project.</p> <p>Bank Balances at Month End: £29,229 [after cheques cleared]</p> <p>Around £8000 of uncommitted funds is available to be spent on new projects.</p> <p>First pass of the Income & Expenditure Account for 2020/21 shows a healthy cash position of £29,229 despite a deficit of £5,537 for the year.</p>
12	<p>Westhill Voluntary Action</p> <p>Mervyn, David, Dave Cowie and David Dent have met to discuss the concept. The proposal has been circulated. Plan is to publicise the local groups who do voluntary activities by putting basic details and contact info in Bulletin, website and facebook.</p> <p>Dave Cowie would be happy to change the name of his Winter Resilience facebook page to Voluntary Action to give it a wider remit. The benefit of the page would be easy and quick access to a central hub for all voluntary activities, and sustainable contact with volunteers.</p> <p>Heather raised the issue of elderly residents needing help with small jobs and could WVA be a focal point for them to get help. These people are mostly not on facebook so there would have to be a phone contact point.</p> <p>If we did offer this kind of help facility it would have to be small-scale so that we weren't seen to be taking business away from local tradesmen who advertise a wide range of services in Bulletin.</p>

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	David Ritchie and Dave Cowie will draft a template for gathering the info to populate the database of local groups who wish to be involved with this.
13	<p><u>Planting scheme/Hanging Baskets</u></p> <p>Mervyn confirmed that Mapp will allow us to get a feed off the water supply to the living wall, to supply planters, baskets and the like – placed on the wall itself.</p> <p>Two additional barrel planters have been bought for placement at the Gateway Sculpture, which is on the Orbital Trail. We are very grateful for the offer of support from Rotary volunteers who will be given good notice of when help with planting will be required.</p>
14	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors Updates</u></p> <p>Reports from Cllrs Walker and Mckelvie have been circulated. Main points raised are:-</p> <p>Cllr Walker- there has been vandalism at Carnie Woods, Westdyke and Elrick last weekend, including a fire left smouldering in Carnie Woods. The City Ranger Ian Talboys is to work with our ranger/head teachers locally to roll out a fire safety presentation he gives to City schools.</p> <p>She is following up concerns raised previously about Skene Medical Practice not providing a blood test service for secondary care (blood tests requested by e.g. ARI consultants) locally.</p> <p>Shopping Centre Car Park- Ben has confirmed he should have the required 3 quotes soon for the repair work.</p> <p>Cllr Mckelvie</p> <p>The Recycling Centre will not be re-instating the Tuesday evening opening hours.</p> <p>The work to increase the parking area at SensationALL is currently ongoing.</p> <p>He is negotiating to plant wildflower seeds at the shopping centre roundabout.</p>
15	<p><u>Close of Meeting</u></p> <p>Meeting closed at 9.50pm</p> <p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u>- 13^h May, at 7pm , via Zoom</p>

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GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE

Community Council: Westhill and Elrick
Reporting Period: March 2021
Previous Reporting Period: February 2021
Current Policing Priorities:



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

1. ASB – Proactive patrols to provide community reassurance and to deter and detect instances of ASB and Vandalism.
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	4 crimefiles	1 Crimefile
House Breaking	0	0
Public Nuisance	21 incidents	10 incidents
Road Traffic	5 crimefiles 11 incidents	3 crimefiles 18 incidents
Drugs	2	0
Fraud	3	n/a

Assault – Includes all recorded instances of violence.

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

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.

Fraud (NEW) – all different types of Frauds reported

This reporting period has seen:

Assaults – Three of the assaults are domestic related and the other one was an assault where a 17 year old male has threatened another male with a hammer. There were no serious injuries and all assaults have been detected

Housebreaking – 0

Public Nuisance – Significant rise in numbers with 21 reports of youths gathering in different areas of Westhill with most reported on a Friday or Saturday evening. When Police attended most youths ran off but a few were traced and given suitable advice.

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Road Traffic Offences - 1 of the crimefiles relates to a driver caught driving through a red light close to a school. Another 1 relates to a driver caught speeding at 70mph in a 40mph road and the third was for a person driving carelessly. The other 2 were drivers caught with no insurance.

The 11 incidents mostly relate to cars abnormal loads, animals on road and parking issues.

Drugs – 2-Both calls relate to drug use but there was no trace of any persons on police arrival.

Fraud – 3. Due to the increase of this type of crime over the last few months I have included this in the report in order to try and make people aware of how some frauds are committed. The first Fraud was an account holder allegedly being contacted by her bank and being told there was fraudulent activity on her account and being asked to transfer her monies to another account which she did. The second one was someone bought an item on Facebook but never received the goods. The third one was a taxi fraud where the customer ran out of the taxi without paying.

Significant crime/issues within your community:

Nothing of note

Planned Community Policing Activity/Advice:

The last few weeks have seen a large number of varying types of fraud reported across Scotland and Garioch is no exception to this. 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.'

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 7 March speed checks were done in Westhill with 3 drivers warned regarding their speed. On 23 March speed checks were done in Westhill with 9 drivers warned regarding their speed

Conclusion:

Overall no serious crime was committed in Westhill but it is disappointing to see the increase in Public Nuisance calls.