

Westhill & Elrick Community Council 10th June 2021 Meetings

Key Points Report

AGM

Presentation from MAPP – Attendees received an interesting and informative presentation from our guest speaker – Lynne Keenan, MAPP Executive Director – Head of Scotland Property Management. Ms Keenan welcomed the fact that we now have a resident Shopping Centre Manager, who has formed a collaborative relationship with WECC. She also thanked WECC for their support in improving the appearance of the “Green Wall”.

Elsewhere she emphasised that Westhill Shopping Centre is an asset strongly valued by its owners, as illustrated by the appointment of a Centre Manager. She also indicated that they are considering improvement proposals, both cosmetic and practical, subject to availability of budgets. More details to follow in the coming months.

Election of WECC Office Bearers – The election process takes place annually and in line with protocol was set underway by Cllr Alistair McKelvie. The following members were elected unopposed- Chair Mervyn Barr, Vice Chair Willie Munro, Treasurer Gordon Prentice and Secretary David Ritchie. Our thanks to Cllr McKelvie for his assistance.

20/21 Donations – WECC donated £6015 from our General Fund and our Covid Support Fund to some 13 good causes such as e.g. £1000 to the Citizens Advice Bureau for new communications technology and £400 to Westhill Girl-Guiding to compensate for a shortfall in their income. Full details of all other donations are available on request.

June Meeting

Funding Applications– The following applications were made to Aberdeenshire Council before the 31st May deadline:-

- Refurbishment of the Denman Park leisure ponds/wildlife reserve. These are in need of dredging to clear silt and reduce the amount of reeds present, which are in danger of stagnating the ponds. The immediate environment of the ponds has also become overgrown with untrimmed trees, shrubbery and undergrowth, all of which variously cut out light and inhibit access to much of the edge of the ponds.
- Additional seating (benches) in Denman Park. This is mainly due to the increase in people walking through the park; to provide somewhere to rest, particularly those with limited mobility. Also if funds permit, a bench will be provided at the outdoor exercise area to assist people wishing to get changed, and a cycle rack will also be installed.
- Installation of sections of hard path in the wetter areas of the Lawsondale link of the Orbital Trail, to improve accessibility and safety.

Orbital Trail - WECC are delighted to report that the Eastern route for the Trail has been agreed and we will be expediting production of the route map, which should happen fairly quickly. Waymarker posts will also be positioned as soon as possible thereafter as soon as we agree locations with Landscape Services and secure installation dates with our contractors.

Planning/Community Action Plans (CAPs) - WECC recently had a presentation from Caroline Smith, Garioch Community Planning Officer on this subject. CAPs are developed by communities following a representative community engagement exercise, where community stakeholders are consulted on what improvements they would like to see in their community, taking account of the specific circumstances of that community.

The outcome of this process is a Community Action Plan that details the agreed community priorities for the years ahead. WECC have noted an “Expression of Interest” in developing such a plan for Westhill and Elrick. We should be in a position to provide more details on the consultation process in the autumn.

Planting Scheme – The scheme is now completed with twenty-eight hanging baskets at the “green wall” in the town centre, along with six barrel planters on the Holiday Inn roundabout, two at the Skene Boar Sculpture and two on the edge of Westhill Drive. An additional two have also been placed at the entrance to the Lawsondale link of the Orbital Trail. Huge thanks to Ben Horsburgh (Centre Manager), plus WECC and Rotary volunteers who have worked so hard to achieve this outcome. How well the plants will do remains to be seen but we are optimistic that a favourable summer will help us achieve a good result – one that we can replicate year on year.

Zoom/Return to normal meetings – WECC have worked fairly successfully through the technology of Zoom now for approximately 15 months and whilst it has been very effective and efficient, it doesn’t have the same atmosphere of a meeting in person, and it is difficult to foster direct public attendance. To that extent we are exploring how, post lock-down, we can revert to our normal meetings in the Holiday Inn and are optimistic that this may be possible from August onwards.

Please note that in accordance with standard protocol, there will be no WECC meeting in July.

Have a great summer!

Mervyn Barr, Chairperson