

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 14TH OCTOBER 2021 AT HOLIDAY INN

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mervyn Barr	Chair	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Donald Davidson	Member	✓ via zoom
Becky Ferguson	Member	✓
Audrey Findlay	Member	✓
Ben Horsburgh	Associate Member	✓ via zoom
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Alan McCue	Member	✓ via zoom
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓ via zoom
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
Justin Reid	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Secretary	✓ via zoom
Ken Stewart	Member	✓ via zoom
Raymond Swaffield	Member	✓
Tim Yeomans	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	✓ via zoom

Members of Public Freda Imrie (via zoom), Elaine Manley, Mairi McCormack (via zoom),

1	<p><u>Welcome and opening remarks</u></p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including prospective member Elaine Manley. Mairi McCormack, who will be assisting with the Christmas event, will be joining the meeting later</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Apologies received from Cllrs Aitchison and McKail No Declarations of Interest</p>
3	<p><u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 9th September 2021</u></p> <p>The minutes were approved with one small correction. Proposed: Raymond Swaffield Seconded: Kate Lumsden</p>
4	<p><u>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set-up of Micro-soft One-Drive or other options – Malcolm advised that David should create a Micro-soft One-Drive using the secretary Gmail account. Malcolm has done a guide which he will send to David. Malcolm has been looking at options for WECC becoming a charitable group. This would bring benefits like exemption from vat and easier access to funding. A Community Trust would be the best option but it would have to be a separate entity from WECC. This will be explored further. Malcolm will circulate a 2015 research paper on Community Councils. 2. Seating for Denman Park - Mervyn confirmed that we are buying 2 benches with backs, a bench with no back for the exercise area and a picnic bench suitable for wheelchairs. All to be supplied by Glasdon.

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	<p>They are made from recycled plastic. We have advised Ian Mitchell in Landscape Services of what we want but he has not yet confirmed that he has placed the order.</p> <p>3. Sclattibrae issue- Mervyn gave an update on recent dealings the residents have had with the Police. Mervyn to write to Inspector Hannan to express concern about the lack of Police action in dealing with complaints</p>
5	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of September correspondence log- This has been circulated. Same file as last month with a new tab for September. Nothing on it to be discussed that isn't already on agenda. • Community Resilience Planning email from Caroline Smith- CCs have been provided with a template to help prepare a Resilience Plan. David suggested we may wish to consider doing this since there will be a delay with the Community Action Plan. Cllr Walker suggested that Westhill could be split into a few areas with a separate Plan done for each area. Diane will arrange a Planning group meeting to look into this. • The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022- Email from Audrey Nash who is the AC Platinum Jubilee Project Coordinator. We are being asked if we would like to participate in two events over the bank holiday weekend in June 2022, namely Lighting of Beacons on Thursday 2nd June and Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5th June. Gordon suggested that article could be put in winter Bulletin about this and asking if any groups in Westhill would like to be involved in organising these events. • WECC Promotion on Social Media- Mr James Cruickshank had sent emails to the 4 Councillors suggesting they should attend the Tarland Food Festival. Cllr Mckail then suggested we should promote it on our website/fb. This was not done as it is not our policy to promote events outside the Westhill area. A short discussion took place on the purpose of our social media – e.g. should it be a newsy, topical “chat room”; mainly factual about WECC business, an information resource for events – or all of the above? It was agreed that the Comms Team should convene to review our policy and approach and make recommendations. Mervyn to action. <p>On a related theme, we have been invited to participate in a Pilot project by the Improvement Service to develop the way that we communicate with residents through enhanced social media approaches.</p>
6	<p><u>Environmental Group Update</u></p> <p>Report from Raymond has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Our twice monthly organised Litter Picks have continued as planned and in September we had a particularly large group of volunteers. We were surprised to find that we were down to our last two grabbers. This in part is due to our “lending” as agreed, six grabbers to the Rotary Group. I therefore want to purchase a replacement of six to ensure that we can always have enough for volunteers.</i> • <i>The Rotary Group continue to do a splendid coverage of the Western extremities of Westhill and tend to vary start points each time. In response to Cllr Walker’s email, the Rotary</i>

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confirmed that they did almost always cover the Westdyke area. They have found the park usually badly littered but say that recently have noticed that it has reduced slightly.

- *Littering at the Academy Playing Field has continued at an unacceptable rate. Several residents have expressed to us their concern regarding the situation. Cllr. Walker, Ken, and I spent a lunch time casually observing the pupils and confirmed that litter was simply just dropped at the field. It currently seems that neither School nor Waste Department feel responsible for clearing this litter, but it is not reasonable that our volunteers are solely responsible for managing the litter problem at the field. I have emailed the Waste Department to request their take on the matter but have not had a reply as yet. I have managed to arrange a telephone conversation with Alison Reid, the Academy Head, on Wednesday morning, to raise our concerns and try to see if the school can attempt to influence pupil social conscience or offer how we should tackle the problem. I understand that she will be accompanied by Nicola Christie, Cluster Business Manager, who has operational responsibility for the school campus. I am unfamiliar with this role, but it looks like she will be able to explain who has the actual responsibilities for the field.*

Raymond gave an update on the call with Academy yesterday- Nicola Christie doesn't know who has responsibility for clearing litter on the playing fields, but will try to find out. The school don't have the resources to clear the litter. They continually request the pupils not to drop litter. More litter bins are going to be put in the playing fields.

Raymond is going to buy 6 more grabbers to replace the ones given to Rotary. These will cost around £150, which was approved

7 **Orbital Trail Project Update**

Report from Gordon has been circulated, as below in italics:

Although the WOT is now officially open and complete, this report will focus on ongoing commitments.

Town Centre Information Board/s

Sally Davis at AC has confirmed that she is ready to commission manufacture of an Information Boards in the town centre but is currently awaiting input on orienteering routes from the local scout leader. Corrections to the digital edition will be made at the same time.

Bulb Planting

Chair has confirmed receipt of 1,000 bulbs and we now must finalise the planting scheme for the volunteers. All landowners have given consent. AC's ranger, Alison Sutherland is hopeful of involving pupils from Westhill Primary.

Landowner Activity

- *Trevor Morgan, AC's Estates Team Leader has confirmed that AC do own the strip of woodland that borders Lawsondale.*
- *Access to Hill of Keir: Scottish Water's contractor is still on site, so the stile has yet to be commissioned from The Men's Shed.*

Correspondence since last month's meeting

Following last month's meeting, Chair is in active dialogue with local Outdoor Access Officer regarding responsible access through Sc lattiebrae.

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Simon Whitworth, Acting Countryside Officer for ACC at Carnie Woods is asking for support to source funds to upgrade/replace some sections of boardwalk.

Chair is planning to write to Area Manager to request a debrief meeting with relevant council officials to discuss lessons learned.

Ongoing Maintenance

Contact has been re-established with Mike Rawlins of the Community Payback Team with a view to ongoing maintenance – primarily strimming - of the pathways at Lawsondale and Broadshades.

We also have a pool of volunteers including Subsea 7 on standby.

An additional waymarker post installation has been requested near the eastern entrance to Carnie Woods.

Funding Update

As per the Project report, £1,605 of the £14,000 funding is uncommitted and deployable on stiles, benches, bulbs and possibly a strimmer for ongoing Trail clearing.

The contract for upgrading the northern stretch of Lawsondale Woods – worth £4,092 - is pending, awaiting formal consent from AC, as noted above. Additional quotations are being sought.

8 Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)

Report from Diane has been circulated, as below in italics:

Planning applications

Very quiet this month

Update on the local development plan

From the most recent Local Development Plan newsletter it is clear that the appointed reporters are now underway with the Examination of the Aberdeenshire LDP. They have been asked by the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) to respond to information requests on the Housing Land Supply, the provision for Gypsy Travellers sites, Ancient Woodland, and an employment site in Newtonhill. It is expected that the reporters will request further information as and when needed.

Seven reporters have been appointed and as yet there is no date when the examination will be completed-the original target date was February 2022. Currently 6 of these reporters are involved with looking at the unresolved representations which were identified in the Main Issues Report and this will involve over five hundred site visits which should be completed by the end of October.

Update on the start of the Community Action plan

I contacted Ann Overton about the Community Action Plan and was then passed to Caroline Smith for comment, she has expressed her regret that they are currently looking for a third party to commission this work and therefore at the moment there is no confirmed start date.

It has been proposed that the Strategic Needs Assessment for Westhill, completed in March 2020, will be the basis of the planned work; however due to Covid it will be necessary to have what is described as a 'light touch review' which will then be the basis for the development of the Westhill Place Plan.

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	<p>suggestion that we have a dome for Santa to sit inside and kids can visit Santa. This would be run by the three primary schools PTAs and could include some stalls. Date proposed of Saturday 4th December. Malcolm volunteered to be Santa.</p> <p>Ben may be able to put lights along the shop frontages. WECC can help to fund the trees plus lights & decorations round living wall and at shops. This could cost around £1000. Costings will be prepared for approval at November meeting. Need to come up with name for the event and banner can be put up. Project team will have a meeting in around 2 weeks after Ben returns from leave.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p><u>Toilets at Shopping Centre</u></p> <p>Mervyn has been speaking to Healthmatics who can install new pods into existing toilets. The estimate is £70000. A maintenance contract would be £8900 + vat for first year for daily cleaning and repairs. Users would pay to enter the toilets. On basis of 1 million car visits to the shopping centre in a year, they have estimated that there would be 80,000 visits to the toilets and the revenue from that should cover the maintenance contract. Ben reminded us that the refurbishment cost would have to be borne by the tenants and it may be difficult to get them to agree to it. There may be some funding available from Town Centre Fund but tenants would require to contribute to cost. Ben will seek other quotes. Mervyn will write to the owners, St James Place</p>
<p>12</p>	<p><u>Westdyke Park</u></p> <p>Cllr Walker advised that a Short Life multi-agency working group convened in May 2021, when ASB was being regularly reported, to look at a joined-up approach to tackling the ASB issues in Westhill and Elrick. The group included Police Scotland, SFRS, Westhill Academy HT, Community Learning & Development, Community Safety and the Garioch Area team. A watching brief has been maintained to share any incidents reported via the Area Office with Police Scotland. There have been increased patrols by Police Scotland who now report that Westdyke has been quiet recently. The next steps for the Area team are to maintain a watching brief to ensure the sharing of information and support the CC and the wider community with local initiatives such as with litter picking and community led projects.</p> <p>It's difficult to get parents engaged so perhaps a social media campaign along the lines of 'Do you know where your kids are' may help.</p> <p>Could the interested Westdyke residents form a group under the umbrella of WECC to put together an improvement plan for the playpark incorporating fund raising ideas? The Area Manager has already done a site visit to the park and agrees that it is not well laid out or very inviting in terms of play equipment.</p> <p>Malcolm Collie will look at getting a small focus-group of interested residents together to discuss what can be done. Cllr Walker, Kate and Gordon offered to support Malcolm in meeting with residents.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p><u>Denman Park ponds/ Green Canopy project</u></p> <p>Green Canopy Project (GCP)</p> <p>The next release of trees will be March 2022, so we have time to plan what we want. Mervyn has made contact with Tajana Telisman-Sosic, the AC Green Spaces officer. She indicated that trees on the A944 between the Tesco Roundabout and boundary at the Brodiach Burn would be a good idea. We would have to contact landowners and check the soil quality/depth and if there are service lines in the area. Also looking at putting hazel trees in Denman Park. Tajana will also be planting trees at Hillside in the late autumn and will welcome any volunteer help – notification to be made in late October.</p>

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	<p>Denman Park ponds –Re the proposed treatment pond, the Arnhall Moss Group have agreed to give WECC £2000 to fund the technical report which Tamsin Morris can prepare. This report will be used to support the funding application. Steve Gray will be the project lead.</p> <p>Ian Mitchell is preparing the plan for a bridge across the bottom weir and an extended walkway on the South side, graded and surfaced (tar/dust), suitable for push/wheelchair access.</p> <p>Re the landscaping on A944, Tajana will look at costing of the original plan from 6 years ago.</p> <p>Raymond advised that the Academy Eco club plan to plant trees round the playing fields in spring.</p> <p>Town Centre Planting-</p> <p>Item 1- The plants in the planters will be replaced by periwinkles until next summer. Expenditure of £170 max was approved for this.</p> <p>Item 2- AC have sent an order form for plants for 2022. Hope to extend the hanging baskets on green wall. We may have to buy some plants to complement what we get from AC to achieve a better range of colours. This could cost around £100. This was approved.</p> <p>Item 3- Ben Horsburgh would like to put 8 planters in shopping centre, but would prefer that WECC buy them (est £240) and be re-imbursed by his landscape gardeners .</p> <p>Item 4- A plan was proposed to put a tiered planter, as a centre piece on the Holiday Inn roundabout in 2022. This plus plants for it would cost around £900. This will be incorporated into a plan for 2022 to be included as part of our 2022 budget considerations.</p> <p>Items 2-4 to be discussed further at next meeting.</p>
14	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u> Cllr Walker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playpark at SensationALL should be re-opening on 18th October. - Susan Adams is not sure if the Denman Park treatment pond would qualify for a funding bid to Town Centre fund, but Steve Gray may have other funding options. - Suggestion that the old vets building could be converted into an Upcycling Centre
15	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Elaine Manley said she has time to be involved in the community now and would like to join WECC.</p> <p>Mervyn advised that he intends to step down as Chair in March 2022, to spend more time with his family, but will remain a Member and an active volunteer.</p>
16	<p><u>Close of Meeting</u> Meeting closed at 10.15pm</p> <p><u>Date of Next Meeting-</u> 11th November at 7pm, at Holiday Inn and via Zoom</p>