

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 9TH DECEMBER 2021 AT HOLIDAY INN

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mervyn Barr	Chair	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓ via zoom
Donald Davidson	Member	✓ via zoom
Becky Ferguson	Member	✓
Audrey Findlay	Member	✓
Ben Horsburgh	Associate Member	✘
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Alan McCue	Member	✓
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓ via zoom
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
Justin Reid	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Secretary	✓
Ken Stewart	Member	✓
Raymond Swaffield	Member	✓
Tim Yeomans	Member	✓
CLlr David Aitchison	Ward 13 Councillor	✓ via zoom
CLlr Iris Walker	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
CLlr Ron McKail	Ward 13 Councillor	✓ via zoom
CLlr Alistair McKelvie	Ward 13 Councillor	✓ via zoom

Members of Public Chika Edeh, Felix Tabenda

1	<p>Welcome and opening remarks Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone</p>
2	<p>Apologies and Declarations of Interest Apologies received from Ben Horsburgh No Declarations of Interest</p>
3	<p>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11th November 2021 Re 'Sclattiebrae issue' in section 6.3, a revised statement re the letter from Richard Elliot was agreed. Proposed: Mervyn, Seconded: Gordon</p>
4	<p>Neil Cameron, Emergency Planning Officer for AC, was due to attend to talk about Resilience Planning but could not attend as he is still busy with the aftermath of Storm Arwen. (He should be able to attend the January meeting). Instead it was agreed that we could review the Response to Storm Arwen and the 4th December Christmas event</p> <p>Response to Storm Arwen on 26th November</p> <p>What went well:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication through Westhill Winter Resilience Facebook page was good -Swimming pool was open for residents to get free showers & charge phones -Ashdale Hall and the 2 churches were open -Council responded quickly to fallen trees blocking roads -Regular bulletins from the Council on social media

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	<p>- Neighbours helping each other</p> <p>What could be improved</p> <p>-Westhill Heights was the only part of Westhill that lost power for a few days. Westhill Heights has always had more power cuts than the rest of the town. It was agreed that WECC should write to SSEN to ask if this can be looked at.</p> <p>- Land lines and mobile phone signals were lost in many parts of the Shire (though not Westhill), so communication was difficult. The Council are aware that a network of battery operated radios should be established.</p> <p>- For areas that were without power, SSEN gave numerous predictions of when power would be restored that were not met.</p> <p>Christmas Event</p> <p>General consensus is that it went well. It was the biggest crowd we have ever had. Good supply of hot chocolate, which all went.</p> <p>What could be improved:</p> <p>Mervyn was the MC but the timelines for different parts of the event were not clear, so co-ordination between the groups involved could be improved.</p> <p>Ben Horsburgh put a post on the Westhill News & Events facebook page that thanked various groups and people but didn't include WECC. Mervyn will speak to Ben about this.</p> <p>Re colour of the tree lights at roundabout, David explained that the lights supplier that we normally use couldn't supply the 'cold white' lights to match existing lights, so the new lights at foot of tree are described as 'warm white' but are more yellow than white. The new lights can be used next year to decorate the two small trees behind the planted tree at the atrium so that the white lights can be kept for the two main trees. The snow machine was being operated from the roof for part of the time whilst the choirs were on so it was difficult to hear them.</p> <p>The microphone being operated by Mervyn was not loud enough for people near back to hear so a better sound system can be investigated.</p>
5	<p>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. File Share Options – No progress 2. Westdyke Park - The survey is being drafted
6	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Review of November correspondence log- Nothing on it to be discussed that isn't already on agenda.</p> <p>Letter to Area Office from Charlie Flint re lack of indoor Sports Facilities in Westhill.</p> <p>This has been circulated</p> <p>One issue is that the weekly booking at Academy by the Table Tennis Club has been cancelled by the school at short notice a few times in recent months. Apparently this has been due to caretaker staffing issues.</p> <p>Cllr Walker commented that there would never be enough Developers Obligations funds to build a sports facility. DO's are targeted to specific uses.</p> <p>It was suggested that it would be worth doing an audit of sport and recreational demand against the capacity of all the facilities in Westhill. It may be that with some rejigging of who/what goes where and when, that all needs can be accommodated. Cllr Walker suggested that Live Life Aberdeenshire and the Sports Hub group may have such information.</p>

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	<p>Cllr Mckail suggested that any new sports facilities should be developed beside the Academy. Cllr Mckelvie suggested that a local fund-raising initiative with match funding from AC may be the only way that Westhill could get a new facility. Agreed that we should wait to see what response Charlie Flint gets to his letter, then ask him if there is anything we can do to support him.</p>
7	<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 Second November Litter Pick had to be cancelled because of the onset of the severe storm conditions. This was to be our final Pick in 2021 and we will restart in Spring. Raymond will thank his group for their efforts this year</i> • <i>It was felt that the fortnightly picks during the year worked out well and we have agreed with the Rotary group to plan a similar timetable next year.</i> • <i>We will inform all our volunteers when dates for next year are confirmed.</i> • <i>On the first November Pick, one of our volunteers found a plastic bag dumped in shrubbery, and discovered it contained a collection of copper coins. It was likely that the coins had been stolen from some Charity Collection box, but no identification was evident. I cleaned the coins and had them counted by the Tesco Coin Machine. I got £13:61 for the coins and wrote a cheque for £14 to donate to Westhill CAB on behalf of WECC. I have since had a thankyou card from CAB.</i> • <i>No resolution to the Littering at the Academy Playing Field problem has developed, but pupils have been given instructions on how to behave regarding litter. There has been no further communication from the Academy on establishing who is responsible for the clearing.</i> • <i>Considering the amount of litter, we have managed to collect during the year, our large group of volunteers are to be congratulated for their efforts.</i> • <i>The litter "Clean up" after the Christmas Light Up event was once again a short task since those attending had dropped very little litter.</i> • <i>In the aftermath of storm Arwen, as a WECC representative on the Carnie woods management team and Arnhall Moss group, Ken visited Carnie Wood and Denman Park / Arnhall Moss. He was shocked by the devastation, and counted at least 100 trees down in Carnie, with walkways totally blocked and destroyed. In Denman Park / Arnhall Moss he counted 25 trees down. Some maintenance had been undertaken to clear obstructions to the pathways. The scale of the clear up is vast.</i> • <i>Reflecting on the downed trees brought thoughts on the "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" event coming soon. Mervyn, Gordon, and Ken are putting heads together to try to enhance this project. We intend to plant the saplings as discussed at an earlier meeting and would hope to expand the ambitions of the team to include Hawthorn, Hazel, and Rowan trees. All are excellent pollen sources for bees and food supplies for a multitude of creatures great and small. The attraction to selecting the trees mentioned above is that they "grow in almost all soil". They are "cell grown" which means that they can be planted in all seasons. Each tree costs £8.95. However, on the Woodland Trust's web page, one offer was for 5 Crab Apple, 5 Rowan, and 5 Silver Birch, all "cell grown" for £41.15. With some consideration and permissions, WECC could rise to this challenge, and replace our fallen friends!</i>

8 Orbital Trail + Links Project Update

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

Note new title to reflect ambition to enhance connectivity to other popular locations [see below].

Ongoing commitments:

Storm Arwen update: *the following message was posted on our website and facebook pages on 4th/5th December taking our cue from Aberdeen City Council Ranger Service:*

*“Please be aware that there are fallen trees on the three sections of woodland on the Trail. The **Carnie Woods** section has been particularly badly affected but the City Council’s Ranger Service is allowing access with care for the time being. Work is also ongoing at the **Golf Club** to clear fallen trees on the northern boundary so please take care when passing through and observe any requests to change course if requested. **Lawsondale Woods** has been less badly affected and remains passable with care. Some clearing work will also be required there.”*

Here are some of the current thoughts of the Carnie Ranger: “I estimate weeks of work will be required to make the site safe for public use. Warning signs have been erected at all official points of entry. Amid this devastation, however, I was thinking about an opportunity we have here, thanks to Storm Arwen: the boardwalks could all be removed, giving us a blank canvas on which to construct an entirely new footpath network in the woods. I’m sure that many fallen trees will have to remain as they are, albeit with a bit of trimming for access, but between the root plates and thick lower trunks a route could be constructed that winds through Carnie Woods.”

I’ll ask Alan for a quick update from the golf club’s perspective. With regards to Lawsondale Woods, George Ellis has offered his help [with chainsaw].

Town Centre Information Board/s

No progress this month; still awaiting decision from scout leader. 400 leaflets were received on 12th November and distributed to the Community Church, the swimming pool, Starbucks, Premier Inn and Hampton by Hilton hotel.

Bulb Planting

All 1,000+ bulb planting completed by 20th November before arrival of winter frosts. Thanks to all 6 volunteers, and the local scouts.

Lawsondale Woods

Contractor CRC hopes to be on site December to lay a 50m section of raised path to circumvent the badly drained wet area.

Correspondence since last month’s meeting

None other than a number of exchanges with Carnie Ranger

Also pending is Chair’s request of Area Manager to have a debrief meeting with relevant council officials to discuss lessons learned on the project.

Ongoing Maintenance

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None other than post-storm clearing activities described above. There is no evidence of further activity from the Community Payback Team at Lawsondale or Broadshades although that may be down to inclement weather at weekends.

Funding Update

As per the Project report, £1,454 of the £14,000 funding is uncommitted and deployable on stiles, benches, path reinforcement [sections prone to flooding and mud], and possibly a new strimmer for ongoing Trail clearing.

Link to Denman Park

Steve Gray at AC has confirmed that the Council has sought quotes from contractors for the following works and hopes [prior to Storm Arwen] to provide feedback for our December meeting:

- *Arnhall Moss Paths upgrade*
- *Denman Ponds vegetation clearance*
- *Feasibility and design study for Denman Ponds reedbed treatment pond for the surface water pipeline into the ponds [using funds kindly donated by Arnhall Moss Group].*

We have asked for confirmation as to whether the quotes include paths and bridges at Denman.

Link to Hill of Keir

Scottish Water's contractor is still on site and is now projecting an end of year finish to landscaping reinstatement works. The stile, which will provide access from the east, has yet to be commissioned from The Men's Shed.

Two access routes from the west end of the Core Path to the top of the hill have been identified, As they involve privately owned field margins and gates we intend to consult with AC officials before proceeding further with the landowner.

9 Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)

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

Planning applications

A PoAN (proposal of application notice) has been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of Cala for a major residential development on the land to the north of Burnland Park and south of Straik Road. On 10th January, a notice will be published in the P & J when details of the proposed development will be made public. Due to covid restrictions, instead of face-to-face meetings, the consultation will be a public event online to take place on 27th January from 3.00pm to 7.00pm. The consultation period will close on Monday 7th February. Both WECC and Echt and Skene Community Council will be notified of the above as this development is close to both borders.

Cala will be invited to make a short presentation at WECC meeting on 13th January.

Resilience planning

Work is progressing on this document.

Community Action Plan

Good news- I have received an e mail from Caroline Smith confirming that Jacky Niven has been appointed and will guide us through setting up our Community Plan, she will be contacting us in January.

The planning group held a meeting on 8th December with Mike Duncan from Stonehaven Community Council who has already gone through this process. Mike told the planning group that it was a significant amount of work and that it's important to know why it's being done and for whom.

The Stonehaven CAP will be circulated to members in January.

Development of a 'Place Plan' can be done in tandem with a CAP.

Brodiach Burn

Aberdeen City Council granted planning permission for the culverting of the burn last year. Whether this piece of land will be developed in the future is unknown at this stage.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

This document will, when adopted, set out the Scottish planning system to 2045.

The consultation closes on 31st March 2022. Suggested that we have a separate meeting on this in February.

A consultation on Aberdeenshire Local development plan 2022-draft planning advice on Developer

Obligations and Affordable Housing is to be completed by 10th December. Diane will send a response to this on 10th.

Problems with the Countesswells development as the firm responsible for the development, CDL, have gone into administration

Only 900 of the promised 3000 homes have been completed at Countesswells. CDL is owned by the Stewart Milne group which manages the site and has sold of some of the land to other housebuilders such as Barrett's, David Wilson and Chap Homes. Work has now begun on the primary school which had been promised to be opened this year however due to problems with delays of the developer's contribution it is now due to be completed by 2023. What is uncertain at the moment is whether the rest of the houses, the second primary school and academy plus the community facilities will be completed.

10 Financials (Gordon Prentice) Circulated report in italics:-

Matters Arising 11 November:

- ***Community Support Fund [CSF]:*** one vacancy remaining [2-3 hours, 3 times a year].
- ***Cashflow Forecast:*** on hold – will be added as part of 2022/23 Budget.
- ***Christmas Event 2021:*** £1,000 approved and included in project report.
- ***Change of Bank Account:*** application for a Community Bank Account has been completed – awaiting feedback from RBS.

Financial Transactions – November:

Income: £380, comprising £50 ring-fenced donation from Vinespring Church plus £330 Bulletin advertising income, £150 of which is for the Winter Issue.

Expenditure: £92.94, clearing expenses approved last month.

Outstanding Commitments: £1,242, comprising two month's honorarium payments to D Ritchie [October & November + Winter Issue of the Bulletin]. This total also includes expense claims from the Chair [£217.27] and Ken Stewart [£208.94] for recent expenditure on TCPS and Christmas Lights.

Bank Balances at Month End: £22,646 [after cheques cleared]

Main Account: £8,579

Bulletin Account: £14,067

Bulletin – Winter Issue Contribution: expected to be around budgeted contribution of £2,500, subject to all invoices being paid. No costs or income included this month although £150 received in advance. Two invoices from earlier issues remain unpaid totalling £360.

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	<p>Gordon advised that he has been approached by Echt & Skene CC re our Community Support Fund. They would like to make an application to help fund installation of play equipment at Echt Park that is currently in storage. Gordon advised them that Echt does not qualify for CSF grants as it is not in the area covered by the scheme.</p>
11	<p><u>Planting Scheme/Denman Park ponds/ Green Canopy project</u> (Mervyn Barr) Updates on November report:</p> <p><u>PLANTING SCHEME</u> <i>Gateway Sculpture flower bed has been weeded but some bare patches need to be filled in with additional heathers. 2 litre potted heathers, say 12, will cost about £60. Sanctioned</i></p> <p><u>DENMAN PARK PONDS AND PATHS</u> <i>Steve Gray has been contacted by email to supply details of other (possibly two) funding sources for the treatment pond He has also confirmed that Council Officers will work up estimates for the treatment pond and path (re)construction'</i></p>
12	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u></p> <p><u>Cllr Mckail</u> commented on the new Fire Safety regulations which come into effect February 2022, see Cllr Mckelvie article on page 13 of winter Bulletin. Some families will find the costs are prohibitive, though grants are available if a number of criteria are met. House insurance may be invalidated if the inter-linked alarms are not fitted. Cllr Mckelvie got a pack of heat alarms and carbon monoxide alarm from Firely for £220. They are easily fitted Need to check if the speed monitoring device which has been refurbished by the Men Shed can now be used by the Police</p> <p><u>Cllr Walker</u> advised that a recent supplement in P&J on 'Shop Local' in Aberdeenshire did not include Westhill. It appears that this was because Westhill doesn't have a business association, so this should be looked at again. Health Boards are looking at buying back privately owned GP surgeries by 2035, so this could affect Westhill.</p>
13	<p><u>Succession Planning</u> Mervyn asked who would be prepared to chair the April meeting, after he steps down as Chair in March. Willie reminded members that it is not a requirement that the Chair takes on lead roles or get involved in projects to extent that Mervyn has done. In his role as vice-chair Willie would be prepared to chair the April meeting but he has already advised he is not prepared to take over as Chair but he has already advised that, due to his personal circumstances, he does not wish to take on the role of Chair. Suggested that we could have two vice-chairs although this would require an amendment to the constitution.</p>
14	<p><u>Close of Meeting</u> Noted that the Police Report for November has not been received yet. (Report received later and now appended to minutes). Suggested that a quarterly report instead of monthly would be adequate.</p> <p>Mervyn has arranged an informal get-together for drinks in Luigis on Thursday 16th December, from 7pm to 9pm. In light of latest guidance from Scottish Govmt, this may be postponed. Update will be sent next week.</p>

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Note that earlier in the meeting Cllr McKelvie reminded all attendees that for the benefit of those attending on Zoom, those in the live meeting should avoid talking over each other as much as possible, as Zoom has limitations on how it deals with competing voices

Meeting closed at 10.15pm

Date of Next Meeting- 13th January at 7pm, at Holiday Inn and via Zoom

APPENDIX



GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE

Community Council: Westhill and Elrick

Reporting Period: November 2021

Previous Reporting Period: October 2021

Current Policing Priorities:

Following review of our priorities, they have been amended for the next quarter to reflect community concerns and emerging crime patterns. The addition of Acquisitive Crime is due to small rise in thefts in rural properties.

1. ASB – Proactive patrols to provide community reassurance and to deter/detect instances of ASB and Vandalism. To reduce instances of ASB as a result of the re-opening of Licensed Premises.
2. AQUISITIVE CRIME – Proactive patrols to deter and detect instances of theft.
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	0 crimefiles 1 incident	2 Crimefile
House Breaking	0	2
Public Nuisance	11 incidents	6 incidents

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Road Traffic	4 crimefile, 9 incidents	7 crimefiles 13 incidents
Drugs	1	0

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 – The one assault was a fight reported within the school grounds reported by a parent. The school was contacted and they said they would deal with both children. There were no serious injuries.

Housebreaking – 0

Public Nuisance – Slight increase in numbers and all are youth disorder. Three of them were youth throwing snowballs and the rest were of youths gathering in different areas of Westhill with most reported on a Friday or Saturday evenings.

Road Traffic Offences – 1 of the crimefiles was for speeding, 1 for careless driving and 2 for hit and runs.

There were 4 minor road collisions reported where drivers exchanged details. There were 2 reports of drink driving with no trace of the cars, 1 report of a motor bike with no lights on again with no trace, 1 for causing an obstruction and 1 for parking inconsiderately.

Drugs

The crimefile was for an adult found in possession of Diazepam

Significant crime/issues within your community:

There were 3 Theft by Shopliftings at Aldi's over one week where the same male stole 2 x bottles of whisky. There was another 2 x Thefts in early November in the Co-op. This male has been identified and will be dealt with soon and it is expected that both males may be linked. Full report in next month's report. UPDATE-Enquiries still ongoing to identify the male from Aldi and the male from the Co-op has been charged and reported.

Planned Community Policing Activity/Advice:

It's disappointing to see the rise in the number of Public Nuisance calls reported month, so we will continue to patrol the Westhill community tackling youth annoyance. We try and have a dedicated unit for Westhill on a Friday and Saturday evening. 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.

There were no speed checks done in Westhill during November.