

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, 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	x
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Alan McCue	Member	✓ via zoom
Elaine Manley	Member	✓
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓ via zoom
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Secretary	✓
Ken Stewart	Member	✓
Raymond Swaffield	Member	✓
Tim Yeomans	Member	✓
CLlr David Aitchison	Ward 13 Councillor	x
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 David Dent (from 8pm)

1	<p><u>Welcome and opening remarks</u></p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He added that while we are keen to preserve the option of joining via Zoom for those who can't make the meeting e.g. due to health reasons or exceptional logistics we would encourage people to attend the meeting in person, as this gives a better experience for all, given some of the technical limitations of Zoom in a hybrid meeting.</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Apologies received from CLlr Aitchison. No Declarations of Interest</p>
3	<p><u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 13th January 2022</u></p> <p>Minutes were approved, with no changes Proposed: Ken, Seconded: Raymond</p>
4	<p><u>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. File Share Options (Malcolm) – Had a zoom session with Gordon & David and tested a few things out. Gordon will draft a file structure. It can be populated with Minutes etc. since start of the new Community Council (March 2020). Hope to have it running by April. 2. Westdyke Park (Malcolm) - Article is in the spring Bulletin (page 68), with a survey that can be accessed via a link or QR code. It is also in a new facebook groups page- 'westhillelrickparks'. A link to visit the park virtually is included.

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT HOLIDAY INN

	<p>Been speaking to a group connected with St Fitticks Park in Aberdeen. Suggested that we try to find out if any Shire CCs have done a similar project for a local park.</p> <p>3. Safety barriers on path to Kirkton of Skene- the email that Mervyn sent to Brian Strachan of Roads dept. was circulated, no response yet. Audrey suggested a site visit may be useful. A petition could be started at Bothy Café.</p>
5	<p><u>Police Report</u></p> <p>No report received for January as Sgt Allan is isolating just now.</p> <p>Mervyn contacted Inspector Hannan suggesting a quarterly report instead of monthly would be sufficient. The response was that the current report format has been in place since 2019, after a consultation with community councils. Westhill did not participate in this as we were in special measures then.</p> <p>Inspector Hannan also said he would get our community officer PC Chris Williamson to contact us about attending our meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Mckail queried if get reports from the Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. David checked post-meeting, and we don't get them.</p>
6	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>Review of correspondence log for last 5 weeks. (circulated)</p> <p>Re the Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum looking for new members, Gordon attended a recent Forum meeting as a guest. There is interest in joining the Forum from more people than there is places, so Gordon will not be joining it at this point, but will retain an interest in it.</p> <p>Mervyn is progressing the naming of the A944 from Brodiach burn to Tesco roundabout as Jubilee Drive. It will be considered by the Garioch Area Committee</p> <p>Mervyn advised that Susan Adams had supplied a Places Fund application form, but due to the amount of detail required in a short time-scale, we will not be able to submit any project for funding this year. Form will be retained for guidance for project funding in future.</p> <p>Mervyn mentioned that Mapp have advised they will not be refurbishing the old toilet block at shopping centre.</p>
7	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u></p> <p><u>Cllr Mckelvie</u></p> <p>The road drains and gullies are cleared on a 2 year cycle, but some streets in Westhill have a heavy build-up of winter detritus and storm damaged twigs/branches. He has asked the Roads dept. to give priority to Westhill Road and Hillside Road.</p> <p>The local schools are coping well with the ever-changing Covid impact and restrictions. Westhill Primary Nursery got an excellent report in a recent Inspection,</p> <p><u>Cllr Mckail</u></p> <p>Pot-holes are appearing again so he will report the main ones.</p>

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT HOLIDAY INN

	<p>The speed monitoring device is available to be used on request to the Police.</p> <p><u>ClIr Walker</u> Re the pot-holes, the main issue is availability of contractors to do the work. The library should be open on a Saturday again soon. The Sports Hub has a new leader, Gregory Welsh</p>
<p>8</p>	<p><u>Environmental Group Update</u> Report from Raymond & Ken has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have decided that our fortnightly organised litter picks will start again on 12th March, assuming that the weather will be suitable by then. The dates will be listed in the forthcoming Bulletin.</i> • <i>We have been contacted by SensationALL regarding their concern with unreasonable amounts of litter being dropped in their play park. We have agreed to include the park in all future picks.</i> • <i>Our attempt to encourage better littering behaviour in Peregrine Road, opposite the Wood Yard, has once again been met with no response. The previous owners Stewart Milne failed to acknowledge any emails and the new owners Donaldson have similarly ignored our emails to their general enquiries line. It seems we will need to identify an address for the actual local manager in order to move this complaint forward.</i> <p>Raymond has now got an address for the local manager, who has responded. He will speak to the drivers about not dropping litter and will investigate the timber debris issue.</p> <p>Ken advised that Tesco have donated £30 worth of more bee-bombs</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><u>Orbital Trail + Links Project Update</u> Report from Gordon has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <p><i>Storm damage update:</i> <i>Carnie Woods:</i> <i>ACC's interim Carnie Ranger accepted our invitation to publish a piece in the Spring Bulletin. It is on page 50.</i></p> <p><i>Golf Club:</i> <i>the combined effects of Storms Malik and Corrie [more westerly than northerly] led to more fallen trees across the trail behind the 7th green and fifth tee. Fortunately, the farmer attended fairly quickly and cleared the course of much of the fallen timber.</i></p> <p><i>Lawsondale Woods:</i> <i>as above, the storms at the end of January serendipitously dislodged the tree that had been reserved for George Ellis to deal with. So thanks are due again to Tom and Heather Cook, plus chainsaw for clearing the fresh debris on Sunday, 30th January.</i></p> <p><i>Town Centre Information Board/s</i> <i>No progress this month; but Council Officer Sally Davis trying to progress before year end.</i></p> <p><i>Lawsondale Woods</i> <i>The trial of laying excess quarry aggregate material over a 12m stretch of muddy terrain seems to have worked well, so I will be asking volunteers for help to lay more once milder weather returns.</i></p> <p><i>Correspondence since last month's meeting</i></p>

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT HOLIDAY INN

- *David had a report of fly-tipping [chopped up tree] on the farm track to the north of Meadowlands which I reported to the farmer and the Council [on their app]. It was removed by the farmer.*
- *Another resident expressed concern about access to Hill of Keir to/from the west side following an incident trying to exit the hill on the west side.*
- *Chair forwarded clarification received from Local Outdoor Access Officer on access at Sclattiebrae. We also received a note from Richard Elliott that he was retiring at the end of January, leaving one part time Access Officer for the whole of Aberdeenshire. Plans are in place to replace him.*
- *I attended a meeting of Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum as a guest on 7th Feb.*
- *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

I have alerted last year's volunteers to be ready for an invitation to an outdoor meeting to draw up a plan for 2022. I also wrote to the head of the Community Payback Team to ask about their ongoing commitment to Westhill and the Orbital Trail in particular. Reply awaited.

Funding Update

As per the Project report, claims totalling £2,790 were submitted to the Council for reimbursement of funds spent. Unfortunately, £150 spent on the press launch and bulb planting was disallowed as it was deemed not to be infrastructure investment – as defined by the Developer Obligations scheme. That now means that £1,324 is now uncommitted, but we have at least had clarification that it can be spent on stiles, fencing, path reinforcement and benches. A strimmer is specifically disallowed.

Link to Denman Park

No change: still awaiting word from Steve Gray at AC on quotes from contractors for the following:

- *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].*

Also still awaiting confirmation as to whether the quotes include paths and bridges at Denman.

Link to Hill of Keir

Scottish Water's contractor has installed a kissing gate at the farm steading to allow access to the hill on the Core Path from the east. Fencing is also complete around the water storage facility and a stile design [from The Men's Shed] has been prepared for approval by the farmer at Berryhill Farm.

Gordon reported that he had approached Historic Environment Scotland who maintain a register of Scheduled Monuments to see if they would be willing to support our application for funding from the "Improving Public Access" fund which opens for applications at the end of February. It was suggested that he contact historian Bruce Mann who might also be supportive of that route.

10 Planting Scheme/Denman Park ponds/ Green Canopy project

(Mervyn Barr)

A 'Greening' strategy for Westhill has been circulated, as below, in italics

Greening of Westhill

To continue to plant baskets and planters with annual bedding plants – with primary focus on the town centre, where water supplies are readily available.

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT HOLIDAY INN

	<p><i>To identify areas (verges, parkland, roundabouts etc.) where wild flowers, ornamental floral trees, evergreens, clover lawns can be planted/established as self-sustaining (apart from minimal tidying); with emphasis on tree replenishment (post storm Erwin) and blooms that attract butterflies, moths and insect life etc.</i></p> <p><i>Take a three to five year perspective /plan on this challenge to avoid a piecemeal approach and produce a well thought-through outcome that enhances the green environment right across all of Westhill and Elrick.</i></p> <p><i>Work through a stakeholder network consisting of WECC Chair, Gordon Prentice (WECC paths) Dave Dent (Rotary) Alison Sutherland (Ranger) Tajana Telisman Susic (Green Spaces Officer); Ian Mitchell (Landscape Services Officer); Steve Gray (Environment Planner (Projects). Ken Stewart (WECC Environment) – to develop strategy and 3/5-year plan, including selection of self-sustaining plants.</i></p> <p><i>Consultation on areas to be planted and how they should be planted, to take place via social media, direct communication via CAP consultation process, and WECC Bulletin.</i></p> <p><i>Budget to be provided by WECC – say £1/2k per annum - specific funds for specific projects to be sanctioned by a simple majority of Members determined via a vote; at a monthly meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation by volunteers from WECC and Rotary plus other volunteers (tbc). Proposed – where WECC and Rotary have collaborated in a project full recognition is given to that effort – including fixing “Rotary Badges” alongside WECC ones. Exact design to be agreed.</i></p> <p>Priorities already proposed: <i>Increase no of hanging baskets at Green Wall to 50 by extending run up Westhill Drive. Continue to plant bulbs around the WOT. Texo verge Pocket Garden Queen’s Jubilee Green Canopy – Denman Park.</i></p> <p>Future possibilities <i>Selected re-wildings - e.g. Clover lawns/verges Ornamental tree-planting Tiered planters at HI Roundabout and Community Church roundabouts</i></p> <p>This general strategy was approved and will be further developed.</p> <p>Mervyn advised that the Council will not now allow tree planting on road verges, following the experiences from the recent storms. So we can’t plant trees on A944 verge now</p> <p>David Dent advised that Jim Lorimer who owns the field alongside A944 will not allow us to plant trees inside the fence.</p>
11	<p>Planning Matters (Diane Priestly) Report from Diane has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <p><i>Shepherds Rest applying for planning permission for the erection of a pergola for outdoor eating/drinking area.</i></p>

<p>13</p>	<p>Academy Outreach proposal Pre-read from Mervyn has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <p><i>Elaine has said she'd be interested in forming links into education in Westhill, and this enthusiasm is very welcome.</i></p> <p><i>We have always struggled to get young people (teenagers/sixth years) interested in WECC. The reasons why they aren't keen can only be speculated on; perhaps we are seen as irrelevant or too old or whatever?</i></p> <p><i>Here is the gist of an idea that Elaine and I have discussed so far, the proposal being to offer support to Careers Advice at the Academy, on the basis that there are lots of positive role models in Westhill - butchers, bakers and candlestick makers plus multifarious engineers, financial people and public sector workers etc. - you name them, they probably reside in this community.</i></p> <p><i>WECC could seek registrations from persons in different careers and facilitate presentations to pupils by those who actually work in trades, professions or sectors - retail, construction, and agriculture; energy finance etc. and speak of the reality of life in their profession. This might lead to pupils having more informed career choices, work-experience days or possibly even secondments/summer jobs.</i></p> <p><i>If WECC are supportive we plan to approach the Academy Head with this proposal as representatives of WECC.</i></p> <p><i>If in turn the head teacher is supportive we could make a start and see where it goes – we may even be able to co-opt a couple of pupils as assistants to help run the scheme?</i></p> <p>This general proposal was sanctioned. We need to find out what careers advice services already exists at Academy.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing Café Pre-read from Willie has been circulated, as below in italics:</p> <p><i>WECC Members will be aware that a food bank has operated in Westhill for some time from the Community Church. As part of its operation, there is a greater awareness of wider care in the community needs and provision. Work is underway to establish a Wellbeing Cafe which would be run on the premises of the Community Church on a Monday afternoon when the Green Pastures Cafe is not operating.</i></p> <p><i>Wellbeing Cafes are part of a national network. A google search will find various sites examples of where and what they are and what they do. It is recognised that 'it is OK to not be OK'. In essence, it is a place where people who are in low mood, anxious, coming out of Shielding, or recovering from mental health and wellbeing issues would be welcome.</i></p> <p><i>We know, from the Strategic Needs Assessment and from national coverage of challenges thrown up by the isolation of covid restrictions, that such a facility would be very useful in Westhill.</i></p> <p><i>The aim is for this to be launched mid- March. At the moment 10-12 volunteers have been recruited and are being trained. Funding is being sought from the Scottish Government Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. The application would be enhanced by statements of support from local groups such as the community council.</i></p>

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY 2022, AT HOLIDAY INN

	<p><i>There is no risk to the community council as it is not being asked for funding nor to supply or seek volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>It is recommended that WECC agrees to convey its support for the establishment and running of a Wellbeing cafe in Westhill as it recognises that there is a need for a place where people can feel that it is OK to not be OK and to meet others in a similar situation in a friendly supportive environment. The Strategic Needs Assessment and Locality Plan evidence need for mental health and wellbeing services and these needs will have increased due to isolation caused by Covid restrictions. WECC also believes that the Community Church, with its Green Pastures Cafe facility is an ideal location for such an initiative.</i></p> <p>This was agreed. Willie will send the statement of support to Leslie Murison.</p> <p>Mervyn has been to see Sally Winning who is a semi-retired consultant psychiatrist. She is keen to assist with this project</p>
AOB	<p><u>Westhill Gala/ Jubilee Event</u></p> <p>David Dent advised that the Round Table will not be organising a Westhill Gala this year. Rotary are discussing a Platinum Jubilee event on 4th or 5th June at the field behind Ashdale Hall or inside the Hall if it is a wet day. Can WECC assist with this? Perhaps get a check-list from Round Table on how they organised the Gala. Time is short to organise an event. We could source a professional promoter to arrange it. Malcolm offered to source a promoter. Gordon offered to collate ideas for the event.</p>
15	<p><u>Close of Meeting</u></p> <p>Meeting closed at 10pm</p> <p><u>Date of Next Meeting- 10th March at 7pm, at Holiday Inn, with Zoom option.</u></p> <p>Mervyn has re-arranged the postponed December social event for Wednesday 23rd February, 7pm in Luigis at Holiday Inn</p>