

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 12TH JANUARY 2023, AT HOLIDAY INN

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mervyn Barr	Chair	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Donald Davidson	Member	✓
David Dent	Associate Member	✓
Becky Ferguson	Vice-Chair	✓
Audrey Findlay	Member	✓
Ben Horsburgh	Associate Member	x
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Elaine Manley	Member	✓
Rachid Meghezzi	Member	✓
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Secretary	✓
Ken Stewart	Member	x
Tim Yeomans	Member	✓ via zoom from 8pm
Cllr Iris Walker	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
Cllr Ron McKail	Ward 13 Councillor	✓
Cllr Craig Miller	Ward 13 Councillor	x
Cllr Fatima Joji	Ward 13 Councillor	x

Members of Public: Freda Imrie (via zoom)

1	<p><u>Welcome and opening remarks</u></p> <p>Chair Mervyn Barr welcomed everyone. Permission was given for meeting to be recorded.</p> <p>David advised that we can't co-opt Amanda Thomson as the Area Office had reminded him this week that we are only allowed 4 co-opted members and we already have 4. However Amanda can be an Associate Member. All members, including the four co-opted members, will need to submit a nomination form in April or May if they wish to remain members</p> <p>POST SCRIPT – this meeting was particularly plagued with problems with the Wi-Fi link for the Zoom call. Again those who wish to participate in the meeting are urged to do so in person whenever possible as there is little prospect of this problem being fixed.</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Apologies received from Ken Stewart, Cllr Miller & Cllr Joji</p>
3	<p><u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 8th December 2022</u></p> <p>Minutes were approved, with no changes. Proposed Heather, seconded Gordon</p>
4	<p><u>Shopping Centre Update- Centre Manager Ben Horsburgh –</u></p> <p>No update as Ben not present</p>
5	<p><u>Matters Arising/ Actions Update</u></p> <p>1. File Share Options (Malcolm) – Malcolm, Gordon & David met on 19th December to review the file structure. The Guide will be sent out w/c 19th January so members can check if they can access the</p>

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	<p>one-drive. David will add members email addresses to the one-drive permissions. Mervyn asked Malcolm to remind members what the purpose of the system is. It is all about allowing members to access the current and historical main documents, like meeting minutes, without having to find old emails or to download the files to their own system. David also advised that he probably won't send the pre-reads out by email. He will just advise members that they are in the one-drive. He will still prefer that the providers email their pre-reads to David instead of putting them directly into the one-drive, as David will wish to review them first. Gordon also pointed out that when office-bearers change it should not require a large transfer of docs as the important docs should be in the one-drive.</p> <p>2. Larg/Broadstraik Park (Malcolm) – No recent progress.</p> <p>3. Academy Outreach- Mervyn and Elaine are arranging to meet again with Malcolm Mcmillan soon to progress a suitable article for the next Bulletin.</p> <p>4. Christmas Event, Granite City Band payment- There was a bit of a misunderstanding between Ben and the band about how they would get any revenue for their participation. We used to give them £150 and it was agreed we would give them £150 again. This had previously been approved by the sub-group.</p> <p>5. Inclusion of Ward Councillors in Member list in Bulletin David had circulated the proposed wording, as below: The four Aberdeenshire Council Ward 13 Councillors named below are ex-officio members of the Community Council. They attend the monthly meetings when they can, but do not have voting rights. They put articles in Bulletin about current topics (see pages xx to xx). They are also ex-officio members of two other nearby Community Councils in Ward 13.</p> <p>Cllr Fatima Joji Cllr Ron McKail Cllr Craig Miller Cllr Iris Walker</p> <p>There was a brief discussion on it. No suggestions for any changes to it. Mervyn will write to the 4 Councillors to get their views on it and a decision will be made at next meeting. He also proposed that if there wasn't unanimous support for the proposal from all elected councillors then it will be dropped.</p> <p>Willie commented that there is no info on members in the Bulletin or website, just member names with no profile. Address and contact details are included for Chair and Secretary. Willie will draft a short profile for himself as an example.</p>
6	<p><u>Police Report</u></p> <p>The Police report for December has been circulated. Nothing in it of major concern.</p> <p>The Public Nuisance incident that Cllr Miller reported at the December meeting, (which has now been resolved) was indirectly brought to the attention of Inspector Gareth Hannan who has requested to attend our meeting on 13th April.</p>
7	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>Review of correspondence log for last 5 weeks. (circulated) David reminded members that we have been asked to provide comment on the draft Local Police Plan, deadline is 12th February. Willie offered to review it.</p>

8 Ward 13 Councillors updates

Cllr Walker (circulated report as below in italics)

Community Composting

Although there have been no decisions made yet on garden waste collections (officers were asked to progress a business case), there is now an information resource available on a joint initiative between Highland Council and Zero Waste Scotland for any groups considering a community composting scheme. More information on this link: <https://highlandcompost.scot/>

More details on the findings of the council's garden waste collection proposals will follow soon.

Winter Maintenance

We received many emails and phone calls in December about streets and footways not being gritted/cleared of snow. As previously advised, there is good information online on the prioritisation of routes and a real-time indication of where the gritters are in terms of main roads, as well as information on the limitations of the service. What we don't have is an indication of local resources available at any given time and I have asked officers to pull together some data.

We have been assured that all people, machines and kit were deployed to deal with the exceptional weather on the basis of the agreed policy and procedures and within the budget allocated. The policy statement in relation to winter maintenance is as follows:

The Council's policy objective in relation to winter maintenance is defined as the reduction as far as practicable of the effects of adverse weather conditions on the movement of people and vehicles to permit safe travel in Aberdeenshire. In order to achieve this objective, it is recognised that a priority treatment system is required, which will concentrate initially on the more important routes and then be extended to the less important routes when practicable.

Waste Collections

Missed waste collections also featured regularly in our mailboxes in December. Some addresses did not have collections for a month. The ice and snow were obviously a factor in some cases where rounds took longer to complete. If the crews were not available/willing to work overtime, it was difficult to catch up with some rounds. I have asked the director for a summary of all the issues in our ward and the mitigations/actions for future planning.

Audrey raised the perception of dog poo bins on Carnie Crescent not being emptied frequently enough. Cllr Walker pointed out that frequently people are leaving the bags on top of bin or under it when there is still plenty space in bin for them. A general bin will be moved to near the dog poo one.

Pot Holes at GP Surgery

Have been reported. Awaiting response/action.

Council Budgets

While there is a lot of work going on in the background to prepare the 2023/2024 budget, the headlines as the 2022/2023 revenue budget is wrapped up show the forecast position for end of March 2023 is £6.999 million over budget. Work is ongoing to explore options to mitigate and reduce this position to a breakeven position by end March. The reasons for the overspend include:

- *Demand for crisis and community care grants with an increase of 16% of applications from 21/22.*
- *Live Life Aberdeenshire has suffered loss of income with a slow build-up of confidence in customers post pandemic.*

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- Lack of demand for Out of School care.
- Early Years seeing pressures arising from an increased demand in council nursery places.
- Uptake of paid meals in secondary schools and card processing payments being higher than budgeted and Scottish Government funding for free school holiday meal payments being insufficient to cover costs.
- a delay in the commissioning process of the NESS Energy From Waste facility
- income from car parks lower than expected due to changes in shopping habits post pandemic
- an increase in building costs, fuel, vehicle, plant and equipment costs

From the capital side of the budget, a couple of local projects have slipped, namely Elrick School refurbishment being in excess of available budget. It is hoped the project will be on site in June 2023. The Westhill Pool boiler upgrade has been deferred until 2023/24.

In February, council rents and council tax will be set with the full budget position for 23/24 agreed in March.

Cllr Mckail

No written report. His main issues recently have been same as Cllr Walker- streets and footways not being gritted/cleared of snow and missed waste collection

He asked if Westhill was doing anything to mark the Kings Coronation in May. Secretary hasn't received anything from the Council or the Lieutenancy about it. The Rotary may plan something

Cllr Miller (circulated report as below in italics) - not present to talk to it.

Pharmacy Issues:

Since the takeover of Lloyd's pharmacies by Porters, I have met with Mr Porter to ascertain if he has encountered any issues. Despite this being early days, he has indicated that so far everything has gone well, and indeed this is backed up by the fact that I have no complaints in my inbox which is a first regarding this topic for some time, in fact, since being elected in May.

Hopefully he, and his staff, (who seem organised and interested in their customers), can turn around the overwhelmingly negative feelings generated previously. Mr Porter indicated that he hoped many of the clients who had moved to Blackburn or Kingswells would slowly start to return to Westhill as their service levels prove to exceed those of Lloyds.

Waste collections:

During the recent spell of poor weather in December a number of bin collections were missed, partly due to the weather causing delays for the crews going about their regular jobs (they are not immune to the dangers of ice and hard packed snow). There have also been isolated reports of similar issues outwith the cold weather season. In a handful of cases, special collections have been actioned within 24-48 hours, but in general the response has been to wait for the next collection where additional waste will be accepted (although it has been reported that this is not always the case). Residents are to be encouraged to report these issues directly to the council, (via the website), to ensure up to date information is provided. The situation is exacerbated by staff shortages as well as crews not always willing to take overtime to catch up on missed routes.

Inclement weather:

Although the significant snowfalls and exceptionally low temperatures raised concerns during December, the council fulfilled their requirements in terms of keeping the priority roads open. A concern that has been raised is the lack of information available to residents regarding priority areas and when/if they can expect their own areas, (roads and pavements), to be adequately maintained. Whilst it is frustrating for residents who

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	<p><i>apparently see no action, resources are an issue, and the significantly cold temperatures, coupled with increasingly heavy falls of snow overnight prove challenging to maintain but most of the priority routes were addressed. It would be helpful if there was a forum to communicate this to residents to align expectations. We still have a long way to go before we are through the winter season and hopefully we can expect improvements going forward.</i></p> <p><u>Road conditions:</u></p> <p><i>Partly due to the inclement weather, the state of roads has undoubtedly deteriorated with some significant potholes making some routes dangerous – a couple of obvious ones are the hole in the middle of the road leading to Kirkton of Skene from the community church (which currently has a traffic cone in it to highlight awareness), and the southern side of the roundabout on the A944 leading to Mackie and Burnland. These issues continue to be raised to the roads department and it is to be hoped that some of these are raised in priority from “monitor” status to “action” status. Whilst we may see some of these defects as serious in our own minds, it is of course always about prioritisation but some of these have been raised directly to roads by councillors.</i></p> <p>Cllr Joji</p> <p>No written report. In her meeting apologies email she commented on the recent waste collection issues which the other councillors cover in their reports.</p>
9	<p><u>Rotary Update/Exchange- David Dent</u></p> <p>The Rotary stone lights are out. He has not been able to get hold of Brian Strachan in Roads dept. to look at this. Cllr Walker will report it.</p> <p>Rotary are responsible for upkeep of some of the March Stones in the Westhill area. No work has been done for a few years so they will do this in summer.</p> <p>Various annual school competitions are being organised.</p> <p>Started raising funds for this year’s Seniors Christmas party.</p>
10	<p><u>Orbital Trail + Links Project Update</u></p> <p>Circulated report from Gordon Prentice in italics:-</p> <p><i>Matters Arising Since Last Meeting</i></p> <p><i>Funding Applications:</i></p> <p>1. <i>Carnie Woods Path Restoration & Upgrade [1.1km]</i></p> <p><i>We start the year with great news; we heard today [5th] from Paths for all that our application for 70% of £128,444 has moved to the final stage of approval – i.e., the issue of a formal offer. Coupled with the City Council’s confirmation of 30% promised on 19th December, I’m pleased to report that this project is fully funded and should be able to commence in April. Total project cost is £128,000. Gordon was congratulated for achieving this.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Broadshade Avenue to Golf Club Upgrade [475m]</i></p> <p><i>As reported last month, the application to GAIF for £5,000 was approved on 22nd November. Pfa also confirmed its offer of £29,949 on 7th December which we subsequently accepted, leaving a balance of £7,836 of the £42,785 to find.</i></p> <p><i>Applications were duly submitted to The Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation [£7,836] and to the FCC Scottish</i></p>

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Action Fund [£12,785] to fund the balance. In the case of the former, a decision is expected later this month, and should that fail, then we still have the FCC's decision to come on 9th March.

Should funds be needed from FCC Scottish Action Fund, we have agreed to pay the admin fee of £1,379.80 requested.

3. **Place Based Investment Programme [Working title: Improving Access for all to Westhill's Healthier Green Spaces]**

As agreed, an Expression of Interest was duly submitted and acknowledged by the closing date of 16th December. The total funding requested was £331,000. Immediate feedback asked for estimates if broken down into phases, so it wouldn't be surprising to receive a request to make a formal application for part funding. We should know more later this month

Gordon reported that PBIP team had contacted him today and invited us to submit a formal application by the 24th Feb. The invitation came with some pointers: 1 – if all the projects were allowed, the fund would be oversubscribed; 2 – emphasise the impact the project will have on the place; 3- be sure to identify the target audience and main beneficiaries; 4 – break the project down into phases. He speculated that we would have to undertake a community survey similar to Carnie Woods. Willie, Becky, Rachid, Heather and Elaine offered their services as members of the project team.

Town Centre Information Boards: as Ben reported in November, installation of these was imminent, but no sign as yet.

Ongoing Maintenance / Upgrades

Annual Maintenance Schedule: no further work done this month, but it will be refined and merged with volunteer resources required for Greening Westhill.

Weeding: no activity – sculpture planted area needs a revisit

Link to Hill of Keir to/from the west: No change, although there may be changes to operation and/or ownership of the land imminently.

Funding Update

As you will see from the Projects Update, the total cost of fully funded works on the Orbital Trail comes to £15,320, and all £14,000 of grant funding has now been spent. The partially funded work at Lawsondale completed last year cost £4,242, of which £2,046 was funded, meaning that overall, WECC spent £3,516 of the £19,562 total project cost [circa 18%].

11 **Planning Matters** (Diane Priestly) Circulated report in italics:-

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Burnland APP/2022/1062

Awaiting decision.

Greggs Drive thru APP/2022/1236

Approved

Wickes APP/2022/2010

Awaiting decision.

The Hill of Fare Windfarm

no update

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN SURVEY

The survey has now been updated and will close on the 31st January.

It will likely be extended again. QR code can be put on Bulletin front cover that should help generate some interest. Should encourage school children to do the survey by promoting it in schools.

SPORTS COMPLEX FEASIBILITY STUDY

Gordon gave an overview of his intention to submit a Developer Obligations Funds Request for a Sports Complex Feasibility Study. There is a tranche of DO funds that expire at end of March and there is a risk of it being returned to developer if it isn't committed soon.

A previous paper – Westhill & District Sporting Facilities Strategy Paper submitted by Westhill & District Community Sports Hub [WDCSH] and Lawsondale Sports Centre Trust [LSCT] in June 2019 made a case for using remaining Developer Obligations funds at the time to partially fund a sports complex.

In this 2019 paper, the authors argued that the existing indoor facilities in Westhill and District – primarily Westhill Academy Community Centre, Westdyke Leisure Centre and Ashdale Hall - were not fit for purpose for a mixed community of over 12,000 people plus a sizable transient working population. Nothing has changed since then. WECC believes that demand continues to outstrip supply and that all venues have size, availability and facility limitations.

This project seeks to build further on the case made in that paper by engaging consultants to gather detailed evidence of the balance between supply of facilities and demand from the community; evidence that WECC believes will demonstrate that there is a good business case for significant further investment in a new sports complex. Such supportive evidence will empower the community to begin a funding campaign led by WECC and WDCSH.

Gordon will circulate the draft funding request to all members.

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

Matters Arising 8 December:

- *Donation made to Community Church as agreed*

Financial Transactions – December

Income: £3,741, comprising £3,094 Bulletin advertising income, plus final DO Orbital Trail grant of £575 from AC, plus £50 from Vinespring Church plus £22 bank interest.

Expenditure: £9,537.70, comprising £6,515 to the Bulletin printer, plus £1,000 honoraria payments for qtr4 to D Ritchie, plus £49 for a gift to leaving member, plus £1,944 on pre- approved project expenses detailed on the Main A/c statement below at **Appendix 1**. (not included in minutes)

Outstanding Commitments: Nil, other than pending project expenses noted below

Bank Balances at Month End: £19,862

Main Account: £7,344 [see **Appendix 1**]

Bulletin Account: £12,518

Westhill Bulletin Winter Issue Contribution: expected to be £2,468 on income of £9,433. This is in line with budget of £2,500 with only one invoice for £57 outstanding. The one invoice from Summer Issue for £57 is unlikely to be recovered.

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Independent Verifier: a reminder that we have still to recruit an IV to review our annual accounts at the end of the financial year. Please let me know if you know of any possible candidates for a few hours work once a year. Elaine advised she would pass on contact details of someone who may be willing to do this.

Draft Budget for 2023/24 [please see Appendix 3 below] (not included in minutes)

Note that no cash impact has been assumed as yet from the CAP process. This will only be possible once survey results are published and priorities agreed amongst the membership.

Equally, no cash impact has been assumed for recent grant awards to upgrade the Orbital Trail on the grounds that the Broadshade/Golf course project is of very short duration, and the other project at Carnie will be funded and project managed by Aberdeen City Council.

In other respects, the budget is very much in line with previous years with the Bulletin contribution enabling most of what we are able to do.

The draft budget was approved

13 **Green Westhill** (Mervyn Barr)

Item	Topic/Comment
1	Purchase of storage shed for behind Green Wall est. - £2000-2500. Council will reimburse £900 against a receipt dated before 28 th Feb. Erect same – Feb/March 23. Mervyn will check with Planning dept. if Planning permission is required.
2	Purchase of additional plants to compensate for reduction (approx. 400) of allocation from Aberdeenshire Council. 300 ordered as replacements. Due date @ June 2023 est. cost £250 tbc
3	Osmocote Fertiliser for bedding/basket plants – est. cost £160
4	Purchase 15 bags of compost for baskets and planters – est. cost £150
5	Combine OT and WG volunteer resources into one group
6	Develop programme of maintenance work for Sculpture, Orbital Trail, Greenwall and pre-plan activities (names/jobs). Gordon will assist with this.
7	Plant QG Canopy trees (108) and Westhill Growing Green Spaces trees & fruit bushes – March onwards.
	Carnie Woods Accessibility path – coming on the Horizon – volunteers will be welcomed. Details tbc

Total est. spend = £2600 (net of Council Grant)

14 **AOB & Close of Meeting**

A social evening will be held on 15th February, probably in normal meeting room at hotel. Gift will be presented to Raymond Swaffield. It was agreed that a £100 Aberdeen City Gift card would be a suitable present.

Meeting closed at 10pm

Date of Next Meeting- 9th February at Holiday Inn, with Zoom option.

APPENDIX



**GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM
VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE**

Community Council: Westhill and Elrick
Reporting Period: 1 to 31 December 2022
Current Policing Priorities:

Our priorities are:-

1. ASB – Proactive patrols to provide community reassurance and to deter/detect instances of ASB and Vandalism.
2. PROACTIVITY – Increased use of Stop and Search to deter/detect drug and acquisitive crime.
3. ROAD SAFETY – Enhanced speed checks and other speed reduction measures.

Crime Overview and Explanation:

CRIME TYPE	CURRENT PERIOD	PREVIOUS PERIOD
Assault	0	1
Housebreaking/Theft	5	1
Public Nuisance	3	7
Road Traffic	1 accident, 9 other	4 accidents and 6 other
Drugs	0	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 Accidents and Offences (speeding, illegal parking, obstruction etc).

Drugs – all reports incidents in relation to drugs dealing and use.

Assault:

There have been 0 incidents reported.

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Housebreaking/Theft:

There has been 5 incidents reported. 3 relate to theft by shoplifting, 1 to an attempted theft by shoplifting and 1 to theft from a commercial premises. One individual has been charged with enquiries ongoing into the other incidents.

Public Nuisance:

There has been 3 incidents reported. These relate to youths throwing items including snowballs and eggs at properties. Upon attendance no youths were traced and no damage was caused.

Road Traffic:

This period has seen 1 reported accident which resulted in no injury. There has been several calls in relation to traffic light faults, manner of driving and animals on the road. 2 individuals have been charged with document offences resulting in their vehicles being seized and 1 for failing to stop after an accident.

Drugs: There have been 0 incidents reported.

Significant Crime/Issues within Your Community:

There have been no significant events this reporting period.

Planned Community Policing Activity/Advice:

Our speeding operation continues with planned activity in the Westhill area in January 2023.

Conclusion:

This is another stable report and if there are any issues that you wish brought to Police attention, please let me know.

Emma Forbes

T/Sgt

A0645