

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 11TH JANUARY 2024, AT HOLIDAY INN & BY ZOOM.

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

Members of Public: Heather Wood, Cllr Glen Reynolds (via zoom)

1	Welcome and opening remarks Becky Ferguson chaired this meeting. Permission was given for meeting to be recorded.
2	Apologies and Declarations of Interest Apologies received from William Munro , Mayasa Al-Jubori, Heather Cook, Cllr Miller, Cllr Joji
3	Approval of Minutes of Meeting 14th December 2023 The minutes were approved with one correction. Proposed by Rachid, seconded by Gordon
4	Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Larg/Broadstraik Park (Malcolm) –Funding of £990 granted from Nescam to create a wild-flower meadow and purchase some fruit trees. Litter Picking- Gordon advised that Aileen Swaffield had passed away on Tuesday. Becky will send a card to Raymond from WECC. A litter-pick will be held on Saturday and forecast is ok Swimming Pool- No updates. David has emailed Ross Smith & Gillian Wood about the household leaflet drop which Avril Nicol had advised us would be done at end of November 2023, awaiting a response

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	<p>4. Business Association- Rachid had delivered around 130 Winter Bulletins in December to businesses at Arnhall and other business areas. Notes were attached to point out the Business Association article in it and ask the business if they would like to get a hard copy each time or the electronic version which could then be circulated to employees. Elaine has had no response re a Business Association, and David has had no requests to get Bulletins, neither hard copy or electronic. It was suggested that we contact the Federation of Small Businesses so Elaine will do that.</p> <p>5. TotalEnergies- Mervyn has had a shot on the Trishaws</p> <p>6. WECC Social Media – This can be discussed at the extra meeting to be held on 24th January. PC Paul had suggested that Eddie Douglas (retired from Westhill Marketing) may be able to give us good advice on Facebook so he has been asked if he could attend on 24th but no response yet.</p> <p>7. Winter Roads Maintenance- David has recently emailed the Roads Dept. to request that the hillier streets in Westhill get a higher priority for snow clearing and gritting. Awaiting a response</p> <p>8. AFC Community Trust- Willie was going to ask Donald Davidson if he could keep in touch with the Trust to try to make sure the Westhill and Elrick area is well placed to take advantage of the offerings. Not sure what status of this is as neither Willie or Donald are present</p>
5	<p>Police Report Report for December not yet received. (Post meeting note- Report received 20th January= see appendix) David is awaiting a response from Sgt Forbes re the house break-in at Skene View that appeared to be missing from the November report</p>
6	<p>Correspondence Review of secretary correspondence log for last 5 weeks. (Circulated) This week Caroline Smith has notified that the rescheduled date for the meeting on Community Action Planning and Local Place Plans is Tuesday 26 March from 9.30am -12pm in Gordon House. We can send 2 reps. Diane will go, possibly Maya also as she had planned to go before.</p>
7	<p>Asylum Seeker Hotel The fortnightly community meetings resumed yesterday. There is now 198 hotel residents, down from the 216 they had a month ago. Becky advised that some of the guys who attend the English classes at her church had offered to do voluntary work at the church, but a detailed risk assessment has to be done first.</p>
8	<p><u>Rotary Update/Exchange-</u> - David Dent Rotary are celebrating 40 years on 4th May at Holiday Inn Lazy Sunday Afternoon is pencilled in for Sunday 9th June Pétanque court is being progressed. Running photographic and Environmentalist competitions for the Youth. Trying to recruit more members.</p>
9	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u> No councillors had submitted reports for the meeting</p>

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CLlr Iris Walker -

Been busy with getting Hill of Fare representations, waiting to see what the Council's own response is going to be.
 Echt & Skene CC have arranged a public meeting next Thursday at Dunecht Hall re the Pylons project.
 Busy with Council budgets.
 Rural areas are having issues getting their bins collected.
 Swimming Pool – only 3 people attended the meeting that had been organised by Gillian Wood to discuss setting up a Friends of the Pool group. It wasn't well advertised. They weren't keen on setting up an official group. This will be raised at the next general Pool meeting.
 Gordon asked if there was any plan to re-issue the bin collection leaflets that had been issued last year when the 3 bin cycle started, as there was an error on it for his Eastside Drive area. Iris will check.
 Re Stewart Milne Group going into Administration recently, Iris has no more details on it. It was suggested that we could put details on Facebook of the PACE organisation which assists people being made redundant. Iris has got details on her Facebook of webinars being done next week by PACE, so Becky will take the graphics from that.

10 **Westhill Paths Update**

Circulated report from Gordon Prentice in italics:-

Storm Damage

Once again, I have to write of further challenges caused by recent storms – particularly Storm Gerrit. Four more well established trees came down at Carnie, crossing and blocking the new path surface; one of them a direct hit on one of the newly installed information panels [at Peregrine Road]. The Council Ranger service has been asked to clear the path of these fallen trees so that it is once again passable for all abilities.

On the higher section at Broadshade and Golf Club, inadequate drainage and path erosion are short and long-term concerns, as there is no natural water course leading down from the top of the surrounding hills. We may need to develop a contingency plan to mitigate further flood damage. Our new handrail leading up to the clubhouse also received a direct hit, and will need repaired.

A Berryhill Circle resident contacted Gordon with flooding issues that they believe have been caused by the path construction work. Gordon is of the view that there are a number of contributing factors including the maintenance of the pre-existing drainage channel, and has written to the resident and the factor to suggest that any meeting should have a land drainage expert present.

Contractual Matters - Finishing Touches

1. Carnie Woods

Quotations have been received for all remaining items:

- a. Purchase and installation of qty 2 metal benches on existing foundations, plus qty 2 metal picnic tables mounted on new larger foundations*
- b. Installation of remaining 2 of 4 information panels*
- c. Construction of stone cairn at Carnie Crescent entrance to the woods. Council officials now seeking a second quote*

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If all goes to plan, there remains a balance of around £1,600 which could potentially be spent on alleviating the flooded section at the Carnie Crescent car park. Council staff should be back to work come Monday 8th, and I'll be pressing for confirmation of a plan to complete the works.

The visitor counters promised by PfA were delayed owing to the project manager contracting covid.

2. **Path linking Broadshade Avenue and Golf Course**

Still chasing the contractor to install the sign acknowledging funders, plus reinstatement of the waymarker post at the top of Westhill Heights. A new promise was made on 9th January.

Active Projects

1. Denman Park – extension of path network, bridging improvements and provision of additional rest areas.

Despite 30 companies expressing interest, only 4 tenders were submitted by the closing date – 13th December, and only one of these met the criteria set by the project team. The contract was awarded to GJ Services of Mintlaw. A site meeting with the contractor is planned for January 16th, as is some tree felling work. The main part of the contract – bridge installation and path construction - may not start until the spring and threat of hard frost and weather delays has passed.

Public notices of impending work to be drafted by project team for approval by AC.

As yet we don't know if the ponds filtration project will be concurrent or not. An update was promised for week commencing 15th January.

Denman Park planted areas – volunteer support: *no progress to report. Proposals sent to the Council's LS team in November offering to improve the presentation of the planted areas in Denman Park using community volunteers. Acknowledged by IM, LS, but no site meeting offered as yet.*

2. Carnie Woods - Boardwalk removal: *no progress to report. Our pilot project on 6th November involving only four volunteers and 20m of boardwalk was very successful. Time allowing, I plan to recruit more volunteers towards the end of the month to remove the 200m remaining.*

2. Weeding around Carnie Woods saplings: *no progress - project in hibernation*

Ongoing Maintenance / Upgrades

- *Farm track on the north edge of **Meadowlands**: drainage and potholes need attention - still no response from the farmer.*
- **Golf club:** *repairs to eroded paths - plan agreed with contractor and WGC Manager*
 - *using larger diameter culvert required*
 - *New brackets and pole for handrail*
- **Lawsondale:** *surface reinforcement required on some sections – plan to be developed*
- **All:** *more directional arrows to be stuck to street furniture*

Community Paths Development - Application to Aberdeenshire Local Action Group *[free consultancy support to develop path networks around our community]: No response as yet.*

Links of interest are:

- *Extension of Core Path link to Hill of Keir to/from the west*

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- *Establishment of Core Path route to Brimmond Hill*
- *Cross country and circular route between Westhill and Blackburn*
- *Cross country route to Peterculter and Deeside Way*
- *Links to Dunecht Estate in conjunction with KoS CAP team. Meeting with E&SCC arranged.*
- *Path on the grass verge between Mason Lodge and Pitcairn Lodge.*

Funding Update

£82 spent on production of sign thanking funders, leaving £127 of the £281 carried forward from 2022/23 unspent.

Budget for 2024/5 – est £1,600 - £2,000

Planned activities are:

- **Carnie Woods** – final stages of implementation, plus boardwalk removal [may involve contribution to cost of construction of soak-away – est £500]
- **Broadshade / Golf Course** sector – finishing touches, repairs, plus resolution of drainage and erosion issues [brackets, rail & culvert – est £300]
- **Denman Park** paths and bridges project – grant funded
- *Ongoing Path Maintenance [new brush-cutter blades, battery charger + Meadowlands reinforcement – est £700]*
- *Additional links to countryside [land searches – est £100]*

Gordon advised that Ian Mitchell in Landscape Services has a new boss, Kenneth Reagan, who is going to be the Principle Landscape Services Officer.

11 Community Action Plan (Diane)

Circulated report in italics:-

CAP event on the 19th and 20th April at Shopping Centre has now been confirmed by Ben. Timing 10.30 to 6pm.

WECC volunteers needed to help man the stall.

Feedback now received from Academy pupils, copies handed out to members.

Budget proposed for 2024-2025 is £1,000

Jackie Niven may attend February WECC meeting

12 Hill of Fare Planning Application

A paper from the Planning sub-group has been circulated which outlines the issues and 2 options for a WECC response- an Objection and a Response making observations only.

There was discussion around one issue we have that we haven't been able to consult with the community properly so it may be difficult for us to justify an Objection. Two issues of the Bulletin invited residents to give us their views, but only 2 responses were received.

WECC are not a statutory consultee so any response we make doesn't carry any more weight than one from a resident. We need to weigh up the merits of spending a long time putting together a very detailed response against how much notice the ECU will make of it.

After further discussion, two votes were taken:

Vote 1- do nothing or send a response. – Unanimous agreement that we should submit a response

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Vote 2- 3 options - to support the application, to put in an Objection as per Appendix A in the paper, or a Response just listing the concerns and observations as per Appendix B in the paper

Result-- In favour of Support- 0; In favour of an Objection- 4; In favour of just listing the concerns- 8

Gordon will prepare the Response as per Appendix B as circulated, adding in the Community Benefits and Access points as per Appendix C. It will be circulated for comment.

Noted that a wind farm proposed in the Borders for a 45 turbine project has just been rejected. After going to a public enquiry the Scottish Government rejected it due to the significant adverse landscape and visual impact, effects on residential visual amenity and impacts on defence interests at Eskdalemuir which would not be acceptable.

Local protesters had campaigned against the plans and expressed their concern that local communities don't have the resources to fight against developers.

Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)

13 Circulated report in italics:-

Planning applications

APP/2023/1451 Full planning permission for external alterations, siting of skips, erection of fence and alterations to car park at Elrick House Peregrine Road expiry date 14 September-awaiting decision.

There is a planning application for 2 EV Charging points in the Shopping Centre car park

Pylons

There is a public meeting at the Dunecht Hall on Thursday 18th January at 19.30 which has been set up by Echt and Skene Community Council and will be attended by Andrew Bowie

Democracy Matters

This consultation followed on from the Commission on strengthening Local Democracy which looked at how democracy is done in Scotland and whether the way in which it is done needs to be transformed.

- *This consultation is about making decisions about our own community and what these might cover.*
- *If you want to have more control over some decisions, what type of democratic systems and institutions will be required, it is about setting boundaries.*
- *What will be needed for communities to have more power?*

The consultation focuses on six key themes

- ***Powers***
Question 1- How could your community use these types of powers to achieve its ambitions, now and in the future?
Question 2- What other powers should be added and are there some that should be retained by existing decision makers.
- ***Representation***
Question 3-When thinking about who might be part of a new decision-making body what are the best way that they truly reflect their communities and enhance equality?

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Question 4-Thinking about your own community, what groups would you like to see represented by other selection methods and what should these methods be?

Question 5 -What would the role of the elected representatives be and what would incentivise other people to take on/be part of the decision making?

- *Accountability and participation*

Question 6- What do you think are the best ways to ensure new decision-making bodies are accountable to their community?

Question 7- Are community events a good way to involve local people in scrutinising progress and setting the future direction?

Question 8- What other mechanisms would achieve high levels of participation in the local decision-making processes?

- *Setting local boundaries and priorities*

Question 9-What else should this process include to provide new community decision making bodies with a strong locally agreed mandate?

Question 10-Are there ways to ensure new bodies are still wanted -for example by making them timebound and subject to renewal ballots?

- *Standards, resources and relationships*

Question 11-How do you think that community decision bodies should be resourced?

Question 12- Are these the right standards to provide reassurance that new community decision making bodies will be effective and treat everyone with dignity and respect?

Question 13- How could a charter be designed to best ensure a positive relationship between community decision makers and their partners in national and local government and the wider public sector?

- *Nurturing community capacities*

Question 14-What type of support might communities need to build capacity and how could this change the role of councils and public sector organisations?

Question 15-Are there specific additional powers and resources which could help public sector organisations to work effectively in partnership with new community decision making bodies?

Question 16- Thank you for considering these questions .When sending us your views please also tell us about anything else you think that is important for us to know at this stage.

The closing date for this consultation is 28th February.

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

Matters Arising 14 December:

£100 paid to Men's Shed for PAT testing Christmas Lights

Financial Transactions – December

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Income: £91,615.15 – £89,910 of this exceptional figure received from Paths for All to pass on to Aberdeen City Council for Carnie paths project. The balance comprises the regular monthly receipt of £50 from Vinespring Church, plus £100 banked from the Christmas event in the town centre, plus £1,512 from 16 Bulletin advertisers, plus £43 bank interest.

Expenditure: £7,976 – comprising £300 donations approved in previous meetings, plus payment of £7,340 to Bulletin printer, plus 6 project related payments totalling £372 from the Main A/c detailed on copy bank statement at **Appendix 1**.

Outstanding Commitments: £90,485 - comprising £89,910 payable to ACC [as above – paid 3 Jan 24] plus £1,120 for Q4 and Bulletin honoraria and expenses payable to D Ritchie. (approved). These will be offset by £425 overdue from Paths for All plus outstanding Bulletin invoice receipts referenced below.

David had incurred a £70 parking charge for parking in the Aldi car park for the bulb planting at roundabout on 13th December. It was agreed that this could be re-imbursed to David

Bank Balances at Month End: £104,668

Main Account: £98,705 [see Appendix 1]

Bulletin Account: £5,963

Available Funds: £Nil after adjusting for the following specifics:

Outstanding Commitments [as above]	£90,605
Bulletin prepayments –	£Nil
Projects [see Appendix 2]	£4,449
Community Support Fund	£2,573
General Reserve**	£7,041

**GR is a notional target of £10,000 to cover fixed asset replacements, unforeseen contingencies plus future projects unknown, but in line with budget agreed in January.

Westhill Bulletin

Advertising rates have been increased by 5% for 2024 in anticipation of printing prices from XIC rising again by a similar amount. This is something we agreed to discuss each November, so I apologise for not bringing it to your attention at the time. A quote from XIC for 2024 is still awaited.

Summer Issue: one invoice for £106 remains unpaid and not now expected.

Autumn Issue: two invoices worth £155 look increasingly unlikely to be settled

Winter Issue: 15 of the 35 invoices totalling £3,223 are unpaid at time of writing.

Budget 2024/25

Unfortunately I haven't had time to draft the first draft of the budget for 24/25, but anticipate a surplus of around £8,000 from the Bulletin to be spent on our suite of projects and donations. I would like to use Thursday's meeting to air and agree the options available to us.

We may wish to budget for buying our own camera/microphone equipment and internet connection that Malcolm has been using from his work. This would all cost around £1500.

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	There was discussion on likely budget figures for our ongoing projects.
15	<p>Green Westhill (Mervyn Barr)</p> <p>In December Gordon planted 200 snowdrop bulbs at the Peregrine Road entrance to Carnie Woods path. Mervyn, David & Ken planted 1000 daffodil bulbs on the verges at Holiday Inn roundabout. The bulbs were delivered late by the Council and quality was not great.</p> <p>Going to talk to Tajana about a wildflower planting scheme for Denman Park and Mains of Kinmundy Hill.</p> <p>Have ordered 8 conifers for the barrels at Holiday Inn roundabout.</p> <p>Could plant bulbs at Broadshade roundabout later this year.</p> <p>Short discussion about the western entrances to Westhill not being welcoming</p>
16	<p>AOB & Close of Meeting</p> <p>Extra meeting on Wed 24th January to discuss how WECC works and how we can promote ourselves more and improve our social media presence.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 10.05pm</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting- 8th February at Holiday Inn, with Zoom option.</p>

APPENDIX

GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM

VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE



Community Council: Westhill and Elrick

Reporting Period: 1 to 31 December 2023

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 and plain-clothed patrols 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

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Assault	3	2
Housebreaking	1	0
Public Nuisance	2	5
Road Traffic	0 collision, 3 other	2 collision, 5 other
Drugs	0	1

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 has been 3 incidents reported

- Child pushed and slapped by parent. No injury sustained. Parent warned.
- Male headbutted within licenced premises. This was captured on CCTV and enquiries are ongoing to identify the male responsible.
- 14 year old male kicked and punched a 15 year old male. Perpetrator referred to an Early Intervention Officer.

Housebreaking:

There has been 1 incident reported.

- Door handle tried at occupied home. No entry was gained. Suspect has not been identified.

Public Nuisance:

There has been 2 reports which is a welcome decrease on last month.

- Group of youths banging on windows at Westdyke Drive. Officers attended and no youths were traced. No damage was caused.
- Two youths drinking alcohol and shouting. Officers attended and no youths were traced.

None give any cause for significant concern.

Road Traffic:

This period has seen 0 reported accidents.

Enquiries are ongoing regarding three instances of failing to stop after a collision. Parked vehicles were damaged. Positive lines of enquiry are being followed in respect of one.

Drugs:

There has been no reports.

Significant Crime/Issues within Your Community:

There have been no significant events this reporting period.

Planned Community Policing Activity/Advice:

The Community Policing Team will continue to carry out speed checks in the area and will be supported by Roads Policing colleagues.

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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, Sergeant A0645