

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 8TH FEBRUARY 2024, AT HOLIDAY INN & BY ZOOM.

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mayasa Al-Jubori	Member	✓ (via zoom)
Mervyn Barr	Member	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	x
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Donald Davidson	Member	x
David Dent	Associate Member	x
Becky Ferguson	Vice-Chair	✓
Audrey Findlay	Associate Member	x
Charlie Flint	Member	✓
Ben Horsburgh	Associate Member	x
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Elaine Manley	Member	✓
Rachid Meghezzi	Member	✓
William Munro	Vice-Chair	x
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓ (via zoom)
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	✓ (via zoom)

Members of Public: Cllr Glen Reynolds (via zoom), Jackie Niven (Aberdeenshire Council)

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 Malcolm Collie, David Dent, Audrey Findlay Donald Davidson has resigned from WECC today. Mervyn advised that as a consequence of the change in ownership of the shopping centre Ben Horsburgh had told him that he was moving on. We should thank Ben for all the improvements he has made.
3	Approval of Minutes of Meeting 11th January 2024 The minutes were approved. Proposed by Rachid, seconded by Diane
4	Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere) 1. Larg/Broadstraik Park (Malcolm) – Malcolm not present and no updates from him

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	<p>2. Litter Picking- Gordon has written litter article for Bulletin. A litter-pick is planned for this Saturday but forecast is poor.</p> <p>3. Swimming Pool- There is a</p> <p>4. meeting on 20th Feb. Iris will raise the issue about the recent Friends meeting which was not advertised well and no minutes were taken. Low Pool temperature just now due to boiler issues. Maya pointed out that Avril Nicol had told us at November meeting that we could see financial accounts for the Pool but we haven't received them. David will follow this up.</p> <p>5. Business Association. Elaine is having meeting with Stonehaven Business Association on 20th February. Also with a friend who has been involved with one before.</p> <p>6. TotalEnergies- No updates</p> <p>7. WECC Social Media –The extra meeting held on 24th January was productive. Gordon has circulated notes from it. We need to agree a strapline for WECC from the suggestions made. Gordon is proposing 'Serving Our Community'. This was agreed. Items for our Facebook page can be put into WhatsApp by members, then Becky/Kate can share it to our Facebook. Becky advised that the recent Facebook post re Carnie Woods had been seen by around 4000 people</p> <p>8. Winter Roads Maintenance- Response from our queries received from Roads Dept.- -Snow Wardens- currently there are two teams in Westhill. One team has 7 volunteers covering Berryhill Park, the other team has 4 volunteers covering Westdyke Drive. -Prioritising routes for gritting- priority routes and footways have already been established for winter 23/24. When a review of this winter is done they will note our comments about the hillier streets in Westhill. The main pavements do appear to be getting cleared better than in previous years We can help to promote the Snow Warden scheme in Autumn Bulletin. We will continue the correspondence with Roads Dept. to try to get higher priority for the hillier streets in Westhill. Suggested that we invite them to our meeting to explain their policies & procedures.</p> <p>9. AFC Community Trust- Willie did contact Donald Davidson to see if he could be our link with the Trust but Donald didn't respond. Some surplus football kit has been given to the asylum seekers so there is a connection there. Willie will contact the Trust to aim to set up a relationship with them</p>
5	<p><u>Community Action Plan</u> Jackie Niven gave a short presentation. Jackie is commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to support community groups through the community action plan process.</p> <p>The validation event on 19/20 April is to check with residents as to what the priorities are from the themes identified in the 2023 surveys. A 2 page middle spread about it is in Spring Bulletin, plus the front cover will promote it. Volunteers will be invited to join the teams that will be formed to help progress the actions from the CAP over next 5 years Looking for members to fill the two hourly slots at the event. Two members of Planning Team will be present throughout.</p>

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	<p>Last week Diane met Julie Mathers from RGU who is the principal lecturer for placements to discuss the possibility of a student undertaking a research project re the sports activities in Westhill and Elrick.</p>
6	<p>Police Report</p> <p>Report for December was received after the January meeting. January report not yet received (received early March, see appendix)</p> <p>Re the house break-in we are aware that appeared to be missing from the November report, Sgt Forbes has confirmed it should have been included in the report.</p> <p>Charlie Flint reported that there has been anti-social incidents in his street at Carnie, mainly involving houses close to the path through to Carnie Crescent. Eggs, flour & milk have been thrown at windows. He reported it to Police via email.</p> <p>If the Police reports continue to be sent late or we think they are inaccurate, this will be escalated.</p>
7	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Review of secretary correspondence log for last 4 weeks. (Circulated)</p> <p>The Transport survey end date is 12th Feb. David will complete it on behalf of WECC.</p> <p>Becky has completed the Primary School provision survey and has offered to join the focus group.</p>
8	<p>Asylum Seeker Hotel</p> <p>Now only 170 hotel residents, due to increase in 'absconders'</p> <p>CLlr Miller advised he didn't get any negative comments this time from his article in winter Bulletin, all the comments were positive.</p> <p>Council will get some funding based on numbers of service users at 1st April. This will be used to offset the Council costs incurred so far.</p>
9	<p><u>Rotary Update/Exchange-</u> - David Dent</p> <p>David Dent not present.</p> <p>He has advised that the Council grant for the Petanque court has been approved.</p>
10	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u></p> <p>CLlr Mckail submitted report:-</p> <p><i>Budget.</i></p> <p><i>The big-ticket item for the Administration Councillors this past several months has been that savings (euphemism for cuts) of some £67 million had to be made to ensure a balanced budget. This hopefully has now been achieved and the outcome of our deliberations for 2024/25 will be confirmed at the Council meeting on the 22Feb.</i></p> <p><i>Is the future of one of the Primary Schools in the Westhill Cluster uncertain?</i></p> <p><i>A public engagement consultation is underway to ascertain whether in future years Westhill will retain its 4 primary schools. Reason for the consultation is that it is forecasted the numbers of the school age population will reduce. Hence spare capacity which in the long term is unsustainable and expensive. Been said for many years we have too many primary schools in the Shire requiring a reassessment of the school estate. The consultation process and the</i></p>

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views expressed by all stakeholders (parents/children/staff/ Trade and Teacher unions/ community councillors etc.) will be monitored by Education Scotland who exercise considerable influence on the council's recommendations to the Education and Children's Services Committee. The decision to close a school is based on educational benefits to the children and not on financial grounds.

(Other clusters involved in this process are those of Banff and Turriff).

Councillor's Postbag.

Items which have had prominence in my post in past month are:

Blocked / Flooded Drains

Leaves in public areas to be collected by council staff.

Out of School Care service

Traffic exceeding the speed limit.

Wheelie Bins not being emptied.

Cllr Iris Walker -

Re the Council ceasing to run Out-of-School Clubs, officers are in discussion with alternative providers but Councillors are not being updated on this due to commercial sensitivities. It is hopeful that other groups will fill the gap.

School Janitorial services are going to be reduced a little.

There is a Council Tax portal now so that residents can now update details online, see historical bills, go paperless etc.

Council has drafted a Community Resilience framework. This will set out the responsibilities of the Council and other agencies re emergencies, weather incidents etc. Community Councils will be consulted on this.

Cllr Joji

Re the Community Resilience framework, Fatima has requested that local businesses be included in continuity planning as they can support community development.

Re an impact assessment on asylum seekers, the Home Office are not going to provide a response and Have redirected Fatima to the Council internal forum

Have had a speeding complaint re Westhill drive being used as a race-track by youths at night, from Holiday Inn roundabout up to Westhill Heights.

11 Westhill Paths Update

Circulated report from Gordon Prentice in italics, with updates in normal type:-

Storm Damage Update

If the evidence of recent months is anything to go by, we're just going to have to get used to dealing with the aftermath of storms. Storm Gerrit at the end of December was the culmination of a very wet spell and left its mark on Westhill's woodland and stressed the town's drainage network in a number of locations. Four more well established trees came down at Carnie Woods, crossing and blocking the new path surface; one of them a direct hit on the newly installed information panel at Peregrine Road. Remarkably, the panel was unscathed and, at time of writing, three of the trees have since been cleared by Council workmen. The 4th tree is in a particularly badly flooded section and may not be addressed until the ground dries

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Other less well-established trees were blown over at Lawsondale. Thanks to volunteers, these have also been cleared in recent weeks. All woodland paths need constant vigilance these days, so if you come across any obstacles, please let us know.

On the higher section at Broadshade and Golf Club, there is no natural water course leading down from the top of the surrounding hills which means that the lower lying land which includes the golf course and residential properties bears the brunt of the cascading water after prolonged rainfall. We are trying to assist with improving drainage in this sector if we can, as any improvement will also improve the integrity and longevity of the path surfaces. Have made contact with civil engineer with drainage specialism. Private meeting w/c 19th February. Still chasing the contractor to install the sign acknowledging funders, plus reinstatement of the waymarker post at the top of Westhill Heights

Active Projects

Carnie Woods – Finishing touches

Contractors will be installing benches, picnic tables and a new information panel in the central rest area, and a new cairn and panel will be installed at Carnie Crescent just as soon as the ground conditions improve. If all goes to plan, there remains a balance of around £1,800 which could potentially be spent on alleviating the flooded section at the Carnie Crescent car park. The cairn and information panel are being installed now, The visitor counters promised by PfA were delayed owing to the project manager contracting covid. The visitor counters have now been installed. A pint or a coffee to first member to report where they are!

Boardwalk removal: *a pilot project in November involving two sections totalling 20m confirmed the tools and techniques required to remove the remaining 200m. Our plan is to begin this in the spring when the ground is drier. If you would like to help and haven't been in touch previously, please email me to let me know.*

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

A contractor has been appointed with some tree and shrub clearing taking place before the start of the bird nesting season in March. The main construction work is planned for early spring after the threat of frosts has passed. Updates will be posted on our Facebook page.

*Investigation work has also begun to try and trace the source of the **pollution in the ponds**.*

Maintenance of Denman planted areas – volunteer support: *members of the Community Council met with the Garioch Landscape Officers responsible for Westhill and Elrick on 1st February. In the knowledge that the Landscape Services team is under resourced, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways in which community volunteers could support the maintenance of the park's neglected planted areas. The meeting was very constructive and will soon lead to a joint plan of action. We also learned that although Ken Regan is the new boss, Ian Mitchell is still the designated lead LS Officer for W&E. However, we now have a direct introduction to the Westdyke Supervisor, Tijay Marrocco, so the aim is to build a relationship that will allow us to work alongside LS in Denman Park, but also have more influence on how landscaping is prioritised. Have now met with Tijay. Council will provide power tool training then it will be decided which zones we can tackle first.*

Ongoing Trail Maintenance

Late last year we managed to procure a suite of power tools with the objective of keeping paths free from overgrowing weeds and branches in the spring and summer. Periodic flooding is also a challenge in several parts of town, so we aim to spend time and effort to improve the surface of the farm track on the north edge of

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Meadowlands, some sections around Lawsondale and a section at the golf club in conjunction with the club's greenkeeping team.

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

Ongoing Maintenance / Upgrades

- *Farm track on the north edge of **Meadowlands**: work on drainage and potholes included in budget*
- ***Golf club**: repairs to eroded paths - plan agreed with WGC Manager – delivery of culvert and new brackets and pole for handrail scheduled for Monday, 5th.*
- ***Lawsondale**: surface reinforcement required on some sections – plan to be developed*
- ***All**: more directional arrows to be stuck to street furniture*
- *Volunteer meeting called for Tuesday, 6th February; to celebrate past achievements and set out plans for 2024. This was attended by 9 volunteers, 6 gave apologies. These 6 have been contacted to determine what their preferences are*

Community Paths Development - Application to Aberdeenshire Local Action Group

I received word on 29th January that our application was unsuccessful, but with a message encouraging an application next year if there is funding available. With encouragement from Willie, I have asked the External Funding Team if they could advise their criteria for selection / rejection.

Funding Update

£10 spent on team meeting, leaving £117 of the £281 carried forward from 2022/23 unspent.

Budget for 2024/5 – revised to £2,000 – to be spent on:

- ***Carnie Crescent access**: contribution to cost of construction of soak-away [est £500]*
- ***Broadshade / Golf Course** sector: resolution of drainage and erosion issues [est £700]*
- ***Ongoing Path Maintenance**: new brush-cutter blades, battery charger + Meadowlands reinforcement [est £800]*

Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)

12 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-approved

APP/2023/2336 Advertisement Consent for display of 2 EVHub Signs Westhill Shopping Centre Car Park-awaiting decision

HILL OF FARE

The closing date for comments and objections has now closed. There has been over 1000 objections. The Council has 3 more months to respond

PYLONS

There are several community councils already fighting against the installation of these SSN super pylons, the

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general opinion of the group is to push for these installations to be either offshore or buried in the ground. A consultation event is planned on 2nd May between 2-7pm at the Milne Hall, Kirkton of Skene. Updated information can be found on the Skene against Pylons facebook page.

The planning application for these pylons is not due until the end of the year.

There will be a drop-in session at Drumoak Primary school on Thursday 15th Feb, 4.30 to 7pm. SSEN will speak 7pm to 8pm then 8pm to 9pm will be MPs Andrew Bowie MP & Alexander Burnett MSP.

The closest pylons to us will be at Dunecht

Local Development Plan

The evidence report and its Gate Check assessment has been delayed because of the Play Space Sufficiency assessment and the Open Space audit. The evidence report will now be considered in November (9 months later than planned) and the 'Call for Ideas', will not start now until early 2025. As a result of this the new LDP will not be approved before the last quarter Of 2028-29.

The consultation runs 5th February to 15th March and is on the Engage Aberdeenshire LDP Hub (Aberdeenshire Engage LDP Hub) where you can make your comments, you can also find the Engage Aberdeenshire site on the Aberdeenshire app under Engage. This site contains a variety of information and consultations.

Looking for someone to take over the Resilience role from Diane

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

Matters Arising 11 January:

Financial Transactions – January

Income: £38,834 – £29,556 of this exceptional figure received from Aberdeenshire Council [AC] included a returned duplicate payment, the other half was passed on to Aberdeen City Council [ACC] for Carnie paths project. The balance comprises grant balance of £425 received from Paths for All plus the regular monthly receipt of £50 from Vinespring Church, plus £8,803 from 40 Bulletin advertisers. Including £1,665 from 18 for the winter issue.

Expenditure: £121,604 – comprising £119,466 grant receipts passed on to ACC plus £14,778 duplicate payment returned to AC. The other 4 payments totalling £1,682 from the Main A/c detailed on copy bank statement.

Outstanding Commitments: £253 - comprising Q1 honoraria and expenses payable to D Ritchie

Bank Balances at Month End: £21,733

Main Account: £7,588

Bulletin Account: £14,146

Westhill Bulletin

The 2023 surplus for the Bulletin is agreed at £7,187.58 against a budget of £11,350. Revenue was £2,391 less than expected, whereas costs were £1,965 more than expected; mostly printing. Further analysis is required to understand the underlying reason for the revenue shortfall: fewer advertisers or less space, or a combination of both. Four invoices remain unpaid totalling £441, but only £180 of that is believed to be recoverable. Meantime, the surplus will be transferred into the Main Account in February.

Looking forward, advertising rates were increased by 5% for 2024. David has secured £23,960 of annual income plus another £3,100 for the Spring Issue which is a great effort, but suggests income may be trending downwards in the short term. Hence the need for further analysis. On the cost front, the printer has just advised that printing costs will be 2% higher, so we plan to have an overdue fresh look at the cost side of the

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	<p>equation, which may include putting the printing costs out to tender and doing some more of the graphic work in house.</p> <p>Community Support Fund Applications No applications received this round, leaving £2,073 of the £5,000 budget unspent. It is both surprising and disappointing that funds haven't been taken up. We need to explore why.</p> <p>The budget for 24/25 that was circulated was agreed</p>
1	<p>Green Westhill (Mervyn Barr) Replacement small trees have been ordered for the planters at Hol Inn roundabout, cost£150 Getting wildflower plants from Tajana to be planted at foot of green wall on Old Skene Rd and primroses for opposite car park entrance. The trees we planted in march 2023 need to be weeded, this will be planned soon.</p>
15	<p>AOB & Close of Meeting Meeting closed at 9.50pm Date of Next Meeting- 14th March, 7pm 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 January 2024
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.

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Crime Overview and Explanation:

CRIME TYPE	CURRENT PERIOD	PREVIOUS PERIOD
Assault	1	3
Housebreaking	0	1
Public Nuisance	9	2
Road Traffic	3 collision, 8 other	0 collision, 3 other
Drugs	2	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 has been 1 incident reported

- Child pulled by parent. No injury sustained. Parent warned.

Housebreaking:

There have been no reports.

Public Nuisance:

There has been 9 reports which is an increase, 2 relate to the same address.

- 4 male youths loitering. No criminality identified.
- Youths refusing to get off bus. Enquiries ongoing regarding threatening/abusive behaviour.
- Eggs thrown at windows. No damage caused and no identification of those responsible. Officers tasked to give passing attention to area.
- Eggs thrown at property. No damage caused and no identification of those responsible. Officers tasked to give passing attention to area.
- Group of youths kicking fence and playing loud music at the rear of the shopping centre. Area search carried out with no persons traced and no damage identified.
- Argument between youths who had been sledging. No criminality identified.
- Youths refusing to leave shopping centre. Unit attended and youths had left. No criminality identified.
- Items thrown at windows. No damage caused. Officers tasked to give passing attention to area.
- Items thrown at windows. No damage caused. Officers tasked to give passing attention to area.

Road Traffic:

This period has seen 3 reported accidents. One involved two cars and a lorry. A male has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal for Careless Driving. The others relate to a single vehicle (no injury) and a single motorcycle, the rider of which sustained non-life threatening injuries.

Reports received relate to manner of driving and parking.

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A female and male have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal for defective tyres and taking a vehicle without the owner's consent respectively.

Drugs:

There has been 2 reports regarding Cannabis. One male has been warned for possession.

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.

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