

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 12TH DECEMBER 2024, AT HOLIDAY INN & BY ZOOM.

Community Council		
Name	Position	Present
Mayasa Al-Jubori	Member	*
Mervyn Barr	Member	✓
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓
Heather Cook	Member	✓
Roy Mitchell (Rotary)	Associate Member	✓
Becky Ferguson	Member	✓ (via zoom)
Audrey Findlay	Member	✓
Charlie Flint	Member	*
Darren Green	Member	*
Kate Lumsden	Member	✓
Arthur McArthur	Chair	✓
Elaine Manley	Member	*
Rachid Meghezzi	Vice-Chair	*
William Munro	Vice-Chair	✓ (via zoom)
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	✓
Diane Priestley	Member	✓
David Ritchie	Secretary	✓
Tim Yeomans	Member	*
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	✓

Member of Public- Hazel Mustard

1	<u>Welcome and opening remarks</u> Chair Arthur McArthur welcomed all. Permission was granted to record the meeting
2	<u>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</u> Apologies received from Mayasa, Charlie, Darren, Elaine, Rachid, Tim, Cllr Miller
3	<u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 14th November 2024</u> Minutes were approved. Proposed by Heather, seconded by Audrey
4	<u>Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere)</u> 1. Larg/Broadstraik Park (Malcolm) – no updates 2. Business Association (Elaine). Elaine not present but she had advised David that she is planning to have a meeting at the end of January.

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	3. Sports Hub (Tim) - Tim not present
5	<p>Xmas Event 7th December Debrief (Kate)</p> <p>The event went well though weather was poor so numbers were down on normal. Only half the hot chocolate was used. The left over mince pies etc. were given to Blackhill Court and Pitcairn Lodge care home. £82 was received in donations.</p> <p>There was an issue with the supply of Christmas trees. As reported at November meeting, Kate reported that she had sent several emails to enquire if the shopping centre were arranging anything, like getting the 2 trees, but she hadn't received replies. Then on 26th November we saw that two trees were put up with lights, arranged by LCP. Same day as the 2 trees we had ordered from Facilities Management Services (Scotland) Ltd were due to arrive and it was too late to cancel the order. The tree that LCP put up in the quadrangle was too small so we put our 14ft tree there and moved LCPs 12ft tree to a pillar near M&S door that had a power socket on it. Our 12ft tree was put up at the other pillar there.</p> <p>FMS charged us the quoted £600 to supply & remove 2 trees. They were supposed to also install the 2 trees for £400 but weren't able to do that. They gave us 4 pallets to construct the 2 bases and tarpaulins to cover them, for no charge. The work to convert the pallets to bases was done by Tom Cook & Dave Yeaman from the Green Spaces team, and these bases can be retained for future use.</p> <p>Re the communications problems, Willie emailed David Waterworth in LCP who passed it on to David Castles. His response was that he was not aware of any communication issues, which suggests that he never received the emails from Kate. Willie had recommended to LCP that we have a de-brief with them in the new year to look into this and establish arrangements for the future. He had initiated the conversation with them about communication but doesn't think he needs to be involved in the de-brief with them. The event team members will meet up first.</p> <p>New lights were put on the raised bed tree at Westhill Drive, using a long ladder but we could only get up to around 60% of tree height. Suggested that for next year we hire a cherry picker or see if the Fire Brigade can help us.</p> <p>We need to review & update the risk assessments that were done a few years back, and assess if a cherry picker should be used for all activities for which ladders are currently used.</p> <p>There was also discussion around roles and responsibilities and agreement that these need to be more tightly specified.</p>
6	<p>Police Report (see appendix)</p> <p>No significant crimes, though number of assaults increased from 1 to 5.</p> <p>Cllr Mckail reported that a resident had contacted him about youths riding bikes recklessly at the shopping centre, and revving up of car engines. Audrey had also seen the bikes.</p>
7	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Review of secretary correspondence log for last month. (Circulated).</p> <p>Nothing of significance that we need to discuss.</p> <p>Audrey reported on the discussion about slow responses from Council Officers that was on agenda at last week's Garioch CC Forum, The paper about it that Willie had written in August had been sent to the Forum Chair and Alison Cumming. Alison didn't circulate it to the CCs till after the Forum meeting.</p>

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	<p>Andy Miller from Bennachie CC advised they had the same issues as WECC. Ann Overton (Area Manager) suggested that it be monitored over next 6 months and revisited at the June 2025 Forum.</p> <p>Gordon gave the example of lack of responses from Norman Wright re the 4 extra waste bins that we were told in June we could get. We recently received an updated list of Service Contacts for Garioch. This lists 3 people for Waste Services so Gordon is going to write to all 3.</p>
8	<p>Asylum Seeker Hotel (David) David advised there isn't any new info to report as there hasn't been a Community Leaders meeting since 30th October. Diane advised that she had been told that 40 guys had been sent to Newcastle, all in separate taxis. Willie recommended that we put in a Freedom of Information request to Home Office about use of taxis, as they hadn't replied to our previous email. Then we will know if what we hear is true or false. If false, we can help to dispel rumours, if true, then it's an inefficient use of public money. Heather offered to prepare the FoI request.</p>
9	<p><u>Rotary Update/Exchange- Roy Mitchell</u> -Senior Citizens Christmas party went well, 140 people at it - The pool table that Alastair got for the asylum seekers has now got a base, made by Men Shed, but a home for it has not yet been sorted as it can't go into the hotel. -Rotary are looking into reinstating the Christmas street collections with Santa Claus, as Round Table stopped doing it two years ago. Other groups would need to assist Rotary. WECC will consider if they can be involved.</p>
10	<p><u>Ward 13 Councillors updates</u> Cllr Ron Mckail- circulated report in italics 1. Christmas Lights Funding for Community Councils <i>Did pursue this and advised no funding available</i> 2. Kirkton of Skene Cemetery <i>The casket ground within Kirkton of Skene Cemetery suffers from historic design issues which makes it difficult for maintenance. Staff do their best around grass areas but are very conscious of damaging headstones with strimming. A possible way to rectify this is to have the whole casket area put into chuckies in the same vein as the area above. This is a costly and labour intensive when attempting to reconstruct this area. There may be some comments from existing lair holders in carrying out this idea and they would have to be consulted.</i> 3. Budget Allocation for Council. Reasons for the Fair Share Funding Campaign <i>Currently, this council receives £2,620 per person—6% below the Scottish average of £2,797 and the 4th lowest in Scotland. This allocation limits the council's ability to deliver essential services. If the council were funded at the national average, it would have an extra £46 million each year to invest in critical services like roads, social care, education, and public facilities.</i> 4. Aberdeenshire Council encouraging use of online app to tackle noise disturbances <i>To-date, the council has seen the resolution of 862 cases following investigation, with 101 live cases where noise complaints are currently being investigated. The most common complaints continue to be around domestic music, anti-social behavior and noise from animals. Loud voices, live music, domestic or industrial machinery and TV and gaming have also led to complaints. The Noise App allows residents to capture an offending noise quickly, rather</i></p>

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than wait for officers to attend to witness the noise or to install noise-measuring equipment. It also allows officers to start their investigations far earlier and take rapid action. Under the latest version of the app, users can now play back a recording before it's submitted to ensure they have clearly captured the issue. Download the app at www.thenoiseapp.com

5. Sign up for Council Tax online.

Council is in the process of pushing out communications across a number of channels, encouraging communities to sign up for Council Tax online. This platform gives people access to more of their information online, as well as the ability to go paperless with their annual bills. Download the app at www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/ctselfservice.

6. Street lighting columns that are identified as structurally weak.

The current budgetary constraints have resulted in there being insufficient budget to replace all the columns that have been identified as structurally unsafe. The cost of replacing a column is at least £1,500 over 1600 columns identified as suitable for replacement. Cost of replacement is more than £20m.

CLlr Iris Walker -

WECC will be getting a Council Officer to help us develop a Place Plan in 2026. Two nearby communities have completed theirs recently- Newton hill area and Stonehaven. David got an email about this yesterday so will circulate it.

CLlr Fatima Joji

Reminder that the Council Budget engagement survey is open till 20th December.

Issue with bins not being emptied recently in Hilltop area, due to vehicle breakdown & staffing issues. Planning to go back there tomorrow.

A resident at Westhill Heights has raised the issue of the bus service not serving that area for a number of years now so residents have to walk down to the stops on Hays Way/Westhill Drive. The standard response from Stagecoach is that there is not enough demand. Dial-a-Bus is an option.

Suggested that a resident's survey be done to check what the demand is. This could be linked to the survey of dropped kerbs etc. that is an action in the CAP. Mervyn offered to draft the questions for the residential survey.

Willie pointed out that the CAP has a number of bus service issues that need to be looked at. This should all be done as one project which would lead to a submission to Stagecoach.

Gordon thanked CLlr Miller for helping to get the bus destination signs for buses going to Westhill from Aberdeen changed back from saying 'Berryhill' to 'Westhill & Elrick'

11 Westhill Green Spaces Update

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

Orbital Trail Development/Maintenance [clockwise from Gateway Sculpture]

Gateway Sculpture – no activity

Hidden Garden – “Community Rest Area” sign – ordered, awaiting delivery/installation. The area has been tidied up this week.

Silvertrees Drive to Peregrine Road – no activity.

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Mason Lodge to Pitcairn Lodge – path at junction of A944 and Pitcairn Lodge driveway. E&SCC submitted a funding application to Nestrans Friday, 29th November. Unfortunately, their application wasn't taken forward, but I'll keep looking for other relevant funds now that we have a quote.

Broadshade/Berryhill Circle – stakeholder meeting proposed to agree actions on flood mitigation measures – involving residents, factor, golf club Manager and WECC. WECC has agreed to work with the Golf Club to put in an extra drainage ditch.

Westhill Golf Club – Once flood mitigation measures are completed, some path repairs will be required, using quarry dust. Have discussed location for dust store with Manager. [Est £130].

Westhill Drive – LS still to cut back overhanging bushes opposite bus turning point.

Link north to Craigmar – reply from Marshalls awaited

Meadowlands Farm track & lane – no activity

Links to Brimmond – no activity

Mains of Kinmundy Hill – no activity

Links east from Hillside Road – reply to enquiry awaited; no progress with cut back of pavement vegetation from Hillside Road junction to Lawsondale turn-off.

Lawsondale – no activity

Other Green Spaces

Denman Park – PBIP Project – There is a small retention [circa £4k] in place to ensure that all snags are addressed.

Maintenance of Denman planted areas – request for site meeting with Ian Mitchell [ACLS] made on 13th Sept, still unanswered, despite reminders. Ian did respond to a reminder this week but not followed this up by committing to a meeting date.

Carnie Woods boardwalk removal – Total Energies have pitched this to Mears as well as a possible joint venture with asylum seekers. Will require a donation of boots for any volunteers from the hotel. Awaiting feedback from TE

Westdyke Leisure Centre accessible path – Nestrans would like to “progress our application” early in the new year.

Carnie Crescent All Weather Pitches [AWP] – still no confirmation from Avant Homes [waste ground landowner] for consent to effect improvements to path and planted areas.

Blackhills Court – Rhonda at TE has promised to pitch this to Donations Committee in January

Funding Update

No spend this month. Budget allocated for 2024/25 - £2,000, increased by £200 donation of Amazon vouchers from TE. Spend so far - £1,038. Future spend may be required for ditch construction [est £400] and quarry material at WGC, spare parts and extendable loppers.

Planting Update

Rachid planted primroses on the Old Skene Rd section of the green wall. The resident who volunteered to plant fruit trees on two sites off Wellgrove Road; one opposite Westdyke and the other on Aspen Grove. The request was passed on to LS for approval on 11th November, but no response as yet!

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Daffodils from ACC. Several hundred were delivered to my garage on 16th November and have been distributed to Scouts [for Scout Hut and Kingshill Church], Blackhills Court, and others for planting out at various locations around. Our plan is to focus on Denman Park, Carnie Woods and Mains of Kinmundy Hill if time and weather allows. Not yet planted due to frosty weather but still hope to do it soon.

Summer Bedding Plants- The Council have just advised that we won't be getting any bedding plants from them in 2025 as they can't afford to repair their irrigation system. Suggested that we could try to get local corporate sponsorship for plants. Mervyn will prepare a cost estimate.

Volunteers – planning to continue maintenance over the winter in Arnhall & Denman Park, subject to ACLS agreement.

Litter Picks

Our planned second pick on 23rd November was cancelled owing to the weather, but we remain hopeful for 14th December and 18th January.

Additional Bins in Westhill

The 4 bins promised for Westhill at our meetings with Norman Wright in June and August have still not materialised, despite writing and further verbal promise on 26th November.

Contacted Aldi twice about restoring a bin to their car park and LCP/M re additional bins [waste and clothing respectively] in their car parks.

.Gordon & Mervyn

12 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (Diane Priestly)

Circulated report in italics:-

We are concentrating on the first of the short-term actions in the CAP document which is Outdoors. We are planning to take forward an audit of the current benches and tables in the public spaces, the existing footpaths, the dropped kerbs, the open spaces and play parks in Westhill. The planning group are hoping that all WECC members will become involved in this audit.

Diane's Bulletin article was placed by Neil towards back of magazine, David should have requested him to move it to nearer front. Future articles will be put nearer front.

Planning Matters (Diane Priestly)

13 Circulated report in italics:-

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

APP/2024/1453 Unit 5 at Westhill Shopping Centre Full planning permission for change of use from café to a Hot Food takeaway with seated area Mr Yhtyyar Jorayeu 3rd -awaiting decision.

APP/2024/1563 Specsavers Unit 23 Westhill Shopping Centre AB32 6RL-full planning permission for the installation of 6 Air Conditioning Units-approved

TRE/2024/0111 4 Meadowlands Way, Westhill, AB32 6ED-TPO for felling of Ash Trees and 1 Spruce Tree and Pruning of Tree Group 1 and Spruce Trees-approved.

APP/2024/1563 Unit 23 Westhill Shopping Centre Specsavers Advertisement Consent for Display of 2 illuminated Fascia Signs and Vinyls-approved.

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APP/2024/1562 Aldi Westhill Drive AB326FY Full planning permission for change of landscaped area to car Parking Spaces and Associated Works -approved. Gordon expressed some concern on this one as the drawings are not very clear

APP/2024/1861 Unit 1 Exploration Way, Arnhall Business Park AB326GD Full planning permission for change of use of land for the siting of Catering Van-awaits a decision.

Costco is planning to add a petrol station to the Westhill site, plus installation of EV charging points, landscaping and associated works. Not clear yet where this will be sited. It will be unmanned.

HILL OF FARE

No update at the moment however concerns continue to be raised throughout Scotland about the industrialisation of rural Scotland.

ENERGY CONSENTS UNIT

2 windfarms have been approved in the last 28 days, 2 battery energy storage systems and 2 overhead power lines.

Diane Priestley

LDP

Today Diane circulated the latest LDP newsletter. It includes the last topic paper, on Infrastructure First. It also includes a section of the Evidence Report document on "Site Selection and Distribution". This sets out what information will be sought from prospective developers to assess their sites as part of the "Call for Ideas", the next stage of the plan. Both of these consultations close on 17th January. For the Site Selection one it looks like WECC can't submit to it, it has to be individuals. Members are encouraged to look at it.

Mervyn proposed a vote of thanks to Diane and her team for all the work they have done to get the CAP document completed.

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

Matters Arising 14 November:

5 Outstanding Commitments from last month [£1,729] paid, including £100 donation to Men's Shed for PAT testing Christmas Lights.

Financial Transactions – November

Income: £85 – comprising £50 from Vinespring Church, plus £35 from 1 Bulletin advertiser

Expenditure: £2,391 – comprising £1,729 agreed last month plus 10 payments totalling £761 on approved projects detailed on copy bank statement at **Appendix 1**

Outstanding Commitments: £nil – after taking into account £806 spend on Christmas event, plus £817 honorarium payments, plus £3,002 to bulletin printer, plus whatever we agree to remunerate David and Neil, offset by £5,157 from 40 invoices issued for the winter issue.

Bank Balances at Month End: £22,158

Main Account: £9,758

Bulletin Account: £12,400

Westhill Bulletin

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	<p><i>Provisional figures for Autumn Issue [100 pages]:</i> <i>Advertising sales - £11,236; Costs [print + hon] - £8,290; Contribution - £2,946, against budget of £1,500. Only one invoice [Cala Homes] overdue – promised December. Thanks to David</i></p> <p><i>Provisional figures for Winter Issue [96 pages]:</i> <i>Advertising sales - £11,142 [£5,985 prepaid + 40 single issue invoices £5,157]; Costs [print + hon, but before exceptional file transfer & template creation costs] - £3,452; provisional contribution - £7,690, against budget of £1,500. Thanks to David and our change of production process.</i></p> <p>Gordon will issue a note to members regarding ex gratia payments to Neil & David for the Winter Issue and to include a recommendation regarding rebalancing of honoraria payments.</p>
15	<p><u>Hospital Transport-</u> David</p> <p>Cllr Walker had requested that David give a talk on this as Hospital Transport was raised at the NHS roadshow in October.</p> <p>As an ancillary service to the Community Minibus operation that David runs, he also provides a hospital transport service using his own car, assisted now by a team of 5 Rotary Club members.</p> <p>This started in early 2021, when the Council Transport team contacted all the Community Transport operators to ask if they could provide a service to take people to their Covid Vaccination appointments. Westhill residents mainly had to go to either Inverurie or P&J Live. David organised for members of the Westhill Resilience group to help with this and the service was advertised in the Bulletin and on bus stops etc. We also said we could take people to hospital appointments at ARI & Woodend and since 2022 these are the main places we take people to.</p> <p>The requests come mainly via THInC (Transport to Healthcare Information Centre). This is a telephone service offering guidance on accessing suitable transport options to get to and from appointments when patients have no means of personal transport. The telephone number is provided in appointment letters. If THInC sees that public transport is not a viable option for a patient they contact the most appropriate Community Transport operator to ask if they can help.</p> <p>In Spring 2023 we started to be asked to take patients to Stracathro hospital near Brechin, mainly just taking them there, not waiting to take them home again as most patients are there for many hours. NHS provides taxis to take them home. NHS pays our car costs for this as they are obliged to help patients get to Stracathro.</p> <p>We are allowed to charge 45p per mile as that is the HMRC approved rate for volunteer drivers.</p> <p>In November we did 14 trips to Stracathro. I also took a patient from St Combs near Fraserburgh to the National Treatment Centre in Inverness. I also took 6 people to appointments at ARI. These were mainly people from other towns like Inverurie or Banchory when the normal provider in these areas couldn't do it. The RVS has volunteer drivers in most towns but they will only do a run if it is between the hours of 10am & 4pm as that is their office hours. So RVS decline a lot of requests from THInC.</p> <p>David's view is that THInC would be able to provide a more efficient service if they recruited their own teams of volunteer drivers based in each town.</p>
17	<p><u>AOB & Close of Meeting</u></p> <p>Meeting closed abruptly at 9.45pm due to a false fire alarm</p> <p><u>Date of Next Meeting-9th January</u>, 7pm at Holiday Inn, with Zoom option.</p>

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APPENDIX



POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA

GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM

VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE

Community Council: Westhill and Elrick

Reporting Period: 1 to 30 November 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.

Crime Overview and Explanation:

CRIME TYPE	CURRENT PERIOD	PREVIOUS PERIOD
Assault	5	1
Housebreaking	1	1
Public Nuisance	1	1
Road Traffic	2 collision, 9 other	1 collision, 8 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.

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Assault:

There has been 3 reports of a domestic nature. Reports have been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

One male has been warned regarding a no injury assault on another. Enquiry is ongoing into one instance resulting in minor injury.

Housebreaking:

There has been 1 report. Sports equipment was stolen from a locked garage. Enquiries are ongoing.

Public Nuisance:

There has been 1 report regarding youths throwing food at the Shopping Centre and causing a nuisance. There was a delay in reporting and no crime was identified.

Road Traffic:

This period has seen 2 reported accidents, one involving two vehicles and the other a single vehicle. These were reported by third parties with no vehicles traced on Police arrival.

Three parked cars have been damaged. Enquiry is ongoing to trace the other parties involved.

Reports received relate to fitness to drive, suspected driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, manner of driving and animals.

Conditional Offers of Fixed Penalty has been issued to five drivers for defective tyres, failure to wear a seatbelt and driving without a MOT.

Drugs:

There have been no reports. However, a male has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal having been found to possess Cannabis.

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