

Community Council			
Name	Position	Present	
Mayasa Al-Jubori	Member	*	
Mervyn Barr	Member	*	
Malcolm Collie	Member	✓	
Heather Cook	Member	*	
Alistair Mckelvie (Rotary)	Associate Member	✓	
Becky Ferguson	Member	✓ (via zoom)	
Audrey Findlay	Member	<b>✓</b>	
Charlie Flint	Member	<b>✓</b>	
Darren Green	Member	*	
Kate Lumsden	Member	<b>✓</b>	
Arthur McArthur	Chair	<b>✓</b>	
Elaine Manley	Member	<b>✓</b>	
Rachid Meghezzi	Vice-Chair	<b>✓</b>	
William Munro	Vice-Chair	<b>√</b>	
Gordon Prentice	Treasurer	<b>✓</b>	
Diane Priestley	Member	<b>✓</b>	
David Ritchie	Secretary	<b>✓</b>	
Tim Yeomans	Member	√ (via zoom)	
Cllr Iris Walker	Ward 13 Councillor	✓	
Cllr Ron McKail	Ward 13 Councillor	✓ (via zoom)	
Cllr Craig Miller	Ward 13 Councillor	*	
Cllr Fatima Joji	Ward 13 Councillor	√ (via zoom)	

### Members of Public-

#### 1 Welcome and opening remarks

Chair Arthur McArthur welcomed all.

Permission was granted to record the meeting

## 2 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies received from Maya, Mervyn, Heather, Darren, Cllr Miller

## 3 Approval of Minutes of Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Minutes were approved. Proposed by Rachid, seconded by Gordon

## 4 <u>Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere)</u>

## 1. Larg/Broadstraik Park (Malcolm) -

Yellowrattle has been planted. 50 hazel trees have arrived, courtesy of Apache. Local residents will help to plant them.

## 2. Business Association (Elaine).

Flyers for 26<sup>th</sup> March meeting now printed. Rachid offered to distribute them, mainly to the Shopping Centre units.



Had meeting with David McCubbin, an AC Town Centre Project Officer. Got lot of good advice. If trying to get funding should have a basic constitution. At 26<sup>th</sup> March meeting will try to get a few people prepared to help to run a BA. Gordon confirmed that any funding could be held ring-fenced in the WECC main bank account. Looking for ideas for speakers. David McCubbin suggested that a business survey could be done. He provided a previous survey. Link to it could go in Summer Bulletin (end of May). Elaine to provide proposed questions to Gordon to incorporate into survey tool.

## 3. Sports Hub

Gordon advised that one of the Sport Hub members is keen to be involved in a feasibility project to get a Sports Centre built. Having meeting next week with Greg Welsh re the Re-discover Denman Park event. Groups who operate within Denman Park will be getting promoted at this event.

## 4. Survey re Bus Service to top part of Westhill Drive

Gordon advised that as at last weekend there had been 206 responses from the 577 leaflets delivered. Survey closes tomorrow. 75% of the respondees had said they would use the bus more frequently if It was re-instated. Used AI to generate summaries of the two open questions.

Mervyn will be asked to prepare an article for May Bulletin, Cllr Miller and CAP Group.

## 5 | Police Report (see Appendix)

No significant crimes. Bit concerning that there was an assault to a retail worker. Doesn't look like shoplifting gets included in the report.

## 6 Correspondence (David)

Review of secretary correspondence log for last month. (Circulated).

The Garioch Community Planning E-bulletin included details of the 'My Place' awards. Gordon is encouraged to enter the Orbital Trail and Denman Park projects. Closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> April

The Garioch Community Planning Joint Meeting on 15th April 9.30 to 12.30 at Inverurie Town Hall is mainly about Place Plans. Diane can't go, Audrey might.

Resident complaint about the bus service from Aberdeen in evening now only hourly and doesn't fit in with theatre shows etc finishing times. Cllr Miller had said he would look into getting a change in bus times.

## 7 Asylum Seeker Hotel (David

The monthly Community meeting was yesterday. The notes from it will be circulated when issued. Hotel numbers down to 258. Many SUs are observing Ramadan this month and there is reduced participation in activities etc.

Gordon and Charlie are planning to run a 6 week trial of table tennis at Westdyke. Cost would be £270 which could be jointly funded by the Sports Hub and WECC. This was approved, conditional on the Sports Hub committing to 50%.

The Home Office response to our FOI request re use of taxis has been appealed. We should get a response by 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

## 8 Rotary Update/Exchange- Alistair Mckelvie

Re Lazy Sunday on 8th June, WECC will take a stall to promote the CAP, Place Plans and Business Association.



Five laptops have been donated to Hampton Hotel, sourced by Malcolm. They are being used at the English classes.

Alistair will be recovering the Pool Table before putting it in Ashdale Hall

Re land for a community garden, speaking to Jim Lorimer about getting a piece of the land he owns off Westhill Road

## 9 Ward 13 Councillors updates

## **Cllr Iris Walker (submitted report in italics)**

### **FLATS AT ELRICK**

We have kept this item on our agenda at ward meetings but no updates have been forthcoming. I contacted Hillcrest Housing directly last week and received the following response:

"We are currently in negotiations with another contractor to complete the works. This has proved to be a challenging process but we hope to be in a position to restart works on site in the coming weeks. Once underway again, we will provide a full update and estimation of completion to both Scottish Government and Aberdeen City Council" (since corrected to Aberdeenshire!)

"The boundary of the site is fully secured as are the individual properties and blocks within that. Security cameras are in place and any unexpected motion on site alerts a local security firm who attend within minutes of the cameras being triggered. In addition they carry out regular patrols of the area as does our own Clerk of Works. The security in place is in compliance with the conditions of our Scottish Government funding."

### LANDSCAPE/ROADS WORK PLANS 2025/26

These plans are expected to come before Garioch Area Committee shortly. They will inform what the 2025/26 budgets will be spent on locally, with the usual reserve list in case extra funding is found or main list projects are not deliverable. May I suggest that David keeps a look out for the agendas coming through to WECC and circulate if CC members would like to see the reports/feedback anything to Ward 13 councillors before committee.

### **BUDGET**

I am attaching the link to the budget papers which were central to the decisions made at the last full council meeting. There is a lot of reading, apologies, but it sets out the context in which the budget including council tax was set.

https://aberdeenshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=142&Mld=7819

There are a number of key points within the reports to highlight:

- 1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a summary of the framework within which the council operates. It is shaped by external factors such as uncertainly over future funding levels, pay settlements for 2025/26, challenges in the construction sector and supply chain pressures, economic conditions and cost of living impacts on service demand and tax income, severe weather events leading to unexpected financial burdens.
- 2. Aberdeenshire Council faces a projected funding gap of £80million by 2029/30.
- 3. The Integration Joint Board (the board that oversees the Health & Social Care Partnership between the council and NHS Grampian) presents financial risks to the council with pressures expected for a number of years to come. Additional funding from the council will be necessary to address increased service costs due to demographic changes. The IJB will be working through the savings and charges agreed over the following weeks and months.



- 4. Public Sector employer National Insurance Contributions will increase from April 2025 adding significant cost pressures. Scottish Government did passport funding across to Aberdeenshire but only for about half of the increase, leaving a £5m shortfall.
- 5. The Scottish Government settlement to councils represented a 1% real-time increase from last year, offering limited fiscal relief. Aberdeenshire Council has been underfunded for years in terms of Scottish Government funding across all 32 local authorities. If we were to get our fair share, we would have been around £40 million better off this year alone. Lobbying continues within COSLA to Scottish Government. The problem we face in getting a fair share is that other councils would lose some of their funding (if Scottish Government did not increase the total amount available), so those councils which form part of COSLA are not going to back Aberdeenshire any time soon.

  6. A major challenge for financial sustainability is demographic change and rising service demand. Aberdeenshire has one of Scotland's fastest-aging populations. By 2030 Aberdeenshire will experience a decline in the number of
- one of Scotland's fastest-aging populations. By 2030 Aberdeenshire will experience a decline in the number of children and young people, and people of working age with a 28% growth in retirement-age residents and a 37% increase in over-85s. This is significantly impacting care services (as mentioned above in point 3). Meanwhile the working-age population is declining adding further economic pressures.

  7. The council tax freeze over the last few years have had a significant impact on council budgets. Although Scottisk
- 7. The council tax freeze over the last few years have had a significant impact on council budgets. Although Scottish Government have previously allocated additional funding in lieu of the freeze, they have baselined this into future years, the freeze means any future increases have started from a reduced position. Personally I don't think that the council tax is a fair system as it is based on capital rather than ability to pay, but as a council we have to work with what we have. The Scottish Government are proposing a consultation on council tax reform later this year. A 10% increase in council tax charge was the lowest that the proposed budget would accommodate without finding further cuts to services; the cuts we did agree on, and the increases to fees and charges were not taken lightly and will have consequences for many local residents. Council tax accounts for just over 20% of income to the council and there are limited ways of raising funds for local services.

### **GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE**

Next meeting is on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March. Papers of interest to WECC might be the National 20mph speed limit roll out and Area Committee Budget proposals. There will be public consultation on the 20mph speed limit.

Agenda for Garioch Area Committee on Tuesday, 18th March, 2025, 9.30 am - Aberdeenshire Council

#### **PLAYPARK FUNDING**

I have asked for a briefing/face to face session with Landscape Services for an update on where we are with the Scottish Government funding for Playparks (and the sum which was previously earmarked for the Westdyke playpark). There is a survey open at the moment on Engage Aberdeenshire website (closes 15<sup>th</sup> March) asking for local views on playparks, but so far there has been no engagement with local members or community councils. It may be that WECC has already completed the survey.

Playground Survey 2025 | Engage Aberdeenshire

Cllr Fatima Joji- nothing to add to what Cllr Walker has covered

### Cllr Ron Mckail -

Been getting many complaints re pot holes, especially on Westhill Drive

A new Academy for Peterhead has been approved, so a large portion of the capital budget will be allocated to it.

Some residents have expressed thanks to WECC for conducting the bus survey.

## 10 Westhill Green Spaces Update



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

#### **Volunteer Activity Since Last Month**

**Maintenance of Denman planted areas** – total number of hours is up to 152 for the first eight Wednesdays since the middle of January. Most of these have been spent pruning and trimming, apart from 5<sup>th</sup> March when most of the group planted 25 azaleas in four clusters around the park.

### Orbital Trail Development/Maintenance [clockwise from Gateway Sculpture]

### Monthly changes highlighted in green

**Gateway Sculpture** – no activity

**Hidden Garden** – no activity

**Silvertrees Drive to Peregrine Road** – no activity

Mason Lodge to Pitcairn Lodge – path at junction of A944 and Pitcairn Lodge driveway – no activity

Broadshade/Berryhill Circle — stakeholder meeting involving residents, factor, golf club Manager and WECC took place on 25<sup>th</sup> February. All present happy with the drainage work completed by WGC, although some residents seeking improvements. Residents agreed to remove blockages in contractor's ditches and to maintain ditch directly behind Berryhill Circle properties. WECC to arrange resources to repair sections of boundary dyke between farmer's field and WGC. WECC to help with sourcing trees to plant on north side of Berryhill Circle to mitigate privacy issues. Copies of correspondence on ditch clearing and "lack of consultation" sent to factor.

Westhill Golf Club – some path repairs will be required, using quarry dust – no activity

**Westhill Drive** – overhanging bushes opposite bus turning point – no activity

Link north to Craigmar – request to extend existing path by a further 100m to Craigmar junction – no activity

Meadowlands Farm track & lane - no activity

Links to Brimmond – no activity. Case under review with AC's Outdoor Access team leader.

**Mains of Kinmundy Hill** – no activity

**Links east from Hillside Road** — ownership of abandoned farm track and pavement vegetation from Hillside Road junction to Lawsondale turn-off — no activity

**Lawsondale** – no activity – spring patching work identified

#### **Other Green Spaces**

**Blackhills Court** – no activity – to be followed up March.

**Carnie Woods boardwalk removal** – no activity - have pitched this to Mears

**Carnie Crescent All Weather Pitches [AWP]** – no activity - awaiting reply and consent to effect improvements to path and planted areas – to be followed up

**Denman Park – PBIP Project –** There is a small retention [circa £4k] in place to ensure that all snags are addressed. Seeding of edges and compound to be repeated in spring – no activity

Rediscover Denman family fun event/proposal for Saturday, 31st May being worked up.

**Denman/Arnhall Moss core path** – consent granted to improve surface of a more direct path between Parkside and Tesco crossing.



Westdyke Leisure Centre accessible path – Offer of grant received – awaiting notice of contractor start date.

### **ALOAF [Aberdeenshire Local Outdoor Access Forum]**

No activity

## **Funding Update**

Budget allocated for 2024/25 - £2,000, Spend so far -£1,803, with an additional £400 committed to Westhill Golf Club for ditch construction. The overspend of £203 is covered by £200 donation of unspent Amazon vouchers from TE.

## **Planting Update**

**Daffodils from ACC -** three bags of bulbs remain **Summer Bedding Plants** – to be funded from WECC budget

Cherry Tree Avenues - Mervyn and I had another productive meeting with Tajana Sosic on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb to agree locations for native trees on Jubilee Drive and Westhill Drive [Denman Park] as part of a proposal that includes wild flowers to the Nature Restoration Fund on our behalf. The plan for Jubilee Drive is subject to landowner's permission on North and South side of approach to Tesco roundabout.

**Possible alliance with Westhill Gardening Club** - Vice chair, Sharon Whitehead has been in touch offering advice and practical support (via willing volunteers) to the GS team. Have invited Sharon to make a 15 minute presentation to our April meeting on her thoughts as to how we might work together collaboratively to enhance floral displays at various locations in Westhill and Elrick, subject to WECC members being happy with this and their being room on the agenda.

#### **Litter Picks**

A record number of 21 attended our organised pick on 8<sup>th</sup> March, including 8 new volunteers as a result of recent Facebook and Bulletin promotion. Sadly, my contacts at AC didn't arrange for the commercial waste bin to be emptied, despite repeated requests from 5<sup>th</sup> February.

**Additional Bins in Westhill –** unsatisfactory response received from AC's Waste Support Leader escalated to Area Manager.

Restoration of bin in Aldi car park – no action - to be followed up.

Re the offer from local insurance company Marsh to do voluntary work in May, Gordon has suggested they do litter picking behind Arnhall Business Park, on the B9119 roadside verges

Gordon & Mervyn

## 11 COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN (Diane Priestly)

Circulated report in italics:-

The planning group will be reviewing the progress of its action plan on a regular basis. (every 6 months) Willie sent out a draft review report today. Any comments on format welcome. There has been good progress in a number of areas, eg audit of open spaces.

A large detailed map of Westhill is required. Malcolm said he should be able to provide one.



The audit of open spaces is underway and we would like to thank WECC members and volunteers who have completed this task, the audit is to be completed by the end of this month and the information will be pulled together at our next planning meeting.

Information about Local Place Plans, I have been attending the webinars and the information that is being given is that a Local Place Plan will involve a huge amount of work however much of the work we did for the CAP could go towards it. Local Place Plans are community led plans which set out the proposals for the development and the use of the land.

## **Planning Matters (**Diane Priestly)

12 Circulated report in italics:-

### **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

APP/2024/1762 Costco is planning to add a petrol station to the Westhill site, plus installation of ev charging points, landscaping and associated works-awaiting a decision.

Gordon queried the proximity of this site to the Forties Pipeline, it must be within 50 metres

APP/2024/2019 Site opposite to Westhill Drive, Skene, Westhill, Aberdeenshire, applicant Marshalls Farm Shop-Full planning permission for change of use of agricultural Land to form Additional Fenced Dog Parks, Erection of Fences and Shelters (retrospective)-approved.

APP /2024/2150 McDonalds Restaurant Venture Way Arnhall Business Park Westhill Ab326BQ Full Planning Permission for the installation of 2 ev charging stations with ancillary substation and infrastructure-awaiting a decision.

APP/2025/0157 Alatas enterprise house Enterprise Drive AB326TQ full planning permission for the erection of a boundary fence

ENQ/2025/0215 Land at Mosscroft Avenue, AB326TQ-Proposal of Application Notice for the Erection of Residential Units, 50-60 units with Associated Open Space Roads and Infrastructure.

Please note that this is a Proposal of Application for the development of the former Stewart Milne Offices to build affordable housing, as it is considered to be a major development it is therefore required to undertake a consultation with the community which is on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March at the Westhill Community Church between 3.30 and 7.30pm. As we will be a statutory consultant to this application I hope that many of you will be able to attend this community engagement event.

I have also been contacted about the removal of soil on the site alongside the B9119 which is marked as Phase 4, Arnhall, Westhill allocated for employment in the LDP. I have been informed by planning that they are aware of the site investigations being carried by the landowner and that this investigation does not require planning permission

There are plans by Westhill Park Homes to develop 24 quality homes in what was the mobile site opposite Tritech International Limited which is off the Straik Road. These homes will be suitable for singletons, families and retired people. Their website says the homes are 'particularly attractive to people reaching retirement age and who wish to downsize or release the equity of an existing home'. Diane is trying to find out if planning permission will be required.

#### HILL OF FARE

I forwarded you the information from Jonty regarding the next stage of this windfarm planning application ,we were informed that the development proposal have now been passed from the Energy Consents Unit to the DPEA (the



planning and environmental appeals division) and as a result of this a reporter has now been appointed. The process of examining all the evidence that has been submitted will start at the beginning of April and the Reporter will submit her findings to the Scottish Government by January 2026.

#### **PYLONS**

The concern about pylons and wind farms continues and you will find these groups have some very interesting articles and comments: Not A Just Transition and Skene against Pylons

#### **ENERGY CONSENTS UNIT**

In the last 28 days there have been 2 applications for windfarms and 1 consultation, 3 pre applications for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and 1 consultation for one solar application.

Diane Priestley

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

## . Matters Arising 13 February:

**CSF Donations:** payments made to Tennis club and Rotary

**Budget 2025/6:** amendments made – see below for summary

**Bank Accounts:** a new 35-day Notice Digital Savings Account was opened to maximise interest earned [currently paying 2.75%]. This will replace existing inflexible Bulletin Account which will be closed in due course.

Re the bank mandates, it was agreed that previous chairperson Mervyn Barr can be removed and new chairperson Arthur McArthur can be added.

Mervyn can retain his bank card for purchases re the planting schemes.

It was also agreed that Bulletin manager David Ritchie can be given digital access to the new Bulletin account.

#### Financial Transactions - February

**Income**: £14,729 – comprising £200 Amazon voucher donation converted to cash plus £14,529 from 40 Bulletin advertisers

**Expenditure**: £5,110 – comprising £3,777 on Spring Bulletin production plus £780 agreed last month plus 4 payments totalling £523 on approved projects detailed on copy bank statement.

**Outstanding Commitments**: £1,387, comprising £400 committed to WGC to support costs of for digger hire and associated flood mitigation measures, plus £267 for two months of secretarial and minute honoraria, plus £600 for Spring Bulletin production, plus £120 on project expenditure incurred in March. DR expenses tabled and approved for payment prior to year end.

**Transfers:** £13,045, representing 2024 surplus for Westhill Bulletin was transferred from Bulletin Account to Main Account, and £5,000 was temporarily transferred from Main Account to new Westhill bulletin Digital Account to enable digital payments.

Bank Balances at Month End: £39,338

Main Account: £14,318 Bulletin Account: £23,733



Savings Account: £0 Bulletin Dig Acc: £1,287

#### Westhill Bulletin

71 advertisers opted to prepay £25,432 for 2025 to take advantage of discounted annual rates. Contribution from the Spring issue is expected to be circa 6,100 [57%] from 112 advertisers.

#### **Budget 2025/26**

First draft surplus of £8,005 after net spending of £15,400 on projects. Revised subsequently to £7,505 as follows, with approval requested:

- Increase in Bulletin contribution based on level of prepaid income £400
- Loss of Vinespring Church income £600
- Increase on ICT based on MC's quotation of £2,000 £300

These budget revisions were approved.

Gordon is speaking to Ian Mitchell about installing a bike rack in Denman Park. This would cost around £900. Malcolm advised that Nestrans could fund it.

Also Heather had been asked if a High Bar could be added to the outdoor gym equipment.

## 14 AOB & Close of Meeting

Rachid reported that the 'One Seed Forward' group in Aberdeen that he volunteers at will be putting seed potatoes into Westhill library in April to help residents to grow their own veg.

Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Date of Next Meeting-10<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm at Holiday Inn, with Zoom option.

## **APPENDIX**



## GARIOCH COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE

Community Council: Westhill and Elrick Reporting Period: 1 to 28 February 2025

## **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	1	2
Housebreaking	0	0
Public Nuisance	3	2
Road Traffic	2 collision, 6	4 collision, 5
	other	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 has been 1 report regarding Assault with no injury against a retail worker. The suspect has not been identified.

## Housebreaking:

There have been no reports.

#### **Public Nuisance:**

There have been 3 reports regarding rocks thrown at a house, a male begging and youths running across the road. No crimes have been recorded.

### Road Traffic:

This period has seen 2 reported collisions. One involving a car and pedestrian. The impact was at low speed and no significant injury was sustained. The other involved a single vehicle and did not require Police attendance.

Reports received relate to driving under the influence, a person at the side of the road, vehicle breakdown, document offences and a vehicle driving at speed.

Enquiry is ongoing into one instance of a parked car being damaged by another vehicle which failed to stop or report the collision.

A driver has been reported to the Procurator Fiscal regarding driving with a provisional licence while unaccompanied with no L plates.



A driver was issued a Conditional Offer of Fixed Penalty for failure to display a registration mark.

## **Drugs:**

There have 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.

#### **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

