

**ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE COUNTY BUILDINGS, WIGTOWN,
ON MONDAY, 11 JULY 2016**

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PRESENT

Willie McCartney <i>Vice Convenor</i>	Jak Kane <i>Secretary</i>	Ann Gray
Kerr Inger	David McAdam	Jock McDowall
Joe McKeown	Robin Richmond	

IN ATTENDANCE

David Moran	Bob Templeton	Sandra McDowall
Cllr Alistair Geddes	Cllr Jim McColm	Louise Kerr, <i>Galloway Gazette</i>
Angus Cameron NHS D&G	June Watters HSC Locality	Linda Bunney NHS D&G
Dr Stephen Gurling	41 Community members	

APOLOGIES

Rob Harford	Matt Kitson <i>Convenor</i>	Nick Walker
	Cllr Graham Nicol	

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CALL FOR URGENT OTHER BUSINESS

In the absence of the Convenor, Vice Convenor Willie McCartney took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the Community Council meeting. It was noted that Rob Harford, Matt Kitson, Nick Walker and Cllr Nicol had intimated their apologies for absence.

2 POLICE MATTERS

There was no Police representation at the meeting and no report had been provided.

3 WIGTOWN SURGERY

Willie McCartney explained that the Community Council had sent a letter to NHS Dumfries & Galloway outlining the concerns raised at its June meeting about the announced merger of Wigtown medical practice with the Merrick practice.

The issues identified at the meeting included:

- The lack of any consultation in the design of future provision of GP services by the new Practice;
- The impact of these plans on the elderly and other vulnerable members of the community including accessibility issues.
- The impact on waiting times.
- The future level of access to other services at the surgery such as the Nurse Practitioner, Midwifery and District Nursing.
- The long term plans for the surgery.
- The potential impact on the local Wigtown chemist services

He then introduced: Angus Cameron, Medical Director with NHS Dumfries & Galloway; June Watters, the Health & Social Care Locality Manager for Wigtownshire; Dr Stephen Gurling from Wigtown Surgery and Linda Bunney, Head of Primary Care Development, NHS D&G.

See Appendix A for report on the subsequent discussion.

Following the issue of the Wigtown Surgery, the Community Council meeting then continued with only the following individuals in attendance:

Willie McCartney *Vice Convenor*

Jak Kane *Secretary*

Kerr Inger

David McAdam

Jock McDowall

Joe McKeown

Robin Richmond

David Moran

Cllr Alistair Geddes

Cllr Jim McColm

4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 13 June 2016)

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and it was noted that the proposed Co-options of Bob Templeton, Sandra McDowall and David Moran had not been included in Any Other Business. The minutes were adopted subject to these details being inserted, proposed by Robin Richmond and seconded by Jock McDowall.

5 CO-OPTION OF NEW COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

In addition to the three candidates nominated at the June Community Council meeting, Matt Kitson had proposed the co-option of Cora Sharp and Marie McCann. As there were now five candidates for three vacancies the Council had been asked for advice on the process to be followed and if it was possible for one Councillor to propose more than one person. In the absence of any response it had been decided to carry the decision on the proposed co-options to the August meeting.

6 UPDATES & REPORTS

1: Consultations WP

Jak Kane confirmed that, as there were no current or forthcoming consultations from either the Scottish Government or Dumfries & Galloway Council, no report was being presented for consideration.

2: Planning WP

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix B). Jak explained that Nick Walker had indicated that the only item of note was the new application for the conversion of the workshop/store in Lochancroft Lane to a dwellinghouse. Willie McCartney advised that he had spoken to the neighbours and they did not have any problem with the proposals. It was agreed that no submission be made. Report approved.

7 TASKS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Derelict Properties – Cllr Geddes said that a meeting of the Council's Housing Sub Committee on 13 May would consider a request from DGHP for an additional £20,000 needed to cover the cost of additional work to enable the refurbishment of the property in North Main Street that would provide two affordable homes. He confirmed that the recommendation was for approval.

He also regrettably informed the Community Council that, in the opinion of the Council's Planning Department, 24 High Street had not yet reached the level of deterioration that would justify the issue of a Section 179 Notice to the owners of the property. He was aware that Harry Hay would be convening a strategic Housing Service Review Group that would be tasked with dealing with the issue of dereliction. In the interim, he confirmed that the owners of the neighbouring properties could have the right to take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman but only once they had gone through the Council's complaints procedure.

8 COMMUNICATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

SAYLSA - Invitation from the Community Rail Partnership for Carrick and Wigtownshire to a Presentation and discussion of its line action plan on 29 June in Stranraer.

Wigtown Common Good - Agenda for meeting in Whithorn of 4 July including consideration of application from Wigtown & Bladnoch Food Festival.

DGC - Flood Risk Management Plan - extracts distributed for Spittal and Kirkinner. -

Third Sector Dumfries & Galloway - Advice of new Scottish Government 'Community Choices Fund' to support participatory budgeting (PB) in 2016/17 as a tool for community engagement. £750,000 available with a closure date of 29 July. There is no minimum grant, but preference will be

given to bids of at least £20,000 due to the cost and time involved in engaging in a meaningful and deliberative PB process. A condition of support is for Community Council applicants to nominate a staff member or volunteer to take part in Scottish Government funded regional training. At a minimum this involves attending one of 6 full day regional training events designed to support the organisation to plan a PB process effectively and independently.

DGC – Community Council Admin grant 2016/17. Annual Monitoring Report for 2015/16 sent to DGC along with report and accounts.

SP EnergyNetworks - the full Dumfries & Galloway Strategic Reinforcement Project will not be going ahead which would have seen new pylons and electricity station at Newton Stewart but a 'Reduced Scheme' consisting of new 132kV transmission infrastructure only between Kendoon and Tongland now the most favourable option, after the detailed review determined that the full 400kV Auchencrosh to Harker proposal is not the most cost effective to take forward at this time..

9 COUNCILLORS ISSUES

Cllr Geddes advised that one of the consequences of the Council's decision to reduce the number of occasions that closed cemeteries were mown was that the grounds of active churches like Kirkinner were not being maintained. He had taken the issue up with Karen Brownlie and she had arranged for the necessary work to be carried out later in the week.

Cllr McColm confirmed that one of the three cubicles in the Wigtown Public Toilets remained out of service because of an alleged water pressure problem and Scottish Water was looking for a solution. He confirmed that the Ladies/Gents signage was to be removed from the now unisex disabled toilets.

10 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

11 NEXT MEETING

Monday, 8 August 2016, at 7.30pm, Wigtown County Buildings.

Appendix A. Wigtown Surgery

Over 50 people, including patients and staff from the Merrick and Kirkcowan practices, attended the Royal Burgh of Wigtown & District Community Council's July meeting to discuss the concerns raised at its June meeting about the impending merger of the Wigtown & Merrick Medical Practices into the Galloway Hills Medical Group. Vice Chairman Willie McCartney welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the Community Council had sent a letter to NHS Dumfries & Galloway and the issues identified included:

- The lack of any consultation in the design of future provision of GP services by the new Practice;
- The impact of these plans on the elderly and other vulnerable members of the community including accessibility issues;
- The impact on waiting times;
- The future level of access to other services at the surgery such as the Nurse Practitioner, Midwifery and District Nursing;
- The long term plans for the surgery;
- The potential impact on the local Wigtown chemist services

Willie then introduced NHS Dumfries & Galloway's Angus Cameron, Medical Director, June Watters, Locality Manager for Wigtownshire, and Linda Bunney, Head of Primary Care Development along with Dr Gurling from Wigtown Surgery.

Dr Cameron began with an outline of the national picture and the very difficult times for rural General Practice in particular. He explained the additional workload on GPs with an ageing population living longer and with more long term conditions having to be treated by these GPs. This was partnered with challenges in recruiting young doctors especially to rural practices. There were now fewer graduates moving into General Practice than previously and, where practices could expect to see 80 applicants for one vacancy 15 years ago, nowadays some practices with vacancies have had no applicants for two years.

Dr Cameron explained that he considered the merger of the two practices to be the best of the options available with the others being:

- The cheapest option would have been for the Practice to be closed completely with patients dispersed to surrounding practices.
- NHS D&G could take over the Practice with it being staffed by costly locums providing disjointed care and a resultant substandard service.
- The Practice could be linked with Practices in the Central Belt with their GPs sent on country attachment for 2/3 weeks at a time, again providing no continuity of care.

The meeting was then opened to the floor with a range of questions put to Dr Gurling, Dr Cameron and June Watters.

Dr Gurling explained that the lack of consultation with the community had been due to the timeframe imposed by the failure to attract an applicant GP and the impending retirement of Dr Jim Dunn. Dr Dunn had been due to retire at the end of July but had agreed to defer his retiral date by a month and Dr Gurling was extremely grateful for the extra time this provided.

For elderly and other vulnerable patients who were dependent on public transport and with only morning appointments to be available in Wigtown, the dearth of public transport in afternoons and early evening was seen as potentially problematic. Dr Cameron explained that Jeff Ace, Chief Executive of NHS D&G had been speaking to SWestrans and Dumfries & Galloway Council on the need to mould rural public and community transport to meet local needs across Dumfries & Galloway. June Watters said that, if there were to be any transport schemes piloted as a result of these discussions, she would be looking for them to be tested in Wigtownshire. There was a level of doubt from the audience that the discussions would result in a sustainable community transport system that met the needs of the community given the likelihood of further cuts in services following the review at the end of the current bus contracts in 2017.

Dr Cameron had mentioned that while NHS D&G could offer relocation support to incoming GPs, he was aware that Cumbria for example was offering golden handshakes of £20,000. In his opinion such schemes did not offer value for money and NHS D&G resources could be better invested elsewhere. For example, Scottish Government were talking about starting another Medical School and Dumfries & Galloway, Dundee and the Highlands would be making a joint bid for a virtual university. A Dumfries &

Royal Burgh of Wigtown & District Community Council

Galloway and Highlands & Islands alliance would also be bidding for all £2.5M of a Scottish Government Rural Recruitment Fund. If successful, it would be used for things like training, improving broadband & phone coverage, video linking, supporting returners with training, and advertising vacancies in places like Northern & Southern Ireland, Holland, New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

Dr Cameron had mentioned a shortage of medical students coming from rural schools and it was suggested that this could be due to few students being presented for six Highers and with Medicine having a Minimum entry grade set at five As at Higher level. Dr Cameron agreed that Universities needed to look for ways to include others who were more rounded individuals and perhaps better suited to General Practice. The opportunities offered by 'Reach' were highlighted. Reach is a national initiative specifically focused on access to medical degrees and supported by funding from the Scottish Funding Council. Reach gives secondary pupils from S4 to S6 in schools in disadvantaged and rural areas more insight into studying medicine as well as practical experience that would help with an application. Taster sessions and student experience days are provided as well as opportunities to talk to current students, help obtaining work experience and support preparing for UCAS applications and the UK Clinical Aptitude Test.

It was confirmed that the new Practice would continue in their efforts to attract a fourth GP and it was hoped that the new larger practice would be a much more attractive proposition for potential applicants. However, Dr Gurling was unable to guarantee that success would mean a return to full-time GP service in Wigtown although he expected the recruitment of a fourth GP could facilitate running some afternoon surgeries in Wigtown again. With only morning appointments in Wigtown available from September 2016, it was confirmed that reception staff would be expected to take any potential transport difficulties into consideration when offering appointments.

Worries about the future accessibility of repeat prescriptions and the impact on Wigtown Pharmacy were allayed by Pharmacist, Stephanie Brown who said that the Pharmacy would continue to work closely with the new Practice and would assist any patient having difficulties.

Towards the end of the meeting there was wide acknowledgment of the high level of service provided by all staff at the Wigtown Practice in the past and appreciation of Dr Gurling's efforts to ensure the continuation of a local GP service in the town.

Willie McCartney closed this part of the Community Council meeting by thanking Drs Cameron and Gurling, June Watters and Linda Bunney as well as all community members for coming along to discuss the community's concerns and views regarding the new Galloway Hills Medical Group.

Appendix B. Planning Working Party Report

Members - Willie McCartney, Joe McKeown, Robin Richmond, Nick Walker.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Dumfries and Galloway Council are required to change their existing application registration system (Acolaid) to a different system (Uniform) to bring it into line with other local authorities across the country.

In order for all the necessary information to be copied across to the new system and all the relevant changes to take place smoothly there will require to be a period of downtime with no systems available and therefore no new registration taking place and no Weekly Lists available.

The downtime period is likely to be at the end of July and beginning of August probably for three weeks. They have undertaken to keep us informed and supply precise details as and when they are available.

New applications

16/P/1/0116 21 LOCHANCROFT LANE, WIGTOWN

Alterations, extension and change of use of workshop/store to form dwellinghouse and installation of an air source heat pump. Applicant also submitted Listed Building Consent application as the property is C Listed but Planning decision was that no consent required.

Update on applications

Nil.

Renewable energy proposals

15/P/1/0031 SHENNANTON WINDFARM, NEWTON STEWART.

12 turbines, 100m to blade tip, ancillary structures, etc.

UPDATE: Pending Appeal (ref. PPA-170-2109); target date of 6 May delayed and no update or guidance as to when decision expected.

15/P/2/0053 CALIFORNIA WINDFARM, CARSLUITH.

7 turbines, 110m to blade tip, structures, etc.

UPDATE: Pending Appeal (ref. PPA-170-2107); target date for decision 16 June 2016, but no update since end of April.

13/P/1/0366 AUCHLEAND WINDFARM, WIGTOWN.

7 turbines, 130 m to blade tip, ancillary structures, etc. No movement since August 2015

UPDATE: Nil.

ACTION

Note report.

2.7.2016