

**ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE COUNTY BUILDINGS, WIGTOWN,  
ON MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2019**

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[www.WigtownCC.org.uk](http://www.WigtownCC.org.uk)

**PRESENT**

Sandra McDowall <i>Convenor</i>	Willie McCartney <i>Vice Convenor</i>	Jak Kane <i>Secretary</i>
Kerr Inger	Matt Kitson	David Moran
David McAdam	Robin Richmond	Nick Walker
	Kevin Witt	

**IN ATTENDANCE**

PC Krystle Martin	Andrew Bielinski, RSPB	Alan Wykes, WB Wildfowlers
	Paul Tarling, RSPB	

**APOLOGIES**

Jock McDowall	Cllr David Inglis	Cllr Jim McColm
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**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Jock McDowall and Cllr David Inglis and it was noted that Cllr McColm was out of the country.

**2 POLICE MATTERS**

Krystle Martin, Community Policer Officer reported that there was an ongoing Police Enquiry in relation to a local Missing Person. Gavin Tait, aged 74 years and living in Maidland Terrace, had not been seen in the last three weeks and this is believed to be out of character. She asked that anyone with information regarding Mr Tait and his whereabouts, contact the Police on 101.

She then spoke about the 'No Cold Calling Zones' (NCCZ) joint initiative between Trading Standards and the Police. This was one way to help prevent crimes perpetrated by bogus callers knocking on doors so that they can access properties and steal once inside or those offering to carry out gardening, building or driveway work and either take payment without carrying out the work, or alternatively charge over the asking price and carry out substandard work.

A NCCZ is as the name suggests, a zone or street where the majority of, if not all, the local residents have decided that cold callers are not welcome. The creation of a NCCZ creates a community spirit and encourages neighbours to look out for one and other while reinforcing any close links which are already in place.

Once a possible street has been identified, Police will contact all residents and discuss what No Cold Calling Zones are. If there is enough support then Police will liaise with Trading Standards and seek to set up a NCCZ.

This would involve signage being placed on the street advising it is a NCCZ and all houses within the street will also be issued with door stickers advising it is a NCCZ, to deter bogus callers. The Bogus Callers will naturally expect that Householders in that street would be better informed and aware of the issues, and that the opportunity to successfully commit crime will be reduced.

The Police were also highlighting Crime Prevention Advice to farmers who might be busier during the lambing season and might be less vigilant in securing equipment such as quad bikes and ATVs.

Alan Wykes asked that the Police make people aware of the need to close gates as he finds that walkers can be careless and leave them open around this time. PC Martin said that she would spread the word.

**3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Agenda was approved and the McGuffie VC Plaque was added to the Agenda as 'Other Business'.

**4 WIGTOWN BAY LNR**

Sandra McDowall explained that, following the March meeting when Cllr McColm said that there would be negative repercussions from the Council's budget decisions, it had now been suggested that the Council will no longer be working to update the Wigtown Bay Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Bye-Laws that would see the RSPB Crook of Baldoon Reserve subsumed into the LNR. This was a result of DGC Environmental Services losing most of their staff other than posts that are externally funded for project work in the recent budget cuts. Consequently, there will not be the resources to support the LNR. Simon Fieldhouse, DGC Environment Manager indicated that, as a result, the LNR could be de-declared which would see the Bye-laws that regulate things like wildfowling and cockle fishing being revoked.

A meeting of the Wigtown Bay LNR Management Committee (on which the Community Council has representation) is scheduled for 16 April when Simon Fieldhouse will be able to give the Committee a more detailed explanation of the ramifications on the LNR. Alan Wykes of the Wigtown Bay Wildfowling Club (WBWC) and the representatives had agreed to attend the CC meeting to discuss this issue prior to the Management Committee meeting.

Alan Wykes said that WBWC had invested a lot into the LNR and its management over the years. It provided voluntary wardens to monitor people using the LNR and carried out necessary maintenance at no cost to the Council. The Council was suggesting that the LNR should be de-declared due to budgetary reasons but in recent years there had been no Council Ranger and the Wildfowling permit system was now self-financing and administered by Machars Action. The Club did not want to see the return of unregulated shooting on the Reserve and felt it imperative that the Bye-Laws should not be revoked. The LNR brought a lot of visitors to the area and not just restricted to wildfowling. These visitors brought economic benefit to the area, staying in local tourist accommodation and using local restaurants, cafes, bars and shops.

Andrew Bielinski explained that the LNR Bye laws needed to be updated to fit with the new Scottish Outdoor Access Code as well as being extended to include the Crook of Baldoon. The Crook Management Agreement between the Council and RSPB had been signed and he had been recently told that the final piece of the jigsaw would be three Public Meetings (Wigtown, Creetown and Newton Stewart) that needed to be organised for the approval of the new Bye Laws. It now appeared the Council did not have the funds nor the will to carry out this consultation work. He suggested that the de-declaration of the LNR and the revocation of the bye-laws would need at least the same level of consultation so no actual cost savings would be achieved by ceasing work on having them accepted. The Council's proposal to de-declare the largest LNR in the UK did not fit with the Council's support of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and the proposed establishment of the Galloway National Park. Andrew said that he was on the Galloway Biosphere Board and he agreed to raise the proposed LNR closure with the group. He thought that the Council had to recognise the importance of continuing the LNR's existence which had great conservation and environmental value that was supported by the RSPB, BASC (British Association of Shooting & Conservation) and Scottish Natural Heritage. Andrew would be meeting with colleagues to agree a way forward in challenging the Council.

The Community Council agreed to lobby the Council, Local Councillors, MSPs and the members of the LNR Management Committee to have the Council agree to continue with the establishment of the new Bye-Laws for Wigtown Bay LNR. Responsibility for the LNR should remain within the Council's Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Department but transferred to Planning Services, who will also have responsibility for the Countryside and Access Service's statutory services.

**5 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 11 March 2019)**

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved, proposed by Nick Walker and seconded by Kevin Witt.

**6 MATTERS ARISING**

**a. Defibrillator Awareness Raising event**

Jak Kane confirmed that he had arranged for Dr Gurling to attend along with David Hirst from Heartstart who would speak about the proposed training course. It was agreed that the event should go ahead 6:30-7:30 pm on Wednesday, 16 April in the Supper Room, County Buildings. A poster for the event would be distributed.

**b. Wigtown Primary School – Nursery alterations**

Sandra McDowall referred to the meeting representatives of the Community Council and the School Parent Council had with John Thin, Acting Head of Education; Larann Foss, Education Office re the planned development works at Wigtown Primary and the reduction of pupil capacity to 98 as a result of the loss of one of the five classrooms.

She said that the officers were not willing to accept the Community's arguments that the school would be over the maximum capacity of pupils as early as next term

Notes of the meeting had been circulated by the Secretary and, although there had been no positive outcome from the meeting, the Parent Council were determined to continue with their aim of retaining a fifth class. They would be asking John Thin to explain what other alternative solutions were looked at and dismissed (if any) supported by evidence and costings including confirmation of existing pupil numbers and expected numbers for next term. The feeling was that the Council were being short sighted as the need for a fifth classroom was expected to be confirmed and its creation after the Nursery alterations were carried out would not be covered by Scottish Government funding.

The apparent lack of support at Community Council meetings from the local DGC Councillors was recorded particularly the lack of notice of the September 2018 committee report that reduced the school capacity to 98 pupils and four classes. The report also noted that officers would share the information with head teachers and their parent council chairs to ensure that they were aware of the information and understand the approach to the calculations. This did not happen until six months after the fact. The inability of the Community Council to discuss issues such as the Primary School and the Local Nature Reserve with Councillors at the CC meetings was concerning and it was agreed that the Secretary write to question the continuance of a rota for members' attendance and its apparent failings.

**c. Resilience**

Jak Kane had managed to obtain a copy of Wigtown's Community Resilience Plan from Graeme McKie as Joe McKeown was unable to provide one. He had sent it on to Mandy Patterson, the newly appointed DGC Community Resilience Officer. And she had pencilled in Monday, 9 September for a visit to a CC meeting. She said that she would be willing to meet with resilience group members outwith a CC meeting before then if needed.

**d. Bird Hide**

Kevin Witt confirmed that he had sent the list of local contractors who could carry out the necessary repair work to Tom Henry, DGC Ranger. As Tom had now been moved to

another post, it was agreed that a CCES request be submitted asking for details of who would now be taking over responsibility for this issue.

**e. Thomas Wheatley Gravestone**

Hugh Dougherty of Heritage Railway Magazine had been advised of the estimated cost of refurbishing the monument and he would look to write an article to try and raise the necessary funds from donations.

**f. Community Council membership**

The Secretary had written to both Ann Gray and Rob Harford to advise their CC membership had been invalidated due to non-attendance.

**g. Wigtown-Bladnoch footpath**

The Council had advised that they were not responsible for the damaged wall or fence adjacent to the footpath. The Secretary had raised the issue with the landowner who had removed the obstruction that the fence was causing. The damaged dyke was the ongoing subject of an insurance claim for damage done by a car.

**7 UPDATES & REPORTS**

**a: Financial Report**

Jak Kane advised that there had been no movement in the accounts since the March meeting.

**b: Consultations WP**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting giving details of current consultations.

- a) **A consultation on fireworks in Scotland** - The Scottish Government was gathering information and views on the use and regulation of fireworks in Scotland. They wanted to hear about experiences and what people thought about the way fireworks are currently used. The consultation would help to identify gaps, issues or unintended consequences with the current regulatory framework although much of the current legislation on fireworks is reserved to Westminster. The Consultation was looking for individual responses and the link to the online consultation was given.
- b) **Local Roads network in Scotland** The Scottish Government had commissioned a study on the value of the local roads network in Scotland. As part of this study, they were consulting with a wide range of stakeholders to gather primary evidence and insights into the importance of the local roads network to the communities it serves, both today and in the future. They have organised a specific online survey for consideration by community councils across Scotland. It seeks responses to a number of key questions relevant to the study and a pdf version had been circulated. Community Councillors that wanted to contribute were asked to either send Jak Kane their answers to the various questions or hand in a hard copy to Machars Action and he would collate a community council response.

**c: Planning WP**

Nick Walker had circulated a report prior to the meeting. Nick explained that there were two new applications to be considered.

The first was a retrospective application and concerned a proposal to change a planning condition on a new build in Station Road from being required to erect a dry stone boundary dyke to being replaced by a wooden fence. The original decision was intended to link the modern house with the older traditional properties opposite which are in the Conservation Area. It was agreed that the CC would object, in keeping with the original reasoning and decision.

The second was in connection with Faodil, 7 North Main Street increasing space in the shop by extending into the upper floors and the addition of a hanging sign. It was agreed that there would be no submission.

Updates on earlier applications were noted.

Nick gave notice that an application had been lodged by Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative for the development of the former Bank of Scotland building and it was likely to be considered at the May meeting. He and four other community councillors would need to declare an interest as they were on the Initiative's Board.

#### **d: Christmas Lights WP Report**

Sandra McDowall had circulated a report of the Working Party's recent meeting at which it had been agreed the name of the working party should be changed to Town Square Development as the remit covered much more than Christmas lighting.

It had been proposed that 16amp sockets be installed on the poles of the heritage lights around the square to simplify power provision for lights and deliver flexibility. This arrangement had been carried out in Newton Stewart and Newton Stewart Initiative would be asked how they had negotiated the scheme and with whom.

The Working Party would be looking at various types of lighting including light projection onto the County Buildings that could be used by other organisations at different times of the year - the Book Festival, Riding of the Marches, Community Festival and Remembrance weekend.

The Council had been contacted re dead trees around the square and Sandra would be meeting with Karen Brownlie to discuss a solution. A second meeting had been scheduled for 29 April.

#### **e: Community Festival WP Report**

Sandra had also circulated notes of the April meeting of the Community Festival Working Party. Good progress was being made with a very positive working party. The group would next meet on Monday, 20 May.

### **8 CORRESPONDENCE, ETC**

***British Spring Clean*** - Information on Keep Britain Tidy's 2019 campaign – 22 March to 23 April - had been circulated.

**U3A** – There had been a display of the activities organised by the U3A after their AGM and it had been suggested that the Community Council might want them to attend a CC meeting to explain what they were about. It was agreed that Jak Kane would circulate a copy of the U3A leaflet that detailed all the various Interest Groups.

***Heartstart*** – the local charity was offering a free certificated training course in the use of CPR and defibrillators. As previously mentioned, they had been invited to the Defibrillator Awareness raising session with a view to identifying sufficient volunteers to take the course.

***Broader Machars Federation of Community Councils*** – Anthony Berretti had emailed a note of the Federation's meeting where they had been addressed by Ian Dick, Chairman of the Dual the A75 group asking for support of their campaign for better transport links to and from the region.

***South of Scotland Enterprise and Community Councils Newsletters*** – copies had been circulated

***Emma Harper MSP*** – A letter had been received asking if WCC would be prepared to propose a discussion at a CC meeting regarding use of an Anaerobic Digester for dog waste. The offer was declined

**Wigtown Common Good** – A report had been received on 1 April that was due to be considered by the Common Good Committee on 8 April. The report claimed that "*The Royal Burgh of Wigtown and District Community Council has been written to and provided with details of the application*" and that "*No comments were received from the Royal Burgh of Wigtown and District Community Council*". As the CC had neither been provided with details of the application nor given the opportunity to comment prior to publication of the report, the Secretary had been instructed to write to the local authority members to complain once more about the lack of effective consultation. The question of the Bowling Club benefiting from being on Common Good land but not contributing to the fund because of the absence of a lease was also to be raised.

Wigtown Bowling Club had applied for a grant of £316.20 as 50% contribution towards cost of tables and chairs but the Community Council recommended that the award be restricted to the level of free income of £60 rather than draw down some of the capital balance. Willie McCartney was able to confirm that he had attended the meeting and the Committee had agreed to award £60 to the Bowling Club.

## 9 COUNCILLORS ISSUES

There were no Councillors present at the meeting and no notifications received.

## 10 OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

**McGuffie VC Plaque** – Nick explained that it was planned for there be two plaques on the pillars at the McGuffie VC Archway gates. One had been produced and Karen Brownlie was arranging for it to be fixed to the left-hand pillar. Nick had circulated for comment the draft layout of the second plaque that would be fixed to the opposite pillar. The Community Council agreed the design and content.

**Kirklandhill** – The pavement and kerbstones near the corner of Kirklandhill and Lochancroft had been damaged by a heavy vehicle. The Secretary would report this to the Council.

## 10 NEXT MEETING

**7.30pm on Monday, 13 May 2019 in Wigtown County Buildings.**