

ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY, 11 MAY 2020

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www.WigtownCC.org.uk

PRESENT

Sandra McDowall (Convenor)	Jak Kane (Secretary)	David Moran
Willie McCartney	Cora Sharp	Paul Tarling
	Nick Walker	

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr Katie Hagmann	Cllr Jackie McCamon	Cllr Jim McColm
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APOLOGIES

Kathleen Hart	Kerr Inger	Ada Montgomery
David McAdam	Cllr David Inglis	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Kathleen Hart, Kerr Inger, Ada Montgomery, David McAdam and Cllr Inglis.

2. POLICE MATTERS

No police officer joined the meeting.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 9 March 2020)

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

4 MATTERS ARISING

a. Kirkinner School Zone lights

Jak Kane advised that, while the warning lights were not working, it may be that this was due to the Primary School being closed but he suspected that the lights had still not been repaired. He would monitor the situation.

b. Marine Scotland Consultation on the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy

Jak Kane confirmed he had submitted the CC response before the 25 March deadline and had circulated a copy to Community Councillors.

c. Community Festival – 11-17 July 2020

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown, planning for the 2020 Festival had been cancelled. Nick Walker advised that the Wigtown Riding of the Marches which had also been scheduled for July had been cancelled as well.

d. VE Day 75

The planned Community Council event had been cancelled.

e. Great British Spring Clean

The Great British Spring Clean had been postponed and it was hoped that it would be rearranged for later in the year.

f. High Cemetery Entrance

Karen Brownlie had said the Council would look into putting down hard standing at the entrance. She had confirmed that the work would form part of the future Land Asset Capital Programme. However, due to COVID-19, this project had not been agreed at Committee yet and was currently not seen as an essential piece of work at this time. She would progress the project in the future weeks/months. Ada Montgomery had raised the issue of unstable headstones in the Cemetery and Karen had advised that all

the Council would do would be to make these safe i.e. lie them down. If they could contact the lair owner/family then they would highlight the situation to them. She said that if the CC could identify the headstones involved, she would have them checked. Jak Kane would provide Ada with a plan of the cemetery and ask her to indicate the unstable stones and he would pass the information to the Council. Cllr McColm advised that there was also a problem with one of the boundary walls but it had been reported to the Council.

g. Paper Recycling Skip

A response had been received from Ralph Steedman, DGC Principal Technician Environment. He apologised for the Council's omission in not advising the CC that the paper bank was to be taken away prior to its removal. He explained that the facility was a legacy from the previous waste PFI contract with Shanks and had ended up being the only Council paper bank remaining in D&G. There had been indications that the paper bank was being heavily used by commercial businesses and the Recycling Point was intended exclusively for domestic waste from households. Since the Wigtown area (under normal circumstances) had a kerbside recycling service for householders that included paper and cardboard, the decision had been taken to remove the paper bank on a permanent basis.

h. WBLNR Management Committee meeting – 25 March 2020

The scheduled meeting had been cancelled because of COVID-19.

i. Federation of Community Councils AGM – 31 March 2020

This had also been cancelled because of COVID-19.

j. McGuffie VC Gardens

Wigtown in Bloom (WIB) had confirmed that they had asked the Council to trim the bushes in the gardens and the Council had been very quick in carrying out the work at what was the best time in the year for the work to be done. WIB were more than happy with the Council's work and had no complaints on how the gardens had been left.

k. Caravans in Wigtown Lorry Park

Graeme Alison, DGC Roads Manager had advised that the Car Parks (Use Restrictions) Order 1985 was vague with regard to parking caravans. The Order was being reviewed and consultation would take place with regard to the future use of Council car parks, including their use for the possible storage of caravans. It was agreed that the CC would only monitor the situation in the interim to ensure that the caravans in the Lorry Park did not become a nuisance and that an effort should be made to identify the relative owners so that they could be contacted directly to resolve any issues.

5 RESILIENCE GROUP REPORT

Sandra McDowall said that she had tried to keep Community Councillors up to date with Resilience Group activities but this was only possible with those who had access to emails. Jak Kane undertook to print copies of future emails and deliver them to David McAdam.

Sandra explained that she, Jak Kane, Cora Sharp and Anne Barclay met every Friday night via Zoom to discuss progress and any issues that had emerged during the week. So far, issues had been relatively easy to resolve and the reports received from those residents using the service had been very positive.

An update had been delivered to all households at the end of April to advise that the decision had been made to reduce the number of daily checks from four to three. This was mainly due to the 8-10 pm check being seldom used and it was thought that dropping it would help ease the load on the volunteers especially as it looked as if lockdown would continue for some time to come. Residents had also been asked to try to think ahead and give a weekly shopping list to their volunteer by 4 pm on Wednesdays in Wigtown and on Mondays in Kirkinner and Whauphill. This decision was made as the Co-op had agreed to support a request for early morning pick and pack

slots, enabling volunteers to do multiple shops before the shop opened. The Group also had an arrangement with the local Chemist and residents could request that their prescriptions be placed in the Resilience bag, which is uplifted every afternoon and delivered by volunteers on their rounds.

Volunteers Week this year was to be celebrated from 1-8 June. It had been agreed that a Thank You card would be sent to all volunteers to recognise their contribution and expressing thanks for helping the community at this time of crisis. The volunteers needed to know how much their effort meant to the vulnerable and the elderly in this community and just how much they were appreciated.

The aforementioned flier also asked for feedback and one resident advised that some residents, particularly the elderly, really missed using the computers in the library and were disadvantaged by not having access to online information. This was particularly true of Wigtown Resilience information as, other than printed fliers, the bulk of information was disseminated via the Group's Facebook page. The Scottish Government had recently announced the 'Connecting Scotland' programme that will offer an internet connection, training and support, and a laptop or tablet to vulnerable people who are not already online during the response to COVID-19. The programme was not currently able to accept referrals directly for individuals but the rollout of the scheme would be monitored and the community advised.

In closing Sandra said that in the week to Sunday, 3 May there had been 93 red cards reported and 24 prescriptions delivered. Numbers for the following week were expected to increase as 28 prescriptions had already been delivered up to Friday, 8 May.

6 UPDATES & REPORTS

a: Financial Report

Jak Kane had circulated a copy of a report on the final Accounts for the year to 31 March 2020 together with the report for the period to date.

Since 1 April 2020 the only Admin Account expenditure had been £5.20 paid to Machars Action for printing. Grants for Resilience had been received from: Wigtown Community Shop £1,000; Foundation Scotland £1,000; and DGC £574.75. A total of £801.67 had been paid for producing Red Cards, Hand Sanitiser, ID lanyards and Printing.

There had been no transactions in the Festivals Account.

b: Consultations WP

There was no Consultation Report as there were no new consultations to be considered.

c: Planning WP.

Nick Walker had circulated a report prior to the meeting that incorporated updates on earlier applications.

There had been one new application submitted to Planning Department in connection with work that would see the erection of a detached domestic garage with self-contained accommodation above at 1 Bladnoch, Wigtown. The property was a C listed heritage building in the Bladnoch conservation area but the proposed detached garage did not affect the listed house. Consequently, the Planning WP recommended no submission

Nick had been contacted by Ian and Sandy McCreath as a pre-application enquiry and they had provided sketches that indicated a likely layout and architects' impressions of six holiday lodges that they were proposing to develop in the field below Bayview House. They had said that they were eager to have feedback on their proposals including constructive criticism before finalising their planning application. There had been some local concerns expressed about the plans and Nick had asked for details so that he could pass them on to the McCreaths in the hope that they could be addressed in the final proposals. It was agreed that the Planning WP should look out for submission of the relative application so that it could be widely publicised in the local

area to provide community members with the opportunity of making representations. While the Council had suspended the meeting of the Planning Committee and extended the power of Planning Officers to take decisions under delegated powers, applications attracting six objections would still need Committee approval and be considered by the COVID-19 Committee.

Cllrs Hagmann, McCamon and McColm did not participate in the discussion of the Planning issues.

d: Town Square Development Update

Sandra McDowall reported that David Jones of SPEN had confirmed that a Three Phase Electricity supply would be installed into the Town gardens. The undergrounding project had been given first stage approval but there was no timescale for the project as yet. Cllr McColm confirmed that he had informed Grant Coulter of the Council to liaise with Kenny Bowie of SPEN to discuss the potential for installation of electric charging points or infrastructure as part of the project. As there had been SPEN staff in Wigtown apparently surveying the overhead power lines recently, it was agreed that Sandra would contact SPEN to establish the up to date position.

7 CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

- a. Bonfires** – The Council had been asked what regulations were in place re the burning of garden rubbish as there had been local complaints about the increase in the number of residents burning garden and general waste at their properties. Julie Baxter, DGC Environmental Health Officer had provided a comprehensive response that basically advised that the legal position was that there were no restrictions on when you can or cannot have a bonfire although you shouldn't cause a smoke nuisance to anyone and any fire that would produce noxious odours or dark smoke would not be permitted. The full response would be circulated
- b. Paths for All** – The grant application for funding to buy equipment to maintain Wigtown's path network had been submitted.
- c. Planning Role & Community Councils during COVID-19** – The Improvement Service (the national improvement organisation for local government in Scotland) had asked Councils for information on how Community Councils were functioning in terms of fulfilling their roles as statutory consultees in the planning process. Council feedback would be shared with Scottish Government Planning colleagues to give them a clearer picture of the issues CCs were facing at this time. Rather than actually contacting Community Councils to ask for their responses, the Council simply forwarded the email without comment despite the email asking for responses to be sent via the Knowledge Hub – a platform for digital public sector collaboration that the CC cannot access. Nick Walker had compiled a response and sent it direct to the Improvement Service.
- d. Wigtown Festival Company (WFC)** – WFC was consulting on its proposal to buy the premises at No 11 North Main Street, Wigtown. Details of the document at SurveyMonkey had been circulated and members were encouraged to take part in the consultation.
- e. Community Council Newsletter** – A local resident had written to ask why Potato Mill Road had not been included in the distribution area of the recently introduced newsletters. The Secretary had written back to explain that the newsletter was only available for collection from local outlets and had not been delivered to any individual property in the Community Council area.

10 COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

Cllr McCamon said that, since her election at the end of January she had spent more time in lockdown than functioning as a Councillor. She had received a number of reports of visitors being in Newton Stewart in contravention of the 'stay at home' rules and wondered if that was reflected in Wigtown. Sandra McDowall confirmed that the Resilience Group had been told that Co-op staff had noticed a recent increase in the number of apparent visitors using the store for food shopping. Cllr McCamon said that the Council was looking at the potential for re-opening the Household Waste Recycling Centres but currently travelling to them was not determined to be essential travel.

Cllr Hagmann reported that, since the kerbside collection of recycling waste was currently suspended, the Council was considering moving to the new scheme with the introduction of additional wheelie bins when the service was reintroduced rather than reverting to the black boxes. All household waste was currently being taken to the Eco Deco plant near Dumfries rather than ending up in landfill.

Cllr McColm said that the Council's Festival and Major Events sub-committee had awarded Wigtown Festival Company £32,000 for this year's festival. He also gave recent statistics relating to Covid-19 cases in Dumfries and Galloway .

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Edible Wigtown – Gill Hay had again been in contact re her suggestion of the introduction of a community garden scheme. The general feeling of the meeting was that it would be difficult to set up at this time and difficult to implement, given social distancing. It would be suggested that she consider setting up a constituted voluntary group that could apply for funding to take the project forward once lockdown was eased.

Covered outdoor spaces - Gill Hay had also identified that there was a lack of covered outdoor spaces in the town and suggested that the introduction of covered spaces (eg having awnings outside the front of cafes and shops so people could queue or talk at a social distance) might be something that would help with community cohesion. It was felt that awnings outside shops could be problematic given our weather conditions. Another factor to consider would be that the town centre is a special Conservation Area with some Listed Buildings and, as such, planning consent would be necessary. Matt Kitson had proposed that an open air stage area at the Market Cross side of the Bowling Pavilion be developed and, if this went ahead, it might provide at least a small open air space that could also be used as a gathering area.

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be the Community Council's Annual General Meeting. The AGM was scheduled for 7:00 pm on Monday, 8 June 2020 and the normal business meeting would be held immediately thereafter.