

ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY, 13 JULY 2020

contact@WigtownCC.org.uk

www.WigtownCC.org.uk

PRESENT

Sandra McDowall (Convenor)	Jak Kane (Secretary)	Kathleen Hart
Kerr Inger	Ada Montgomery	David Moran
David McAdam	Willie McCartney	Robin Richmond
Cora Sharp	Paul Tarling	Nick Walker
	Kevin Witt	

IN ATTENDANCE

Emma Harper MSP	Cllr J McCamon	Helen Morley
-----------------	----------------	--------------

APOLOGIES

Cllr K Hagmann	Cllr J McColm
----------------	---------------

Sandra McDowall welcomed Emma Harper MSP to the meeting which had been made possible by her not being in the position of having to travel to Edinburgh for attendance at the Scottish Parliament.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Hagmann and McColm.

2. POLICE MATTERS

No police officer joined the meeting and no written report submitted in time for the meeting. (*Report was subsequently received and circulated*)

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 8 June 2020)

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved, proposed by Paul Tarling and seconded by Willie McCartney.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not featured later in the Agenda.

5 UPDATES & REPORTS

a: Resilience Group Report

Sandra McDowall said that the Resilience Group had agreed to now cut back the frequency of the checks for Red Cards to once a day for a week with scheduled checks stopping completely thereafter. A flier outlining the plans had been delivered to all households together with a fridge magnet giving the Resilience Group phone number that anyone needing help could contact. The Resilience Group had bought a dedicated sim for a mobile phone for this so that the number could be used in the future for any issues that might arise. Residents were also reminded to hold on to their red cards, to be used if there was a second phase of Covid-19, power cuts or severe weather.

b: Financial Report

Jak Kane reported that the spending on the Resilience Account had been £124.19 for fridge magnets and £10 for the mobile phone sim. He had also made payments from the McGuffie VC funds - £350 for creation and 5 years' maintenance of the CC's

WWI website and £28.96 for blank DVDs so that the celebration DVD could be reproduced.

c: Consultations WP

A Consultation Report had been circulated giving details of the DGC consultation on the Review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries and Galloway. The proposed changes aimed to improve and update the terms and provisions of the Scheme including the Casual Vacancy Election process, Preconditions to the Release of Discretionary Grants to Community Councils, and developing the use of virtual meetings and other remote methods.

It was agreed there was nothing contentious in the proposed changes but that the CC should take the opportunity of putting forward a couple of suggested changes to the discretionary grant process.

The Scheme amendments required the discretionary grant application to "*be submitted... as early in DGC's financial year (1 April to 31 March) as possible*" but did not require DGC to produce the relative application early in the financial year.

The revised Scheme also listed the 'Preconditions to Release of Discretionary Grant' that Community Councils had to meet but no requirement on the Council for release the grant timeously once the Preconditions had been met.

In 2019-20 the Community Council did not receive the application form until October 2019 with payment not received until January 2020 – three months after submission of the application with the preconditions met and more than nine months into DGC's financial year.

It was agreed that a consultation response should be submitted asking that the Council should be required to provide the grant application form within two months of the CC's AGM and payment released within two months of the application being submitted.

d: Planning WP.

Nick Walker had circulated a report prior to the meeting that only gave updates on the position of earlier applications. Subsequently he circulated an update that advised that the application re 4 North Main Street was back on the planning portal but the invalid letter and requests for more info for the application had got out of chronological order. Everything was now in hand and planners expected a decision on the application soon. No explanation had been given for the glitch that had seen the application temporarily disappear from the planning portal.

Following the WP's report being issued, a new application had been registered in connection with the Change of Use from Holiday Accommodation to Gift Shop at 1 North Main Street, Wigtown. Neighbours had no problem with the proposal and the property had been used as a .pop-up shop in the past during the Book Festival. It was recommended that no submission be made and this was unanimously agreed. Cllr McCamon did not participate in the discussion of the Planning issues.

e: Town Square Development Working Party Update

Sandra McDowall had circulated notes on an online meeting that the Working Party had arranged with Grant Coltart of DGC to discuss the proposed installation of electric vehicle charging points in Wigtown.

Grant advised that the larger towns of Stranraer, Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Langholm had been identified as hubs but smaller settlements were also being considered and he was keen to work with Wigtown to explore the possibility of installing the infrastructure in the town. He had been in contact with SPEN to see if this could be done alongside their planned undergrounding works but had not been informed of a start date. David Jones, SPEN, who is coordinating the proposed

works in North Main Street, had subsequently undertook to contact the delivery teams with regard to timescales for the entire project but envisaged North Main Street being done in the autumn of 2020.

Various issues, including the target users of the charging points, the type of chargers required and the location were discussed. It was agreed that the main users would be tourists and local visitors but there could be some local residents in the future. To enable greater flexibility of use it was agreed that we should opt for rapid charging as well as overnight charging points. A number of possible locations were suggested, including the lorry park, close to the transformer or South Main Street opposite the flats. It was agreed that the area opposite the County Buildings should be avoided, given its regular community use.

Grant agreed that he would work up a few proposals so that there would be options to consider and he hoped to be in a position to produce these in a couple of weeks. He would also investigate possible sources to match fund the contribution available from his budget.

6 **WIGTOWN RECOVERY SUGGESTIONS**

There had been some suggestions that marquees should be located in the parking spaces in South Main Street or in the McGuffie VC Memorial Gardens to provide covered spaces for people to sit and that other measures could perhaps be introduced using recently launched sources of funding. It was agreed that the logistics involved mean that this was not something the Community Council could lead on and that cafes, restaurants and pubs around the square would be better placed to lead on this.

7 **DRAFT SECTORAL MARINE PLAN FOR OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY**

Crown Estate Scotland (through ScotWind Leasing) had asked potential offshore windfarm developers to register their interest in leasing one or more of the Draft Plan Options before 5 August 2020. Marine Scotland's Sectoral Marine Plan was still going through the consultation process so the leasing round had launched with reference to the draft Plan and not a final version. Once the draft Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy plan had been passed, Crown Estate Scotland (CES) would call for actual applications for Option Agreements a month later and they currently expected a closing date for these applications to be in the range from October 2020 to early 2021 with decisions given four months after the Closing Date.

By offering developers an Option agreement, CES would give the developer confidence in undertaking the time-consuming and expensive work to collect information and prepare applications for consent, viz Planning. A developer with an Option Agreement would know that they would be able to obtain a lease before making this investment. The Option Agreement will set out the terms on which Crown Estate Scotland would grant such a lease, only in the event that the developer succeeds in obtaining all the necessary consents. A lease will only be awarded once all the key consents and permissions have been obtained from the relevant regulatory authorities including Marine Scotland.

Jak Kane had written to Marine Scotland for clarification on the progress of the Marine Plan's consultation and they had agreed to keep the CC informed.

8 **CORRESPONDENCE, ETC**

- a. **Police Scotland Monthly Report** – The June report had been received on 10 June and circulated.
- b. **Save the Monastery Field** – An email had been received from a group titled 'Save the Monastery Field'. The Community Council were not in a position to discuss any proposals for the site until such time as a Planning application had

been submitted. It was pointed out that the site more properly should be referred to as Black's Field close to the Friary and not the Monastery.

- c. **DGC Waste Strategy** – Cllr Hagmann had written to confirm that DGC had agreed that the rollout of new wheelie bins for household recycling in Wigtownshire would start in Autumn 2020. Accordingly the collection from the Black recycling boxes would not be recommenced in the interim.
- d. **Scottish Police Authority (SPA)** – The SPA was asking for views, thoughts and experiences of people who had any Covid-related contact with the Police.
- e. **Connecting Scotland** – the programme that had been set up by the Scottish Government to provide equipment to help digitally excluded get online and help them to access the services and support they need an help them to keep in contact with friends and family had been launched. The scheme was not open to individuals to apply direct.
- f. **Paths for All (PfA)** – Jak Kane had received confirmation that PfA had agreed the CC's application for a grant of £1,500 towards the purchase of a rough mower, strimmer and PPE for maintenance of paths around Wigtown. Jak had also taken part in a webinar on Path Grading which had been a grant condition.
- g. **Drains** – Blocked road drains in North and South Main Streets had been reported and the Council had scheduled the repairs.
- h. **Bird Hide, Wigtown Harbour** – Anna Johnson, DGC Countryside Development Officer had confirmed that work had been started at the hide and the materials required to complete the re-roofing was expected on site before the end of the week. Once the work on the hide was complete, one of the Council Rangers would repair the boardwalk.
- i. **Mercat Cross** – Foliage had been spotted growing in several points on the recently refurbished Mercat Cross again and the issue had been reported to the Council. Karen Brownlie, DGC Community Assets Manager said she would arrange for Property & Architectural Services' Clerk of Works to investigate.

9 COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

Emma Harper MSP said that there was a high level of concern from some locals with the return of tourism visitors to the area and with the recent cluster of COVID-19 cases in the Annan/Gretna area. There was also concern that there could be a second serious outbreak in winter exacerbated by the flu season. She asked that the Community Council keep in touch as any feedback would be helpful

Cllr McCamon said that in a region reliant on agriculture and tourism it was important that a balance be found between return to business and safeguarding against viral spread. The Council had published its Town Restart Strategy with a view to revitalising the local economy, and to promote community confidence by attracting people back to the hubs of our communities, and encouraging everyone to shop local, but shop safe.

There had been recent local reports of problems being caused by wild campers not clearing up after themselves across the region and similarly the Council was looking for feedback from local people.

There had been reports of wild camping in Galloway Forest Park with lots of rubbish being left at the Raiders Road and Talnotry.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

'Alternative' Wigtown Week – Working with other Community members, Ada Montgomery had drawn together a week of community events which could be carried out within the Government's social distancing guidelines with the events organised

for the week before local children returned to school. A schedule of the events together with posters of the individual events had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was agreed that the Community council would support the event with taking out Public Liability covered normally arranged for the annual Wigtown Week Community Festival. This year the events would operate under the banner of 'Wigtown Fun Week' to differentiate it from the normal Festival. Ada undertook to ensure that all health, safety and legal requirements would be met eg marshalled events where required and suitably qualified leaders in accordance with H&S and child protection. The Community Council would also commit up to £200 of its resilience funding to support the Wigtown Fun Week as it should contribute to community confidence and wellbeing. Ada was congratulated on doing such a good job at pulling together a programme in such a short time.

Newsletter - It was agreed that, now there were no plans for the Resilience Group to issue further updates, Kevin Witt and Ada Montgomery would pull together another edition of the Community Council Newsletter on receipt of the draft Minutes of the meeting.

McGuffie VC – Nick Walker had compiled and submitted a final report on the HLF grant that had part-funded the McGuffie celebrations with a copy circulated to the CC prior to the meeting for information. There remained c£3,000 left of the grant unspent and Nick had made suggestions to the HLF on how this could be used. He was currently awaiting feedback on the proposals. The second commemorative plaque had still to be installed on the pillar at the McGuffie VC arch and the first plaque was now wonky and would be rehung.

11

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on **Monday, 10 August 2020** starting at the usual time of 7:30 pm and held online.