

ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY, 10 AUGUST 2020

contact@WigtownCC.org.uk

www.WigtownCC.org.uk

PRESENT

Sandra McDowall (Convenor)
Kerr Inger
Robin Richmond
Nick Walker

Jak Kane (Secretary)
David Moran
Cora Sharp

Kathleen Hart
Willie McCartney
Paul Tarling
Kevin Witt

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr K Hagmann

Helen Morley

APOLOGIES

Ada Montgomery
Cllr J McCamon

David McAdam
Cllr J McColm

Cllr D Inglis

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Ada Montgomery who was unwell and David McAdam and Jock McDowall who were both unable to access the online meeting. Cllrs Inglis, McCamon and McColm had also sent apologies.

2. POLICE MATTERS

A Police Report compiled by PC John Jamieson had been received and circulated prior to the meeting. PC Jamieson advised that an individual had been apprehended in connection with the theft of high value batteries from Vodafone mobile phone mast sites that had been reported in the July report.

He also shared details of incidents reported to Police since the previous meeting:

1. The Community Council had passed details of drugs misuse and the presence of drugs paraphernalia in Southfield Park to DG Councillors and the Police. Officers had attended and subsequently arranged for 3B to demolish the derelict building which was the locus of the problem. Regular police patrols will continue in case the problem is displaced elsewhere in the town.
2. During one of the aforementioned police patrols at the Park a number of underage young people were found to be under the influence of alcohol with one having to be conveyed home by the police due to their level of intoxication. It was later reported that the same young people had been inside and climbing on Wigtown Hide at the harbour. Anti-Social Behaviour and Vulnerable Persons Reports had been submitted
3. A local driver would be reported for driving a motor vehicle with a defective tyre.

Details were also given about the dangers of responding to phishing emails and smishing texts. Suspicious emails can be reported by forwarding the original message to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service [report@ phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) and suspicious texts by forwarding the original message to 7726 (which spells SPAM on your keyboard).

Nick Walker pointed out that 3B would not have had time to obtain planning permission for the demolition of the building within Southfield Park nor to address the possible presence of bats within the building.

3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Agenda was approved proposed by Willie McCartney and seconded by Kerr Inger.

4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 13 July 2020)

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

5 MATTERS ARISING

Paths for All (PfA) – Jak confirmed that the formal written offer of grant had now been received from PfA.

Bird Hide, Wigtown Harbour – the works to replace the roof of the Hide had been completed and Anna Johnson from the DGC Countryside Team had put up COVID Social Distancing signage. Temporary repairs to the boardwalk had been carried out and the Council Ranger would be returning to make permanent repairs.

6 UPDATES & REPORTS

a: Resilience Group Report

Sandra McDowall said that there was nothing to report from the Resilience Group. Support for community members was still available from the Group via the dedicated phone number.

b: Financial Report

A financial report had been circulated prior to the meeting showing that the only recent expenditure had been from the Resilience account. Sanitiser stands for use by passing public had been purchased and installed near the telephone kiosk and the bus shelter, with both secured by bicycle locks. Jak was able to confirm that they were being well used as he had needed to refill them with sanitiser. A Smart Phone had been purchased for use by the Resilience Group. Sandra explained that there was a very active WhatsApp group of Resilience volunteers and, with the Smartphone, they could be quickly mobilised using the app. Finally, £194.60 had been dedicated to the Wigtown Fun Week (£105 prizes; £89.60 Public Liability Insurance (PLI)). The normal annual Wigtown Week Community Festival normally attracted a PLI premium of £179.

c: Consultations WP

Jak Kane explained that the only issue highlighted in the August Consultation Report was 'Spaces for People Dumfries and Galloway' on which Sustrans Scotland was working in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council. In the coming months town centres needed to prioritise and enable safe physical distancing to support local businesses and residents to stay safe by limiting transmission of COVID-19 and Sustrans wanted to encourage people to walk, cycle or wheel at a safe physical distance from others, avoiding unnecessary car journeys.

To ensure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to share their views they were asking people to visit their website to post comments and suggestions about creating temporary space for walking and cycling. While it would not be possible to address every issue that was suggested, the Council would use the site to prioritise their work and try to direct its limited resources to where they were most needed.

The website had an interactive map where people could check and comment on what had already been added or to add new suggestions for the local area.

<https://spacesforpeopledumfriesgalloway.commonplace.is/>.

d: Planning WP.

Nick Walker had circulated a report prior to the meeting that contained detailed information about the application that had been submitted in connection with a development at Blacks' Field in Bank Street that would see the siting of six holiday chalets with associated works. The report summarised communications from the town, feedback from a public meeting that had been convened by the Community Council to gauge community feelings about the proposals, and from discussions with some Community Councillors over the previous couple of days.

Nick explained that the Community Council's role as a statutory consultee on planning was to ascertain and express the views of the community. For many applications, the Community Council took no active part; for some, there were clearly important comments to make based on policy and experience. For a few, there was considerable public interest and this application fell into this last category. Based on public sentiment, rooted in the planning issues identified which on balance demonstrated that the proposal was out of keeping with planning policy, it was proposed by the Planning Working Party that the Community Council submitted a formal objection to this application, citing the issues highlighted within the report as the grounds for objection. There was also a risk that, if approved, this development could establish a precedent for further undermining of protections of natural and built heritage locally.

There were no updates on previous planning applications to report.

It was agreed to note the contents of the Planning Report and that the Community Council should submit a formal objection to the Blacks' Field proposals.

Nick Walker was thanked for his work in pulling together what was a comprehensive and fair submission of the issues raised in connection with the Blacks' Field development. He was asked to include in the CC's submission the suggestion that the Councillors making a decision on the application should carry out a site visit or be given a video or photographs of the site to demonstrate the effect that the proposal would have on the immediate surrounding area. He also undertook to speak to Planning Officer Iona Brooke to ascertain if there would be the opportunity of someone from the community council being given the opportunity of speaking to the objection if the relative meeting was online.

Sandra McDowall pointed out that, now the Community Council, had discussed and agreed a joint CC response to the application, individual Community Councillors were now free to make personal submissions to either support or object to the planning application

Cllr Hagmann did not participate in the discussion of the Planning issues.

e: Town Square Development Working Party Update

Sandra McDowall had circulated an email from Grant Coltart of DGC in which he confirmed that DGC had received £100k from Transport Scotland to help fund EV (Electric Vehicle) Infrastructure for D&G and that it had been decided to allocate the full amount to Wigtown. The funds would be used to fund a Rapid Charger and a Fast charger covering four bays in the Lorry Park. The Lorry Park had been identified as the most suitable location for the Charge points although confirmation of agreement from Property Services was awaited. DGC hoped to use some of the money as match funding for external funding that might provide charge points for a further 16 bays. It was also intended that the work would be tendered for and delivered by local electrical contractors.

f: Wigtown Fun Week Report

Despite her incapacitation, Ada Montgomery had managed to circulate a brief report that said that, all in all, the week had gone really well and there had been lots of

take-up on the activities on offer. She would prepare a financial report once all monies had been collected and there should be a surplus to be split between Wigtown Rainbows, Guides and Brownies and the Wigtown Players.

She wrote that thanks were due to WCC for their support, Cllr McColm and Willie McCartney and Tom Inger for their help on Saturday. Beltie Books had also donated rosettes that were used across the events.

Sandra McDowall said that Ada was to be thanked and congratulated on managing to pull the week's events together so quickly with the Fun Week being well supported and appreciated by all.

7

CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

- a. **DGC Town Ambassadors** – Grame McKie had written to outline the DGC Town Restart measures that were to be introduced following the July meeting. Two Town Ambassadors had been appointed for Wigtown and they were visiting the town and its businesses two to three times a week. Street cleaners were also in the town more frequently litter-picking and emptying litter bins.
- b. **Consultation Analysis Report for the Draft Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy** – The Report had been published by Marine Scotland and could be viewed online: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839608544>. The Draft Plan Option (DPO) of a wind farm off the Mull of Galloway (SW1) had attracted almost four times the total number of responses than any other DPO around Scotland with broad opposition responses to SW1 (somewhat oppose or strongly oppose) forming 82% of total responses to the consultation.
- c. **Lightlands Park** – a local resident had reported a line of stones that had appeared in a part of the park which he thought had been put there to interfere with children's ability to play in that part of the park. A couple of the Community Councillors had visited the site and thought the stones were far enough removed from the play park not to present a problem and that they had been placed by the homeowner simply to aid reversing from their driveway. The Council had been notified of the situation for their views.
- d. **Wigtown Public Toilets** – DGC had agreed that the Wigtown Public Toilets could re-open from 9-4 on a daily basis. Karen Brownlie had contacted the Community Council to ask that a local representative be the keyholder and arrange the opening and closing of the facility. David McAdam had been approached and he agreed to volunteer and take up the responsibility and for this he was due the thanks of the CC. The facility was being cleaned daily by the Council before opening.
- e. **Payphone removal** – It had been reported that there was a notice in the Wigtown kiosk advising a 42 day consultation period on the proposed removal of the phone box. On investigation it emerged that the notice had actually been put up in 2019 but the proposed closure did not go ahead at that time because the notice had not been dated so did not comply with BT's consultation process. BT advised that, if the kiosk is to be included in a future programme, a new notice will be posted. BT had also advised that community adoption of the modern kiosk would not be an option unless it was to be used to house a defibrillator. Cllr Hagmann had advised that, while not a planning issue, proposed removals of phone kiosks are posted on the planning portal to notify communities and give them the opportunity of commenting on the proposal.
- f. **Emma Harper MSP** – Emma Harper had written to say thanks for allowing her to join the Wigtown Community Council Meeting which had been chaired and hosted extremely well by Sandra McDowall. Virtual engagement had offered her increased participation in remote and rural areas with much success and it

had been extremely useful for her to be part of the meeting and see faces and hear everyone's contributions.

- g. County Buildings** – Nick Walker had noticed that there were items blocking one of the emergency exits on the outside of the County Buildings. He was aware that staff were in the building, although closed to the public, and reported the situation to Karen Brownlie. Karen had arranged for the items to be moved and the emergency exit cleared.
- h. Towns and BIDs Resilience & Recovery Fund** – Helen Morley had written a draft application with a number of proposed actions. The application had been discussed by Community Councillors and it was decided that the CC should not submit the application. However, from the application the Community Council decided to use the Resilience funding already in place to purchase two Hand Sanitiser stations which had been placed near the telephone kiosk and the bus shelter. Work was also being done to produce a Town walk/cycle leaflet covering things like the Town trail, Lovers Walk, the Martyrs Stake/Harbour path and the Wigtown Women's Walk.

98

COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

Cllr Hagmann said that meetings of the Full Council were now held online and citizens could attend remotely while they are livestreamed. All Council committees are expected to restart and meet from September 2020. The Council continued to work on Restart activities and were currently looking at museums, leisure centres and swimming pools.

She also spoke about Borderlands Growth where Dumfries & Galloway Council would be working with the other cross-border local authorities of Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council to promote economic growth and competitiveness of the area that straddles the Scotland-England border. The importance of towns will be the focus of a place investment programme linked to Destination and Business Infrastructure investments within the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. She said that Wigtown had been placed fourth in a list of 15 towns in terms of need after Kirkcubright, Stranraer and Whithorn.

Crown Estate Scotland had also launched a new Community Capacity Grant to fund local regeneration and sustainable development in Coastal Communities like Wigtown. The Wigtown Area Committee had made decisions on the allocation of its Discretionary and Anti-Poverty grant funding.

In Education the Council would provide free masks and hand sanitiser for pupils returning to school and all buses would be disinfested using fogging machines every night.

10

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Broader Machars Federation of Community Councils – Graeme McKie had circulated an email from former Convenor of the Federation, Antony Berretti suggesting a way forward given that the Federation's AGM had been postponed due to Covid. Nick Walker had responded as one of Wigtown CC's Federation delegates to say that the Federation served an important purpose in bringing together CCs across the Machars for issues in common and should be parked until things had normalised a bit. If the consensus from the other Machars CCs was to convene a virtual meeting to consider options, he indicated Wigtown CC would want to be involved

Speeding traffic – Kevin Witt had been asked to raise the issue of speeding traffic travelling through Bladnoch village and from Acre Place and Lightlands Terrace.

Paul Tarling also mentioned difficulties in the blind corner of High Vennel and Lochancroft Lane. Jak Kane would write to the Council to highlight the concerns.

Street Lights – Jak would also report incidences of street lights on 24/7 in Harbour Road, around the McGuffie VC Gardens and at the County Buildings.

11

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on **Monday, 14 September 2020** starting at the usual time of 7:30 pm and held online.