

ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

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www.WigtownCC.org.uk

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr J McColm	Louise Kerr	Steph Howarth
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APOLOGIES

Kathleen Hart	Jock McDowall	Cllr K Hagmann
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1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Kathleen Hart and Cllr Katie Hagmann. Jock McDowall was unable to access the online meeting.

2. POLICE MATTERS

The Secretary had circulated a Police Report compiled by PC John Jamieson. The report provided details of incidents reported to Police since the CC's August meeting:

1. There had been two separate incidents reported at an address in South Main Street on different dates which were classed as vulnerable person calls.
2. Two golf buggies had been stolen from Wigtown Golf club. The buggies had been recovered and two persons apprehended in the Newton Stewart area.
3. A male person had been arrested and charged with Threatening and abusive behaviour.
4. A male person had been arrested and charged with Assault and Breach of Bail.

The report explained that there had been several new Police Officers in Mid Galloway, either probationers or transferees from across the division. Police Officers had also been more visible as all training courses had been suspended during the COVID lockdown. Staffing levels had been good in D&G with absence rates among the lowest in the country.

The Police were asking members of the public contacting 101 to be patient with Service Centres running at a reduced capacity due to social distancing coinciding with the peak summer period where call demand increases.

Cllr McColm advised that PC Jamieson was aware of the recent acts of vandalism in Wigtown.

3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Agenda was approved with the addition of the Harbour Bird Hide, School buses, Bus timetables, Remembrance Day, Station Road, and Wigtown Harbour added as Other Business

- 4 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 10 August 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 Willie McCartney 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: Financial Report**
There had been no income or expenditure in the past month, so no report had been presented.
- b: Consultations Report**
- i) ***Further Consultation on the Review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Dumfries and Galloway.*** The Council had consulted on a review of the ‘Scheme’ and subsequently agreed to amend it and the new Scheme would come into effect on 1 September 2020. However, additional advice had been received in relation to the proposed wording of two paragraphs in the Scheme and the Council had to consult again on the relative changes. The outcome of the consultation will inform a report due to be presented to a Special Meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Council on Thursday, 24 September 2020. Nick suggested that the Council’s reference to a Community Council’s failure to hold quorate meetings “due to a global epidemic or pandemic or other emergency situation from whatever cause” in Para 9.2 might better be extended by adding ‘other major event that renders physical meetings untenable’.
- ii) ***Major Festivals and Events Strategy 2018-2021 Research Project*** – The Council was collecting the views of Community Councils, Community Resilience groups and other locally based tourism groups and development trusts on the possibility of smaller scale festivals and events in the region restarting and taking place. They had prepared a short online survey to get up-to-date views on this issue across Dumfries and Galloway, to help inform how they would use their events budget in the next 18 months. Jak Kane had circulated the text of the survey to the CC and would compile a response based on input from Councillors who had responded.
- iii) ***Proposed Changes to Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Requirements in Planning*** - This consultation relates to proposed changes to the existing requirements for pre-application consultation with local communities on national and major developments. The consultation paper seeks views on the detailed legislative proposals for PAC, the approach to engagement with disabled people during PAC, and on the content of guidance on PAC. It also seeks views on impact assessments in relation to the proposed changes. The results of the consultation would assist in finalising the changes to legislation and guidance on PAC.
- The issue had been passed to the Planning Working Party to work up a response.

c: Planning WP.

Nick Walker had circulated a report prior to the meeting that highlighted two new Planning applications. It was recommended that there be no submission in respect to the proposed erection of an agricultural storage shed at North Clutag Farm. The application submitted in connection with alterations to Couthy Brae, Botany Street was discussed and it was determined that the Community Council would not make any submission on this proposal either.

Nick Walker confirmed that the Working Party (WP) would consider the proposed changes outlined in the Scottish Government's consultation on Pre Application Requirements in Planning. He had asked WP members to send their comments back to him by 1 October so a draft response to the consultation document could be prepared for consideration at the CC's October meeting.

Paul Tarling advised that his employer, RSPB would be submitting a planning application connected to the Crook of Baldoon reserve and he would declare an interest when it came up for discussion.

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

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CORRESPONDENCE, ETC

- a. **Streetlights** – McClymont Electrical Services had advised that some of the streetlights around Wigtown Square were on all day was due to the ongoing SPEN works which was replacing overhead lines. New switchgear to control the streetlighting could only be installed once the works were completed. Similar work was being carried out in a number of towns in the area and areas where the power to streetlights had been removed completely were being prioritised.
- b. **Retaining wall Wigtown/Bladnoch road**– Robert Templeton Jr had agreed to again look into the repair of damaged wall close to the Maidland corner.
- c. **Flooding** – Jak Kane had reported flooding being caused by a blocked drain on the pavement next to the bus shelter and immediately in front of the gardens' gate and the Council had cleared the problem.
- d. **WBLNR** – DGC Countryside Development Officer had provided a report on several aspects of the LNR. The Wildfowling season would be going ahead as normal and Machars Action was currently issuing permits subject to change should SG restrictions dictate. The consultation on the re-designation of the LNR and its proposed byelaws has been put on hold until SG eases restrictions on public meetings. Anti Social behaviour at the hide had seen windows being smashed, wooden viewing flaps broken and signage torn down. Anna had visited the hide on Monday to clear up and the Police had been informed and they and the Council's Community Safety Officers had been patrolling the area..
- e. **LNR Research Survey** – A group from St Andrew's University were returning 16-18 September to carry out some further vegetation surveys and take some cores of the saltmarsh as part of ongoing research into carbon that is stored in the merse habitat. William Wykes from Maidland had contacted them to point out high tides expected at the harbour.
- f. **Bladnoch Distillery premises licence** – The Community Council had received notice from DGC Licensing Department that the Distillery had applied for a variation of its premises licence. The notification had been circulated and no comments had been submitted.
- g. **Finlay Carson MSP** – The MSP's office had circulated a copy of a poster to CC's but had failed to put sufficient postage on the envelope. They had promised to reimburse the £1.50 surcharge.

- h. **Cllr Jackie McCamon** – Cllr McCamon had written to advise that she would be starting maternity leave on 18 September 2020.
- i. **Bladnoch Distillery Community Engagement Day** – Emma Harper MSP had been in touch to ask who would be representing the Community Council at the event and Jak Kane had told her that the Community Council had not received an invitation. Community Councillor Kerr Inger had attended but in his capacity with Wigtown & Bladnoch FC. Sandra McDowall advised that she had been invited but it had not been clear if it was as Convenor or not. In any event, she had been unable to attend.
- j. **DGC Wigtown Area Committee** – The Agenda and minutes of the meeting of 2 September had been circulated. They included details of the Area Committee's decisions on Discretionary Budget Arrangements for 2020/21. The Secretary would send in Expression of Interest forms for the grant funding allocations for Christmas Decorations and Community Galas & Events.
- k. **School Zone Warning Lights – Kirkinner** - Three of the four 20 mph lights in Kirkinner were still not working and had been reported again. This issue was outstanding from the end of 2019.
- l. **Seaview** – Road and pavement issues at Seaview had been reported but the Council had advised that no defects had been categorised as needing repair.
- m. **Forestry in Dumfries and Galloway** – Corsock and Kirkpatrick Durham Community Council had written asking for support in their campaign for changes that would see: improvements in the way communities are consulted on forestry development, clear felling and replanting; the level of broadleaf/native species in new plantations and areas being replanted to be more strictly enforced to ensure the target of 20-30% share is delivered; a limit on the intensive softwood coverage in any community council area; a moratorium on consideration of any plans for new forestry developments; and better scrutiny of the overall environmental and social impacts of mass afforestation on a locality, not just on a case by case basis. Paul Tarling confirmed that the RSPB had expressed concerns over the prevalence of Sitka spruce and lack of broadleaf diversity in the new tree planting in Scotland.

While Wigtown & District had little direct impact from Forestry in the locality, it was agreed that the Community Council should support the efforts to effect changes to the way forestry is managed in Dumfries & Galloway

98 COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

Cllr McColm said that some of what he had to report had already been covered by correspondence.

He had attended the event at Bladnoch Distillery and it was impressive to see what had been achieved through the considerable investment in the site. He felt that those attending had been well received and the Distillery was now showing greater sensitivity towards the community.

The Council had visited Lightlands Park to deal with reported problems with litter and overgrown bushes.

The Council would be rolling out the new kerbside recycling service in the Wigtownshire area with information due to be given to householders in late September. Cllr McColm was asked to get more detailed information on the relative timeline.

The inquiry into the Trunk Roads contract that had lost the Council £3M was ongoing and the Independent Group of Councillors had spoken to the Chair of the Integrity

Group which was carrying out the internal investigation. A report was expected to be produced by Christmas 2020.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

School buses – Reports of incidences of bad behaviour of a few of the young people waiting for school buses in Wigtown had re-emerged with one person taking a diversion around North Main Street to avoid coming into contact with them. Sandra McDowall had raised the issue with the Head Teacher at Douglas Ewart High School. He had said that the young people involved would be given detention and their parents w told that further problems would see the individuals banned from the school bus with the parents then being responsible for transporting their children to school.

Service buses – Nick Walker reported that the restricted bus timetable was causing problems with links to some Stranraer buses no longer synchronised at Newton Stewart. Jak Kane would write to Sustrans to highlight the concerns and ask for review.

Remembrance Day – David Moran raised the issue of the Remembrance Day event that was normally organised by the Community Council. Nick Walker undertook to contact Archie Dryburgh, the Council's Armed Forces Champion to ask him if he could provide guidance regarding Remembrance events during the current Covid restrictions. Jak Kane would contact the organisations that normally participated in the event to find out if they wanted the CC to order poppy wreaths as usual.

Station Road – Ada Montgomery said that, in addition to the anti-social behaviour reported earlier in the meeting, windows had also been smashed in a house being built in Station Road. The incident had been reported to the Police. It was agreed that the issue should be highlighted in the next edition of the CC Newsletter.

McGuffie VC – Nick Walker confirmed that the Council had attached the second plaque to the pillar at the archway entrance to the McGuffie Gardens.

Wigtown Harbour – Alan Wykes had contacted the Community Council to ask if they could help with provision of signage, interpretation and rubbish collection at the harbour. Although overnight parking was allowed at the harbour, it had been identified on the Internet as somewhere that motorhomes could park for Free. It was agreed that the CC would work with Alan Wykes and DGC to see if improvements can be introduced.

11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on **Monday, 12 October 2020** starting at the usual time of 7:30 pm and held online.