

**ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ONLINE**  
**ON MONDAY, 9 AUGUST 2021**

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

**PRESENT**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Cllr Katie Hagmann	Cllr Jackie McCamon	Cllr Jim McColm
	Louise Kerr, Free Press	

**APOLOGIES**

David McAdam	Jock McDowall	Robin Richmond
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**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Robin Richmond due to internet connection problems. David McAdam and Jock McDowall were both unable to access the meeting as it was online.

Sandra McDowall intimated that she had received notification from Kathleen Hart that she was resigning as Community Councillor. Sandra had replied thanking Kathleen for her time on the CC and her support.

**2. POLICE MATTERS**

A Police Report had been received from PC John Jamieson prior to the meeting and it had been circulated to members.

The report detailed a number of local crime incidents that had been reported since the previous report of 12 July 2021.

- Report of a staff member in the Book Shop being verbally abused. Enquiries ongoing.
- Theft of garden patio table and barbecue in Low Duncanfield, Wigtown. Male apprehended and reported for a number of offences including reset, breach of bail and drug possession.
- Theft of items from garden in South Main Street and ASB between 27 and 30 July. This incident related to the previous report.
- A disturbance in High Street, Wigtown was reported on 3 August but there was nothing ongoing on Police arrival.

The report also highlighted a consultation on Police Scotland's draft Gaelic Language Plan 2021-2026. The consultation period will end on 5 September 2021.

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

The Agenda was approved with the addition of the lighting at the EV Charging Points, complaints about the new ATM and the drain outside the Co-op.

**4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 12 July 2021)**

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and it was pointed out that the tree mentioned in item 5 a) was a Birch and not a Beech. Subject to this amendment the minutes were approved, proposed by Paul Tarling and seconded by Ada Montgomery.

## 5 MATTERS ARISING

**a) *Honey fungus*** – Nick Walker said that there was no progress to report.

**b) *Kirkyard Project***– The Council had been told that Ulster TV was planning to visit the Martyr's Grave in the Kirkyard at the end of August in connection with a documentary that they were making. Cllr McColm reported that he had met with Robert Lowther, DGC and Andrew Wilson and they had walked round the Kirkyard. Robert Lowther had explained that the Council had planned to top the grass in September but that could be brought forward by a few weeks to tidy the site before UTV's visit. There was also agreement that self-seeded bushes and saplings needed to be removed. It had been suggested that the project to create a wildflower meadow should concentrate on a limited area of the Kirkyard rather than the whole graveyard.

There were significant concerns in the community that the site was looking unsightly but this was a result of the grass simply not having been cut back by the Council and not because of the project had actually started. Part of the challenge was that it would take time to establish a wildflower meadow and for it to look good and it was agreed that there should be an education programme to explain to the community how wildflower meadows are created and what they could look like. The project leaders would be asked to compile a presentation with photographs that could be added to the CC's website and/or Facebook page. It was also agreed that the suggestion of wildflower test areas could work alongside the education programme to let people realise how the Kirkyard could develop.

**c) *Community Fridge Project*** – Kevin Witt had no progress to report.

**d) *Wigtown Shindy*** – Matt Kitson had reported concerns that the event would not go ahead because of the need for an Entertainments Licence that would not be processed in time. However, Cllr Hagmann was able to advise that the restriction of the length of time music would be played would remove the need for a licence, so the event was back on track with fliers printed and due to be distributed. The event would be an all-day event with the School Fete in the morning, entertainment in the gardens in the afternoon and evening, and a Market extension.

**e) *Borderlands Place Programme*** – Jak Kane said that he had been in contact with the Council to ask for an update on the Place Programme and he had arranged to meet with Donna Mounce, DGC Policy & Performance Adviser on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal for an informal chat. Donna advised that will be end of September/beginning of October before the Partnership starts to engage fully with communities.

**f) *War Memorial Competition*** – The CC had entered the DG War Memorial Competition and had received a grant of £200 to instal stands for the Unknown Tommies and to tidy up the area around the War Memorial. The entries would be judged in September with a prize of a winning certificate to be displayed in the community.

## 6 UPDATES & REPORTS

### **a: Financial Report**

Jak Kane advised that the only transaction on the CC accounts was receipt of the £200 grant previously mentioned.

### **b: Consultations Report**

Jak Kane confirmed that he would circulate a draft response on the *Use and Sale of Fireworks in Scotland and tackling the misuse of Pyrotechnics*'.

**c: Planning Working Party**

Nick Walker had circulated a Planning Report prior to the meeting which included no new applications. There was an update for only one out of the 12 outstanding applications with approval given for the erection of an agricultural building at High Barness.

Nick highlighted the application for alterations to the Red Lion Inn to replace windows, put up an extension and change it to a dwellinghouse. The retrospective application was first validated in February 2020 and then disappeared temporarily from the system. Planners had said that a decision was expected in August 2020 and Nick had sought clarification from the Planners in July 2021 but had not received a response.

The contents of the report were noted and the DGC Councillors were asked to chase up the status of the Red Lion application. Cllr Hagmann undertook to take the issue to the Planning Department and to keep the CC and other Ward Councillors advised. Paul Tarling raised the issue of an RSPB planning application for which they had not been contacted since their PAN was submitted and Cllr McColm said he would pursue this with the planners.

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

**d. Town Square Developments WP**

Sandra McDowall had circulated a Working Party Report that confirmed that the underground socket in the market square had been reconnected and Alan McDowall had altered the meter board etc to fit the new cabinet and had replaced the sockets on the existing cabling.

It was proposed to instal sockets in the 12 lighting columns around the gardens with projectors to be sited on each end of the gardens – two across from the County Buildings and two across from the Mercat Cross. The plan also included 8 twin socket illuminated bollards within the gardens. Power cables along the Bowling Green would not be installed until work was being carried out to resolve the honey fungus issue there. It was agreed that Sandra would contact two local contractors to suggest the best way for the work to be carried out so that costings could be pulled together for a funding application for the scheme. Sandra was still to meet with Paul Siddle re the metal fittings for the gaslight holders.

**e. Martyrs' Walk/Harbour Project**

A meeting had been arranged to meet with Anna Johnson, DGC and Will Marshall, the artist responsible for the original Goose Stones installation. Paul Tarling had already been in touch with the Tourist Board in Greenland to try and source a replacement for the stone that had been removed. There had been reports re the condition of the walk but it had since been strimmed.

**f. Resilience**

Fliers had been prepared for distribution to Wigtown, Bladnoch, Kirkinner and Whauphill advising that, with Scotland emerging from lockdown restrictions, the need for the Covid Resilience Group to be fully active had passed. Householders were asked to retain their Red cards for future resilience emergencies including weather and power outages.

It had been agreed that a memorial stone marking the contribution of the community during the COVID emergency would be commissioned and David Cluckie had volunteered to engrave the stone free of charge. The stone would be sited alongside a Nye Bevan Rose, a new rose named in honour of Aneurin (Nye) Bevan, founder of Britain's National Health Service and in recognition of the NHS, its people and associated organisations and charities. The stone would be unveiled during the Wigtown Shindy.

## 8 CORRESPONDENCE

-  **DGC – Meetings in Council Premises** - the Council had written to say that, while their advice was for CCs to continue to meet virtually in the short term, they were currently looking into the opening of buildings to accommodate its staff and community partners in a safe and responsible manner. It was agreed that the CC should look to deliver blended meetings allowing Community Councillors and members of the public to continue to engage virtually if they chose while holding in person meetings for the benefit of those who could not take part online. Using the County Buildings could be problematic due to the lack of public internet access outwith the Library and it was agreed that they should be asked what arrangements could be made to provide wifi to the CC for its evening meetings in the building. In the interim, it was agreed that the next meeting of the CC would be a blended meeting with some community councillors attending in the office of Machars Action.
-  **New Local Democracy Reporter for D&G** – The CC had been contacted by Marc McLean who had just started a new position as Local Democracy Reporter for D&G with the Reach Group (formerly the old Mirror Group). Details had been circulated.
-  **Scottish Civic Trust's 'My Place Awards' and the 2021 SURF (Scotland's Regeneration Forum) Awards** – Details of these awards for community-led built environment projects and community-led regeneration respectively were circulated. Consideration could be given to entering in future years by the Booktown Bunkhouse and the Town Square development projects after they were completed.
-  **DGC County Buildings** – The Council had been asked on behalf of Wigtown in Bloom (WiB) to spray the areas within the railings at the County Buildings with weedkiller as WiB were currently weeding by hand as they did not have the capacity. Robert Lowther had quickly responded that Community Assets greatly valued the activities of the WiB volunteers and would arrange for the area to be sprayed.
-  **Seaview** – DGHP had again been asked about the condition of the pavement and road surface at the car parking spaces in Seaview which the Council had stated was not its responsibility. If DGHP was not going to carry out the remedial work needed, they were asked to write to their tenants and explain their decision. They replied that the issue had been passed to the Investment Team at DGHP and they would come back with an update.

## 9F COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

**Cllr Hagmann** reported that the Council had agreed its Budget setting process and Councillors had been given until the end of September to present their proposals. The mid-range forecast suggested that there would be a £10.6M deficit with savings needed in 2022-23. The Scottish Government had said the Council could expect a 3 year settlement which, in turn, would allow it to set a 3 year budget.

Announcements on awards for young people from '10,000 Voices in Action' funding would be announced next week. She also urged community councillors to engage with the SG consultation on the introduction of a National Care Service for which there would be a series of nine online events. This was an important issue for Dumfries & Galloway as it had a higher proportion of people both in care and working in care services.

**Cllr McCamon** said that the Council had again organised its free school uniform project that aims to help children and young people of all ages throughout the region. Cllr McCamon explained that there was a donation point in Newton Stewart and the Council had organised 'One Stop Shop' events for those wanting to pick up a school uniform. However, the Council had again failed to arrange somewhere in the Machars for people looking to receive a school uniform and she had asked that this be rectified in future. Cllr

Hagmann was able to advise that although not listed, the NS Community Shop had a rail where people could collect free uniform items.

Cllr McColm said that the Council had scheduled a series of surface dressing works on local roads, including the Baltersan Straight, which could see temporary road closures in the coming weeks. Following a period of intense rainfall on 7 August, a number of blocked drains in Wigtown caused flooding and he had reported the incidents to the Council.

#### 10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Lighting at EV Charging Points** – Concerns had been raised about the impact of the lighting columns on the neighbouring garden. DGC's Grant Coltart had advised that the columns were not full length and he would do all that could be done to mitigate the effect on the Dark Sky. He was looking into the possibility of PIR sensors for the lights.

**ATM complaints** – There continued to be complaints about the ATM being short of cash and out of service. The Community Council had already been in contact with Cardtronics and had circulated contact details so that those affected could contact them directly.

**Drain outside Co-op** – Issue had been reported to the Council online.

#### 11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Council would be a blended meeting held in the meeting room of Machars Action with limited numbers and online on Zoom on **Monday, 13 September 2021** at the regular time of 7:30 pm.