

**ROYAL BURGH of WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF BLENDED MEETING HELD in MACHARS ACTION and ONLINE
ON MONDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2021**

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PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr Jackie McCamon	Cllr Jim McColm	Louise Kerr, Free Press
	Helen Morley	

APOLOGIES

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence with Community Councillors attending in person and online. David McAdam had advised that he would be late in joining the meeting.

2. POLICE MATTERS

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

The report detailed the local crime incidents that had been reported since the previous report of 9 August 2021.

- Male charged with Threatening and Abusive Behaviour.
- Reported theft of milk and dairy products in Jubilee Terrace.
- Warning issued to Seaview resident regarding excessive noise at property.
- Two separate reports of vehicles parked on the pavement in Botany Street. Police attended but deemed that the vehicles were not causing unnecessary obstruction, taking into account the narrow roadway and limited alternative options for residents.
- Male charged with offence under the Rent Scotland Act 1984 with report to be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.
- Two persons had been charged with Theft with report to be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.
- A Male had been charged with Breach of Bail and Assault. He had been kept in custody overnight pending his appearance at Stranraer Sheriff Court.

The report also gave info on 'Dealing with bogus callers' and the Police Scotland initiative on 'Oil and Diesel tank security'.

It was agreed that the Police would be asked to join some meetings rather than just sending a written report so that the Community Council could have the opportunity to discuss issues face to face (albeit digitally). As the CC had started blended meetings with some community councillors meeting in person in the office of Machars Action, this would solve any difficulties with Police Scotland relying on MS Teams for online meetings.

3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Agenda was approved with no 'Other' business other than that already included in the agenda.

4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Monday, 9 August 2021)

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and were approved, proposed by Paul Tarling and seconded by Nick Walker.

5 MATTERS ARISING

a) Honey fungus – There was no progress to report on the project to deal with the issue in the McGuffie VC Gardens.

b) Community Fridge Project – Kevin Witt had no progress to report on the first funding application but he had submitted a second funding application.

David McAdam joined the meeting at this point.

c) Wigtown Shindy – The Event had gone ahead as planned and it had been a gorgeous day and a great event. The Community Council thanked everyone who had contributed to it being a success.

d) Borderlands Place Programme – Jak Kane had met with Donna Mounce and had ascertained that the initial towns in the Place Programme will need to draw up a Local Place Plan (LPP) which will describe the town and its ambitions and identify potential projects. . Assuming that there are projects from the LPP that meet the Borderlands objectives, the town will be invited to produce a Town Investment Plan which will detail the projects seeking investment (in effect a Business Plan). The Council is looking to identify funding to allow towns to carry out the work to produce their LPPs as the Borderlands Place Programme will only cover Capital costs. Jak had written to Planning Aid Scotland and Community Enterprise Scotland and they had said that the costs involved with the creation of a place plan would be in the region of £16/20,000. Jak suggested that he would look for external funding while waiting for the result of the Council's efforts. Donna Mounce had written asking if the CC needed an initial meeting with a few representatives from the most appropriate organisations to explain the process and expectation of the programme. It was felt that since the Festival Company and W&BCI were being kept updated by the CC, so an additional meeting at this stage was not needed.

Helen Morley joined the meeting at this point.

e) Kirkyard Project – Sandra McDowall reported that an onsite meeting had been convened by Cllr McColm and she, David Moran, Paul Tarling and Robin Richmond had attended along with Jane Carlton and Helen Morley. The meeting had been arranged to discuss the proposal that the wildflower meadow project should concentrate on a limited area of the Kirkyard rather than the whole graveyard which could then act as a demonstration to the community of what it could eventually look like. Unfortunately, a compromise could not be reached at the meeting because none of the areas suggested were deemed acceptable. There followed a string of emails where the discussion deteriorated to a level that Sandra could not tolerate and she ended the connection. As a result, Robert Lowther DGC had arranged for the whole kirkyard to be cut and it would be placed on the Council's schedule of works for next year. Over the winter he would arrange for the removal of self-seeded trees and other vegetation from the cemetery and from November the Council will be inspecting gravestones for stability and carrying out work to make them safe. Lack of contact details for relatives may make it difficult to contact relatives if/when work is needed to particular headstones

Nick Walker said that he was disappointed that the meeting had been organised in a way that everyone directly involved could not attend. Also, while the notion of a compromise had been raised at the CC meeting, there had been no decision that it would be agreed and decided to pursue this option at a meeting. There was no reference to a further meeting at the CC meeting when the issue was discussed

and Nick thought that this perhaps contributed to some of the distress that followed.

Jak Kane advised that Andrew Wilson had written to express his disappointment at how the project had been ended and it would appear that there had been a failure in communication. Andrew doubted that those people complaining of the grass being so long had been told that it was simply a result of the Council not cutting it and it was not because the work to establish a wildflower meadow had been started. He also felt that it had not been explained to the community what was being proposed and how the projects would enhance the area. Jak said this would have been covered by the education programme suggested at the CC's last meeting where it would have been explained what was a wildflower meadow and the process involved in its establishment. Jak suggested that the Council needed to communicate better with people outside the CC who are leading on projects, making clear what the CC involvement would be and the level and extent of its support.

Andrew Wilson had also indicated that he was no longer willing to go ahead with his project to create a trail through the Kirkyard. Jak suggested that there would be the opportunity for the community to be consulted on projects such as those suggested for the Kirkyard during the process of creating a Local Place Plan for the Borderlands initiative.

- f) Meetings in DGC premises** – The Council had advised that it was looking to the opening of Council buildings for community use as part of its restart planning. The Community Councillors thought the CC should continue to offer people the opportunity of continuing to attend CC meetings virtually. The Secretary had written to the Council asking if the CC could be allowed to access the Wi-Fi in the County Buildings to allow it to have its meetings in one of the meeting rooms with online access but had yet to receive a response.

6 UPDATES & REPORTS

a: Financial Report

There had been no transactions on the CC accounts since the last meeting.

b: Consultations Report

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting providing info on three current consultations:

- a) **Gambling Act 2005 - Preparation of new Statement of Principles (Section 349).** The Dumfries and Galloway Divisional Licensing Boards were seeking views on their current 36pp Statement of Principles which they must prepare and publish every three years.
- b) **Sectoral Marine plan for Offshore Wind for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation (INTOG).** The Scottish Government had launched a consultation exercise on a new offshore wind planning round. The new planning round was designed to identify new potential areas for offshore wind development that will specifically target the electrification of oil and gas infrastructure in Scottish waters (and examine potential options for smaller (<100 MW) innovation or test and demonstration projects in our waters. However, the Solway Firth had been designated as 'INTOG – South West Exclusion', an area where no projects will be considered.
- c) **Consultation on Penalty Charge Notices for Parking Enforcement.** The Scottish Government has been working to improve parking legislation in Scotland by introducing provisions within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 that will ban pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs, thereby tackling the

impact of inconsiderate and obstructive parking. These changes will also impose new duties on local authorities to enforce these new provisions.

The Scottish Government was seeking views on proposals that relate to the Government's existing guidance on penalty charge levels and also the amount of the penalty charge for the new parking prohibitions which in the future will be set out in regulations.

c: Planning Working Party

Nick Walker had circulated a Planning Report prior to the meeting which included six new applications.

- ❖ Erection of Veterinary Centre at Kirklandhill
- ❖ Installation of Telephone Kiosk/ATM in North Main Street
- ❖ Erection of Agricultural Storage Building at Baldoon Airfield
- ❖ Alterations to 20 Bladnoch
- ❖ Habitat Installation works at RSPB Crook of Baldoon
- ❖ Installation of Air source pumps by James Gordon, Whauphill
- ❖ Change of use to steading to form Craft room, music room and workshop at Orchard Cottage, North Balfern, Kirkinner.

It was agreed that the CC should make submissions in support of the applications relating to the Veterinary Centre and the work at the Crook of Baldoon Reserve. The CC would also support the provision of the phone and ATM service, with the suggestion that the unit should be recoloured red to fit in with the Outstanding Conservation Area in which it was located. It was agreed that the CC would not make any submission in connection with the other applications.

There was an update for only one out of the eight outstanding applications with approval given for an extension to 4 Main Street, Whauphill.

Cllrs McCamon and McColm did not participate in the discussion of the Planning applications.

d. Town Square Developments WP

Sandra McDowall reported that she had met with Blacksmith Paul Siddle and he had suggested that rather than fabricated light fittings the CC should look to use alternative fittings with integrated lighting which would be less weighty and could link to lights festooned from pole to pole. Paul had agreed to design and cost a metal tree to go round the old market cross in the centre of the McGuffie VC Gardens which could also be lit but may need permission for Ancient Monuments. She had asked Sandy Sweetman for an update on the proposed lighting scheme.

e. Martyrs' Walk/Harbour Project

The meeting with Anna Johnson, DGC and Will Marshall, the artist responsible for the original Goose Stones installation had to be rearranged as Anna had been off work following a car accident. Anna Johnson had since been at the hide cutting back some vegetation and sweeping up inside. She had met with Ross Gemmell at the Martyrs Stake to discuss repairs to the boardwalk and the work had been carried out. The CC had been contacted by someone willing to volunteer to carry out repairs at the hide and they were referred to Anna. She had also spoken to another person at the boardwalk who indicated an interest in volunteering on the LNR.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

- a) ***DGHP re Car Park @ Seaview*** – Confirmation received from DGHP that its Asset Officer had scoped out the work needed to repair the road and pavement and the

work was being priced by its contractor. DGHP would let the CC know the expected start date once they had a price and programme.

- b) **Back Lane, Lochancroft Lane** – the CC had been copied into an email sent to DGC Roads asking a member of the Street Works Team to meet to discuss the lane and to explain how to apply to the DGC to have the lane ‘re-adopted’ and ideally have it repaired and re-tarred.
- c) **Act of Kindness** – a recent visitor had written to the CC to thank a lady who had returned his bank card which he had inadvertently left in the ATM after use. The message was posted on the Facebook pages of CC and I love Wigtown.
- d) **Wigtown Community Shop re Defibrillator Cabinet** – Dr Dunn had noticed that the heater on the 20+ year old cabinet was not working. As the Community Shop had already agreed to cover the cost of replacement pads and batteries for the defibrillator a request for funding for a replacement cabinet was submitted. A replacement cabinet would cost in the region of £550.
- e) **Free Support and funding to start a Community Fridge** – Kevin Witt had been passed information re Charity Hubbub who, in partnership with Co-op, was looking to support 100 community organisations across the UK to establish a new Community Fridge. Kevin had submitted an application.
- f) **Martyrs' Monument, Wigtown.** – The Council had been asked to investigate the condition of the area at the monument and the monument itself and arrange remedial work to be carried out. Some of the railings were broken and they need to be repainted and work is needed to deal with the grass and weeds. Most importantly, the inscriptions on all sides of the monument are nearly illegible and the engraving deteriorating. The wall at the nearby car park also needed attention. In the interim, Community Councillors had done some weeding at the site and had sprayed weedkiller.
- g) **Queen Elizabeth II – Platinum Jubilee Celebrations 2022** – A briefing note for Community Councils for this initiative had been circulated.

9F COUNCILLORS' ISSUES

Cllr McCamon said that the Scottish Government had allocated Councils across Scotland more than £1M to help libraries re-open and extend their opening hours. DGC had acknowledged that reading is important for mental health and she was trying to gauge community support for libraries particularly as it appeared that those in the west of the region were not as well served as those further east. The McNeillie Library in Wigtown was still open only two half days per week (6 hours total) and in meetings with Derek Crichton and Harry Hay she had been told that the restricted opening hours were dictated solely by staff word-of-mouth reports of usage. Cllr McCamon was due to meet again with Derek Crichton and the CC asked that she pursue at least the return to previous opening times as decline in usage of the Library could obviously be caused of reduced access and limited opening hours should not be justified on anecdotal evidence. The Council should also be reminded that the Library is also a Council Customer Service Centre. It was agreed that the CC would consider how it would campaign for the return of the Library Service to the previous level if it transpired that the Council proposed that the existing level should become a permanent situation.

Cllr McColm said that Libraries was only one area of Council provision of services where funding was a problem. DGC Chief Executive Gavin Stevenson had returned to duty. Youth Action Group had awarded £3,000 to DEHS to establish a school garden and the local Youth Forum received £1,600 to establish gym facilities in the McMillan Hall.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Town Railings – At Sandra’s McDowall’s meeting with Paul Siddle, he had highlighted that the railings around the McGuffie VC Gardens needed maintenance work or they would deteriorate to the extent that they could be lost forever. The same applied to the railings at the Primary School and, as previously mentioned, those at the Martyrs’ Monument on Windyhill. The DGC Councillors were asked to look to have these type of capital works carried out..

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, 11 October 2021** at the regular time of 7:30 pm.