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**MEETING MINUTES**

**Venue:** TheDavid Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms

**Date:** Monday 3rd April 2023

**Time:** 19:00

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| **Present** |
| Grouping | Name | Initial | Position*(If Applicable)* |
| Elected Members | Joanna Coghill | JC | Chairperson |
| Allan Farquhar | AF1 | Vice-Chairperson |
| Alastair Ferrier | AF2 | N/A |
| Allan Bruce | AB | ‘’ |
| Wendy Campbell | WC | ‘’ |
| Doreen Turner | DT | ‘’ |
| Norma Craven | NC | ‘’ |
| David Dunnett | DD | ‘’ |
| Co-opted Members | Eswyl Fell | EF | ‘’ |
| Roy Mackenzie | RM | ‘’ |
| Ex-officio Members | Cllr Jan McEwan | Cllr JM | Highland Councillor |
| Cllr Raymond Bremner | Cllr RB | ‘’ |
| Non-Members | Jayden Alexander | JA | Secretary |
| Lena Forbes | LF | WHS Representative |
| Carly Rosie | CR | ‘’ |
| Alan Hendry | AH | Press Reporter |

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| **Apologies of Absence** |
| Name | Position*(If Applicable)* |
| Eswyl Fell | Elected Member |
| Doreen Turner | ‘’ |

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

JC welcomed everyone who was present to the meeting and thanked everyone for joining whether in person or online.

1. **Review of Documents**
* **Approval and Adoption of Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed to members by the Secretary and the minutes were approved and adopted as follows:

Proposed By: WC

Seconded By: AF2

* **Monthly Correspondence List**

All members reviewed the monthly correspondence list, and no points were raised.

* **Action List**

JC advised that most actions were ongoing.

1. **Local Organisations’ Update**
* **Wick High School Representatives**

JC extended a welcome to the WHS representatives who asked if they could attend. JC asked if there were anything that the reps would like to ask about with regards to having anything in the town, or for communication in the school regarding what is on within the town for young people. WC asked if there was any music or a chance of having coffee etc. in the Youth Club, the pupils advised no. NC advised that “Teen Scene” would be starting in PPP. JC suggested for the pupils to write to PPP to ask what is available and to explain that they are looking for. NC advised that discussion took place with regards to showing films in the Centre, however, a license is required which wouldn’t be an option, but the opportunity for a film club would be a possibility. NC raised that Wick Players hold youth nights on a Monday evening. A contact for updating the TV’s within the school is to be established. RM asked if the school provide any training on becoming a chairperson, the pupils advised that they weren’t sure,

* **Local Police**

A report was received in advance of the meeting which had been circulated amongst members.

* **East Caithness Community Campus and Noss Primary School**

AF1 advised of the incident which occurred at the campus, it is believed that it is being resolved, however, it is still closed. The reception area was being re-designed; however, those plans have apparently been cancelled for this year. There was discussion taking place regarding the current state of the All-Weather pitch.

* **Friends of East Caithness Cemeteries**

WC advised that tidy up’s resumed last Saturday morning and that the new roses have settled. The paths have all been renewed and the lining work which took place in the winter is being maintained by The Highland Council. However, the cemetery is currently still very wet and damp. The purchase requisition has been raised for the gates to be permanently locked to stop cars from entering the cemetery (except for when a funeral / internment is being held). DD suggested making it that only blue badge holders can enter, however, it was felt that this would cause an issue if the gates weren’t closed in the meantime until that discussion takes place.

* **Friends of Green Road Park**

AF1 advised that over x100 trees had been received to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Noss Primary School will take ownership of the trees which will be planted in the park. An underground survey will be carried out before this planting is carried out. GMR Henderson have been asked to carry this out. There are enough trees to be planted in the park as well as Hillhead Park which AF1 is liaising with the school about.

* **Wick Development Trust**

No apologies had been received and no update was provided prior to the meeting.

* **Association of Caithness Community Councils**

AF2 advised that a lot of representatives attended the previous meeting of the Association from various departments. The NHS were talking about the new Three Harbours Medical Practice, and how the new nub may be located next to Noss Primary School, JC did question why they weren’t looking at the former Wick Swimming Pool building, however, a lot of renovation work would have to be carried out to make it a suitable building. AF2 raised the ongoing issue regrading getting Police staff to stay in Caithness. AF2 also advised that he is aiming to cut the meeting off at 9pm to make it a shorter meeting which would benefit all who attend. Cllr RB expressed that he was worried that the Association might have gone into abeyance some time ago, and COVID-19 came around shortly after the Association “got off the ground” which didn’t help matters. Cllr RB also expressed that it is important for the Caithness Community Councillors to have a forum where they can discuss things and raise and share different matters.

1. **Council Business and Matters Arising**
* **Review of Spring Clean (Beautiful Scotland 2023)**

AB advised that x2 events have taken place so far which both were successful. Harbour area and Trinkie was tackled first with 58 bags of rubbish collected with a lot of things collected around Battery Road. AB looked at the possibility of purchasing bin hooks to help that area. The following week the industrial estate was tackled with 57 bags collected. AB advised that this wasn’t as bad as last year, however, the main stretch of road heading up to Nucleus was particularly bad. X2 letters of thanks had been received, one from MP Jamie Stone congratulating all volunteers for the efforts, also from MSP Maree Todd touching on the impact on the community working together to enhance the area. AB gave the fun fair staff a helping hand tidying up and they were very appreciative. AB would like to have discussion regarding having an operative on when the fun fair is in town.

* **Veteran’s Memorial Tower**

AB advised that a positive meeting was held with RBLS, AB has written to the architect to ask for estimates to get the tower refurbished as the original prices are now outdated. Once this is obtained, engagement with the architects will be required for the job to go out to tender. Currently, it is not being launched officially to the public, but designs will be obtained first of all with a plan and a programme to go out to seek funding.

* **Wick Common Good Fund**

JC would like to create a sub-group to take this forward (to be discussed in Private Business).

* **Wick River Fountain**

JC advised that the Distinguished Visitors plaque on Station Road will be recreated and a possible location at the Riverside where a picknick bench was supposed to be located. JC will email the list collated of ideas for this.

1. **Council Sub-Group Reports**
* **Wick Hanging Baskets Committee**

JC advised in Eswyl Fell’s absence that there was not much to report.

* **Wick Community Market**

AF1 advised that the next market will be resuming within the next few weeks. NC raised the possibility of RBWCC having a stall at the market, JC suggested aiming for the 13th May.

* **Wick Christmas Lights**

No report was provided due to the absence of Claire Mackenzie.

* **Wick Paths Group**

AB explained that evenings do not suit some of the older members, it was agreed to hold a work afternoon with x14 volunteers turning up to give a great tidy up around the fountain area which was an opportunity for the new tools to be used. All entries from the logo competition have been received, so the winner is yeat to be decided.

RM met with Ruan Peat who is the responsible officer for the Carnegie Library. It has been agreed by The Highland Council for the air raid shelter to be refurbished. This will start on 21st April with Wick Paths Group cutting the locks on the doors. The Highland Councill will then be contacted to ask what they would like to do with their items which are currently stored there.

* **HAPPY**

AF1 advised that a meeting will be required later in the year to discuss this.

1. **Treasury Reports**
* **Royal Burgh of Wick Community Council**

£22,194.00 (Fountain £3,000. Businessmen’s Corner £1,000. Beatrice COVID Fund £6,000. Green Road Park £1,856).

* **Wick Hanging Baskets Committee**

JC advised that this will be confirmed once the most recent bank statement is received.

* **Wick Community Market**

£790 Approx.

* **Wick Christmas Lights**

This will be confirmed at the May meeting.

* **Wick Paths Group**

£13,483.07

* **HAPPY**

£1,886.12

1. **Highland Councillor’s Report**

A written report prior to the meeting had not been received, however, a lengthy verbal report was provided and the following notes taken:

Cllr RB expressed that he has been very active on social media, simply to make the community aware of the good news for what is happening in the town with regards to the town centre regeneration, public toilets etc. Cllr RB explained that people were arguing the fact that the town should be doing more to keep the shops open, however, advised that it shouldn’t stop the town from focussing on making the town centre looking better to attract more shops. Cllr RB advised that people are not understanding the huge concept of the project (i.e.- High Street will be transformed and construction will be taking place if the next step for the project is won). JC expressed her disappointment in the negativity online from people who express their thoughts but yet do not attend any meetings or read the content available. JC advised that the team who were at the event on Friday did a great job. Cllr JM expressed that the negativity in Wick is diabolical. Cllr RB advised that The Highland Council do not have the means to walk into shops to ask if shop owners to hose down their windows and clean their shopfronts or ask them to reduce their rent. Cllr RB advised that the Scottish Government. AB expressed that if the whole community buys into this whole project it would be a great success. AF1 spoke with two individuals and the boards which were on display will be available to view at the next community market. Cllr RB advised that when people work together things can be delivered, the new public toilets being a prime example, another example being Riverside Car Park; all the areas of Highland have funds which come to them the same as Wick, they chose what they want to spend it on. Cllr RB advised that the public toilets building will be safe, sound, crack free, it will have a pitched roof, a canopy for protection, lockers for visitors etc. Cllr RB advised that Caithness has almost £1.2 million which can be spent on the repair of roads. or years AF1 provided that the payouts for vehicle damage for 2020 – 22 was as follows: Ross & Cromarty £160k, Caithness and Sutherland £33k, Inverness  £5k, Orkney £750 (1 incident only). Cllr RB advised that he would be happy to discuss this further.

1. **AOCB**
* **Meeting with HighLife Highland Chief Executive**

AB advised that he met with Alan Turner of Caithness United. There is a grass pitch next to newton Park Primary, it had never been used but it has a set of rugby posts on it. The access to the pitch has now been resolved. Sebastian Sandecki would support local groups using this pitch; however, the High School do not manage this facility. AB was also asked there a forward plan for the pitch being repaired in the future as it has passed its economic life, there is apparently issues with the lighting and no one knows who to report this to as the person who maintains the fencing is different to the person who maintains the ground. AB was asked who the contact is for the maintenance of the Bignold Park facility.

* AF2 advised that the Wick Common Good fund is now sitting at £22,600. WC asked how the Council keep track of what money is coming in and out of the fund. DD asked how the public would know how the public is kept informed of what money is being spent. JC expressed how unfair it is that a member of the community cannot sit on the panel for managing this fund.
* AB was approached by a member of the public to say that the flight times from Wick John O’ Groats Airport. It was mutually felt that it is very poorly marketed. AB suggested inviting David Swanson to attend a future meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 2nd May 2023

 (Original date was Monday 1st May, however, due to the closure of

 HighLife Highland facilities on the proposed date, the meeting was

 re-scheduled to take place on the above date.

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| These minutes were approved and adopted as follows: |
| Date | 02/05/2023 |
| Location | The David Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms |
| Proposer | Wendy Campbell |
| Seconder | Allan Bruce |
| Signed | Text, letter  Description automatically generated | Name | Jayden Alexander | Position | Secretary |