



## MEETING MINUTES

**Venue:** The David Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms

**Date:** Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023

**Time:** 19:00

Present			
Grouping	Name	Initial	Position <i>(If Applicable)</i>
Elected Members	Allan Farquhar	AF1	Chairperson
	Allan Bruce	AB	Vice-Chairperson
	Joanna Coghill	JC	Treasurer
	Wendy Campbell	WC	N/A
	Doreen Turner	DT	"
	Alastair Ferrier	AF2	"
	Norma Craven	NC	"
Co-opted Members	Claire Mackenzie	CM	"
	Roy Mackenzie	RMCK	"
Ex-officio Members	Cllr Raymond Bremner	Cllr RB	Highland Councillor
Non-Members	Alan Hendry	AH	Press Reporter

Apologies of Absence	
Name	Position <i>(If Applicable)</i>
Jayden Alexander	Secretary
Rona Morrison	Elected Member
Eswyl Fell	"
Doreen Turner	"
David Dunnett	"

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

AF welcomed those present.

## 2. Review of Documents

- **Approval and Adoption of Previous Minutes**

Date should be 4<sup>th</sup> September. Norma had submitted Apologies. Subject to amendments above, minutes were proposed, accepted by Wendy Campbell and Seconded by Roy Mackenzie.

- **Monthly Correspondence Record**

- 19 Items of Communications had been received
- Action List
- Action 7 Action transferred to Watten Community Council. Complete
- Action 11 Contractor engaged. Date of tidy up to be established from WGC
- Action 15 Complete

- **Action List**

N/A

## 3. Local Organisations' Update

- **Wick High School Representatives**

None present.

- **Local Police**

AF1 gave an overview of the August report sent in by the No report submitted, however Police Scotland ( Sgt Mezals) had provided an update at recent AOCCC

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

CC are aware of significant concerns re maintenance / cleaning regime employed at Campus. Concerns to be communicated to Campus TPC and Highland

Councillor for details. **AF/JA to progress Action 01**

New Front Doors have been fitted to WHS Reception to alleviate long standing issue of automatic doors being unable to cope with weather and / or confusing demands during operation. This issue has had serious implications for the reception area. This concern had been raised by CC during the design phase and suggestions submitted, however this had been dismissed by Project Team.

Issue of Campus Library acoustic and operational shortcomings had been brought to attention of HC **Jan McEwan** to progress.

**Action 02**

AF to forward Operational report prepared by an independent consultant to JMcE (already provided to HC RB on previous occasion). Recommendations thereof have not been implemented due to funding issues

**Action 03**

AB & JA are to have another presentation with new intake 1<sup>st</sup> year pupils re RBWCC to explain our purpose and to engage with youngsters to air re issues which impact them and our community as a whole, through WHSR as above.

**Action 04**

AB provided an update on all weather pitch, which seems to have no obvious person responsible to deal with issues of poor condition. Issue to be pursued

- **Friends of East Caithness Cemeteries**

WC intimated that the cemeteries were in good condition following works by the volunteer group and HC.

- **Friends of Green Road Park**

HC had installed a zipline this year and reinstated the round swing after repair by volunteer group. The park has been well used this year, and some trees planted. Current proposals are being discussed to install Basketball Nets and to replace the goalposts. AB indicated local sports committee may be able to assist in funding for new posts and nets. AF to progress

**Action 05**

- **Wick Development Trust**

No report, however funding had been realised for new toilet block. In addition Sarah Lamb had conducted a walkdown of an unused wooded area with AF which is being proposed to be repurposed into a wildlife walk. Campsite road along riverside is exhibiting signs of wear and tear requiring repair

- **Association of Caithness Community Councils**

AF2 provided an update ( minutes will be made available ) IT issues in town Hall are still problematic. Good representation from Highland & Community Councillors, however , intention is to move the quarterly meeting around county to encourage more attendance the Police Report provided by Sgt Mezals and HC John Mackay re HC parks Services.

#### **4. Highland Council Matters**

No report received from HC RB. Lack of road markings on zebra crossings on safe routes to school had been forwarded to HC via FixmyStreet on previous occasions over the summer, however such are the members concerns for safety and the number of near accidents that are being witnessed this will be brought to the attention of the Ward Manager directly. AF/JA to progress

**Action**

**06**

#### **5. Council Business and Matters Arising**

**Businessmans Corner** has been well received by the public

**Veterans Memorial Tower** awaiting response from Architects re indicative costs before establishing possible funding streams, following which CC will assist the restoration group to achieve the refurbishment as practicable.

**Wick Common Good Fund** financial status and management of the fund had been discussed at recent HC Caithness Committee. RBWCC are yet to be involved in the administration of the fund, however dialogue with the HC representatives is ongoing as to how to apply for funding or to add to it.

**Harbour Sheds Works** complete for this year which has been widely celebrated by local community and donations of paint and funds had been gratefully received by the team. Discussion with Harbour Trust on future works is in hand as lots of other requests had been received by the team. Members expressed their thanks to the team for their hard work.

**Town Centre Clean Ups** Great work by a varied team led by AB in locations throughout the town had encouraged some premises owners to pick up on our initiative. Evident from the considerable amount of spoil and rubbish that has been gathered that this is an aspect in which HC are failing, to the extent that Caithness House external facias and windows are a prime example of lack of maintenance regime. Emphasis will be made to shop owners to keep their premises in good condition

**Wick River Fountain Area** well received after a lot of work by volunteers, local businesses with support from HC. New etched 'monoliths' are due for installation shortly.

**Pocket Lanes** designs being developed by Project Team and local designers / artists are being engaged. Monthly progress meeting due mid month with view to final consultation early November.

**Town Centre Redesign** Update due from Project Team re development and funding for Installation due Late 2024 / 2025

## 6. Council Sub-Group Reports

**Hanging Baskets** JC to add

**Community Market** Not being run during Oct as key personnel are unavailable. Next outing is in conjunction with XMAS Funday. AF requested funding for PBS/PPL licence from HC Discretionary Fund. Ward Manager has responded that funding to 50% of costs may be available. AF to chase **Action 07**

Yet to establish formal committee and bank account, some response from local traders to run the market AF to pursue

**Action 08**

**XMAS Lights** Update from CM Santaland will be run at Community Hub for 3 days due to venue being prebooked. 300 tickets available. Funday will be 25<sup>th</sup> Nov using WCM Marquees as required. Need volunteers to erect and dismantle. Santas sleigh will be doing the rounds, volunteers required. Lights at the hospital which had been donated some years ago are now u/s and unrepairable, however those that are serviceable will be operational. Support from HC and G&A Bernie

**Wick Paths Group** whilst not a Sub Group of RBWCC, John Bogle had provided a comprehensive report re group activities works complete for this year on a variety of projects and new equipment purchased. Great support from volunteers and local businesses donating materials and equipment FOC.

**HAPPY** AF in discussion with local band for live music. AGM required to formalise office bearers and enable online banking. Several outstanding payments from last years event are required. Those providing services have been informed and understand delay.

## 7. Treasury Reports

Bank Balance as at 02.10.23: £19788.82

Within that, CC holds Monies for -

- \* Beatrice Covid Fund £6450.00
- \* Businessman's Corner balance £963.35
- \* Wick Fountain Regeneration balance £671.92
- \* Green Road Park £1856.00
- \* Riverside Volunteers £126.63
- \* Townhall Flag Pole Grant Balance £260.00
- \* WCM £1034.00 (TBC)

## 8. Highland Councillor's Report

- Pocket Lanes. AF1 confirmed that the Contract is with HC – RB confirmed that the Legal Department is looking at this and will sign it once they are satisfied of wording etc. AF1/RB confirmed that works has to be completed by 31.03.24
- Sustrans. RB advised Stage 4 is where we are at. HC finalising info/technical info/ facilities/utilities and we should know by March 2024. AF1 asked “how confident are we?”, RB advised “very confident that this will be delivered”.
- DT advised rugby posts going up in the pitch behind the schools. AB asked if ownership can be confirmed as HLH say it's not theirs. RB advised perhaps either Estates or Education depts. Ward Manager might be able to advise. AB to send email regarding this to RB along with All Weather Pitches query.
- RMck raised the Wick Carnegie Library issues. He recalls JA was to draft a letter, but to date, RMck has never seen this draft. He would like clarification on –
  1. The etched pane of glass to be removed and delivered to Wick Museum for display
  2. Who oversees the Air Raid Shelter situated in the grounds. It needs emptied, tidied.
  3. The sculptures found in the basement. Ownership has to be determined if HC or CGF. RMck feels it is HC and they would be responsible for repair.

AF1 posed Questions on Economy and Infrastructure Agenda Minutes 17 Aug 2023 for JM as follows:

- Item 8 Developer Contributions ; Members and local communities can shape developer contributions.
  - 1. How are developer contributions derived ?
  - 2. How much is in the current developer 'pot' ?
  - 3. How can local communities contribute as to how the developer pot spend profile decisions are made ?

JM advised that so much goes to Education (schools etc). HC can't object but note. RB advised around £10k per household & gave examples of new build areas in Inverness – new houses, increase population so new school built, play park, lighting, pavements and so on.

- AF1 asked about new builds in Wick developer monies. JM was of the opinion that this goes into the “pot” revenue and Amenities then receive it.

Background info : From HC EI meeting minutes, 4.5 i States ' Where an appropriate representative Community Group identifies a new project priority that might be eligible for Developer contributions, they can make recommendations for consideration by the Developer Contributions Action Group ( through the Developer Contributions Officer) and subsequent decision by Area committee.

Chair AF1 stated the Local Plan downloaded from the HC website ( which identifies areas in Wick ward identified for development, and therefore contributions thereof) was dated 2002. RB initiated that a more up to date version available.

- Item 12 Adopted Tree Management Strategy Update

Would JM care to comment as to what this entails ? JM didn't know.

- Item 13 Nature Restoration Fund

Would JM care to comment as to what this entails and clarify what the grant scheme is ?

- Item 17 Tourism Development

Would JM care to comment as to the status of the HC Tourism plan is ? Is there ability for community input ?

- item 18 Visitor Levy Bill

Would JM care to comment as to what the impact of this bill will be to our community ? RB advised that this was a Scottish Government levy and a letter to our local MSP should be sent. Action AF1/JA

- Item 19 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Would JM comment as to how this fund is being delivered ?

- Item 21 SSEN Community Benefit Fund Consultation

AF1 commented Thurso Cllr Ron Gunn ( Thurso ) was reported in the Local Press with regard to this fund, however on closer inspection it seems as if the local communities that would benefit would be those along the route of the transmission lines which would

exclude Wick, unless negotiation with SSE was to occur such that the fund would apply wards county wide eg Halsary. Engagement with SSE will be essential to realise such.

JM confirmed that she will try to advise or help if she is able to.

Cllr RB reported the following:

- Whitechapel Toilets making good progress & should be open October.
- Heating in Pulteney area. He is leading this. 2<sup>nd</sup> phase is happening with a possible additional 100 households being connected – a mixture of Council tenants/private owners. In total 173 properties will benefit and it is hoped that this project may be able to “cross” the river to include Wick side. Benefits are being seen by residents – from an £80 pw cost for coal, down to £40 pw, others have seen savings up to £1k pa.
- Roads. Town roads are being marked up. Some already done. Shared work between Roads Dept & Contractors. £3 million for Caithness and will help enormously with upgrades/repairs. AF1 enquired about Green Road. RB advised that there is a Economy Infrastructure Paper List, so maybe this area will be included in the “general list” for the Caithness Area Committee Roads Report.
- Riverside Area CCTV cameras will be installed shortly.
- JC enquired about the painting of white lines on newly retarred roads. RB confirmed Contractors have been indentified and this will happen shortly.
- AB wanted to touch on good news stories – newly arrived Street Sweeper, fantastic bit of kit and he knows the HC boys are delighted. He is aware that HC departments in town are grateful for all that individual groups are doing alongside their workings.
- AF1 touched on recent floodings in town. JM knows about Union Street. RB advised that although the Roads team are busy retarring etc, flooding issues need to be reported so they are noted & attended to.
- RB would like to meet up with AF1 to address the letter sent recently to all 4 East Caithness Councillors.

## 9. AOCB

- **Argyle Sq phone box** is in a very delapidated state. BT to be contacted for refurbishment and / or plans to retain or remove. AF/JA

### **Action 09**

- **A9 Road closures** this is becoming an all to regular occurance many now lasting hours . Are the any trends ? What are HC contingency plans for comfort breaks, refreshments etc for long delays . HC , MP & MSP to be contacted AF/JA


### **Action 10**

- **Free bus travel** to be better advertised for youngsters and seniors. Establish responsible person in HC for advertisement HC RB to progress

### **Action 11**

- **Flower containers** funding received from Ward manager
- **Honours List / Citizen of the Year / Local Hero** proposals sought for those who have made substantial contribution to community above and beyond 'day jobs' for recognition.
- **HC Public ancillary works inaction** members are disappointed that little has been performed by HC on the agreed scope of ancillary maintenance works, whilst members have completed the tasks assigned to RBWCC. HC RB to progress  
**Action 12**
- AF1 attended a Dounreay Stakeholders meeting. Dounreay is now a division of Magnox and they are now rebranding.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023

These minutes were approved and adopted as follows:					
Date	06/11/2023				
Location	The David Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms				
Proposer	Wendy Campbell				
Secunder	Norma Craven				
Signed		Name	Jayden Alexander	Position	Secretary