

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Location: Meeting held via Zoom.

Date: 3rd August 2020

Time: 7:15pm



Present:

Elected members:

Joanna Coghill (*JC*)
Alan Farquhar (*AF1*)
Alastair Ferrier (*AF2*)
Doreen Turner (*DT*)
Wendy Campbell (*WC*)
David Dunnett (*DD*)

Chairperson / Wick Flower Baskets
Vice chairperson / HAPPY

Co-opted members:

Claire Mackenzie

Wick Christmas Lights

Ex-officio members:

None in attendance.

In attendance:

Jayden Alexander

Secretary

Apologies

Doreen Turner

Cllr Nicola Sinclair

1. Welcome and apologies

JC thanked everyone for joining on Zoom, and welcomed everyone to the meeting. JC also thanked Allan Tait (AT) of CVG for joining us. Two apologies were submitted.

Apologies: *Doreen Turner, Cllr Nicola Sinclair.*

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 1st June 2020 had been circulated by the secretary and were agreed, subject to two spelling corrections.

Proposed by: WC | seconded by: AF2

3. Matters arising and outstanding actions

May 19/07- Harbour Quayside (jutting out pavement): Raymond Bremner had taken this up with the roads department who claimed not to be aware of the question being raised. A response was awaited.

Jan 20/02- Common good land: Raymond Bremner advised that officials had produced a spreadsheet showing all the areas in question, they were still researching, including documents held at the Nucleus but it appeared that the Camps car park was Common Good Land and possibly also the Mart car park and the Town Hall but other areas were also being looked at. A lot more work remains to be done and it will be necessary to have a public consultation rather than a public meeting.

Feb 20/02- Planning and building standards workshop: Raymond Bremner advised that this was ongoing.

Feb 20/03- Big spring clean: Raymond Bremner advised that the date for this had been agreed as week commencing 13th April 2020. This was postponed due to the current pandemic (currently still ongoing).

Feb 20/04 NHS Near Me: Raymond Bremner advised that he was still waiting for the figures from the NHS but expected them next week (currently still ongoing).

4. Highland councillors report

No report was received. JA is to chase this up and circulate once received. A report was not received for the previous meeting either, however JA did chase this up and one was received from Cllr Nicola Sinclair.

It was agreed that RBWCC are not receiving any information on any matters from any of the Highland councillors, and in particular, Wick Community Council meetings are not being attended by a or any councillors and haven't been over the past few months. JA is to compose a letter/email to HC regarding this and HC's lack of correspondence with RBWCC, especially with the proposed boundary plans which is to affect a councillor's job.

The name Community Council suggests representing the Community. How can we do that if they do not advise us on what is going on. It was mentioned that at most meeting's we are discussing what we have heard or seen, we should be getting all this from the Councillors, and not just what they want to pass on. AF2 started drafting a polite letter to send to all as a draft. AF2 is to complete this and circulate.

Other examples include the cycle routes and hoops, this first came to first RBWCC's attention through social media. RBWCC was not aware of the boundary proposals until it was broadcasted by Struan Mackie on Facebook.

5. Correspondence

Seven items on the correspondence for July required a response, all have since been completed or are ongoing.

6. Treasurer's report

KMR states that there was nothing to report since the previous meeting. AF1 said that there is £2,000 left of the King George VI park money. AF1 had asked where RBWCC receive their income from, WC explained that RBWCC get their income from HC.

7. Christmas Lights

CM explained that a meeting is to be held on Thursday 6th August 2020, and that Christmas lights will be put up this year, however, there will be no bingo, funday or Santaland. The Santa sleigh tour will go ahead. They are hoping to do some digital fundraising.

8. HAPPY

AF1 said that there was nothing to report.

9. Wick Flower Baskets

JC had nothing to report, other than this summers show of flowers was a good one.

10. Wick Paths Group

A report was received by email from John Bogle: “ *Our activities were curtailed during lockdown, however 2 members located the General Horne memorial cross that marks the spot where he died in Blingery Forest. A track was cut through very dense trees and marked, also the route over to the forest from a parking area was marked. This route is very difficult walking at present but we need permission from Forestry and Land Scotland to make any improvements and a meeting planned for the end of March could not be held, a new date has not been set. The group has also embarked on their biggest project to date - the refurbishment of the Coghill Bridges. Over the weekend of 1/2 August the rotten deck timbers on the wee bridge were replaced and non slip decking laid, the side railings were also painted, the bridge is looking much better and it is now much safer for pedestrians. A start was also made on the larger bridge with some timbers replaced and some painting done but this is a much much bigger task, another work weekend is planned for 15/16 August but a 3rd weekend may also be required. On Saturday 15th August the Paths Group will also be joining with the Wick Riverside Volunteers and some members of Pulteneytown Parish Church to carry out a litter pick of the Riverside area, members of the public (and RBWCC!) are invited to take part - meet at 10.00am. “*

11. Green Road Park

AF1 explained that he is seeking funding for the park's zip slide installation. Other than that there was nothing to report.

12. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School

AF1 is submitting a request from HC on school readiness for restart following shutdown and status of statutory maintenance. Also requesting as to when access to MUGA pitches will be installed and when the main boulevard construction is liable to start. We are now in year 6 of a three year build project.

13. OSCR complaint

JA confirmed that the consent sent from which had to be signed by John Bogle to give JA permission to file an official complaint against OSCR to the SPSO had been completed and sent. Draft letters for sending to Gail Ross and Jamie Stone has been agreed however it was suggested that we wait until RBWCC's letter is published in the John O' Groat Journal.

14. Highland Council public consultation

For discussion at the next meeting.

15. Love Local campaign

JC suggested this was a no go as it would mean that RBWCC would have to do all of the marketing etc and this was not viable.

16. Mental health and community contact numbers

AT was invited to along to the meeting with the potential of helping RBWCC create a list of contact numbers which could help with the mental health issues which arose over the past couple of months. As well as a list of contact numbers from the likes of HC with contact names and numbers for different departments etc.

AT addressed the following: In March at CVG resilience groups were organized and received funding, These groups are now starting to cut back but will most likely continue to provide support until September. AT advised that CVG are preparing for the worst case scenario, such as another spike of COVID-19. It was mentioned that there is no doubt that issues will arise in the further such as jobs being lost due to the ending of the furlough scheme.

CVG received funding to employ, with the aim of tackling inequalities. An action group was set up, which Cllr Nicola Sinclair is a part of. With regards to mental health AT outlined that in order to tackle the issue we need to know what is happening now, not for example five years ago etc. Currently the NHS is not helping with funding but as a community we need to provide support.

It was said that NHS Highland has failed due to the influx of people. It was outlined that crises could escalate especially with Christmas approaching which causes money shortages etc. JC said that RBWCC need to get a list of contact numbers (co-ordinating) with CVG arranged to help those who are in crisis. AT assured that he would share anything that is found, created with JA.

It was suggested that one of the biggest problems is most likely the people living with those with mental health problems. For example- are they asking themselves are they doing things right? How can they do more to help them? JA is to compose a letter to the Haven, Wick to ask what's services they provide outlining RBWCC's goal of creating a contact list. It was also mentioned that drug and alcohol mental health issues have certainly increased and is a huge problem across the Highlands. COVID has also had a large impact on those struggling with mental health.

17. Town tidy up and wild camping

It was mentioned that the town is in need of a deep clean. It was suggested that there is a lack of bins at the Trinkie area and more dog waste bins are needed along streets, due to dog waste being found everywhere (not being disposed of- of high danger). It was also suggested that the recycling bins at the front of Sam's Furniture Shop be removed and bins be placed by the Riverside and harbour. It was agreed that the bollards on the High Street are in need of being painted and the seating is in need of being straightened. The question was asked as to why HC can't request empty shop owners to tidy up their shop fronts. It was also mentioned

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that Caithness House ground floor windows are in need of washing. It was also mentioned that Lower Pulteney is in need of a deep clean also. Litter picks are being carried out by volunteers.

It was asked if the gala committee could clean up the mess left after the bonfire.

JA is to compose a letter to both HC and Wick Gala Committee regarding this. It was suggested to submit the same letter to the paper for publishing.

AF2 suggested sending a letter to the paper also calling for a SPOC (single point of contact) that can deal with issues of the wild camping, the rubbish and sorting it and also trying to co-ordinate a positive side promoting all the good things for the County.

18. Annual general meeting

JA has drafted a poster to advertise the RBWCC's 2020 AGM, which will be held via Zoom. A date and time is yet to be confirmed.

19. Town wardens

A letter was sent to Alex Macmanus and Margaret Ross from RBWCC asking what the town wardens do. A reply was received from Margaret Ross outlining that they are Community wardens, not town wardens. They are employed by HC and are funded by the Housing Revenue Account. Their role is to work with individuals, community representatives and agencies in order to address antisocial behaviour, improve the environment, safety and security of council estates and to provide support, advice and information to those communities.

It was discussed that many streets in Wick such as Dunnett Avenue and Leith Walk are in need of attention (eg- the garden states). Other matters include the need for more bins in car parks such as the Trinkie, harbour, Noss Head and Riverside areas. It was mentioned how there could be the potential for more "No overnight parking signs". It was also mentioned how dirty waste is not being disposed of correctly and that there needs to be an organised body to arrange tourism in Caithness.

JA is to compose a letter to Margaret Ross asking how Community wardens are working with certain areas and how they are getting tidied up, and will they.

20. AOCB

- Boundary commission proposals

JC explained that the boundary changes are important to us and them. We cannot allow Inverness to gain two councillors as we lose one, this was the proposal made by an office in Edinburgh... There is an online petition which can be signed and shared. JA shared this on the RBWCC's Facebook page.

- Interim education boss senior

It was outlined that education boss who had resigned still has earned £45k in the time he was employed. It was mentioned that these monies could have gone towards something more worthwhile and needed. It was asked if we need someone to replace him? Why was it necessary to hire in the first place? What did he actually do in his job? The bin charges are increasing but yet HC can still pay an empty £936.00 per day.

- Car parking charges

AF2 has rewritten to HC for a confirmation that the Consultation still stands and he has asked as to whether any discussions formally or informally have taken place for the resumption or delay/postponement for the car park charges. AF2 has found out that Elgin were able to expand their streets for car parking permits by local decision without public consultation. This would have been in the original agreement in 2017, so he has asked that question also i.e. could that be done, as it hasn't been mentioned, however, know they can change prices, free periods and the charging period by local Councillor agreement without speaking to the public. The Consultation is for Charging or not only. Permits, costs free periods lie with local councillors. The car parking consultation has been cancelled / halted due to COVID and there are absolutely no plans that we are aware of, for this consultation to be revisited.

- Thomson girls certificates

AF2 said that Susan Thomson said “ Thank you for putting the video out there for the girls. It has given them a boost to their confidence and we are delighted for them.

JC thanked everyone for either attendance.

The following items were discussed in private:

- 21. Beatrice micro-grant applications

It was agreed to award Wick Flower Baskets with £250 as applied for to help the committee to pay for their insurance for summer displays.

It was agreed to award Wick Paths Group with £200 as applied for to purchase additional materials for the improvement works of the Coghill Bridges to be complete.

Three other applications are to be discussed at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

Date: Monday 7th September 2020

Location: To be held via Zoom

Time: 7:15pm

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

ACTION NO.	ACTION DETAILS	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
May 19/07	Harbour quayside Road jutting out pavements. To chase response from HC.	RB	Ongoing
Jan 20/06	Noss Primary School and Community campus, to check for more recent report than Dec 2018.	RB	Ongoing
Feb 20/07	Planning and building standards workshop. To circulate details when available.	JA	Ongoing

Feb 20/04	NHS. To circulate the figures on use of NHS Near Me.	RB	Ongoing
Mar 20/01	CCTV. To pass on map and details to secretary for distribution, and to DS Afro JOGJ.	JA / RB	Ongoing
Mar 20/02	WADF complaint to OSCR. To advise OSCR that a reference would be made to the Ombudsman if not resolved by April meeting, complaint was made to SPSO.	JA	Ongoing
Mar 20/03	Parking charges. Request an extension to the consultation period at the ACCC meeting on 03/03/2020.	JC	Ongoing
Jul 20/02	Compose a letter to Jamie Stone, Gail Ross and Scottish Government regarding situation with WADF and complaints to OSCR and SPSO.	JA	Ongoing
Jul 20/04	Photos to be sent to JA for new RBWCC website.	JC / JA / CM	Ongoing
Jul 20/05	Find contacts for HC and mental health teams for potentials contact list for RBWCC.	JA	Ongoing