

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Location: Meeting held via Zoom.

Date: Monday 1st February 2021.

Time: 7:15pm.

Present:

Elected members:	Joanna Coghill (<i>JC</i>).	Chairperson
	Allan Farquhar (<i>AF1</i>)	Vice chairperson
	Wendy Campbell (<i>WC</i>)	
	Alastair Ferrier (<i>AF2</i>)	
	David Dunnett (<i>DD</i>)	
	Doreen Turner (<i>DT</i>)	
	Allan Bruce (<i>AB</i>)	
	Frances Purves (<i>FP</i>)	

Co-opted members: None in attendance.

Ex-officio members: Cllr Raymond Bremner (*Cllr RB*)

Cllr Willie Mackay (*Cllr WM*)

In attendance: Jayden Alexander (*JA*) Secretary

Alan Hendry (*AH*). NOSN (Press reporter)

Apologies:

Kimberley Miller-Rosie

Claire Mackenzie

1. Welcome and apologies.

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for joining on Zoom. JC gave a vote of thanks to AH for joining on behalf of North of Scotland Newspapers (NOSN).

Apologies as per listed.

2. Reminder introduction for Community Council business.

The above item was discussed in private to the members and the secretary of the community council only.

3. Minutes of previous meeting.

All were happy with the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to amendments of the list of apologies, JC also corrected that tubs for flower planting for the Wick Flower Baskets group has not been ordered (JA to correct).

Proposed by: WC / Secoded by: DT

To be confirmed after adjustments are made and distributed to all members.

4. Matters arising and outstanding actions.

No items on the correspondence for December required a response, however several to be discussed (as below).

Spring clean

This is now on hold, there will be no action taken until we exit lockdown.

NHS Near Me

Cllr RB is awaiting a response (this is delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cllr RB will distribute information to members of RBWCC.

Wick Grizzle Park

AF1 confirmed that no progress has been made, all agreed that it is still in good use by members of the public. AF1 confirmed that he is awaiting estimates for work to be carried out at King George VI park.

Breakdown of RBWCC accounts

JC confirmed that a breakdown has yet to be made by KMR. WC confirmed that the Wick Paths Group is now separate from RBWCC's accounts

Letter to Michelle Johnstone (NHS)

JA confirmed that the letter he had drafted for sending to Michelle Johnstone (North area manager of NHS) was approved and submitted. A response is awaited.

Letter to MSP Gail Ross, MP Jamie Stone and NC500 company

JA stated that he would amend the letter which was sent to Michelle Johnstone (NHS) to make it suitable for sending to MP Jamie Stone and the NC500 company. JA confirmed that a copy had been submitted to MSP Gail Ross. A response is awaited.

Letter to postmaster of new Post Office (PO)

JA confirmed that a letter of congratulations and thanks had been sent to Mr Kevin Milkins (new postmaster of Wick PO) at the new address for the PO. The letter was received, and a post was published on Facebook by Mr Milkins. All agreed this was good publicity for RBWCC.

Letter to Highland Council (HC) and BEAR Scotland regarding recent work on Francis Street

AB confirmed that he had taken photos of the recent pavement work on Francis Street and had distributed to all CC members. AB also stated that he has yet to draft a letter for submitting along with JA.

5. Correspondence.

No items in the correspondence for January required a response. All were happy.

6. Highland councillors' report.

Cllr WM praised and thanked both Cllr RB and Cllr NS (who wasn't in attendance) for their work and input for all that is going on in Wick. Cllr WM stated that there is more good work and lots of progress being made in Wick more than any other HC area, Cllr WM also stated that Wick has "stood up greatly with overwhelming endorsement."



Cllr RB gave updates on the following:

- HC continue to give weekly briefings on the COVID pandemic, and that Highland councillors are alerted of any issues arising in care homes and updates on the vaccine rollout.
- Tension was diverted to the winter resilience with road gritting etc.
- HC budgets are approaching, hopefully funding will be issued to the Caithness committee.
- Cllr rb is to send an update to CC members on mental wellbeing.
- A meeting regarding the town regeneration was held on Monday 1st February. Sixteen new CCTV cameras are to be introduced in the town. All agreed that this is a huge plus for Wick. These cameras will hopefully be manned until 2am.
- The boundary commission consultation is now closed. The view is that the county does not want to lose two councillors for Inverness to gain.
- The Pulteneytown conservation area was extended up to Huddart Street (although it doesn't actually include Huddart Street). Cllr RB is to distribute the map to all CC members.

Members of RBWCC raised several questions to the Highland councillors present:

- *“ Funding was delayed for the town regeneration, what is the update on this? ”*.
Cllr RB stated that HC are awaiting clarification on this but will notify RBWCC as soon as possible.
- *“ Will the new CCTV cameras be manned from the Police Station in Wick or from the council offices? ”*.
Cllr RB stated that it would most likely be manned from a room within Wick Police Station and that the cameras will be infra-red.
- *“ Is any particular group leading the happenings with the current airport situation and what is the Government's opinion on the situation? ”*.
Cllr RB stated that Caithness Chamber of Commerce is the leading organisation on the matter, and suggested that until the funding process for 2021 is underway then a view forward will not be able to be put together.

7. Treasurer's report.

There was no report due to the absence of KMR.

The bank balance for Happy is currently £732.75, Wick Flower Baskets account currently stands at £5265.00 (same as January statement). Due to the absence of CM, there was no treasurer's report for Wick Christmas Lights.

8. Wick Christmas Lights.

There was no report due to the absence of CM.

9. HAPPY.


Nothing to report.

10. Wick Flower Baskets.

Nothing to report.

11. Wick Paths Group

“ There isn't a lot to report from the Paths Group for obvious reasons. Because of the current restrictions we will not be able to install the interpretive panels on the north side of the Bay until we are able to meet in slightly larger groups. We have not made any progress on identifying land ownership on the south side of the Bay. Willie Watt, working alone with an excavator dug additional drainage channels beside the North Head Path and spread some planning's on the muddiest bits of the path. This path is even more used since the start of the pandemic and really the whole path could do with being resurfaced but this is a major and expensive job. Willie plans to do some more drainage work on the path. During the recent icy spells, the new surface on the Coghill Bridges proved to be very successful but there were several reports of people falling on the pre-existing concrete ramps at each end. I contacted Highland Council and I understand they have now supplied salt bins - there is no shovel to spread the salt as it would likely end up in the river but if a bridge user has a plastic bag in their pocket, they will hopefully spread a handful of salt on the ramps. Having said that the approach paths to the bridges were also lethal in the recent cold spell. “



JC highlighted that a large vehicle has churned up the path and ground at Old Wick, adjacent to the castle. JC also highlighted that the path here (South Head Path) was completed by members and volunteers of the paths group two years ago. JC mentioned that someone had also dumped a large amount of rubble and earth waste. Cllr RB stated that it is a disgraceful act and asked if bollards or a gate could be installed to prevent this happening to the path again. WC suggested contacting SEPA as it is an environmental issue. DT suggested contacting Graham Begg who might be able to shed some light on the subject. All agreed, JA is to compose a letter.

12. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School.

AF1 contacted HC to find out when works on the boulevard will finish, works were supposed to finish at the end of January, however, it will most likely be the end of April now. It was highlighted that we are now six years into a three-year build programme.

13. Wick Academy Development Fund.


AF1 drafted a letter for the judicial factor of how the trust was managed. It was agreed that as long as the whole situation comes to a suitable end, it would be a huge leap to see these funds put to good use.

14. Common good fund.

JC stated that the meeting held in January with Cllr Andrew Sinclair was beneficial, and he did his best to answer questions raised by RBWCC. A vote of thanks was given to Cllr Sinclair for his input and help. Cllr AS submitted a summary of what was discussed to Sarah Murdoch of HC and asked if she would be willing to meet with CC members to discuss the CGF, for members to get a solid understanding sooner rather than later. Cllr AS stated anything classed as a statutory requirement can never be classed as common good. AF2 is to contact Roy Mackenzie who has done extensive research into the missing historical items from the Carnegie Library and John Horne collection.

15. Camps Car Park.

It was brought to the attention of RBWCC that the Camps Car Park has been left in an untidy state with scaffolding boards from the demolition of Sloans left in the car park, it was suggested that these tools and boards could have been left tidy and together in one place in the ground of the demolished building instead of the car park. It was also said that there is rotten seaweed in the car park which is a hazard for both vehicles and people on foot. AB asked Cllr RB if the leave sweeper from Inverness could be borrowed to tidy things like this up, and around the Wick streets. DT suggested starting at the basics and HC buying a street sweeper. Cllr RB said this was a good suggestion and would investigate. It was highlighted that a good deep clean of the town would help and would tie in with the tourism sector. AB said that his plan as a new community



councillor is to use photographs as his way of pointing out issues in and around the town, all agreed that with pictures, no one can deny the issues.

16. Caithness Club Corner and Riverside Fountain project.

JC confirmed that Sieman's will be getting involved with the Caithness Club corner project. JC explained to all present that the plan is to brighten up this corner by mounting Johnston Collection photographs to the two walls, installing a bench and some flower boxes. JA is to contact Alf Gunn of The Wick Society to arrange the ordering of the photo panels for the walls. JC explained that the delivery for a bench is extortionate but confirmed that she is still looking into different companies. JC is to send photos to all CC members of possible picnic benches which are made of recycled plastic with structures to bolt down.

The area to the front of the Riverside Fountain has been measured for membrane and chippings. Barnies is to check the lighting around the Fountain. JC confirmed that the new pump for the Fountain is to be installed in March. John Bogle is investigating the possibility of informative panels with pictures and history, the possible cost will be around £1700. The handrails leading down to the Fountain will be replaced, this work will be carried out by community payback. The total cost of this is £280.


17. AOCB

Dog fouling

JC stated that there is dog mess everywhere in the town. All agreed that most streets were filthy and this is a hazard. WC suggested that HC should have someone in charge of this, someone designated to charge people for this. Cllr RB stated that there is a limit as to what can be charged. Cllr RB suggested inviting the dog warden to the March meeting of RBWCC to find a way forward. All agreed.

Airport situation

AF2 is awaiting a response from various people with regards to the airport situation, and from the NHS on their usage of the airport.



JC thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was brought to a close.

Date of next meeting

Location: Meeting held via Zoom.

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Action List

January 2021

ACTION NO.	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED
OCT 20/01	List to be composed of tasks to be taken on during the next big clean of town (on hold due to COVID-19).	Cllr RB / Cllr NS	
OCT 20/02	Update to be sought on NHS Near Me (RB awaiting response from NHS).	Cllr RB	
OCT 20/07	Investigations into Wick Grizzly Park to be carried out to find out what can be done with a view to re-open the park (officially).	AF1	
OCT 20/09	Investigations to be carried out to establish the current situation with wall in Gladstone Place which is affecting parking.	Cllr AS	
OCT 20/10	Breakdown of treasurer's report to be provided in table format including Wick Paths Group and Wick Flower Baskets, micro grants and CC.	KMR	

JAN 21/02	Letter to be written to MSP / MP regarding NC500 situation.	JA	21/01/2021
JAN 21/04	Letter to be written to HC / BEAR Scotland to express dissatisfaction with new pavements on Francis Street.	AB / JA	
FEB 21/01	Letter to be written to Graham Begg regarding the land and dumping of rubble at Old Wick concerning the South Head path.	JA	06/02/2021