

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Location: Held via Zoom.
Date: Monday 5th July 2021
Time: 7:20pm
Following the 2021 AGM

Minutes of monthly meeting held in July 2021.

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>)	
Co-opted members:	Allan Bruce (<i>AB</i>)	
	Eswyl Fell (<i>EF</i>)	
	Roy Mackenzie (<i>RM</i>)	
	Claire Mackenzie (<i>CM</i>)	
Ex-officio members:	Cllr Raymond Bremner (<i>Cllr RB</i>)	Highland Councillor
Non-members/Public:	Jayden Alexander (<i>JA</i>)	Secretary
	Paul Cannop (<i>PC</i>)	
	Jonathan Miller (<i>JM</i>)	Chairperson of Wick's Heart
	George Ewing (<i>GE</i>)	Development Officer of Cycling UK
	Sharon Powell (<i>SP</i>)	Community Liaison Manager of SSEN
	Alasdair Goskirk (<i>AG</i>)	Chief Inspector (Police Scotland- Caithness)
	David Scott (<i>DS</i>)	Press Reporter (NOSN Newspapers)

Apologies

Kimberley Miller-Rosie

1. Welcome and apologies.

The meeting commenced following the closing of the 2021 AGM which was officiated by Cllr RB. Cllr RB welcomed JC as the re-elected chairperson.

The apologies received were read out by JA (as recorded on Page 1).

JA advised that one member of the public was in attendance (PA) who had raised a query regarding the opening of the public toilets located at Whitechapel. JA advised that this query had been discussed by RBWCC previously and that it was on the agenda for the evening. JA also advised that members of the public are not at liberty to ask questions during community council meets and that any questions must be submitted via email prior to meetings.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

JA circulated the draft minutes of the previous meeting which was held on Monday 7th June 2021 (via Zoom) to RBWCC members.

Approval and adoption: The minutes were approved and adopted subject to three errors which JA will amend.

Proposer: WC | Seconder: AF2

JA advised that the minutes will be made available to the public on the RBWCC website and Facebook page as per usual once the amendments have been made.

Outstanding actions:

- Action No. OCT 20/01- List to be composed of tasks to be completed during the next big clean of town.
Cllr RB / JC / WC
- Action No. JUL 21/01- Letter to local shops re. mental health contact poster and dog fouling campaign to be amended and distributed to shops with copies of each poster.
JA / AB COMPLETED 22/07/2021
- Action No. JUL21/02- Photoshoot to be arranged with RBWCC and successful applicants of Beatrice micro-grants.
JA / JC COMPLETED 20/07/2021


- Action No. JUL21/03- Poster to discourage littering and fly-tipping to be finalised.
JA
- Action No. JUL21/04- Wick Gala Committee to be contacted to confirm receipt of findings of information re. Riverside Islands by Roy Mackenzie.
JA / RM COMPLETED 06/07/2021
- Action No. JUL22/05- Sub-group of RBWCC to be formed to manage the new community market titled “Wick Community Market”.
RBWCC

3. Report from Wick Development Trust (Wick’s Heart).

JC thanked JM for joining on behalf of Wick’s Heart (Wick Development Trust). JM introduced himself as the current chairperson of the trust and went on to explain that Wick’s Heart is the trading name of the Wick Development Trust and that the organisation has been set up for a couple of years. JM stated “we are here to start a line of communication to work on projects going forwards”. JM went on to explain that the trust is working “behind the scenes” with the demolished sites (Former Sloans and Pavilion sites) for re-development. JM also said that both organisations (Wick’s Heart and RBWCC) could be of assistance to one another as both are working towards the same outcome.

AF2 asked JM if Wick’s Heart had any propositions or a way forward for both demolished properties which is now in their ownership. JM stated that they are looked at different routes, one being to find a suitable developer for each site in a timely manner, or a community led project for which lots of suggestions has been made. JM said that it could be tricky project. If the route of a community led project was to be followed, then that would mean reaching a consultation stage for community development and establishing what is available for that project. JM also stated that although lots of suggestions had been received it is a choice of finding what is feasible and realistic taking costs into consideration and if it was a community led project, finding how the site would actually be managed depending on what the site could be.

WC asked JM if and how Wick’s Heart would stay in contact with RBWCC as RBWCC attempted to make contact previously on different occasions which were unsuccessful. JM explained that Wick’s Heart began with a strong amount of people, many left and then a board of directors had to be established. JM stated that they are looking to get new members and are happy to keep in touch with RBWCC.



EF explained to JM that she had applied to become a member of the trust but was told that to become a member she would have to become a director and that she felt hugely discouraged at being told this especially when Wick's Heart were a new organisation which were set up for the good of the town. EF also explained that she was told that meetings were held "in secret". JM stated that the monthly meetings are for directors only and that meeting minutes are available on their website. JM also stated that members can attend annual general meetings.

WC explained that she felt insulted when RBWCC were told by Wick's Heart that they did not want RBWCC representatives at meetings.

JC asked JM how many directors Wick's Heart currently have. JM explained that the trust currently have eight board members including two new board members, but they are looking to recruit both new members and board members.


JC explained to JM that she along with RBWCC feel that Wick Development Trust need to be more open and transparent to the public about Wick's Heart as no one knows what is going on or what is happening. JC also stated that Wick Development Trust need to keep in contact with RBWCC as the name of Wick Community Council is on the funding applications for the town centre re-development and that RBWCC are a key stakeholder in the re-generation.

AF1 asked JM what the timescale is for re-developing the demolished sites. JM stated that Wick's Heart aren't ruling out any option for the now demolished sites and progress should be made within the next month or so. JM also said that the trust does want to get the public's hopes up if a community led project does not go forward when a buyer could be involved.

AF1 also asked where the trust get their funding from. JM stated that the trust is currently looking at different funding options and that they are working with HIE for strategy work.

JC asked JM if he would inform RBWCC of when the trust's AGM will be, JM agreed this would happen.

JM explained that a local artist has been commissioned to create a mural of Wick Town Centre will hopefully be up on the hoardings around the two demolished sites within two weeks. AB explained to JM that the public need to be aware of this sort of thing, and that Wick's Heart need to start publishing information like this, to start communication with the community. JC and RBWCC members agreed with this statement and JC said that Wick's Heart need to be visible with their information,



understanding that certain aspects will be private business but other information like this needs to be made available.

JM asked RBWCC to “feel free” about letting Wick’s Heart know of any projects going forward.

JC thanked JM for his attendance and said that it would be beneficial for Wick’s Heart to meet with RBWCC again and advised that RBWCC would be in touch soon. JM thanked JC and remained online for the duration of the meeting.


4. George Ewing (Cycling UK).

JC welcomed GE to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance.

GE introduced himself as the Development Officer for Cycling UK. GE explained that the company are currently working on a project called “Rural Connections” which encourages people to cycle more and to bring together local organisations to hold activities for the likes of young people to upskill them and to build a sector of activities for young people. Another aim of this is to build a focus group for something called “active travel”. GE explained that active travel can include people travelling on a bicycle, walking, or even pushing or being in a wheelchair. Cycling UK is also working on the “Shift Project” which emphasizes on everyday journeys. GE explained that not everyone who travels on a bike is confident with local traffic. GE advised that this project could help to provide funding for the likes of training for confidence with local traffic which would help to build confidence for local people. The funding for this varies between £400 to £800, GE advised that funding like this could also be used to provide bike helmets or bike locks for local organisations.

DD asked GE if the path heading out to Wick Tesco is for cyclists or pedestrians. GE advised that he is of the opinion that it is for both and that it is there to encourage people to cycle and / or walk more.

AB asked GE if Wick has the potential for an electric bike scheme. GE stated that if other places in the South of Scotland have electric bike schemes, then there is no reason why Wick couldn’t have a scheme for this when the potential is there. GE explained that this sort of project is something that he could assist with as part of his job- If RBWCC or another local organisation wanted to push for this or any similar project then he and Cycling UK would give 100% effort to get the funding and people behind it.



JC asked GE if the cycling proficiency training which is provided at local primary schools is carried out by Cycling UK. GE advised that this training is carried out by Cycling Scotland. GE also explained that cycling proficiency is only available at rural schools, however, Cycling Scotland is looking at making this training available at central schools also.

AF2 mentioned the bicycle racks which are in the plans for the town centre re-development as well as the new cycle route for the town.

GE stated that if anyone locally knows of anyone who is in the need of loaning a bike short term to contact him.


JC thanked GE for his attendance and for taking the time to explain what Cycling UK is working on.

5. Local Police report.

JC thanked AG for joining to give a report on local arising issues and also thanked AG for his response to the email correspondence regarding the recent attack and actions which took place at Wick Riverside.

AG stated that the demand for policing has grown, AG also stated that there have been recent prosecutions for drink driving (of which there have been five offences), domestic violence (eight offences) search warrants have also been obtained for other crime. AG stated that violence has dropped and that there has been an increase of noise complaints by 29%. AG explained that there is currently a national drink drive campaign going on and there will also be a campaign happening soon on seatbelt wearing. There have been various speeding concerns in Henrietta Street. AG advised that alcohol has been ceased from young people at the Riverside area, particularly from people around the ages of fifteen, sixteen and seventeen (whisky, wine and beer in particular). AG advised that Police are currently at their busiest stage with a high demand, however, they will continue to listen to local concerns, but communication is challenging. AG stated that he along with his team try to be as visible as possibly with the Association of Caithness Community Councils also, AG advised that he will do what he can to keep in contact with RBWCC.

DD asked for confirmation on the different number which is available to contact Police. AG advised in an emergency to call 999, and if anyone comes across or sees anything such as vandalism or the likes of young teenagers at Wick Riverside causing harm etc to call 101. JC suggested RBWCC publishing a poster or something similar on their Facebook page to make people aware of this. AG advised that the more people who log a concern via the 101 number the more the Police will recognise that problems like such are increasing in Wick, therefore work is needed to ease the issue, such as patrolling etc.



WC asked AG to confirm if Wick still has a non-drinking law. AG confirmed that as far as he and his team are aware Wick does have a non-drinking ban; therefore, people are not allowed to consume alcohol outside on the town streets etc. AG advised that this law also applies to Thurso. AG also suggested the statement “do parents know where their children are?” implying do the parents or guardians of these young teenagers who are out and about doing these actions know where they are and / or if they are doing such things.

AB suggested to AG that there will be lots of things going on locally which the Police are aware of, however, there will also be lots of other things happening which the Police won't know about at all because people aren't reporting it. AG advised again to encourage and advertise for people to call 101 in circumstances like these, and by logging a concern through that particular number statistics will then rise and Police will be made aware and will have to act on it.

JC thanked AG for his report and for providing answers to some questions which RBWCC were pushing on getting resolved. AG advised RBWCC that he will do what he can to remain in touch, AG then left the meeting.

6. Correspondence.

No items in the correspondence for June required a response, except for the information received from Cllr RB from Sarah Murdoch (Common Good Fund Officer, Highland Council) regarding the Wick Common Good Fund. As this was on the agenda under “Council business” it was agreed to discuss the matter then.

7. Highland Councillor's report.

Cllr RB provided the following report: **To be received.**

8. Treasurer's reports.

Due to the absence of the treasurer (KMR) no report was provided. However, all would be the same as provided at the 2021 AGM.

9. Sub-group reports.

All sub-groups had nothing to report due to the current circumstances and regulations as a result of the pandemic, however, all is the same as reported at the AGM.

10. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School.

AF1 stated that he had nothing to report regarding both campuses, except from the unused reception are in the High School which can't be used as the strong winds from the front doors make the area very cold for staff, and this advice was not listened to when the design work for the campus was underway. This is now being reviewed. AF1 also explained that a new access ramp is being installed for the sport pitches.

11. Council business.

Wick Common Good Fund: RM explained that he was in contact with Alex MacManus (ward manager for Highland Council) to express that HC could actually own the islands located within Wick river. RM stated that he found lots of information from research which indicates transfer to Wick Town Council. RM has been in contact with Sarah Murdoch regarding this and he will continue to work on this in conjunction with HC, the same applying for the historic, missing items currently being tracked down. JA advised that he emailed the information and findings from RM to the secretary of Wick Gala Committee, however, received no response. JA will send an email to ask if the information was received and to express that RBWCC would be more than happy to help or assist with any questions or queries, and to work together to find a suitable outcome aiming to find ownership of the riverside islands.

Caithness Club Corner project: JC advised that the new bench and photographic panels would be installed soon by Sieman's, bringing this project to a successful end.

Wick Riverside Fountain project: JC advised that the Community Service Team would be installing a new handrail as soon as wood is supplied from the woodyard. HC are working on getting the new pump running which will allow the fountain to function. Once this is completed, new lighting for the fountain and surroundings can then be looked into.

12. AOCB

- Dog fouling campaign: AB advised that a thank you letter should be sent to Karen at Tesco (Community Champion) for her efforts in providing such great prizes for the children. All agreed and JA will compose a letter of thanks with AB.
- SSE Noss Power station: JC thanked SP for joining again on behalf of the new Noss Power Station. SP agreed that a site tour for RBWCC would hopefully be arranged soon. SP confirmed that she would be attending the August meeting of RBWCC with a couple of her team members to show a slideshow and time-lapse of the work going on at the new site. SP also indicated that her team could possibly help with the current situation with the playparks. JC confirmed that this could be discussed at the August meeting, to plan a way forward for the issue. JC thanked SP for her attendance, helpfulness and dedication for keeping in touch with RBWCC regarding the new site at Noss.

JC thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed for private discussion for RBWCC members and the secretary only.

Next meeting

- Location: Via Zoom
Possibly Wick Assembly Rooms (to be confirmed)
- Date: Monday 2nd August 2021
- Time: 7:00pm