

**Minutes of a Meeting held in Assembly Rooms, Wick**

**Monday, 2nd March 2020**

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| Present:  Elected Members  Co-opted Members  Ex-officio Member | J Coghill (JC)  D Dunnett (DD)  K Miller-Rosie (KMR)  D Turner (DT)  A Ferrier (AFr)  C Mackenzie (CM)  R Bremner (RB) | Chair/Baskets  Treasurer  Christmas Lights  Highland Councillor |
| In Attendance  Apologies: | J Bogle (JB)  J Alexander (JA)  D Scott (DS)  M Mackenzie  A Farquhar (AF)  W Campbell (WC)  A Sinclair (AS) | Secretary (outgoing)  Secretary (incoming)  Press  Member of Public  Vice Chair/HAPPY  Highland Councillor |

1. **Welcome and Apologies**JC took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting, she introduced Jayden Alexander who she had appointed as secretary. Apologies as above.
2. **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 February 2020 had been circulated, and were agreed subject to amendments suggested by Insp Goskirk, RB and AF.

Proposed DD Seconded KMR

1. **Actions / Matters Arising**

The outstanding actions were reviewed:

**May 19/07** Harbour Quayside Rd jutting out pavements – RB had taken this up with the Roads Dept who claimed not to be aware of the question being raised. A response was awaited.

**May 19/08** Grizzly Park fence – DD advised that the repair had been completed, agreed take off.

**June 19/08** WADF – on agenda for later

**Sep 19/06** Town centre tidy up – RB advised that a full review had been undertaken, Caithness was now a pilot area. A meeting had been held with managers and staff and they were looking at increasing the number of full time staff, they were also looking at grass cutting frequencies and the length of the grass cutting season. Agreed take off.

**Jan 20/02** Common Good Land – RB 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.

**Jan 20/06** Noss PS and Community Campus – RB advised that he was still following up this report.

**Jan 20/07** Corner at Businessmen’s Club – JB advised that he was still waiting for one price.

**Feb 20/01** HC Audit report – RB had circulated the link, take off.

**Feb 20/02** Planning and Building Standards workshop – RB advised that this was ongoing.

**Feb 20/03** Big Spring Clean – RB advised that the date for this had been agreed as week commencing 13th April 2020.

**Feb 20/04** NHS Near Me – RB advised that he was still waiting for the figures from the NHS but expected them next week.

**Feb 20/05** Parking charges - on agenda for later.

**Feb 20/06** Beatrice micro grants – JB had advised the successful applicant, take off.

**Feb 20/07** Secretary post – interviews had been held and JA appointed, he was welcomed, take off.

1. **Councillor Reports**

It was noted that RB had circulated a detailed update. He stated that with regard to CCTV the Wick system was better than he had thought and combined with better lighting, motion sensors, etc he thought things would get much better and hopefully time would be up for the vandals. He advised that there were currently 14 cameras in the town and all would soon be fully operational plus another 6 going in at the Riverside – one of these new ones would cover the play park area and another the public toilets. All will be relayed back to Wick Police Station, recorded and archived. RB will pass on a map and details of the installation to the secretary for distribution. He advised that a new maintenance contractor had been appointed and Inverness will be a central fault reporting centre. HC are looking for funding to enable all CCTV footage to be relayed to Burnett Road Police Station, Inverness as well as to Wick Police Station. RB will send details to DS for the Groat.

RB advised that the shortfall in the budget to purchase the derelict buildings had been found and they were waiting for the offers to be legally accepted.

JC queried a report in the P&J which stated that HC had found £32,000 to improve disabled access for the proposed Inverness River Wall installation but on another page it stated that HC had no money. RB advised that each area had a pot of money to spend and he suspected that the money had been transferred out of another Inverness budget.

1. **Correspondence**

JB had circulated the list of correspondence received and forwarded to CC members in February, this was noted. Two items requiring a response were on the agenda.

1. **Treasurers Report**

No report available

1. **Christmas Lights**

CM stated that their funds remained the same, she thanked the CC for the Beatrice micro grant towards the cost of their insurance. She said that they had been charged £185 + VAT by HC for putting the Christmas Tree lights up, this was less than they had previously been advised but still a large amount and they would look at doing it themselves next year, RB suggested they could also consider applying for a grant from the Ward discretionary budget. CM advised that they were relinquishing the lease of the HC garage at the end of the month due to the large rent increase.

**8.** **HAPPY**

No report.

1. **Baskets**

JC reported that they had held their AGM and had attracted one new member. They had been successful in their Beatrice application for new planters.

**10. Paths**

JB reported that the AGM had been held and office bearers remained the same. They had been successful in obtaining a Caithness Community Improvement grant to refurbish the Coghill Bridge but due to unforeseen circumstances there was a small shortfall and an application for support would be coming up later. The group had funds of £9,658 but a large part of this was committed for the interpretive panels that they hoped to install in the near future.

**11. Green Road Park**

No report.

**12. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary**

No report.

**13. OSCR Complaint**

JB had circulated an email from OSCR which upheld the CC complaint regarding the time OSCR had taken to investigate the CC’s original complaint, they had said that the original complaint was now being progressed to the conclusion stage. There was an option, if the CC remained unhappy to contact the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman and ask them to look into the matter. JC suggested contacting the Ombudsman now but after discussion it was agreed to advise OSCR that if the complaint was not resolved by the time of our next meeting in April we would contact the Ombudsman.

**14. Pre-engagement on Off-Street Car Parking Proposals**

Detailed emails from RB and AFr had previously been circulated. AFr stated that he has his own views but everyone needs to make their views known. AFr and MM had contacted many town centre businesses to gauge their views and some of their email responses were tabled. Most businesses who had responded had concerns about the effect parking charges would have on their businesses. AFr went over the details of the proposals, he explained that it had been put forward by HC last October as an opt out scheme, ie if nobody objects then charges will come in by default. Profit from the scheme would be split 50/50 between HC centrally and the local ward but he said that there were no guarantees that the percentage split would not be changed in the future. He gave an example of how a share of the income from parking at Aukengill could potentially be spent on maintaining the broch. Each CC with a car park was being consulted. He thought that charging could lead to more on street parking and at the hospital whereas free parking could be an attraction for the town.

RB stated that he agreed with much of what AFr had said, the date for responses was only for statutory and key consultees, the public consultation will be later. He thought that the current consultation could have been handled differently but the proposals can be reshaped before the public consultation. He said that it would irk him if the rest of the Highlands were making money for their local area but East Caithness was not.

AFr thought that motor homes should pay for overnight parking, DD said that everywhere you go you have to pay for parking. DD suggested making parking at the far end of the Riverside car park cheaper then HC employees would not park all day in the Mart car park if it was dearer.

MM said businesses were concerned because they are struggling enough already, they are trying to breathe new life into the town but parking charges would be another burden. She said that there was nothing to keep visitors in the town. Her main concern was that in the proposals the Mart car park would have no free period. One business owner had said that they wouldn’t mind paying for parking if they were guaranteed a space to park in. AFr suggested that the first 3 hours in the Mart car park should be free. MM asked about the consequences of opting out of parking charges but RB wasn’t sure.

It was agreed that JC would recommend extending the consultation period at the ACCC meeting the following night, all CC members invited to attend. JC suggested holding a meeting and inviting all town centre businesses to attend.

**15. Double Yellow Lines – Thurso St**

DT enquired what was happening about double yellow lines in Thurso St and RB advised that this will be covered in the review.

**The following items were taken in private.**

**18. Beatrice Micro Grants**

JC advised that there had been a meeting of the awards panel for the main fund the previous week and it had been agreed to increase the amount each CC has for micro grants from £2,000 to £5,000 per annum from August 2020 and to permit individual applications of up to £500. She reminded members that there was still a lot of money available for Wick in the main fund and asked that members spread the word.

An application from the Paths Group for a contribution of £515 towards the cost of re-decking the Coghill Bridge and other improvement works was considered. The project had been funded by HC but the original supplier had been unable to supply the decking materials at the price quoted, the alternative was very much more expensive, however an alternative had been found via Wick Harbour and although more expensive than the original quote was cheaper than the alternative from the original supplier. It was proposed to meet the shortfall by utilising the contingency fund and by Subsea 7 purchasing some of the materials to the value of £584, this left a shortfall of £515 (the cost of the galvanised steel plates). It was agreed to award a £200 Beatrice micro grant and to provide £315 from the CC’s own funds.

**19. Secretary Post**

It was noted that JA had been appointed with effect from 1/3/20, there would be an overlap with JB leaving on 31/3/20

**DONM 6th April 2020**

**OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

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| **Action No** | **Action Details** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| **May 19/07** | Harbour Quayside road jutting out pavements – RB to chase response from HC | RB | ongoing |

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| **Action No** | **Action Details** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| **Jan 20/06** | Noss PS and Community Campus – check if there is a more recent report than December 2018 | RB | ongoing |
| **Jan 20/07** | Corner at Businessmen’s Club – submit a bid for funds | JB | ongoing |

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| **Action No** | **Action Details** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| **Feb 20/02** | Planning and Building Standards workshop – circulate details when available | JB | ongoing |
| **Feb 20/04** | NHS – circulate figures on use of NHS Near Me | RB | ongoing |

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| **Action No** | **Action Details** | **Responsibility** | **Status** |
| **Mar 20/01** | CCTV – pass on map and details to secretary for distribution, also pass info to DS for Groat | RB/JB | new |
| **Mar 20/02** | WADF, OSCR complaint – advise OSCR that if the complaint was not resolved by the April meeting reference would be made to the Ombudsman | JB | new |
| **Mar 20/03** | Parking charges – request an extension to the consultation period at the ACCC meeting on 3/3/20 | JC | new |
| **Mar 20/04** | Beatrice micro grant and CC funding – advise Wick Paths Group that total funds of £515 awarded towards costs of Coghill Bridge upgrading | JA | new |