

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Location: Meeting held via Zoom.

Date: Monday 5th November 2020

Time: 7:15pm

Present:

Elected members: Joanna Coghill (<i>JC</i>).	Chairperson
Alastair Ferrier (<i>AF</i>).	Vice Chairperson
Wendy Campbell (<i>WC</i>).	Treasurer
David Dunnett (<i>DT</i>).	
Doreen Turner (<i>DT</i>).	

Co-opted members: None in attendance.

Ex-officio members: Nicola Sinclair (*Cllr NS*). Highland Councillor

In attendance: Jayden Alexander (*JA*). Secretary

Apologies:

Kimberley Miller-Rosie

Jayden Alexander

Cllr Willie Mackay

Cllr Andrew Sinclair

1. Welcome and apologies.

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Joanna explained that as a matter of priority we would discuss the events that have unfolded over the weekend.

Insp Alasdair Goskirk had emailed her along with the Highland Councillors very early Monday morning to advise events (this had been shared with all CC members).

JC confirmed that she had had a meeting with Insp Goskirk that afternoon regarding the terrible tragedy.

Searches had started early Saturday morning then escalated to missing person within 4 hours with all emergency services taken part until the discovery of a body 1215 Sunday. CID Inverness are heavily involved with enquiries but Insp Goskirk was mindful and fully aware of what was being shared on Social Media - that this was irresponsible, and anxious that all rumours and assumptions were squashed - this is an ongoing investigation lead by Police Scotland.

He wants the community to be assured that they are taking this incident very seriously and until cause of death has been established, the victims' family had been informed, only then will a statement be released. Until such time, he asked if our local Highland Councillors would put out a statement to quell hearsay and rumours, which Nicola Sinclair had issued. Joanna confirmed that they, the CC would agree a statement and put this onto their FB page (after approval from Insp. Goskirk to ensure that no information was divulged).

JCa sent a brief statement to all members last night for their approval before it is sent to the Inspector to glance over. Jayden will post this on our FB page Tuesday

An open discussion took place about the drug problem in Wick. It was agreed that it was very serious and as a matter of urgency, action was required involving all Services (NHS Highland, Highland Council, Police Scotland), NS confirmed that she has escalated this to Government level to the seriousness of this local issue. She has pencilled in a meeting for Wednesday (4/11) as the Chief Exec of HC along with Nicky Grant will be in Wick - NHS Highland and Police Scotland will be invited.

The CC members all agreed and are well aware that something has to be done by the powers that be now, not later. This problem has been a major issue for a number of years, and has now escalated to such an extent, that 4 young lives have been lost this year alone. There is a crisis, and there are no services here in



the North able to deal with the numbers of those who need help. We are not blaming the Mental Health team here, we need NHS Highland and the government to realise that they need to increase what services we currently have to be able to cope with the demand and ensure that this tragedy is not repeated.

WC is keen for "educating the young" now to ensure that they are not caught up in this drug culture problem. WC thought that one "body" should take the lead. We cannot lay the blame on the Police for doing nothing, they are doing what they can but this needs other services to work together to tackle the problem and set out a way forward.

JC confirmed that Allan Tait had emailed regarding this problem - and she gave her support to him, advising him to contact directly, Highland Councillors, MSP, MP etc. JC believes that if more of the community demand enough is enough, then surely the "powers that be" will take notice and increase the level of services to address this crisis. The system is failing.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

All were happy with the minutes of the previous meeting.

Proposed by: WC | Seconded by: DD

3. Matters arising and outstanding actions.

- **May 19/07- Harbour Quayside (jutting out pavement):** Raymond Bremner highlighted that this is not a roads department responsibility, however is to do with the planning of the re-generation. David Jones is in discussion with Raymond Bremner on whether it should be improved or removed.
- **Jan 20/02- Common good land:** A report will be submitted to the Caithness committee as soon as a draft lost is sent to Raymond Bremner
- **Jan 20/07- Corner at Businessmen's Club:** JA completed and submitted a planning application. This is ongoing.
- **Feb 20/02- Planning and building standards workshop:** A public meeting for planning is to go ahead when the ability to do so is available. Raymond Bremner has asked about the possibility of holding it virtually with RBWCC.
- **Feb 20/03- Big spring clean:** Raymond Bremner and Nicola Sinclair did a walk around the town and is to work on a list for the clean.
- **Feb 20/04 NHS Near Me:** Raymond Bremner has had no update on figures but is to get an update on the matter with Willie Mackay.

4. Correspondence.

One item on the correspondence for October required a response. This has since been completed.

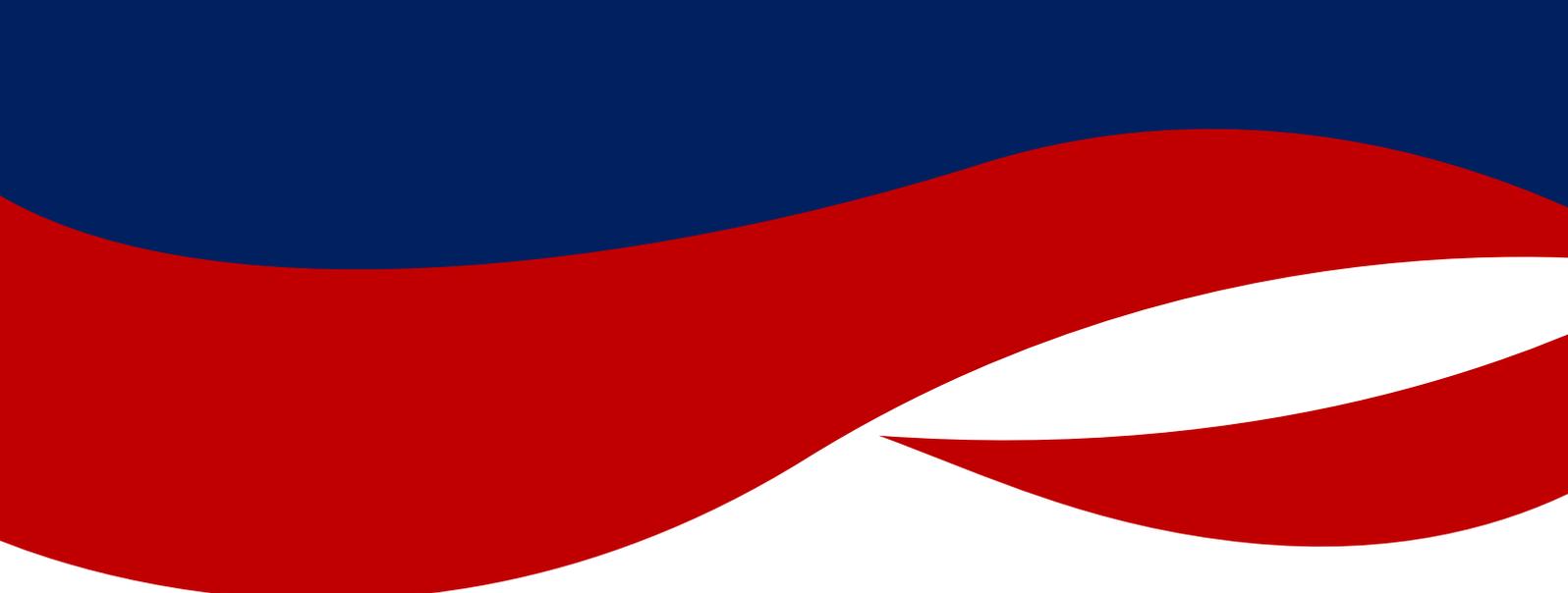
No queries were arisen.

5. Highland councillors' report.

Cllr Andrew Sinclair kindly passed on the following report in advance of the meeting due to his apologies:

Wick Airport The Caithness Committee passed a motion at our last meeting (22/10/20), under the following terms: "Caithness Area Committee recognises the fundamental strategic importance of Wick John O'Groats Airport to the economy of the region, and the energy, business and tourism sectors in particular. Caithness members confirm their full support for the Public Service Obligation and their commitment to working with stakeholders and partners to deliver this as a matter of urgency. Caithness Area Committee further calls on Highland Council to identify financial support to secure the onward sustainability of the Airport". The motion was originally proposed by Cllrs Nicola Sinclair and Struan Mackie, and received the unanimous support of the whole Committee, in addition to that, at the most recent meeting of the full Highland Council, on Thursday 29th October, the motion was further endorsed by the wider Highland Council. Everyone is waiting patiently to hear word of a PSO arrangement for the Airport. It's hugely reassuring that the wider Council recognises the importance to the airport to our local economy and is willing to provide support at this crucial time.

Wick Common Good The Caithness Committee has received a comprehensive update on the investigations into Common Good property in Wick. The Council's Common Good Officers have put in an enormous amount of work carrying out title deed investigations and looking back through centuries old archives – the result is a substantial register of assets, which will now go out for public consultation under the Community Empowerment Act 2015. There will now be an opportunity for the public to give feedback on the current register, which crucially could highlight any additional property which has not yet been flagged up. Notable property that has been deemed Common Good so far includes: the Bignold Park, Camps Car Park, Green Road Park, the Market Square, Riverside Park and the Town Hall. Many historical artefacts and paintings have also been assessed as Common Good. For any CC member interested in reading more,



a copy of the Committee report can be found at the following link: https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/77186/item_12_wick_common_good_-_asset_register. JC had one question from the Riverside Volunteers regarding the Flower Beds that Raymond had posted on FB. NS confirmed that the beds are the ones in the actual Car Park, not the ones that the Riverside Volunteers looked after.

6. Treasurer's report.

The current account bank balance currently stands at £27926.43 KMR said that there was nothing to report. JC requested if it would be possible for KMR to provide a breakdown of the report including the community council, paths group and micro grants.

7. Wick Christmas Lights.

The committee are still looking for one volunteer to help to hang the Christmas lights. CM confirmed that the 28th November is the date for the switch on of the lights, and 22nd November for the Christmas tree being erected in the Market Square. It was also confirmed that the Rosebank Playing Fields will be lit up again this year, as 2019.

8. HAPPY.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there are no plans for Hogmanay this year.

9. Wick Flower Baskets.

JC had nothing to report other than that flowers were slowly being taken in and a meeting is to be arranged.

10. Wick Paths Group.

Not a lot to report because we are still not able to meet up in any numbers however the Planning application for 4 interpretive panels on the north side of Wick Bay has been submitted. One panel will be above the North Baths, one at the Soldiers Tower (this one will not be provided by the Paths Group), one further along dealing with shipwrecks and lifeboats and the final one will be a relocation of an existing wildlife panel from beside the fish mart to where the old fog horn was. Regarding the application for the



south side of the Bay, we need landowner permission before we submit, we have written permission from HC for 2 of the sites but can't identify the landowners for the other 2 sites.

11. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School.

Wick Campus. AF1 asked CM about the "street". CM confirmed is due for completion (16 wk programme) end of January, early February. AF1 asked about the ventilation. CM advised that the system design, didn't take into account, the School was situated in the middle of a field, in Caithness. It involves Co2 levels and it has now been agreed to change levels in the Gyms and Classrooms. CM confirmed that is now a lot better than what it was, now comfortable in class. CM advised that there is talk of changes to the Dining Area, and Reception Area (to ensure that visitors cannot wander into the school once inside the Main Doors.

12. Sustrans

Cllr NS confirmed that the Street Redesign is in 2 parts for funding. (1) Street Design has been near completed with a Draft Concept Design taking into local requests and thoughts from the open days and online. A grant has not been secured yet, this is what is being applied for. The next stage is to apply for the Places for Everyone to ensure that the larger grant will allow the street redesign to happen. For this, Cllr NS explained that for best chance of success a community group would apply in partnership with HC. The CC could apply and then to be known as the Board in charge - however, NS is happy to complete the 30 page application with our agreement, and one member to be named on it - AF(1) agreed to be this person, CC fully support this application. NS will do all the leg work, with advice from HC. She has approached HIE to ask for a dedicated High Street Officer. NS advised that Wick will be up against stiff competition. Work should start April 2021 completed Spring 2022. It will mean a major revamp of our Town Centre.

13. Common Good

NS advised that the HC lawyer has gone through a lot of old documents and listed everything that legally is Common Good. JC enquired about the TA Hall in Wick. HC lawyers are not accepting this is Common Good property - NS confirmed she had personally gone through the Deeds and had to accept that Caithness Council did have ownership. JC enquired about the Rhind House - NS was unsure, but noted that after looking at the list, if there is anything we feel missing, now is the time to ask for it be looked into as when it goes out for Public Consultation, afterwards, this list is final and will not be changed. The list will be emailed out to all community groups.

14. Riverside Fountain

Tree felling has restarted this week. DD asked if replanting was happening. NS & JC confirmed no, the area will be opened up to allow light in. The pump will be ordered through HC and they will install. A meeting will take place this month to agree what and how the area should be adapted for families to enjoy. Beatrice Funding has been secured to cover costs, all invoicing will be through the CC.

15. Halsary Wind Farm

It was agreed that Point 2 - members from CC's and a local should be on the panel to grant funding - AF(1) and JC advised this set up has worked well for Beatrice Panel.

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

ACTION LIST

ACTION NO.	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETED
OCT 20/01	List to be composed of tasks to be taken on during the next big spring 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 / Cllr WM	
OCT 20/05	Situataion with Wick's Heart on		

	CC rep attending meetings.	
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.	AF1
OCT 20/08	Cllr NS to be contacted regarding the state of various shop fronts and buildings on High St and Bridge St.	JA
OCT 20/09	Investigations to be carried out to establish the current situation with wall in Gladstone Pl affecting parking.	Cllr RB / Cllr WM
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