

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Location: Meeting to be held via Zoom.

Date: Monday 7th September 2020

Time: 7:15pm

Present:

Elected members: Joanna Coghill (<i>JC</i>).	Chairperson
Allan Farquhar (<i>AF1</i>).	Vice Chairperson
Kimberley Miller-Rosie (<i>KMR</i>).	Treasurer
Alastair Ferrier (<i>AF2</i>).	
Wendy Campbell (<i>WC</i>).	
David Dunnet (<i>DD</i>).	

Co-opted members: None in attendance.

Ex-officio members: Raymond Bremner (<i>Cllr RB</i>).	Highland Councillor
Nicola Sinclair (<i>Cllr NS</i>).	Highland Councillor
Andrew Sinclair (<i>Cllr AS</i>).	Highland Councillor

In attendance: Jayden Alexander (<i>JA</i>).	Secretary
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Apologies:

Clair Mackenzie

1. Welcome and apologies.

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received by JC from CM shortly after the meeting commenced.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

Subject to spelling errors which were pointed out, and adjustments submitted by AF2.

Proposed by: KMR | Seconded by: WC (to be confirmed after adjustments are made and sent).

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:** A draft list has been created as highlighted by Cllr NS.
- **Jan 20/07- Corner at Businessmen's Club:** JA is to submit a planning application and is to contact TWS regarding Johnston photographs. JC to look at planters and seating.
- **Feb 20/02- Planning and building standards workshop:** Raymond Bremner advised that a progress update will be done in time for the next meeting.
- **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).

Cllr NA highlighted that the car parking charges consultation had been dropped due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there are currently no plans to resurrect it. Cllr RB confirmed that the new security cameras for the riverside are pan and zoom equipped so the cameras will most likely be able to zoom in on the fountain area and new play area.

4. Correspondence.

Three items in the correspondence required a response, all had been completed.

5. Highland councillors' report.

Cllr Willie Mackay kindly passed on the following in advance of the meeting, as per his apologies due to business commitments:

“ Well, there is no doubt there is a lot happening in Wick which I'm sure you will all be aware of , the Town is undergoing a transformation with much credit to the fantastic hard working Cllr, Nicola Sinclair and Cllr, Raymond Bremner. Although myself and Andrew has always been kept in the loop they are the brains behind it all and credit where credit is due. Eyesores being knocked down, Sustrans vision for the future and the exciting new Wick Heart developments are I think unstoppable. My only criticism is from these nasty social media comments which I do not like, Wick has a huge amount of volunteers, from Paths, Riverside, Hanging baskets, Cemetery's to mention a few and with an enthusiastic RBWCC I would defend you all on any pavement in town if I was to here a wrong word being said. For me in town I have a few areas of concern where boy racers continue to belt up and down the streets like Leishman Avenue and Henrietta Street and I also have been contacted recently about Anti-social behaviour from kids annoying law abiding senior citizens in Owen Place and Anderson Drive in their homes which I'm addressing .The weeds publicity in eCourier/Groat was a pity but again brilliantly commented on by my fantastic colleagues Nicola and Raymond. The littering face masks was a better put together report by ePaper and I'm sure everyone got the message . A lot of my case work is out of town like this morning where another idyllic location is being rubbished by inconsiderate campers of which I will be reporting to my fellow Councillors later tonight and I've got issues in Dunbeath, Banniskirk and John O groats. On the bigger picture there is the biggest planned full council meeting ever this Thursday expected to go again into Friday. But here, I hope this will give you something to go on from my views and keep please up the good work and I'm sure and hope my three faithful colleagues will have more depth and variation on a report of interest to you all at the RBWCC. “

6. Treasurer's report.

The current account bank balance currently stands at £28332.55. KMR said that there was nothing to report.

7. Wick Christmas Lights

CM was not in attendance to give a report.

8. HAPPY

AF1 said that there was nothing to report and that bank balance currently stands at £732.70.

9. Wick Flower Baskets

JC said that a meeting will be held soon to arrange to take flowers out etc.

10. Wick Paths Group

RBWCC gives their thanks to the Wick Paths Group and all volunteers who were involved in the refurbishment of the Coghill Bridge.

The following report was received from John Bogle (secretary) in advance of the meeting:

“ August was a busy month for the Paths Group, over 2 weekends we upgraded the Coghill Bridges at the Riverside - rotten timbers were replaced as were rusting supports for railings, a new non slip surface was laid and the railings were painted. Funding came from Highland Council and RBWCC (thank you), we also had support from several local businesses who supplied materials, loaned equipment or provided refreshments this included Subsea 7, K Little Body Repairs Ltd, Wick Harbour, Michael MacDougall (Joiner), Caithness Seacoast, Norseman Hotel and Wick Caravan Park. We had tremendous support from Paths Group volunteers and there have been lots of appreciative comments from bridge users. We also organised a successful litter pick of the Riverside and were joined in this by members of the public. We are currently working on Planning permission for the interpretive panels and have agreed to be involved with the fountain area upgrade and the proposed major town clean up. If anyone would like to be added to the Paths Group mailing list just let me have their email address. “

11. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School

AF1 said that he has yet to receive a response from Ryan Sutherland after Brian Porter passed on his query as to how the schools are coping as a result of the pandemic.

12. Wick re-generation project.

Cllr NS said that brochures has been delivered on behalf of Sustrans to businesses etc with plans for the re-generation, she also said that it would be great to get as many responses from people as possible. Cllr NS explained that once opinions were collages then the plans will go to a detailed design stage. Funding will them be applied for, Cllr NS asked if RBWCC would be willing to apply for this alongside them as it will improve the application coming from a community organisation etc. This was agreed. Cllr NS also highlighted the negative comments regarding the re-generation project which were on social media on how “money could be used for something better”. The money being used for the re-generation project is money which was funded for this project so it can only go towards this and nothing else.

Cllr NS also said that the lining of the Riverside car park was underway and it was agreed that this was a big improvement for the town.

Cllr RB said that issues were raised with the bus stop at the car park, with plans for it not to be used but for the busses to be stopping on Bridge Street instead. These plans are still going ahead.

13. Businessmen’s club corner project

JA said that he had received A3 plans for the corner development from Alf Gunn of The Wick Society (these has been sent to community councillors via email). JC suggested changing the Johnston photographs to views of Wick, this was agreed. JA is to enquire and will submit a planning application in order for work to being. JC will look at plant containers for flowers and seating etc.

14. Arrangements for 2020 annual general meeting.

AF1 asked if JA could send out a copy of the council constitution to all members prior to the AGM. This was agreed. JC said it would be beneficial to advertise for new community councillors prior the AGM also (JA to do this). A date will be arranged for November.

15. AOCB

Community wardens and town improvements:


The following letter was received on 07/09/2020 in response to RBWCC's letter to Margaret Ross outlining points which are needing to be addressed in the town (improvements etc):

“ Dear Mr Alexander, Thank you for your letter of 13 August 2020. Within that letter you state that there are many streets in Wick that are in need of attention and gave the examples of Dunnott Avenue and Leith Walk. It would be helpful if you were to be specific about the aspects of these streets which you believe require attention? It will come as no surprise to you to know that we, as a housing service, like others, struggled throughout lockdown with an increase in fly tipping as recycling centres were closed, however, as services return to normal we too can return to addressing these issues. Similarly, with re-glazing of vandalised properties – glass was not available to us to for many weeks. That situation is now slowly being remedied. The lack of bins at strategic areas around Wick and the additional signposting which you believe to be necessary falls out-with my remit however I have passed your concerns on to the relevant officers. As I previously explained the single Community Warden we currently have, who covers Caithness and Sutherland, is funded solely from the Housing Revenue Account. His ongoing remit is to provide a presence in social housing communities in relation to concerns raised about antisocial behaviour, vandalism and environmental issues as part of an early intervention and preventative approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour. The Scottish Secure Tenancy lease tells tenants that they must take reasonable care to keep their garden from becoming overgrown, untidy or causing a nuisance. We are constantly issuing letters to remind tenants of their responsibilities. In some cases, we will cut grass and clear gardens and all costs are then re-charged to the tenant. Vulnerability is recognised and The Highland Council garden aid scheme has been set up to assist our tenants who are elderly or disabled to keep their gardens tidy in accordance with their tenancy agreement. That budget is of course limited. I hope this information is of some use to you. Yours sincerely, Margaret Ross.”

Wild camping

JC asked how the wild camping situation could be policed? It was suggested that the Highland Council is responsible for the situation of people not disposing of waste properly as there is nowhere to dispose waste in the area, it was suggested that people who aren't disposing of waste correctly should be fined or it should be policed and that someone has to take responsibility. JC suggested writing a letter to organisations such as

Royal Burgh of Wick Community Council



VisitScotland and the NC500, Cllr RB said in response to this that those two organisations are only two of many- there are many other organisations involved with Scottish tourism who could take responsibility, action etc.

Cllr NS said that an application for the rural tourism fund was planned, however, too much was expected as part of the application and there was very little that could actually be done.

AF2 highlighted that there are industrial bins located at Reiss, but in amongst this chaos we should be promoting and taking as much tourism here as we can. The question was asked how we could advertise the ethnics of this- for example, if we have those chemical stations here for disposing of waste then this can be promoted and become popular areas because they have these much needed facilities. DD said that at the likes of Wick, Thurso and John O' Groats these facilities are something which should be in place to prevent this from happening again. It was said that if areas up here had this then it could be advertised at places such as petroleum stations and car parks etc, however, Cllr NS highlighted that it is not as easy as this- planning permission and other things need to be put in place prior to this becoming a reality. Cllr RB mentioned that there was a waste disposal facility for busses and coaches at Caithness Glass next to Ashley Ann, it was asked if perhaps they would be willing to open this to help the situation.

Common good land

Cllr NS said that boxes of paperwork were gone through and that a draft list of all the common good land had been made. Cllr NS mentioned that common good land doesn't always make money, however, there is a possibility it could and that it could have a positive outcome for the town. This will be brought up at the next Caithness Committee meeting, then it will be brought to consultation. It was said that this is a good step forward for Wick.

Boundary commission plans (re-design)

JC said that we most definitely do not want Caithness to lose another councillor. Cllr AS said that the council will meet on Thursday coming, and that as a council they entirely re-kept the proposal. Cllr AS assured RBWCC that they are reasoning in the strongest way possible. Cllr NS mentioned that Caithness, Sutherland and Skye are the most affected areas to plans and that a local campaign will hopefully be raised which people will sign and posters put up.



Riverside Fountain

JC said that it will be a big achievement and improvement to get the fountain at the riverside cleaned up and working again. There are plans for picnic tables, and a small play area for children.

Harbour gate

DD asked Cllr RB how the harbour “gets away” with having the new gate opposite the BOWL offices being so close to the road as others have to keep a distance of two metres between road and gate.

Proposals for road alterations etc

Prior to the meeting, Cllr AS sent an email with proposals of road alterations etc. Cllr AS said that included in the proposals were plans for the round about at the bottom of the cliff to be replaced by traffic lights, for traffic lights to be installed on South Road opposite Lidl. It was suggested to move the “30” signs further out of Wick towards Milton to reduce the speed of cars. Cllr NS highlighted that this was explored before and was proved that it was not possible due to restrictions.

JC thanked everyone once again for attending and the meeting was brought to a close.