

ROYAL BURGH OF WICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Location: Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms

Date: Monday 6th September 2021

Time: 7:00pm

Minutes of monthly meeting held in September 2021.

The names of those present highlighted in grey were present virtually, via Zoom.

Present

Elected members:	Joanna Coghill (<i>JC</i>)	Chairperson
	Allan Farquhar (<i>AF1</i>)	Vice-chairperson
	Kimberley Miller-Rosie (<i>KMR</i>)	Treasurer
	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>)	
	Claire Mackenzie (<i>CM</i>)	
	Roy Mackenzie (<i>RM</i>)	
Ex-officio members:	Cllr Raymond Bremner (<i>Cllr RB</i>)	Highland Councillor
Non-members/Public:	Jayden Alexander (<i>JA</i>)	Secretary
	Andrew Henderson (<i>AH</i>)	Noss Power Station Representative
	David Scott (<i>DS</i>)	Press Reporter (NOSN Newspapers)

Apologies

No apologies were submitted.

1. Welcome and apologies.

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those who had joined online.

JA stated that no apologies had been received.

2. Local Police Report.

JA stated that a no apologies had been received from Police despite their not being a representative in attendance, and no report had been received.

JC expressed her disappointment.

3. 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 had been proposed by WC and seconded by AB.

Outstanding actions: Action No. JUL21/03- Poster to discourage littering and fly-tipping to be finalised.
JA
Action No. JUL22/05- Sub-group of RBWCC to be formed to manage the new community market titled “Wick Community Market”.
RBWCC

Matters arising: The matters arising from the previous minutes concerned the Highland Council, therefore it was agreed to discuss this in Cllr RB’s report.

4. Correspondence.

Several items in the correspondence for September required a response, all had been dealt with except from the ongoing communications with Highland Council for a town walkabout and / or meeting to discuss the current state of the town centre.

5. Highland Councillor's Report.

JC stated that RBWCC members had a walkabout in the town centre to note concerns. No response had been received from any individual after JA submitted a lengthy email on behalf of RBWCC. JC also stated that most of the concerns raised in this email were “quick-fixes” and could have been done within a short space of time. JC mentioned that she had notice one council employee with a hoe, a street sweeper in action and that one drainage grate had been cleaned. It was mutually agreed that it would be beneficial if Highland Council employees could walkabout the town with RBWCC to physically show them the concerns. EF stated after a recent visit to John O' Groats she spoke with some tourists who said that they were extremely disappointed with Wick as a town, it looked so unclean and lacked facilities- this said it all.

WC asked Cllr RB what the other three Highland Councillors are currently doing, Cllr RB stated that he cannot comment on their behalf.

Cllr RB expressed his thoughts on the whole town clean up being co-ordinated locally, if not then no one will know what job is being done, or when. Cllr RB stated that it has to be done efficiently and sustainably. It was agreed that heads of service should be taking responsibility in saying what jobs will be attended to. JC stated that the barriers in the Market Square beside Caithness Houser which had been pushed over hadn't even been reported, this shows that Highland Council employees hadn't even reported this and they work in the building where they would have clearly seen the issue. Cllr RB suggested a meeting with the executive chief executive for Caithness, Nikki Grant.

With regards to play parks, Cllr RB stated that a total of £40,000 had been made available. There is a document which describes how this will be divided.

Two meetings had also taken place to discuss the Sustrans application for the town regeneration, Cllr RB stated that submission should be ready before 23rd September.

Cllr RB is to email a document to JA for distribution which outlines designs for the new public toilets once the designs have been finalised. These designs will include a pitched roof on the Camps facility and safety barriers for vehicle parking. AF2 expressed his concerns for signage directing people to the Norseman Hotel until the toilets have been revamped. Cllr RB stated he had raised this with the council.

AB suggested that various departments aren't taking heed of what councillors are saying which is proving to be a major problem for things not getting improved in the town.

EF stated that tourists who she had spoken to in John O' Groats had to wait until they returned from Wick to their accommodation to be able to use the toilet due to no facilities, and lack of signage to guide them to the Norseman Hotel.

JC stated to Cllr RB that RBWCC need guidance as to how the community council can employ a town warden. Cllr RB said that he would seek guidance on this.

6. SSE Noss Power Station.

AH presented photos of the site progress at Noss. Native trees, shrubs and bushes will be planted at the site. There is currently a main access road coming from Noss Head, however, current access is from Ackergill. It is hoped for the site to be wind and water tight by December 2021, with the building then being harled.

AH stated that they do not have the money like what Beatrice have to be able to offer grants, however, they can offer manual help and labour for projects and they are open for people who are unemployed to get work experience. AH also stated that directional drilling from Noss Head ahs now been finished and they will be re-surfacing areas of the road at both Noss and Ackergill.

RBWCC is to send AH and Sharon Powell a list of top five things the community would like help with from SSE with various projects.

7. Treasurer's Report.

Wick Christmas Lights: CM stated that the current account bank balance sits at £3,500.66

Wick Flower Baskets: JC stated that she had no bank statements to hand, however, there would be no change.

Wick Paths Group: A report was received from John Bogle which JA circulated.

HAPPY: AF1 stated that the current account bank balance sits at £732.81.

8. Sub-Group Reports.

- Wick Christmas Lights: CM confirmed that the committee took the decision to hold a fun day, this time with no Santa's Grotto due to COVID restrictions. Bingo will unfortunately, not run as the hall would not be as full as usual. The committee are facing an extensive number of repairs, but the funds are not available to make repairs and the Rosebank Playing fields have been made available for the whole of December. The lights located at the hospital will be looked at, however, due to the growth of some of the trees some of the lights have been burst. DT stated that as these lights were in memory of someone, the individual's family has offered to help pay for any repairs which need to be made. Santa's sleigh will also be going out as usual.
- Wick Flower Baskets: EF stated that the flowers are still currently looking good, however, vandalism has been a re-curing issue. The committee now have five new volunteers and they have been offered a free trip on the Geo Explorer as a raffle prize.
- Wick Paths Group: A report was received in advance of the meeting by John Bogle which was circulated by JA.
- HAPPY: AF1 stated that feelers were issued to local musicians for a new year party, however, not so much response was received.

9. Wick Community Campus and Noss Primary School.

AF1 stated that the work for path leading to the sports pitch has been put out to tender. The high school reception is being re-configured in 2022 and the ventilation is being looked at. Highland Council decided not to install the PA system and Morrison's figured it would be cost effective to leave it in case it is decided to install it in future.

10. Council Business.

- Caithness Club Corner: JC stated that the bench has now been installed. JA and KMR is to look at the invoice for panels to work out what the extra six blank panels are for.

Common Good Fund: JA stated that no communication has been received from Highland Council. RM stated that land was transferred by title deed for the riverside islands and that Highland council have a moral duty to maintain it, whether they choose to accept that responsibility or not.

Wick Riverside Fountain: JC stated that community payback finished the railings leading down to the fountain. JC is keeping in contact with Highland Council on the work going on to get the fountain running again.

Wick Community Market: AF1 stated that quotations have sought for buying marquees. Wick Gala Committee have two marquees, AF1 is enquiring to see if they would loan them.

Dog Fouling Campaign: AB is awaiting posters from Colin Stewart, confirmation has also been received from Highland Council to display these on the dog waste bins.

11. AOCB.

There was no further business to be discussed.

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

Next meeting

Location: Mowat Room, Wick Assembly Rooms

Date: Monday 4th October 2021

Time: 7:00pm