

Whitehills & District Community Council
Minutes of the meeting Thursday 15th November 2018

held in St Brandon's, Whitehills

Present: Ross Balharry (Chairman), Anne Balharry, Duncan Leece, Stuart Ironside, Mick Moloney, Robert Mackie, Alistair Wiseman, Alan Stewart and Mattie Verster.

Also attending: Lee Watson from Aberdeenshire Council, Kevin Muir from Scottish Water, David West, Gordon Paterson, Agnes Lees, Tony Wright and Raymond Ritchie.

Apologies: Bill Bain and Chas Findlay.

Minutes of the meeting 18 October 2018, were approved as correct, proposed by Stuart and seconded by Anne.

Matters Arising:

- Anne ordered new flags for the harbour.
- Robbie and helpers will put up the Christmas lights on Sunday 2 December.
- The Christmas tree will be delivered by Seafield Estate on 3 December.
- We are pleased to welcome a new volunteer for cleaning the public toilets.

Police Report:

PS Caroline Gray was welcomed to the meeting. There is nothing for her to report. Three matters were brought to her attention by members of the community council:

- Sadly all 3 poppy wreathes were removed from the War Memorials at Whitehills Cemetery after they were laid at the service on Friday. Police were notified and are aware of this.
- Alan said the problem with the use of illegal substance in the village had been reported to 101 and still nothing seems to have been done. PS Gray asked that the details be emailed to her and she will attend to the matter.
- There are reports of hare coursing and possible badger baiting in the area.

There being no further issues, PS Gray was thanked for coming and free to leave.

The public is reminded to please report any incidents to 101.

Treasurer's Report:

Anne went through income and expenses since the last meeting. Payments were made for new flags, the cleaning of the Redwell and for teas at Boyndie after the Remembrance service. Income from the Christmas light collection was £25 leaving a balance of £ 4444.96 in the working current account.

Wind Farm Account remains the same at £ 68641.61 and after payment to Mattie toward the church for her services the Gift account has a balance of £ 30851.30.

Anne was thanked for her brief report.

Flooding Issues present position

Lee Watson (Aberdeenshire Council) gave a Power Point presentation covering the meetings held, work done including surveys, investigations and photos taken until present and then the plan forward. There is a raised area in the middle section of the ditch which prevents the flow of water. The outfall pipe is higher than the ditch and needs to be lowered. Lee said he has taken note of residents complaining about lack of progress but has not changed his commitment to solving the problem.

Kevin Muir from Scottish Water explained his position and whilst he is keen to help with a solution, he made it clear that Scottish Water is not responsible for surface water and are not permitted to feed surface water into their sewage network. A water course in public areas is the responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council but the water course on a private property is the responsibility of the owner of the property. Climate change is here and plans are in action to manage water from storms that will be significantly worse in the next ten years. Kevin offered a 20" storage container to keep sand bags in for an emergency response in the event of flooding. We can keep an eye on stock and Scottish Water will replenish stocks. Furthermore, SW want to promote resilience and encourage property owners to protect their properties from flooding by using smart air vent bricks, filter strips etc. if needed. He is trying to do his best and works with many CCs trying to keep all involved.

The whole matter was discussed at length. Questions and concerns were addressed. Aberdeenshire Council is restricted to £10,000 available until April 2019 for the current financial year. The work is to be done in stages as and when money is available. Lee said in principle, the drainage must be corrected from the end of the system so that water further up can flow.

Verbal permission has been given by Seafield Estate for the first stage to put a new outfall pipe (600mm diameter) down the lower west footpath, then under a culvert and in to the sea with manholes. This will be alongside an existing pipe and will carry a huge amount of water. If this is not sufficient, an open ditch will be made between the sea and pathway. Lee will check the capacity needed for the drainage. The exit of water to the sea near the last property is to be carefully assessed as it is a concern. It will be put into a proper concrete apron to prevent vegetation from blocking it. An open ditch is the cheapest option and it is visible and easier to maintain. This is within the budget available and will be done by April. The footpath would be closed for a week to do the work, which is fine. The memorial bench can be moved if need be.

The next stage is to pick up the field drains into the ditch with water tight catch pits and improve the depth and gradient of the ditch using laser to get it level. The farmer, Stuart Geddes, will know exactly where the drains are. Kevin suggested, in hearing David's concern, Lee is to quantify the amount of water and put in a wider pipe to convey more water if necessary.

Kevin explained that to take a pipe from behind the houses in Reidhaven Street into the existing pipe in Ogilvie Street, as suggested by David to drain the water North of the ditch, would probably help but will be very costly (at least £75000) and far beyond the funds available.

Kevin will make an assessment of the drain on Seafield Street near the War Memorial as to whether it should be changed. He is not going to do anything that will compromise any customers further down the network.

If customers have any issues with water and sewage please phone Scottish Water 24 hour service telephone 08000778778 and ask for a reference number for your call.

New Community Action Plan

There being no time, this and other matters on the agenda, will be discussed at the next meeting in December.

Correspondence:

- A letter of thanks was received from Patricia Seligman, Deputy Lieutenant of Banffshire, for the Remembrance Service she attended on Friday 9 December and the tea at Boyndie Trust.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday, 20 December 2018 at 6.30pm in St Brandon's Centre, Seafield Street, Whitehills.