

**Westhill
Community
Council
INVERNESS**

Officers:

Chairman: Dr Donald Boyd
Treasurer: Kenneth Cox
Secretary and Minute
Secretary: Neil Hornsby

Members:

June Alexander
Brian MacGregor
Allan Simpson
Kath Fraser
John Thomson
Catriona Johnson
Bill Dougan

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WESTHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COMMUNITY LOUNGE OF CRADLEHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, INVERNESS,
AT 7.15PM ON WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2013.**

Chairman's Report

I wish to thank the Westhill Community Council (WCC) for the privilege to serve you and the Westhill Community for another year as your chairman.

Our endeavours to advertise for a secretary proved unproductive and Neil Hornsby agreed to take over the post as well as to continue his role as Minute secretary. I wish to thank him for his support in this role.

It has been another busy but interesting year.

The role of Westhill Community Council is to serve the community, and we need to find more methods to do so. It is not a talking shop nor a platform for personal grandstanding. At the end of my second period as chairman and almost three years on the committee, I am concerned that we still have little input from the community in order to find out what concerns them. There is a danger that we simply serve the interests of the Committee. This encourages personal agendas and does not foster collective action. Can the Council really say that it knows what the Community wants?

The WCC newsletter has been an effective way of notifying the community of our existence and what we are doing for them. However, the most effective way to keep the community up to date with our affairs is through a website. Through pressure of work, Allan Simpson has stood down as webmaster and I have agreed to develop a new WCC website to improve our service to the community.

We are also endeavouring to establish communication with the community by involving them in our projects, and our involvement with their concerns. We have done so with the Beechwood Campus access, the Cradlehall pharmacy application, the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and we are seeking help to develop a large-scale play park in the area. We are pleased that the Culloden Youth Forum has also sent representatives to our monthly meetings.

We wrote to the Scottish Government with recommendations as a result of our campaign to support a local pharmacy application.

Future development of Community Councils

Since last year, the Inverness Area Community Councils Forum (IACCF) has been revamped, with initiative and strong support from the WCC. Its chair is Catriona Johnson, a co-opted member of WCC and former chair of WCC. This is a step in the right direction.

The IACCF is not a statutory consultee for planning matters; only individual Community Councils have this statutory function. For more substantial matters, it is possible that we may be able to make more use of the Inverness City Committee as well as the Inverness Area Community Councils Forum.

In last year's report I said that we need to find ways to improve our representation, and I suggested that we could aim for Community Council representation on some committees of the Highland Council. This would raise our profile and influence, but the best course of action for this has still to be considered. This is similar to another proposal we made in our letter of recommendations to the Scottish Government, in which we suggested that provision for Community Council representation on local Pharmacy Practices Committee should be incorporated into national guidance.

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan

We continue to monitor the progress of this important framework plan. Highland Council organised a large number of consultations with local communities but not with WCC as such. We attended the last presentation along with neighbouring Community Councils and gave our verbal feedback in addition to our written submission last year, which should be available on our new website in due course.

Local issues

As well as these area-wide issues, the council has attended to matters within the community. The newsletter continues to be produced and is well received. We are investigating cost-effective methods of production and distribution in order to keep the community informed of local issues.

The access to the Beechwood Campus is proceeding apace and we will soon have very much better management of the junction in the period before students and staff begin to occupy the site scheduled for 2015, but we remain concerned about the two-lane bottleneck over the flyover of the A9.

We continue to monitor the transport implications of the new access to the Beechwood campus. There are occasions when traffic still queues on the southbound carriageway of the A9 in spite of upgrading the slip road from the A9.

We are in discussion with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Corran Properties (developers in Inshes), and with Transport Scotland (TS) through HIE not only about the additional access to the Beechwood Campus from the sliproad leading from the

A96 to the A9 southbound carriageway, but also about a proposal to incorporate a pedestrian and cyclist underpass of the A9 from the Beechwood Campus to the Inshes Retail park, possibly using developer contributions. This should explore the possibility of widening the A9 flyover at the same time, which is owned by Transport Scotland.

On-going activities

Our activities can be followed by reviewing the monthly Minutes which will be published on our website and retained by The Highland Council. Westhill residents are encouraged to attend our meetings on the second Wednesday of each month of the year, apart from the summer months.

On behalf of the Council, I wish to thank Cradlehall Primary School for the continued use of the Community Lounge, the office staff for distributing our newsletter via the school children, the janitor for his services, our community policeman, the four ward councillors who attend our monthly meetings and contribute their expertise and follow up our requests for action by Highland Council officers, and Charles Stephen our ward manager. We are pleased to welcome the public when they attend our monthly meeting, and I have been happy to let them contribute if they indicate the wish to do so.

At the personal level, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help, support and forbearance, and especially our Secretary, Neil Hornsby, and our treasurer, Ken Cox, for their help in the efficient running of your Westhill Community Council.

Dr Donald Boyd
Chairman
Westhill Community Council
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