

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - September 2000

as approved

1. Attendance

Community Councillors:

Ken Crichton, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, John Landon, Helen Lawrie, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Joe Peterson, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Chris Young

Co-opted: Bill Sangster

Fife Councillors: Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville

Apologies:

Maries Cassells, Chris Lesurf, Donald Macgregor, Jane Hunter-Blair, Sheila Hill, Lindsay Murray, Frank Riddell.

2. Minutes of July 2000

Accepted.

3. Presentations

3.1. Community Police

PC Balmaves attended.

3.1.1. Fires on the West Sands - in answer to last month's query PC Balmaves reported that though there had been fires and parties on the West Sands before, the incident in June was the first he could find that had involved damage to property.

Cllr Frances Melville noted that a report would be going to the Community Services Committee soon. One of the problems was that responsibility for events on the beach is spread among several of the council's services.

3.1.2. Cycling

- pavements & lights - with the nights drawing in again the problems of irresponsible behaviour by some cyclists was raised - PC Balmaves and his community policing colleague PC Thompson are now equipped with cycles and a number of offenders have been caught.

3.1.3 Inspector John Pow - has taken over (today) from Insp Rennie Ritchie at St Andrews Police Station. Insp Ritchie has moved on after a successful tour of duty. Insp Pow hopes to attend Community Council to introduce himself next month.

3.2 Iain Smith MSP

Thanked Community Council for the invitation to attend. With 30+ Community Councils in NE Fife it is taking some time to get round them all...

As the aim of the visit was to hear local issues and concerns rather than speak he was happy to answer questions or points raised.

- Archie Strachan asked whether there was any news on the Future of Community Councils. He explained the difficulty of functioning only as a consultative body, expressing a common feeling on this Community Council that a little more power devolved to local people through democratic organisations such as Community Councils would enhance public interest and respect for its role in consultation.

Iain Smith reported that there is no specific news at the moment. The Mackintosh Commission Report was supportive, and as a result he thought there was no threat to the continued existence of Community Councils. He had always been a supporter of Community Councils during his 16 years in local government on Fife Region and Council. He hoped that the role of Community Councils would be preserved and enhanced and would do everything in his power to promote this. The form and powers of Community Councils was a local authority concern and not, within the spirit of devolution, a matter for the Scottish Executive. The recent Kerley Report on local government is a result of the Mackintosh Commission. He expects the Scottish Executive's response to the two reports next year with any necessary legislation

- A number of other concerns were listed by Murdo Macdonald - the lack of an amenity site, the lack of a hospital, state of the town centre - felt by some to be run down - the Community Council can complain but cannot do anything more. Discussion of these and other issues

could take up the rest of the meeting however, so he hoped a more informal meeting could be arranged for wider and less formal discussion.

As had been indicated Iain Smith would be happy to meet again. He pointed out that that he fully supported the campaign for the new hospital & health centre and had already been in contact with the Health Board on this

- Exam results and the Scottish Qualifications Agency were raised by Ken Crichton on behalf of townspeople with children. When would there be a full public debate of the debacle?

There is little point in a debate, Iain Smith said, until the facts of what went wrong are available. The first business of the new session of parliament will be a Statement from the Education Minister when he would be answering questions from MSPs. A committee of enquiry is already set up and the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament will also be looking into the situation. Any public debate will have his full support once all the facts are available.

- John Landon raised press reports from earlier in the year alleging that Mr Smith had organised email lobbying on Clause 2A ('Clause 28') from overseas.

Mr Smith firmly stated that he had not been involved in any such campaign. He was aware of the story that appeared in the Daily Record, remarking that a number of strange stories appeared in the Record during the Clause 28 debate.

3.3 Locality Planning

Kate Hughes, Locality Manager, gave a brief introduction to the review of the locality plan. She too is going round all the Community Councils in her area, but fortunately she only has 6 to visit in the St Andrews locality, which stretches from Kingsbarns to Leuchars as well as including St Andrews itself. The assistance of Community Councils is sought in identifying live issues in their communities, though the review process is also co-ordinating with other services and voluntary groups being talked. The Local office needs feedback on what is wanted, however it must be achievable - within budget & powers. Action won't be immediate, the draft locality plan won't be circulated for comment until the end of October. The previous LPs lasted for a year. From now on a slightly longer view to be taken with a 3 year plan.

Chris Young commented on the work of the local office itself, saying that while the staff are always very helpful they don't always know about various schemes and plans being run by the various parts of the council. Internal communications are very important for the function of the office. Murdo Macdonald asked how the general public could be involved in setting the locality plan directly as well as through organisations such as Community Council?

Kate Hughes admitted this is always a problem. There are no foolproof methods, but communication is a priority. Cllr Frances Melville suggested involving the central Fife Council Communications Unit; getting word out is what they are supposed to be for.

3.4 Sandyhill Road Hostel proposals:

Mr Gourlay of the Sandyhill Residents Association outlined their concerns, circulating a summary document and list of concerns arising from a meeting between local residents and Housing Service officials (Fri 31/8/00). A Fife Council information sheet on the subject was circulated independently.

The Residents Association feel that Sandyhill Road would not be a suitable place for a temporary hostel for single people, much preferring the current use as temporary accommodation for homeless families. Also raised were the parking requirements of nine single homeless people plus staff, and the question of where the homeless families who would have been placed in Sandyhill Rd will be housed in future. Other locations were suggested for housing single people.

Chair cut off attempts by some Community Councillors who had attended the previous meeting to make further points, holding discussion of how to proceed until later in the meeting.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Civic Amenity Site

- there will be a meeting between the chair of East Area Regulation Committee and St Andrews Councillors to discuss a preferred site.

It was decided that the site by Safeway's identified in the days of the District Council and included in the Local Plan, should be taken forward.

4.1.2. Pier

- Historic Scotland has agreed to jointly fund the work required, if the National Lottery funding application is successful.

4.1.3. Planning Service Cupar office - to be reconfigured to make it easier for the public to use.

4.1.4. Kinburn Park

- there is to be a review of Parking Policy here. Dennis Macdonald suggested that the unused tennis courts should be used for cars instead.

4.1.5. Byre

- East Area Development to view a proposal for an 'Artwork' as part of the Byre development.

4.1.6. Craigtoun Road -

reported that the central 3 storey block, which was against the development brief anyway, had been refused permission.

Convenor of the Planning Committee, Ian Goudie, welcomed the news. The original planning brief had been a model example of such things, he thought, but he expressed the committee's concern that the attempt to add a storey to one of the buildings against the guidelines was an example of developers trying to undermine conditions by piecemeal amendment. Cllr Melville assured him that the Development Committee was well aware of that danger.

4.1.7. Building Safety - In mind of a fatal incident of stonework falling off a building on to a pavement café in Edinburgh Ken Crichton asked if any special inspection or licensing of building structures above outdoor seating was needed here. Cllr Melville to enquire of Building Control.

4.1.8. Painted shop signs vs Vinyl - Ken Crichton was concerned at reports that planning officials now favour the adhesive vinyl signs.

Cllr Melville reported that there had been a 'robust' discussion of the issue of shop signs policy at the East Area Development Committee recently, lead by Cllr Jane Hunter-Blair. Planning service officials are to look at policy again for continuity. Cllr Jane Ann Liston added that the officials had felt that there would have to be a policy adopted Fife-wide, though possibly restricted to conservation areas.

4.2 Jane Ann Liston

4.2.1 St Andrews in Bloom - drew attention to the judges' comments (see agenda 6.5) from the Best Kept Town competition regarding involvement by townspeople - no one from the town has yet come forward to take over the Bloom committee from councillors and officials.

On another aspect of the judges' comments, on the state of the benches in Church Square, it was agreed to write to Roads Service to express disappointment that the benches had not been repaired despite assurances (delivered via Cllr Jane Hunter-Blair) that this would be done in time for the Open.

Pete Lindsay to write

Responding to Joe Peterson's query on how the work of the Bloom committee involves the benches she explained that there are two competitions over the summer with which the Bloom committee is concerned - Scotland in Bloom and Fife Council's Best Kept Town. The latter in particular involves more than just the window boxes and hanging baskets that the committee directly deals with, hence the concern with the benches.

4.2.2. Railways - Scotrail not (yet) allowed to curtail Leuchars hours by the Rail Regulator.

The 8.17am Leuchars - Edinburgh is not restored in the Winter timetable. She has established that there was no proper consultation by Scotrail on the cancellation of this service - revised timetables were simply passed to Fife Council for comment without this major change being highlighted.

Pete Lindsay reported that he had been contacted by a St Andrews resident who has been forced to give up her job in Edinburgh because of the strain of using the 7.30am service, the 8.44am getting in too late.

The Golfink service providing a direct rail/bus access to St Andrews during the Open was not as well used (15% of attendees) as last year at Carnoustie (26%). Despite the larger total attendance absolute numbers using the link were down - more people using cars. The lesson, she felt, was obvious - there is a rail station in Carnoustie but not directly in St Andrews, another argument in favour of StARLink.

4.3 Jane Hunter-Blair

(passed on by JAL as JHB sick)

4.3.1. Waste Management in the town centre - Chief Exec Douglas Sinclair looked at some of the problem areas - eg Crails Lane. He has suggested that the possibility of a nighttime refuse collection after closing be investigated for restaurants etc. He also expressed concern at cardboard being thrown out as it is recyclable - which is good news, Jane Ann Liston commented, as previously it had been said that doing so is not cost-effective.

4.3.2. Wheelie bins in City Road - Jane Hunter-Blair suggests that perhaps the toilet block by the West Port be converted to wheelie bin park. Alternative toilets would, of course, have to be provided somewhere possibly in the St Mary's Place car park.

As Cllr Jane Hunter-Blair was not present this was taken as a matter to be contemplated upon pending her return.

4.3.3 Central St Andrews traffic - Alan Bryan, head of Transportation Service will be visiting St Andrews to discuss possible changes to (eg) the South St/Bell St roundabout in order to ameliorate the problems.

4.3.4 Park & Ride

- usage up this year; awaiting more feedback at the meeting with Alan Bryan.

4.3.5 JP Courtroom

- conversion work to provide the Red Cross with an equipment store has been delayed due to Building Control issues.

4.3.6 Scooniehill Golf Development - public enquiry as a result of the applicant's appeal is scheduled for the end of November.

4.3.7 CCTV

- new funding is available and a bid seeking Challenge funding for more units for St Andrews is being submitted.

4.3.8 Trial Special Collection - drew attention to this, starting on 9 Sep.

Murdo Macdonald welcomed the trial but emphasised the need for the long delayed civic amenity site & recycling centre.

Bill Sangster was worried about the, he felt, inadequate, level of advertising of the trial.

<10 min break at 8pm>

5. Matters Arising from previous meetings

5.3 Byre & Common Good Fund.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston stated that as a member of the local committee which advised on CGF applications she had never agreed to this proposed use of the fund. When confidential discussions were held, questions asked by Community Councillors on the CGF committee were not answered by officials. Archie Strachan explained that at the so-called consultation all the Community Council representatives were asked was whether a 20 or 25 year term would be preferred. When asked for details of the arrangements being made, to better understand the position the officials refused, saying only the payback period was for discussion. There is no agreement to this use of the CGF locally, he stressed. Jane Ann Liston went on to explain that - when she wrote to officials to put the queries again on behalf of the Community Council they were still not answered, though it was implied that should the community council ask directly they would receive a reply. Clearly they had not received a useful reply. She noted that recently an expenditure of £115 for work on the town's charters had been queried with the St Andrews Councillors while the thousands of pounds for the theatre had never been formally agreed.

To put the problem in context Pete Lindsay added that Fife Council are the trustees of the CGF - the control of CGFs has moved further and further away from the communities they were supposed to serve with successive local government reorganisations - from the Town, to the District, to Fife Council.

Jane Ann Liston explained that while there would be some money left to the CGF if all went according to Fife Council's plan, there was no guarantee that the CGF's income would be maintained at current levels for 20+ years. If it fell, due to failure of the Lamas Market auction for instance, there would be no CGF left after the interest payments on the proposed Byre Theatre loan.

Murdo Macdonald asked if, as he understood, the old Byre Theatre building was property of Fife Council would the new building also be? Jane Ann Liston's information was that the

Byre's board of directors owned the new building - a legal manoeuvre that put the building at arm's length from Fife Council and so possibly permitted use of the CGF.

Iain Smith MSP suggested that the External Auditor for Fife Council be asked if the proposed loan backing was a legitimate use of CGF. He would certainly raise the general principle of who controls Common Good Funds with the Scottish Executive.

Archie Strachan wanted to be sure that Community Council was competent to raise matters with the External Auditor? Iain Smith replied that individuals could, so he thought we'd be ok. He went on to wonder, from what he had heard and what he knew from his time on Fife Council, at the legitimacy of the decision of the Policy & Resources to utilise the CGF when it was a matter delegated to the Local Services committee. He also wondered whether use of the CGF to support a loan met the 'best value' requirements on local government spending.

Pete Lindsay to write to Ext. Audit

6 New Business

6.1. Review of Tourism Management Programme

Decided to invite Archie Jamieson of Fife Scottish Enterprise to speak next month

Pete Lindsay to arrange

6.2. New Century New Healthcare

Joe Peterson will attend an afternoon session, perhaps Murdo Macdonald the evening session.

6.3. Bell Street Banners

There has been progress since Kate Hughes raised this, and she feels that these arrangements may not now be necessary.

6.4. East Of Scotland Water Board Meeting

Joe Peterson will try to attend.

6.5 Best Kept Large Town

covered by Cllr Liston.

7 Reports from Officers

7.1 Chair

Only item to report is that he is to welcome 'pilgrims' as part of the St Andrews-Holyrood Pilgrimage 2000

7.2 Treasurer

Nothing to Report

7.3 Secretary

Nothing left to report

8 Committees

8.1 General Purposes

Report noted

8.2 Planning

The planning report was circulated. Ian Goudie thanked Ken Crichton for standing in for Lindsay Murray in item 5 (Tourist management Programme)

8.3 Recreation

Ken Crichton thanked those who stood in for him during his recent indisposition. He will give the reports on the summer competitions next month.

8.4 Publicity

A planning application has been lodged for the new noticeboard in Church Square.

8.6. Discussion of Bulletin proposals

Murdo Macdonald spoke in support of his detailed proposal (Appendix B). Pete Lindsay commented that the costs compared favourably with other estimates gathered by the Publicity Committee. Archie Strachan confirmed that the costs as presented, with the assistance of the Locality Manager, could be borne by the administration account. He also noted that the remit of community council includes seeking out the views of the community and supported this as a way of doing so.

The proposed move of the suggestion box from the Town Library to the Fife Council offices in St Mary's Place was also discussed. It was felt that very few people know where it is - Dennis Macdonald reported that the first letter for 6 months had just come from the box in the library.

Ian Goudie was concerned that some of the discussion of the newsletter could give the impression that Community Council felt out of touch. He did not think that it is, but warned that such an impression, even if false, could undermine the position of the council at eg planning enquiries. Murdo Macdonald counted, saying that he hoped and expected that the results of this exercise would support the Community Council's position.

Agreed that articles from committee convenors for a mock-up be supplied to Pete Lindsay ready for next meeting, with a target printing date of October.

Move of suggestions box - Pete Lindsay to co-ordinate with Kate Hughes.

9 AOCB

9.1. Flag Flying

Archie Strachan noted that 3 September is non recognised as a memorial day for merchant seamen. 30,000 were lost in the 1939-1945 war. He proposed that Community Council should recognise this by flying the Merchant flag on this day.

Proposed Archie Strachan, **2nd** Pete Lindsay - none against.

Pete Lindsay to investigate cost of flag

9.2. Further discussion of Sandyhill Road

Meeting agreed to invite the relevant officer of Fife Council, Housing Manager John Mills, to present Fife Council's case.

Pete Lindsay to arrange
