

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - October 2000

Approved 6 Nov 2000

1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Maries Cassells, Ken Crichton, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, John Landon, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Murdo Macdonald, Lindsay Murray, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Chris Young

Students Association: Marcus Booth

Co-opted: Bill Sangster

Fife Councillors: Sheila Hill, Jane Ann Liston,

Apologies: Helen Lawrie, Jane Hunter-Blair, Donald Macgregor

2. Minutes - September

add apologies from Frank Riddell

amended minute approved

3. Presentation

3.1. Inspector John Pow

The new Inspector in St Andrews introduced himself, having been in post for just a month. He then described a number of current concerns he had targeted, and answered questions:

3.1.1. Greyfriars Garden disturbances - trying back to basics policing with officers on foot. Also working with University and Students- Association; however students are individuals and members of the community responsible for their own actions - they are not special cases. If they break the law the police will treat them like anyone else.

3.1.2. West Sands problems - Fife Council investigating raising bye-law to require anyone organising an event/party to get written permission from Fife Council who will notify Police and will have the opportunity to pass on health & safety advice to the organiser. He warned that this won't stop unauthorised events. A single van load of police cannot control a thousand people determined to party.

3.1.3. Cyclists

- lights & pavements - police are making a special point of stopping offenders who will be warned for a first offence and referred to the procurator fiscal if they come to police attention a second time.

The system of issuing offenders with forms requiring them to purchase lights and present receipts at the Police Station within a few days or be fined, could not be reintroduced as it had no legal basis, an adaptation of a system aimed at motorists. It was then suggested that perhaps Fife Council could introduce a bye-law to allow this. The inspector will pass the idea on.

In answering various questions he reported that cycling on pavements is not legal except in designated cycle lanes (such as Viaduct Walk) even for children. He did concede that there was some discretion involved, that with very young children a question of balance of risk was involved - would the child be at risk on the road?

On the matter of cars parking on the Canongate cycle lanes Inspector Pow stated that this is, unfortunately, not illegal. A greater problem on Canongate is the selfish behaviour of some parents collecting their children at the school who park immediately outside on the yellow lines marking the parking restrictions. Some seemed to doubt the status of the lines. He emphasised that the lines do mark a legal restriction on parking, and that his officers and parking wardens would be enforcing it.

3.1.4. Zebra crossings

- asked about the possibility of bringing CCTV to bear on some of the Zebra crossings, because of concerns over the behaviour of both motorists and pedestrians, he replied that this was not possible because there are higher priorities for the very limited number of traffic cameras, and the CCTV units are not suitable as they are covert units. If motorists do not behave properly on zebras or other crossings Insp Pow urged people to report them - the police would follow up all reports he promised.

Cllr Frances Melville asked if the police had been consulted about the positioning of the Zebras. Not to Insp Pow's knowledge, nor had he seen anything in his predecessor's records. He did note that there is a meeting with Transportation Service scheduled for November.

3.1.5. Millennium entertainment - in response to a query on the general principal of new year/true millennium entertainments spilling into Church Square the Inspector made it clear that he did not think outside events at this time of year were a very good idea. He feared possible icy conditions, weather generally, drink and high spirits. The police would certainly make observations on any licence applications, indoor or not, and ask for suitable conditions to be imposed he said.

3.1.6. CCTV

- asked about use of these units he said they were in use to combat vandalism etc, but pointed out that covert units could not be set up watching an area 'just in case'. That would be against the rights of passers-by because of civil liberty issues. He had to satisfy his superiors that a specific problem existed that the camera would help solve, before its use would be authorised.

3.2. Tourism Management Plan

Archie Jamieson gave a quick slide presentation on the TMP, with handout. He then invited questions, assisted in answering by Bill Lindsay of Fife Council planning service.

3.2.1. Coastal Path

– Referring to the fine view of the town from Kinkell Brae, Archie Strachan noted the dangerous state of the coastal path since recent erosion and longer term neglect. He called for it to be included in the programme of environmental work mentioned. Archie Jamieson replied that the scheme is just looking at the East Sands area at the moment, but that the path would be a logical extension. Lindsay Murray wondered what had happened to the concept of a bridge to bridge coastal path? AJ understood the aim was still being pursued, but there were difficulties with landowners at this end of the path.

3.2.2. Pedestrianisation

– Commenting on improvements planned to the buildings of the town mentioned in a 'five year plan' Joe Peterson asked if there were any intention to pedestrianise the centre of town so that people might enjoy the views. Bill Lindsay responded that such a move would come under the 20 year Transport Vision, but the TMP had to deal with the current situation. There had been a wide range of input to the Transport Vision. Ian Goudie was concerned that the discussion on transport so far had been rather more for the benefit of tourism, not what would be good for townspeople. For sustainability the needs of the town must be regarded as well.

3.2.3. Golf

– Frank Riddell raised concerns about the capacity of St Andrews for further golf tourism – most such visitors want to play the classic courses of the Links, which are nearly at capacity according to the Links Trust. He cited to the fate of the Gateway Centre as what could happen to developments without associated play on the courses.

AJ said the TMP was not suggesting building any more courses, but making better use of what we have, to lure tourists in then spread the benefits to the whole surrounding area of Scotland – through Fife to Edinburgh and to Tayside.

3.2.4. Strategy

– Maries Cassells wondered if there was a long term strategy behind the plan, with finance and integrated with the Locality Plan currently under development?

AJ said that funding was only for one year at a time which made strategic 'big ideas' difficult. On Locality Planning Bill Lindsay said that it and the TMP were indeed working together in a mutually beneficial relationship.

3.2.5. Membership of the working parties – questioned about this AJ was happy to agree to supply this information for circulation later. More involvement from members of community council would certainly be welcome he said.

3.3. Sandyhill Road hostel proposal.

John Mills, Fife Council Housing Manager spoke about the reasons for the proposal to convert 2 houses at 29-31 Sandyhill Rd currently used for temporary accommodation of homeless families to a 9 place hostel for single homeless people. He made the following points:

- St Andrews is a gap in the provision of temporary accommodation for the single homeless in NE Fife.
- Fife has the third highest rate of homelessness in Scotland.

- There is a very low turnover of rented homes in St Andrews plus a very high demand, which makes it difficult to house people quickly.
- The council particularly wants to house homeless in a residential area in their home locality.
- Last year in St Andrews there were 85 claims of homelessness. The claimants must, by law, be housed until the claim is resolved. Two-thirds of these were single people of all ages, not just young people.
- There are 7 furnished properties for temporary housing in St Andrews, all of which are family accommodation.
- To accommodate single homeless in the St Andrews area have previously used B&B, costing £76,000 last year. It is Fife Council policy to phase out use of B&B.
- On 31 July central government awarded £170,000 for a hostel.
- Can't find anywhere to buy/build in St Andrews. Of two unbuilt sites in council ownership, one is currently used as a market garden, the other garage lockups. Neither site is suitable for building.
- Sandyhill Road on the other hand is already in council ownership.
- Propose to convert from 2 families to 9 singles and on-site staff. It will cater for stays of from a few days, to months, depending on the outcome of the claim. The staff are there to look after the residents - help them with filling out applications etc - and look after the building.
- decision on the go-ahead will be taken by East Area Local Services committee meeting on 18 Oct. If that is successful conversion will be completed by 31 March 2001.

Responding to questions about the adequacy of the consultation he agreed that some local residents feel concerns, and agreed with some of those concerns. The decision had been to inform and consult the local residents only once there was a funded proposal.

On the sort of people expected to stay at the hostel, he said local residents have been invited to visit other Fife hostels to see for themselves, but no one had taken up the offer so far. He did not agree that single people are more of a problem than families, as objectors seem to believe, on the basis of his experiences over several years involvement with Housing. There is a zero tolerance policy of abuse of drink and drugs in council hostels. Any troublemakers will be relocated.

Only about one third of the (85 last year) applications fulfil the criteria for homelessness, but by law all applicants must be housed until this is determined.

Temporary accommodation for families to replace these two properties will come from exchanging some large properties for a greater number of smaller ones from the housing stock. It is obviously not suitable to put several single homeless people into houses initially which is why hostels are needed as a transition to suitable furnished accommodation.

There were four single people from St Andrews in B&B, placed in Cupar and Levenmouth. There is currently a shortfall of about 10 temporary accommodation places in St Andrews. Local B&B proprietors were charging £40/person/night before the Open, and are now asking £60 (a figure which caused some astonishment among those members of community council with B&B connections). It is not Fife Council policy to split families in B&B, as one questioner asked, but it does sometimes happen due to capacity of the accommodation available. The categories defined by legislation are Single/Couple/Family the latter involving children, even if it is simply a parent and child. By law also the council cannot discriminate in provision of accommodation between single and other categories.

Many sites have been looked at in the search for a location for this hostel; details will be given in the report to the Local Services Committee. The cost to build a new hostel in Kirkcaldy recently was £0.5 million for 16 places. The question that has to be considered is "what is the most cost-effective site"?

Fife council is trying to provide accommodation for the greatest need, and the greatest demand is single homeless at the moment. This is unlikely to change as changes proposed in the law will require the housing of non-priority homeless people soon.

4. Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Structure Plan Draft - 500+ responses to draft - over half on green belt for St Andrews & Dunfermline. One particular point to be welcomed is that views from the town centre out are not to be impaired.

4.1.2. Harbour Trust - meeting soon with Fife Enterprise on further funding for restoration.

4.1.3. Kinburn Park

- use of derelict tennis courts for parking, suggested last month, not possible as they belong to the tennis club who have plans to refurbish them.

4.1.4. West Sands - multi-agency approach to the various problems - keep her updated.

4.1.5. Tourism Management Plan - she sees the Kinkell brae footpath is a priority.

4.1.6. Byre Door & artwork on Abbey Walk - concerns from Roads, Byre could not answer questions on obstruction of footpath. Waiting on other Abbey Walk 'gateway' improvements.

4.2. Sheila Hill

4.2.1. Civic Amenity & Recycling site - will be a report to Regulation committee. Planning consent expired April 2000. She was very concerned.

Murdo Macdonald suggested that if the site was lost out-of-town sites be considered, particularly a site about 1 mile out of town past Safeway. Pete Lindsay was against this as people would have to drive to the centre, making it inaccessible or at least inconvenient to non-motorists.

**Pete Lindsay to write Chief Exec on CAR site
- shocked & surprised at loss.**

4.2.2. John Knox Road - proposed development to be considered at EA Dev tomorrow. Bill Sangster asked if the definition of "Special Needs" which caused concern in July (3.5 & 8.5.1) was any clearer? Sheila Hill understood that this was clarified in the revised proposals to be considered.

4.3. Jane Ann Liston

4.3.1. East Sands Leisure Centre - lane swimming increased at request from the public, swimming clubs etc, but now lots of objections from the leisure users so changes to be reviewed.

Lindsay Murray asked about opening hours - why the centre shut as early as 3.30pm at weekends and an extended period over Christmas, times when people could be expected to be free to go swimming?

Cllr Liston to investigate.

4.3.2. Express & Sleeper rail timetables - GNER entries now include Leuchars and other Fife stations.

4.3.3. Structure Plan

- now includes mention of a St Andrews railway line, on a 1-10 year timetable.

4.3.4. Byre Theatre/CGF

- due to meet Christine May (Head of Administration Group) and Stuart Allan. Will get answers to Community Council's questions asked in July.

4.3.5. Sandyhill Road

- Bill Sangster raised Sandyhill Road hostel and criticism by some residents of their councillor, Cllr Liston, asking why that was. Jane Ann Liston replied that she had personally circulated the residents of Sandyhill Rd and neighbouring areas to keep them updated on developments. Any criticism he would have to ask them to clarify. Cynthia Tero, who had been at the public meeting on the hostel proposals at the start of September, expressed support for Jane Ann Liston's handling of the situation.

5. Matters Arising**5.1. Common Good Fund/Byre**

(September 5.3) Further action to be held until after Cllr Liston's meeting with Head of Law & Administration Stuart Allan and leader of the Administration, Christine May.

5.2. New Century, New Healthcare

(Sept 6.2.) reported from the September meeting afternoon session that Cathy Adamson & John Bell emphatic that they did not want to use St Leonards Fields, that a green field site was needed to support the 275 car parking spaces the hospital would need. Murdo Macdonald & Frank Riddell surprised as that did not seem to match what was said in their presence at the evening session.

5.1. East of Scotland Water

(Sept 6.4.) JP couldn't make this.

6. New Business

6.1. Remembrance Sunday Parade

Six members volunteered to attend.

Murdo Macdonald to arrange

6.3. NEF Healthcare Co-operative

Agreed to Dr John Bell coming to speak on hospital project progress in Nov.

6.4. MoBUS Community Transport

Agreed to invite for Nov.

6.5. State of Kinkell Brae coastal path

Archie Strachan added that he had attempted Boarhills-St Andrews recently finding it very dangerous and swampy. The path from the Leisure Centre to the caravan site is a disgrace. He worried that the walk will be lost. Ian Goudie agreed with this assessment, adding that wire-cutters were also a necessary tool for walkers following the coastal path. Joe Peterson also backed the remarks, though adding that part of the problem was due to damage from quite legitimately grazing animals.

**Pete Lindsay to write to Bill Taylor (Corporate Development),
Kate Hughes (Locality Plan),
Archie Jaimieson (Fife Enterprise & TMP).**

6.6. Railway Development Society

Agreed to (corrected) £15 membership fee.

6.7. Honoured Citizen

Murdo Macdonald made a proposal. Meeting agreed to a ballot in accordance with the procedure set in June.

Pete Lindsay to arrange

6.7. Bus Stop Information

(Oops, duplicate number - PL) - no comments.

6.12. Golfing Sheep

There were mixed feelings on this, but the meeting decided to await developments, planning applications and the like.

7. Officers Reports

7.1. Chair

7.1.1. Links Trust meeting 24 Oct - meeting agreed Murdo Macdonald & Dennis Macdonald to attend on our behalf.

7.2. Treasurer

Reminded members to submit expenses in good time

7.3. Secretary

no further business

8. Committees

8.1. General Purposes & Publicity

Murdo Macdonald: Bulletin not as advanced as had been hoped, not yet ready for review. He asked for permission to go ahead under control of GP & Publicity, aiming for publication at the end of October.

8.2. Planning

Report was circulated

8.2.1. Strategic Plan/Green Belt - Joe Peterson proposed that Community Council minute its

pleasure at Fife Council's inclusion of green belt proposals. After much discussion it was agreed that:

This community council is pleased to note the inclusion of a Green Belt in the draft structure plan.

8.2.2 Scooniehill Public Enquiry - Frank Riddell has submitted written evidence. He expects to call Cllr Hill to give evidence as a member of the education committee, Dr John Bell on medical services and Dr Ian Goudie as a professional Statistician

8.2.6. Tourism Management Plan - Transport Vision 2020 - position is being clarified. Ian Goudie has submitted personal comments on statistics. The final draft will go out for comment.

8.3. Recreation

8.3.1. Competitions

- Ken Crichton reported on the competitions run this year - Spot the Odd One Out & Floral, both over the summer, with the Art & Photo to come for St Andrews Week.

<9.30pm standing orders suspended>

8.3.2. Bandstand Concerts

(i) Meeting agreed to continue the bandstand concerts next year.

(ii) A new organiser is required - meeting expressed its thanks to Archie Strachan for his service over the years. It was decided to look at the physical side of arranging the chair for the concerts etc after the community council elections next year. Meanwhile Archie Strachan to undertake application to CGF and start booking bands.

8.4. Millennium

Proposals for a second (true) Millennium Ceilidh in the Town Hall have fallen through as there will be no cover by caretakers etc.

8.5. Publicity

8.4.1. Noticeboard - planning permission received.

Frank Riddell to order board and erection

8.4.2. Loches & Arms

- Received request from Loches for use of our Arms on a commemoration sign.

Meeting agreed.

9 AOCB

9.1. Attendance

Bill Sangster asked about the standing of community councillors who do not attend regularly.

Pete Lindsay replied that the Scheme of Administration held councillors not attending for 6 consecutive meetings to have lapsed. When he last checked, for the AGM in May, no one quite failed the test. He would check again.

9.2. Weekend Trial Waste Collections

Murdo Macdonald has heard that these will be continued monthly rather than ceasing at the end of the trial period.
