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Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - December 2001

approved

Chair: Murdo Macdonald

0. Youth member

David Reed co-opted

1. Attendance

Community Councillors:

Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Callum MacLeod, Lindsay Murray, Gordon Pay, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Jean Thompson, Penny Uprichard

Student Association: Dana Green, Jane McColloch, Stephanie Nicolson

Nominated/Co-opted: Ewen Sparks, David Reed

Fife Councillors: Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville

Apologies: Bill Brooks, Tom Plant, Joe Lamb, Cynthia Tero, Bill Sangster, Sheila Hill

2. Minutes of November 2001

Approved.

3. Presentations

3.1. Town Library

Iain Whitelaw (Fife Council Manager for Arts, Libraries, Theatre etc) and Aileen McLauchlan (Libraries Information Services Coordinator) spoke.

They felt that their meeting with members of community council in July had been positive, and hoped that the issues raised then had been addressed in the new draft plans, copies of which were circulated.

The current location is very convenient but the two sites are separated by a busy road which is not convenient for anyone, users or staff, so the proposal is to integrate both the children's and main libraries into the building on Church Square. However the current layout there is very cramped for staff and users, and an inflexible layout prevents use for exhibitions or events. It is proposed that the current staff accommodation, which is inadequate for a library the size of St Andrews, becomes public and that the staff move to the new area. Stock will be able to increase and 12 computers added. Disabled access is very poor at the moment; the stairs to the upper floor are narrow and steep, both uninviting and difficult to use so most services are located on the crowded ground floor. It is proposed to both widen the stair and provide a lift for access to the upper part of the building.

As part of the refurbishment the library would be joined to the computerised issue systems to speed issue/return. There are currently some 23,000 books. As part of the design it is intended to at least maintain that number, and it is thought that a 10% increase in stock level would be possible through careful design work and use of flexible shelving. The stock of books would be developed to meet user needs, not just directly transferred. This would be in addition to the new public access computer systems proposed from the New Opportunity Fund (NOF) money to join libraries to the People's Network & the Internet.

They emphasized that this is a draft plan still under development and will be responsive to public comment. The proposed upper floor office & workshop are still very much 'under discussion' and may feature a public heritage area.

Current timescale is to complete by July 2003, with the library closed Jan-June 03. Funding is the major issue. The current draft for the refurbishment and new equipment is costed at about £350k but there is no commitment yet to any of the funding being discussed. Relevant council infrastructure budget decisions to be taken early in the new year. Other sources for funding include sources within Fife Council, NOF, and the lottery. Currently they have identified £200k of the required £350k. Phased implementation may be necessary. They are looking at a traditional package of funding rather than the property exchange mentioned previously, which would be too legally entangled. It was suggested that a 'Friends of the Library' type of organisation might be more successful getting funds from charitable sources than a council.

In discussion after the presentation Iain Whitelaw confirmed that there was no longer any intention to use money from the Common Good Fund, but also noted that it was not the job of the Libraries Service to fund the CGF through its rent for the Children's Library. When the 1996 proposals for a site at Kinburn Park were raised he pointed out that this was well before he became involved with the project, and well before he joined Fife Council for that matter. Any money for the 1996 proposals has been spent and the option on the land cancelled. He has to deal with the current situation.

If the current proposals do not go forward through lack of support or funding difficulties the IT provision, which is funded, will be added to the current building as far as possible. But he hopes to use that funding as leverage to bring in more money for the full proposed upgrade. Ken Fraser reminded the meeting of the concerns that the current layout of the library would fall foul of provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act when it comes into force. This might lead to the closure of the current library as a public building if it is not upgraded.

While general support for the proposals was at best perhaps lukewarm, the point made by several speakers was that this was because of a wish to see the best possible deal for the library, rather than actual opposition to an upgrade.

It was agreed to give qualified support to the proposals.

3.2 Police Report

PC Balmaves attended

3.2.1. Parking at Station Car Park

in the longer term Fife Council are seeking a traffic order to introduce parking restrictions at the junction with Doubledykes Road. For the time being, traffic wardens are leaving notes on vehicles parking inappropriately informing them of the impending change and asking them to park elsewhere. These have been heeded and the problem much reduced.

3.2.2. Annual pedal cycle initiative

with the dark evenings police are targeting those suicidal cyclists without lights, inconsiderate cyclists riding on pavements and travelling the wrong way along one-way streets.

3.2.3. Crime Prevention

Chris Lesurf drew attention to various alarms, personal & handbag advertised recently in The Citizen, and to free light-timer switches available from the Crime Prevention Officer at St Andrews Police Station.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Harbour bridge

funding is arranged for a replacement or upgrade. There is to be a meeting soon between Harbour Trust and Fife Council.

4.1.2. CCTV

criticised the police's block application for the cameras as messy and difficult to deal with for the East Area Development Committee. The police had been advised to submit individual applications for the cameras but refused to do so.

4.1.3. West Sands Barriers

council consulting with Links Trust on how to go about the replacement of the access control. The size of the job is such that it will go out to tender.

Ian Goudie was worried that the automatic barriers being considered may lead to year-round charging for vehicle access to the West Sands. Cllr Frances Melville assured him that there was no such intention, but then added 'at the moment' which caused widespread mirth.

4.1.4. Feddinch golf application

this is another attempt to find an acceptable Sconiehill, roughly mk IV. There was some concern over the timescale of this application [but the fear that it was scheduled for 18 Dec development committee later proved to be a misunderstanding - PL]

Frank Riddell commented that the Feddinch location has many of the same problems as its previous at Sconiehill regarding infrastructure impact etc.

4.1.5. Kinkell Footpath a roadside footpath is being looked at as 'planning gain'.

Ian Goudie and Joe Peterson amongst others spoke up for a roadside path which would be useable at all times of day and night where the coastal path will not be suitable for night time use unless lit.

4.3. Jane Ann Liston

4.3.1. Golden Jubilee

relay for the attention of St Andrews runners: 500 runners are wanted to carry a baton around Scotland to celebrate the jubilee. The event will pass through St Andrews on 11 June.

4.3.2. Postal Votes

[Nov 4.3.8.] the motion to Fife Council welcoming postal votes and calling for candidates' information to be circulated was passed overwhelmingly.

4.3.3. Town Hall improvements Paul Marshall reports that a notice board is ordered. The baillie's robe is in place in the Burgh Chambers foyer.

4.3.4. Town Council Provost's Chain

Fife Council Convenor Tom Dair was reportedly wearing the chain at St Andrew's Day functions. There was some discussion whether this proper. Opinion split between those who were glad to see the chain being used and those who felt that it should only be used for official functions by the provost - which post no longer exists since the replacement of the Town Council by the Region & District councils in 1975 and Fife Council in 1996.

Pete Lindsay to write Chief Exec

4.3.5. Kinkell Braes summarised a geotechnical report by Hydracat Ltd for Fife Council which says that:

...the slope failure is due to water within the slope softening a layer of mudstone. It is not a soft soils slope failure. It is a natural phenomenon triggered by water percolation. Action required will be:

- 1) a monitoring programme by the Countryside rangers
- 2) water discharge points to be identified so that drainage can be redirected within the caravan park which will reduce surface gullying
- 3) further improvements could be made such as tree planting within and adjacent to the caravan park.

The path will continue to be re-routed due to further erosion from time to time.

5. Planning

Report was circulated at the meeting

Report of the PLANNING COMMITTEE Meetings of 12.11.01 and 26.11.01 for the Community Council Meeting of 3 December 2001.

1 Planning applications.

(i) Wester Langlands.

A letter of objection was submitted, the grounds being as outlined in last month's minute. Copies available on request.

(ii) College Street.

Mrs Murray wrote indicating that we are sympathetic to the proposal that there should be two more lights installed, but object to the chosen style which looks out of place.

(iii) Craigtoun B housing site.

IBJG wrote, continuing to support the principle of housing on this site, but objecting to a range of detailed aspects of the application. Copies available on request.

(iv) Scenic Maps.

Mr Douglas agreed to write objecting to the proposal to install outside Hamilton Hall a second town map with advertising (similar to the one in South St). A Corner of the Bruce Embankment car park would be more appropriate.

2. Green Belt Forum.

The Planning Committee was supportive of the proposal that the Forum should adopt a constitution. A copy of the draft constitution has been received.

Comment by IBJG

3. Recent bad news

November 2001 will not be remembered in St Andrews as a triumph for consultative democ-racy:

(i) 1D St Mary's Place

The plans for change of use of the former betting shop to a hot food take-away were approved. The Community Council had objected on grounds of traffic impact, increased demand for parking, likelihood of litter and noise.

(ii) Quad bike track.

The proposed track at Kinkell Farm was unanimously approved. The grounds on which the Community Council had objected had included impact on the unbuilt coastline, further traffic generation and potential problems including pollution close to a SSSI, litter and noise.

(iii) CCTV.

The proposed scheme for St Andrews was approved by nine votes to two. The erection of poles over twenty feet high in conspicuous places is bad news in environmental terms for the conservation area. The 24 hour surveillance constitutes a general fishing expedition, which was not justified by crime statistics. It will affect the atmosphere of the town, as well as raising more general questions of civil liberties. Ironically, many of the traditional trouble-spots in the town are not covered by the scheme. The Community Council has previously noted the unsatisfactory nature of the public consultation on the matter.

(iv) Cycle Paths on pavements.

Following the Public Inquiry earlier in the year, the Scottish Ministers have now endorsed Fife Council's scheme. The Reporter recommended an eighteen month trial period, but, following a two month delay, the Scottish Executive has removed even this requirement. The Community Council did not object to all aspects of the proposal, only at those it saw as dangerous or ill-advised. Much of it was aimed at visitors rather than for residents, but, even looked at in these terms, it was hard to believe that there were not better ways to spend the money. Not one St Andrews cyclist spoke at the Inquiry in favour of the proposals.

5.3.i 1D St Mary's Place

Dana Green expressed the Students' Association's disappointment that planning permission had been granted for the hot food takeaway behind the Victoria Café despite the objections from Association, University and Community Council. She hoped that people would appreciate that any increase in noise and rubbish in the area should not be blamed on the Union.

5.3.iii

Ian Goudie also concerned that Fife Council was, in cases such as CCTV, granting permission for developments by closely allied bodies like the Community Safety Forum on which FC is represented - in effect giving permission to itself. He understood that such applications should be should be overseen and confirmed (or not) by the Scottish Executive.

Cllr Frances Melville to check the rules

5.3.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston noted that just because submissions by community council had not been successful it did not mean they had not been considered.

6. Matters arising from previous meetings**6.1. Bandstand Concerts**

No one person has time available to cover all aspects of this job. Archie Strachan will continue to organise the concerts but physical work (chair stacking etc) and attendance at the concerts will be handled by a rota of volunteers:

Callum Macleod, Murdo Macdonald, Frank Riddell, Richard Douglas, Joe Peterson, Pete Lindsay, Archie Strachan.

6.2. Youth Liaison Committee

David Reed commented that there was lots of support and interest in the YLC within Madras College.

Joe Peterson volunteered.

6.4. Other matters arising from November

4.2.5. Recycling Centre progress Cllr Sheila Hill to report next month

4.2.6. Largo Road Crossings Cllr Sheila Hill to report next month

7.4.1. ASCC Executive

member Callum MacLeod looked into this but it involves too much travelling to be practical for him to take on.

7.6. Home Composting

Donald Macgregor complained that despite repeated attempts to join the scheme he had no contact back from Cleansing & Waste Management Service. Cllr Jane Ann Liston will chase them.

7. New Business

7.1. Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Pete Lindsay thought suggestions for Jubilee celebrations, if any, should be asked for through the Bulletin.

The only firm suggestion came from Cllr Jane Ann Liston who suggested a historical re-enactment pageant of the wedding in 1538 of James V & Marie de Guise-Lorraine - ancestors of the present Queen.

7.2. St Andrew's Day

Lindsay Murray expressed disappointment at The Citizen's coverage of St Andrews Week. There was, she said, nothing on St Andrew's Day on the cover of that weekend's edition, instead the stories were all negative, dirty linen washed in public.

She praised the new event, The Bash, organised by local publisher Leckie & Leckie, which comments were backed by several others and it was agreed a letter of thanks and congratulation be written.

Pete Lindsay to write

Other members backed her comments on The Citizen considering the 'student bashing' article particularly unfortunate. The meeting agreed that a letter of complaint be written to the editor of The Citizen

Pete Lindsay to write

Murdo Macdonald suggested that community council should take a wider role in St Andrew's Week in future, and that a new committee be set up to deal with this.

Murdo Macdonald said that while he did not want to go into details prematurely he could say that there would be a positive announcement from the Liaison Group on 20th Dec.

8. Office bearers' reports

8.1. Chair

Murdo Macdonald apologised for the lack of a written report, and emphasised that as much as possible should be given to the Secretary to be printed in the agenda, so people would have time to read it before the meeting and be able to ask informed questions, if necessary.

8.1.1. Remembrance Sunday Thanked those who attended.

8.1.2. Meetings with other Community Councils hopes to arrange early in the new year.

8.1.3. Millennium Account [Nov 8.2] hopes to arrange meeting and report next month.

8.1.4. Liaison Group mentioned above

8.1.3. Wrote to chief exec [of Fife Council] about letter received from Planning Service - file copy.

8.1.3. Hogmanay Ceilidh has a band at last. 97 of 200 tickets sold already.

Archie Strachan asked about provision for younger people. Murdo Macdonald said he had looked into it but cannot take on organising two events on the same night.

Agenda Jan - youth hogmanay

Treasurer & Secretary

Nothing further to report

9. Committee reports

9.1. Publicity Committee

Usual requests for copy; looking for informative, interesting & snappy pieces. Even if an article can't be fitted in to the current issue it can be kept on file for later use.

9.2. Recreation

9.2.1. Art & Photographic competition attendance down on last year, £500 takings

9.2.2. Senior Citizens Xmas Tea

Tues 18 Dec 3.30-5.30pm at the Students' Union. Raffle - begging letters to local businesses for raffle prizes being circulated.

9.2. Health Education & Welfare.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston could not agree with the comments about the Cosmos Centre Management Committee; they did not reflect the meetings she attended. Murdo Macdonald expressed his support for the Cosmos committee whose main difficulty in his experience was the lack of people willing to help and take part.

It was also explained that Joe Lamb's report was for information, not action.

10. AOCB

Sherry & mince pies raised by Pete & Jane Ann, downed by everyone else.