

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes –3rd March 2014

For Approval

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Patrick Marks, Ian Goudie, Ken Fraser, Henry Paul, Marysia Denyer, Penny Uprichard, Kyffin Roberts, Izzy Corbin, Carol Ashworth, Judith Harding, Howard Greenwell, Robert McLachlan, Ken Crichton, Henry Cheape, Alice Alexander, Tom Waterton-Smith, Harry Stewart .

Students' Association Representatives

Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Fife Councillors

Keith McCartney, Dorothea Morrison, Brian Thomson, Frances Melville

Apologies

Callum Corbin, Chloe Hill, Bernadette Cassidy, Ronnie Murphy

2. Minutes of Meeting – 3rd February

Cllr Melville noted that she was incorrectly put down as absent whereas she'd been at the meeting!

Mr Marks apologised for omitting much of Cllr McCartney's report and said he'd correct that in the final version.

Cllr Thomson noted the absence of his comments at the end of the last meeting in relation to comments made by Mr Greenwell in the planning minutes. Mr Marks agreed to check if these could be included under AOCB.

3. Presentations

3.1. Seagull Management Report by Mr Spackman

Mr Spackman started by thanking the meeting for the support this initiative had had last year. This evening's presentation he explained was an update on the initiative.

The problem with gulls he said was their intelligence making them very adaptable, and their high breeding success rate of around 90%. He briefly gave the meeting an idea of the potential growth rate with that level of successful breeding, which would put very serious pressure on the environment. He explained that their adaptation to the urban environment was partly a response to changing availability of food, with the urban environment offering relatively easy access to new food sources. He added that gulls were a protected species, but questioned the way this had been arrived at and whether it was still appropriate. The legal protection of gulls severely limits the ways they can be managed.

He went on to say that in St Andrews since the mid nineties there had been very considerable changes in the physical environment of the centre of the town and the economic structure of the businesses there as well as significant improvements in Market Street. There had been a large growth in coffee shops and fast food outlets and as a result of that there had been a development of a pavement culture, which was very attractive to gulls as food sources were becoming more easily available to them. He also noted the demographic changes in St Andrews with a significant decline in the number of town centre residents and increase in the number of properties to let and an increase in the number of absentee landlords, who might not always take property responsibilities as could be desired. Finally Mr Spackman said that there were systemic problems of waste disposal and street collection. He felt that everyone was aware how all these issues came together in relation to the gull problem. In the summer months during the breeding season he said there was an extraordinary level of ambient noise, which went on for 24 hours a day, as chicks were fed on demand. Excrement pollution and seagull aggression were also significant parts of the problems. He explained how the aggression of seagulls often related to defence of their chicks if they had fallen out of their nest.

He then went on to explain what he and a group of concerned local citizens had been trying to do to reduce the problem in a variety of ways. He also acknowledged generous public support from Fife Council last year and from St Andrews Community Trust this year. Fife Council is this year giving other material support relating to council properties affected by gulls. He was hoping that the group would be able to bring in the churches such as Holy Trinity and All Saints both of which have active seagull populations. Nest removal is planned for the churches. He reminded the meeting that although seagulls have protection the group has an SNH licence in Mr Spackman's name to remove nests and eggs, an activity which requires to be done a few times each breeding season.

Mr Spackman acknowledged that at present the group is relatively small in relation to the size of the local population. He was also aware of some arguments that they were merely shifting the problem, but his response would be that as long as gulls have access in an area to food they would stay whereas if waste disposal is better managed leaving no food accessible to gulls the problem of gulls will be significantly reduced.

Mrs Denyer pointed out similar problems on Scooniehill Road where the gulls had become used to seeing the school children throw away some of their lunch and were always present to take advantage of the free meal. Mr Spackman replied that this added to his argument and he thought that the only solution to the problem lay in educating people not to leave food accessible to gulls and understand their civic responsibility.

Mr Spackman thought that the big problem in relation to the centre of St Andrews was Market Street. This street had a lot of outlets from chains or multiples not members of the Merchants Association, so less accessible to working with the community. There was also the physical problem of difficulty in getting access to the nests due to many properties being in multiple ownership, making access more difficult.

He then mentioned how expensive clearing the roofs and taking other preventative measures would be around £10 - £20000 and this would not be to get rid of the gulls but merely to control aspects of the way they create problems.

Mr Spackman and his colleagues have had contact with a firm promoting the use of bird free gel as a way of dealing with the problem.

He also recognised that as a small group they'd done as much as they could but needed more public support and input to extend the management of the problem. Meanwhile they would continue to do what they could in their own neighbourhoods.

Mr Cheape asked about the effectiveness of the hawk, which had been used at one time to scare the gulls. Mr Spackman in reply said that the hawk was marvellous theatre and gave the group a lot of invaluable publicity during the early stages of the group's development. The

hawk created a disturbance amongst the seagulls but didn't stop them nesting. He thought that the seagulls learnt that the hawk was only around for short periods of time. He felt that the most effective way to reduce the problem was to intensively work to remove the nests on a three weekly interval as this was around the time it was taking for the gulls to rebuild and lay fresh eggs.

Mrs Denyer asked about the bird free gel. Mr Spackman explained that this was a substance in small containers like tea lights stuck on roofs in a grid pattern. The gel was red in colour and Mr Spackman informed the meeting that the birds apparently interpreted the colour as fire. He thought that the gel did appear to work quite well and was supposed to work for a few years in a range of weather conditions. The group had tried it on a few properties, with a test run near his house, which worked well. He recognised as well that netting roofs was the ultimate solution but this did not suit all roofs.

Mrs Harding later asked the meeting if there was anything that could be done communally about the seagulls? She wondered if the councillors, merchants, university and others could get together to publicise the issue. She thought that a joint concerted effort could reduce the seagull population. Mrs Harding wondered if there was any way that interested parties could keep in contact after the CC meeting? She commented about the numerous seagulls on the roofs of the sheltered flats at Argyle Court and wondered if the residents might be willing to contribute something towards seagull removal. Mr Marks suggested that the factors, Murray, Donald should be approached to discuss that with the residents as they could arrange such work but it would have to be with the residents agreement as there would be a charge.

Cllr Melville thought that there was some merit for this initiative to expand into different sections of the town.

Mr Roberts asked if there was anyone willing to take on this bit of work? Mrs Harding volunteered but acknowledged that she'd need a lot of advice. Cllr McCartney suggested that it might be better liaising with Mr Spackman on the idea given his expertise and experience in dealing with the problem elsewhere in town. He thought that it would be better to work together rather than have fragmented initiatives. Mr Roberts asked Mrs Harding to report back to the CC on this matter. Mrs Alexander mentioned the seagull problem up by Straiton Wynd and surrounding area and Mrs Denyer mentioned the same problem by St Nicholas Street.

3.2. On The Rocks

Four student representatives attended the meeting to tell the CC about the "On the Rocks Festival".

Emily Rodgers the Director of the 2014 festival began the presentation. She described the event as the largest student arts festival in Scotland now in its sixth year. Last year there had been over 6000 guests at their events. This year's festival will run from April 4th to the 13th. One of the main festival aims was to make it accessible to everyone in the town not just university students. Partly to get more community involvement last year some of the students began an event called "Art on the Rocks" in which art works were displayed in local cafes. This year it was hoped to have works from local people as well as those by students in these displays. At the end of the week the art works would be brought together and displayed again at the closing party at which it was hoped that people would be able to see what their peers and neighbours had created. She explained that there were two periods for submission March 12th and April 3rd.

The head of Community Development organiser then explained her role in organising workshops in art and music. It was hoped that they would be able to involve local school pupils and other local people in the workshops, which would have a special emphasis on the participation of the community.

Drew Silverman, Community Events explained her role as organiser of the clay workshop based on Anthony Gormley's "The Feel" which would take place in the local library and involve students, local people and school children.

Islay Wright was the last of the group to explain the event she was organising, which was a performance-painting workshop the week after the clay workshop. She hoped that this would attract children, school children and anyone with an interest in the nature of the workshop. This event is in the town library on the 12th April in the afternoon.

Islay also explained about a third event, an organ workshop, which will take place in St Salvators Chapel. At this event on the 8th April anyone with an interest in organs can participate.

Emily concluded by appealing to the meeting to help publicise the festival as a major aim was to try and include the local community in a more inclusive way.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Bruce Embankment Repair Work

Cllr Melville reported that repair work that would be taking place on stone-faced revetments at the Bruce Embankment. This will take 3-4 weeks and there may be small traffic delays at times in the area near the work leading to the West sands.

4.1.2. Drop-in Sessions – Fife Council Wind Turbine Project

Cllr Melville mentioned that there would be drop-in sessions for the possible plans for this project to build wind turbines on Fife Council land throughout Fife.

4.1.3. West Sands Road

Councillors had recently become aware that the West Sands Road had not been adopted as believed. The situation is still being investigated as Cllr Melville explained that even within Fife Council it wasn't clear and different parts of the Council had different views on the road's status. Cllr Melville confirmed that Fife Council have said that they will maintain the West Sands road whether or not it is adopted.

4.1.4. Pre-Determination Hearing

Dr Goudie talked briefly about the Pre Determination Hearing meeting and congratulated Cllr Melville on the skill of her chairing in relation to a subject, which has been very divisive within the town. He thought that she had managed to keep the Hearing on track and had quickly dealt with any participant she felt was out of order as well as treating all participants with respect.

Miss Uprichard then asked about the NHS and the status of their objection. She said that Mr McLean had said at the Hearing that the NHS who had lodged an objection was now satisfied. She had checked after the meeting with a Mr McCready and he confirmed that this was the case but didn't make it clear if the actual objection had been withdrawn. She then said that she understood that what the NHS had actually said was that they were having discussions with Fife Council and if there were a formal agreement about parking and other matters they would actively consider their position. Cllr Melville said in reply that Mr Leiper had spoken to Councillors after the first session and explained that he was going to discuss with Fife Council officers about the NHS objection and concerns but she thought that the NHS wanted to make absolutely sure that their tangible concerns were taken on board and addressed. She thought that that was where the matter stood.

Miss Uprichard also asked about the gas main issue. She acknowledged her own lack of knowledge on the technical aspects of gas mains. She had brought the issue up last year at the CC but nothing more had been heard except a claim that Fife Council had stated that it would

cost £750000 to have it moved and relocated. More recently she had heard that the gas main might be relocated to the north nearer the housing. She sought Councillors views on this matter. She wondered whether there should be a health and safety report and environmental report. She added that there was no information about the pipeline at all. She asked if Councillors could make enquires about the matter.

Mr Roberts commented on the gas mains issue raised by Miss Uprichard. He was aware of a medium pressure gas pipe, which came in south of John Knox Road, and this was 19". He thought that at the pre determination hearing it was a 4" pipe that was being discussed and this could not be described as high pressure. He added that moving a 4" pipe was quite normal for the Utilities when doing work.

4.2. Brian Thomson

4.2.1. Road Surface Buchanan Gardens/Strathkiness High Road

Cllr Thomson reported that the road surface at the above junction would be the subject of a major patching exercise in the new financial year.

4.2.2. Sewage Discharge - Largo Road/Scooniehill Road

Cllr Thomson had been contacted by a resident of the area about the sewage discharge a couple of weeks ago in this area. This discharge had also been reported in the St Andrews Citizen. Fife Council contacted Scottish Water and it turned out that inappropriate items were being put into the sewage system and this had blocked the pumping station just north of the hospital. Scottish Water attempts to rectify the problem, which required a replacement part had still not been resolved by today's date.

4.2.3. Leak on A915 Largo Road

This leak which had been highlighted by Mr Roberts as a hazard appeared according to reports received by Cllr Thomson to be coming out of a BT manhole and could be a broken carrier pipe below the road. A work order has been issued to investigate the possible source of the leak. Mr Roberts who had highlighted the problems late January reported that his concern that the leak would cause an accident had been correct and there had been an accident the previous Saturday when the road surface was icy. The car missed pylons and thus any serious injury was avoided. Mr Roberts emphasised the danger if the leak wasn't stopped should weather become wintry again. Cllr Thomson agreed to continue to pursue the matter.

4.2.4. Tayplan – Main Issues Report

Cllr Thomson reported that this reported was approved by the Joint Committee for consultation from 25th February with a major public consultation exercise taking place from 15th April to 27th June. There will also be an elected member and Community Council briefing session in Dundee on 15th April in the evening. There is to be a Community Drop-in event in the town hall on Saturday 31st May – 1.30 to 4.30.

Miss Uprichard reported that she'd asked the Tayplan office about how many responses they'd had to two consultations last year and they told her there had been 23 and 26 responses respectively across four local authorities. She thought that this showed the lack of public engagement in a major plan exercise.

Miss Uprichard asked which councillors were represented in this exercise and Cllr Thomson reported that it included himself, Cllr Donald Lothian and Cllr Lesley Laird.

4.2.5. Straiton Wynd – Fence Problem

Mrs Alexander brought up the problem of the state of the fence behind the Police Station. It is in a dilapidated state and Mrs Alexander had asked the police about it and had been informed that they thought it was the responsibility of Fife Council to repair it. Cllr Morrison reported that she'd been made aware of the fence by a constituent and she believed that there was a misunderstanding and the police weren't made aware that it might be Police responsibility once they'd taken over the former GP surgery.

4.2.6. Sandyhill Road

Mrs Denyer reported that this road is in bad condition with potholes. Cllr Thomson made a note of the information

4.2.7. Missing House Numbers/Signs

Mrs Alexander also brought to Cllr Thomson's attention to the issue of numbers missing in Forrest Street. She explained that there were numbers missing or hanging by a screw. The numbering system in the street and some neighbouring streets is complex, as the numbering doesn't follow a logical pattern. Mrs Denyer and Mr Greenwell also added their perception that the numbering system was very difficult to follow and this wasn't helped when direction signs went missing. Mr Fraser also confirmed that the streets in question had all been built around the same time and all with equally confusing numbering systems. The original signs he agreed had over the years been lost in many places making direction finding very difficult.

4.3. Keith McCartney

4.3.1. Potholes

The potholes reported in **January** on **Bogward Road** (centre of road west of junction with Moir Crescent and south side of road at junction with Craigtoun Road), **Radernie Place** (east side outside No. 6), **Strathkinness Low Road** (by drain east of junction with High Road) have been repaired as have those reported in **February** on **Canongate** (centre of road opposite entrance to Viaduct Walk), **Craigtoun Road** (south side of road east of junction with access road to Craigtoun Park/The Duke's Course) and **Hepburn Gardens** (at junction with New Park Place). Another two potholes on **Hepburn Gardens** (south side of carriageway opposite lighting column no.20 east of roundabout at University Playing Fields) were inspected last week and repairs actioned.

4.3.2. Graffiti

Tags' painted on junction boxes on **Abbey Walk** (beside lay-by outside old Greyfriars School), path beside **Kinness Burn** (east of Maggie Murray's Bridge) and **Strathkinness Low Road** (beside Strathkinness Low Road sign on south side of road east of junction with Lawhead Road West) have been removed.

4.3.3. Bell Street

Uneven and unstable paving slabs on the dropped pavement at the east end of the pedestrian crossing at the south end of **Bell Street** were reported. A works order was issued on 17th February to have these slabs reset and this has been done.

4.3.4. John Knox Road

Water issuing from the bank to the south of John Knox Road by lighting column 14, entering the road at that point and running along its south side in an easterly direction over a number of drains, which appear to be blocked, before disappearing down a drain near lighting column 8 has been reported.

4.3.5. Kinburn Park

Water ponding back across the width of the path leading into Kinburn Park from the Double Dykes Road entrance has been reported.

4.3.6. Kirkhill

The fire damaged visitor information board reported some time ago has now been replaced.

4.3.7. Lade Braes

Work on repainting the two bridges and 'gates' leading from Lawmill Gardens restarted last week.

4.3.8. Town Hall

The saltire, which was blown off the flagpole during one of the winter storms, was to have been reinstated today (Monday 3rd March).

4.3.9. Logie's Lane

Work to repair damaged paving slabs has been actioned.

4.3.10. Market Square Fountain

Lindsay Adam asked when the fountain would be operational? Cllr McCartney explained that the delay was due to the fact that necessary waterproofing couldn't be applied until average temperatures were above 10c.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. Seagull Problem

Cllr Morrison commented on this matter, making the meeting aware of attempts to deal with the problem in St Nicholas Street but the use of a Fife Council worker to try and tackle the problem had to be stopped due to the cost. She said that a major part of the problem was residents feeding the birds almost on a commercial basis. She also commented upon an issue raised by Mr Spackman namely the putting of tables and chairs outside cafes, which is not a problem in itself, however as she added if the cafes didn't clear away uneaten food the gulls took advantage.

The use of rubbish bags, which still occurs in the town centre despite the introduction of large communal bins, is another area where seagulls take advantage creating a mess.

4.4.2. Parking Issues

Cllr Morrison mentioned some concerns, which had come her way from Mrs Rowe. These included the issue of cars parking on the pavement in the narrow end of Market Street, creating dangerous obstacles for disabled/visually-impaired people. Mrs Rowe was knocked down close to the narrow end of Market Street Dominoes Pizza by one of their delivery vans mounting the pavement. Mrs Denyer took photos of offending vehicles and Cllr Morrison has passed copies on to Fife Council as evidence of illegal parking causing problems.

4.4.3. Car Park by Murray Park

Cllr Morrison spoke about an issue raised some time ago about this car park when it had been relined. A local person had felt that there had been a reduction in the number of parking spaces following the relining. Fife Council are to look at this and determine if this is the case as there had never been any intention of reducing the number of spaces.

4.4.4. Town Hall Toilet Signage

A sign is to go up to make people aware of the availability of public toilets at the Town Hall.

4.4.5. Police Station Manning

Mr Roberts brought up the issue of the Police Station and the proposed closure of the front desk outside day time hours and it had been rumoured that there might not be any police officer at the station during the night. Miss Uprichard reminded the meeting about the recent consultation by the new police authority about its proposals to close front desks either completely in some area or reduce them to day time hours in other areas. In St Andrews the desk will be open 9 – 5 whereas in Cupar it will be open for much longer.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Committee Report

Mr Greenwell reported that it had been a very quiet month with no objections submitted from either of the planning meetings.

The only other issue to come up related to a previously refused planning application at Howard Place. Fiona Kirk had notified Mr Greenwell in the past couple of days about this fresh application for a new roof etc in a conservation area. It has not yet been discussed by the Planning Committee. This application appears to have been the subject of an incorrect application of procedure by the official in planning as there had been 10 objections and should have gone to committee and not been refused by the official under delegated powers. The applicant appealed to a Stewart Wilson, Service Manager who overturned the official's decision so that it could be put forward to NE Fife Planning Meeting to be recommended for refusal. The applicant would then be able to appeal and ask for a reporter's view. The Planning Committee was concerned that once a decision had been made it could be changed. He asked hypothetically whether the CC as a statutory consultee could ask for a decision to be overturned if approved and sent to the NE Fife Planning Committee? It was felt that this could open up a can of worms and report back. Cllr Morrison suggested contacting Andrew Ferguson to see how this would go through the planning review body. Cllr Morrison explained that if someone got a refusal or permission under delegated powers it was the planning review body, which looked at the decision.

Miss Uprichard recently attended a drop-in event about the proposed extension of the Hepburn Gardens conservation area with the heritage officer in attendance. There was a query as to whether the management plan for the area had been approved, with the Heritage officer believing it had been, but this has turned out to be incorrect. Miss Uprichard explained that the report from Mr Winter had gone to committee late last year and had omitted to mention two responses from the CC Planning committee and the Preservation Trust. The report was approved but the committee then requested a consultation something, which usually happens before a report, goes to committee. The report has gone into the local plan despite the fact that that report was approved committee in 2011 and the last consultation had been in 2010. Miss Uprichard also mentioned that the criteria for development zones in a conservation area had been omitted from the report. Miss Uprichard was concerned that as a result of this omission the conservation area had not been subject to the rules for a development zone. She was going to ask Mr McGroaty how this report got into the Local Plan. Cllr Melville in response felt that it was ironic as these things usually went like clockwork and explained the processes the reports would go through including public consultation.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Botanic Gardens

Mrs Corbin gave an update saying that there would be an the official opening under the new set up following agreement with the University about the lease.

6.2. Housing Commission

Mr Roberts reminded the meeting that the report was out and the Reference Group would meet later this month to set up the Working group.

6.3. Reports from Representatives

6.3.1. Craigtoun Park

Mr Roberts reported that funds had been made available by Fife Council to help stop the deterioration if not the refurbishment of the Dutch Village. He thanked the local Fife Councillors for their support in pressing for this money to be made available. A 5-year lease was also on the horizon if approved formally by Fife Council Executive this week. This lease has the possibility of extending to a much longer lease. Mr Roberts was optimistic about this possibility.

Mr McLachlan asked about the report that Craigtoun was on the list of possible Fife Council wind turbines. Mr Roberts explained that the site was on the list for a possible feasibility study looking at numerous sites owned by Fife Council around Fife. He acknowledged that while

there were hopes to have some form of renewable energy at Craigtoun in the future wind power wasn't on their agenda.

6.4. Any Other Matters Arising

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

Mrs Denyer reported that there would be a meeting on Tuesday 18h March specifically for the 1st Coffee Morning on 12th April. She appealed for volunteers and donations for the event.

7.2. GP Meeting

A meeting is to be held soon

7.3. 200 Club

1st Sarah Paul 2nd Mrs Caskie 3rd Mr K. Roberts

7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee

Mrs Corbin reported on an increase of parking spaces at both the Queen Margaret Hospital and Victoria Hospital

7.5. Rail Sub Committee

Dr Goudie reported that Fife Council had chosen not to support the STAG appraisal for funding and as a consequence of this failure the Tayplan office wrote to Dr Goudie to say that the St Andrews Rail link would not be included in their Big Ideas part of Tayplan. He thought that the committee might have to try and find funding from another source to fund the appraisal.

On a more positive note the Courier had carried a report from Transport Scotland with proposals for creating a more proactive rail environment within Scotland and had noted the possibilities of an St Andrews link in the article.

8. New Business

None

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

Mr Roberts reminded the meeting of the commitment he had to working to help Craigtoun Park and the amount of time he committed to the Community Council, and added that he couldn't continue to commit himself to both to the extent he had to date. He acknowledged that dealing with Craigtoun was a lot easier than dealing with the Community Council for what he felt were obvious reasons. He was therefore proposing to stand down as Chair either from the AGM in May or by November when the Community Council elections were scheduled to be held.

9.2. Treasurer

Mr Paul had as usual emailed the monthly report by email to those attending the meeting. There was no great change in the accounts. He appealed to members to send him any expenses claims before the end of the current financial year.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence

Mr Marks reminded the meeting that the May meeting would be on the 2nd Monday of the month due to the May public holiday and he would be absent at the April meeting.

Miss Uprichard asked about the letter received from Mr Younger of Mount Melville Estates. She was a bit puzzled about the letter, which was talking about the Masterplan and allocation of sites for development. She wasn't certain whether the area he was talking about was included in the western extension. She asked for comments from Fife Councillors. Cllr Morrison said she'd had contact with Mr Younger and he'd been in contact with officials from Fife Council. The area he was talking about was not part of the western extension as proposed. She said that Mr Younger was looking to see if any extra land could be brought into use below the 50m contour.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Starter Packs

Mr Roberts asked Mrs Corbin if there had been any news about the starter packs. Mrs Corbin reported that she had been in contact with Mr Welsh the CC's contact in Fife Council on CC matters to ask about training and he'd indicated that there wouldn't be anything organised until after a new CC was elected later this year. She added that the starter packs were almost ready.

Mrs Denyer wondered about the possibility of members producing a more detailed profile for the CC website or other media outlets to help make the CC more transparent in the way it presented itself to the public. She suggested the possibility of members writing about why they wanted to join the CC. Mr Roberts suggested that this was something, which merited further consideration. Mrs Corbin suggested she could incorporate some of Mrs Denyer's suggestions in the starter pack.