

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes –3rd December 2012

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, Andy Primmer, Carol Ashworth, Alice Alexander, Ronnie Murphy, Judith Harding, Howard Greenwell, Henry Cheape, Robert McLachlan .

Students' Association Representatives

Freddie fforde, Ali West

Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Fife Councillors

Keith McCartney, Dorothea Morrison, Brian Thomson, Frances Melville

Apologies

Bernadette Cassidy, Catherine Rowe, Callum Corbin, David Patterson, Ken Crichton

2. Minutes of Meeting

These were accepted as correct as read with a minor correction as follows:

Page 5, Para 3, line 5 – “housing asset line” should read “housing land supply”.

3. Presentations

3.1 – No presentation this month

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Waste Management Change Problems

Cllr Melville reported that there had been an update on the problems relating to the changes in the collection of waste management from an official Martin King. It was reported that businesses were becoming more used to the new system, which includes a Sunday collection. Fife Council had made some concessions about the timing of the Sunday collection because of its effect upon businesses.

4.1.2. Harbour Gates Funding

Cllr Melville reported that the Harbour Trust had applied to the Common Good Fund for funding help in replacing the harbour gates wrecked by recent flooding. The Harbour Trust has also applied to Marine Scotland from where the bulk of funding may eventually come. Cllr Melville indicated that she and Cllr McCartney had been asked for their views on an appropriate amount to be awarded from the CGF. They considered £10000 to be an appropriate amount. Mr Roberts speaking on behalf of the Community Council indicated that the majority of Community Councillors also thought that £10000 would be an appropriate contribution possibly with a claw back condition if the Trust managed to get all its funding from other sources as mentioned.

4.1.3. Long term Absenteeism in Transportation Services

Cllr Melville reported that absenteeism in Transportation Services was having an effect upon the service, stretching staff that has to cover for absent colleagues.

4.2. Brian Thomson

4.2.1. Madras College

Cllr Thomson continuing on from Cllr McCartney argued that the public wanted a green field site for the new school. He also confirmed doubts about the viability of the pond site partly because of the University's position regarding the price of the site and also abnormal costs associated with the site due to its nature. He felt that there would be considerable additional costs, based on his professional experience and knowledge of building projects in his job.

In reply to a query from Miss Uprichard about costs, Cllr Thomson confirmed that an agreement had been reached with the owner of the Pipeland site with a value of £1.8 million being accepted by the District Valuer.

Mr Roberts voiced his view that local public opinion would favour the pond site for a new school. He was concerned about the apparent inability of the Council and the University to come to a suitable agreement over a possible deal. He recognised that if this site wasn't achievable that the only options appeared to be the Kilrymont site or Pipeland. He couldn't imagine the school moving outwith the town. He recognised the great difficulty in reaching a decision on this matter.

Cllr Morrison reaffirmed the Conservative Group view that a school at the Bridgehead should be considered, with Madras South Street being retained in St Andrews. She had had advice that any objections on issues such as the range of subjects available in a smaller school wouldn't be as great could be overcome. She believed that there was a lot of support for this possibility. She also viewed it as environmentally more acceptable as it would reduce the bus use.

Mr Scott commented on recent views expressed by Cllr Poole at a meeting with the university in which he indicated that the Council wouldn't accept the pond site even if the University gave it for nothing, due to the abnormal costs allegedly associated with its development. He felt that the time had come to look at other sites. He reinforced the fact that the price of the pond site seemed neither here nor there.

Dr Goudie felt that one of the problems with the way the matter was being handled partly related to the way it had been bedevilled by false information. The factoring into the costs of the relief road at £8.5 million appeared to Dr Goudie to be complete nonsense. He also commented on the issue of bussing and its financial and environmental costs. Personally he favoured the possibility of a new Madras at Station Park.

4.2.2. Western Extension Development

Miss Uprichard said that she'd heard that the University had said that the western extension wouldn't start for at least five years. She wanted to ask what would happen to master planning, setting university extension boundaries and the Green Belt boundaries?

Cllr Thomson in reply said that he understood that the University had said that in the current economic climate it didn't see development starting for a number of years. He assumed that a master plan exercise would be starting soon.

4.2.3. University Student Union Recycling Area

Cllr Thomson reported that he'd discussed with the University about the way that the current recycling facility would be affected by the Students Union redevelopment. There was a suggestion that this facility could move across the road behind the Chaplaincy.

4.3. Keith McCartney

4.3.1. Lighting Problem – Fordyce Court Area

Mrs Denyer reported that the lighting around Fordyce Court and by the Ambulance station is poor. She had fallen when delivering invites to the Old Folks Party. She agreed to send Cllr McCartney an email with the details of the problem areas so he could raise the issue with officials.

4.3.2. Madras College Proposals

Cllr McCartney said that he would be willing to comment upon the recent NEFAC vote on the proposed Madras new school site. This vote was in favour of redeveloping the Kilrymont site. Cllr McCartney explained that this vote had come after councillors visiting the various possible sites with officials as well as visiting the new Dunfermline High School. He stated that he didn't think the Kilrymont site was a second grade option and wouldn't put his name to anything second grade. He felt that a first class school could be built at Kilrymont. Part of the old building would be demolished and other parts would be taken back to the girders, so he claimed that it would be a new building for all intents and purposes. He said that he was impressed by the new Dunfermline High School, but added that officials have informed him that standards could even be improved for a new Madras based on the experience of building the Dunfermline School and another new school development at Auchmuty.

Mr Primmer voiced concern about the decision by NEFAC and didn't think that it addressed issues such as bussing, local opposition to rebuilding on the Kilrymont site and the problems which would be associated with a decant during the rebuilding. He hoped that Councillors would reconsider their decision. Cllr McCartney in reply thought that it would be possible to provide suitable temporary accommodation in South Street without affecting the quality of education. He reminded the meeting of the present ways education was affected by the need for teachers to move between buildings. He also reminded that the Community Council that the only other viable option to Kilrymont would be Pipeland, and this was opposed by the Community Council. He accepted that there wasn't a perfect solution to the issue, but reminded the meeting that the longer the debate went on the main people to suffer would be the pupils. He concluded by saying that no matter what decision was taken tomorrow, it would be four years before the pupils would enter a new school.

Mr Primmer claimed that it was obvious that Fife Council officials far from considering each possible site equally would pick a site and back justify it to Councillors and the public. He felt that more effort should be made to properly assess the potential for the pond site. He didn't feel that full information had been given to the public on the potential of other sites.

Cllr McCartney in reply denied that Councillors had been taken in by officials wanting to present a case for their choice of site as opposed to that preferred by Councillors and the community. He felt that Councillors had made extensive enquires and had visited sites to gain as full a view as possible of the pros and cons of each site. Councillors had quizzed officials in detail.

He acknowledged that he would have been happy to consider the pond site had it been viable, but from information presented, particularly in relation to site value and environmental issues this was not the case.

Mrs Harding asked what would happen to the current two school sites if a new Madras were built in another location? Cllr McCartney in reply said that the sites would in all likelihood be sold.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. West Port

Cllr Morrison had been trying to have contact with Chris Smith and Alistair Hamilton about the situation with the pergola. She'd received an email from Alisatair Hamilton, which seemed to imply that the pergola was not actually attached to the building. Cllr Morrison indicated that she would be pursuing this further as her information didn't concur with Alistair Hamilton's information

4.4.2. Flooding in Fife

Cllr Morrison reported that she would be attending a meeting of the Fife Council Executive the following day to discuss flooding in Fife. She would be trying to bring up the issues affecting St Andrews, such as the problems at John Knox Road. Miss Uprichard brought up the issue of possible flood risk assessment regarding the western extension. She noted that the Tayplan merely refers to past flood events and refers back to the Local Plan for other measures. She felt that there was little evidence of flood risk assessment in relation to major future developments such as the western extension and whether Cllr Morrison would be pursuing this as part of any discussions about the subject at the Executive. Cllr Morrison replied that the following day's discussion would be centred on areas already assessed as flood risk. She added that surprisingly the Kinnessburn wasn't listed for the meeting as a high-risk area for flooding.

4.4.3. Castle Sands

Cllr Morrison reported that work had just started on the Castle Sands after a considerable delay.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Feddinch

Mr Greenwell reported that the Planning Committee had put in a formal complaint to Scottish Ministers about the way the Reporter had handled the Community Council response earlier in the summer, compared to Fife Council. He felt that some progress was being made about having independent representations to have an assessment of the actions of the Reporter with regard to the current representations in the Feddinch appeal. Miss Uprichard commented on the poor quality of the Reporter's decision making and noted that he'd even claimed that no statutory consultee had objected. She expected that he would be announcing acceptance of a development of a Clubhouse in Green Belt. She felt that the Reporter's report was the most shoddy she'd seen in many years.

5.2. Knightsbridge and Affordable Housing

Mr Greenwell noted that Knightsbridge had applied to vary their obligations on their planning with regard to the provision of affordable housing. He noted that there had been a section 75 agreement made before Knightsbridge had sold off the particular part of the site for the provision of affordable housing units. A letter of complaint has been sent to Fife Council about the way Knightsbridge had acted in this matter.

5.3. Infill Planning Applications

Mr Greenwell commented on the increasing number of applications attempting to infill parts of the town centre with two bedroomed flats as a way to get around HMO regulations.

5.4. "A" Boards and other street furniture

Mr Greenwell reported an ongoing battle to get better control of "A" Boards and other street furniture cluttering the pavements. The committee felt that a way of policing this issue would be for the Council to start charging for use of public space as most of this street furniture is on the pavement.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Martyrs Monument Update

Work is ongoing and a planning application has been put in for the base area.

6.2. Craigtoun Park

Mr Roberts announced the fundraising day at Craigtoun on the 15th December with the train running again.

6.3. Botanic Gardens Update

Mr Paul reported that the group was developing a business plan to submit to the University Court.

6.4. Reports from Representatives

6.5. Any Other Matters Arising

6.5.1. Open Day re Allotments on 14th November

Mr Paul reported on the recent Open Day at the Cosmos in relation to the possibility of allotments in St Andrews. Following this day there are now 66 people on the list for 29 places. Peter Duncan from Fife Council who had been present on that day had indicated that he thought it could take two years to get the allotments sorted out. Mr Henry viewed this timescale as ridiculous and mentioned how Strathkiness had managed to achieve their allotments aim in 9 months. Mr Paul asked for support to try and get the process speeded up! Mr Paul did acknowledge that the plan for the allotments put together by Mr Duncan was a very good plan. His main concern centred on the timescale quoted by Mr Duncan to deliver the allotments.

6.5.2. St Andrews Festival

Mr Roberts praised the role of Mr Paul in helping to pull together events as Events manager for the festival. Mr Paul acknowledged that it had gone well apart from a slight hitch when the location of the firework displays had had to be moved for safety reasons and he'd had to deal with the complaints of some folk who'd missed the display.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

7.1.1. Old Folks Treat

Mrs Denyer reported that the event organisation was in hand and should go ahead without difficulties hopefully. She reported that about 180 had been invited. The event is to be a week on Friday at 2 – 4.30. Mrs Denyer appealed for further volunteer involvement.

7.2. General Purposes

No report

7.3. 200 Club

1. 25 Mrs A Alexander. 2. Mr G Seaton. 3. 5 Mrs E Kerracher

7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee

Mrs Corbin had attended a spiritual care meeting and obtained leaflets relating to bereavement services and related matters.

7.5. Rail Sub Committee

See report circulated separately. Dr Goudie brought up a new matter, which he believed to be important in the possible eventual development of a railway line. The new aspect was at Government level and called the National Planning Framework Scotland. In this the Government he explained were looking for possible developments of more than regional significance, which met a number of economic and green criteria. He thought that the St Andrews Railway ticked all of the boxes in the required criteria. He wanted to propose the St Andrews Rail Link as a project under this framework. He hoped that the Community Council could support his proposal. There was a general feeling of acceptance that a proposal should be submitted to the Scottish Government in relation to this project.

8. New Business

8.1. Consultation on Fife Council Budget

Mr Marks explained that this was a Fife wide consultation set up by Fife Council to get ideas from the public and organisations about its future budget. This had arisen partly because of the ongoing financial difficulties being faced by Fife Council and the need to make changes and cuts over the next few years. Mr Marks suggested that this could be discussed under a sub committee heading if the Community Council so desired. There is to be a public meeting on the 19th December as well and consultation packs are available on line or at local libraries.

8.2. Scottish Health Campaigns Network

See appendix in agenda detailing this network. Mr Marks briefly outlined the details, which had been circulated earlier by email as well as on the agenda. Mr Marks suggested that it might be a matter, which could be dealt with by the HEW Committee.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

Mr Roberts in his report commented that he felt that the Festival had been a success. He had suggested to the Festival Committee that the Community Council Civic Reception should become an integral part of the Festival. He added that the Civic Reception had been very successful with more attending and the location had worked out well.

Dr Goudie asked about the progress with the Housing Commission. Mr Roberts reported that the Housing Commission was up and running. A questionnaire is to be delivered with St Andrews in Focus magazine and will also be available online and at other outlets in the town. Analysis of the responses will begin in January. Dr Goudie felt that it was important for the Community Council to put in its own response. Mr Roberts agreed and suggested that the planning committee could undertake that task and submit its response to the full Community Council meeting for approval

9.2. Treasurer

9.2.1. Treasurers Report

Mr Paul reported that the Community Council remains in a healthy financial position. He reminded members to put in expenses claims.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence – see Appendix A.

Mr Marks briefly went through the correspondence listed in the agenda appendix. Mr fforde asked about the PANs received, as he wasn't familiar with these. Mr Greenwell explained that these were pre application notices sent in by developers about their proposed developments prior to public consultation. A brief discussion followed in relation to the PAN for Hamilton Grand and Mr Greenwell explained the changes being proposed with respect to that building. The owner wanted to make it possible for freehold to be obtained by purchasers of flats a major change from the previous intention for their use. A change in the windows had also been proposed. Cllr Morrison also explained that originally planning permission for Hamilton Grand had been for holiday accommodation but for a variety of reasons the owner was attempting to change the way the apartments could be used/purchased. She felt that the proposal was a marketing tool by the owner.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Sheriff Court Closure Threat

Mr Murphy reported on the recent public meeting with the Scottish Courts Service. The latter were severely criticised by those attending for the proposal to close the Cupar Sheriff Court and move to Dundee. Mr Murphy said that a petition was still circulating and he encouraged everyone to go on to the Scottish Courts website and fill in at least question 17 of the form relating to the proposed changes/closures in the Court system. Mrs Ashworth mentioned that there was a precedent for local courts to be saved and cited an example of a court, which had been saved by concerted local action. Mr Murphy acknowledged that there might be a chance and thanked everyone for their support.