

# Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

## Provisional Minutes –4<sup>th</sup> March 2013

### For Approval

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## 1. Attendance

### Community Councillors

Patrick Marks, Ian Goudie, Ken Fraser, Henry Paul, Marysia Denyer, Kyffin Roberts, Izzy Corbin, Andy Primmer, Carol Ashworth, Ronnie Murphy, Judith Harding, Robert McLachlan, Ken Crichton, Henry Cheape.

### Students' Association Representatives

### Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Niall Scott

### Fife Councillors

Keith McCartney, Brian Thomson,

### Apologies

Frances Melville, Bernadette Cassidy, Penny Uprichard, Howard Greenwell, Freddie fforde, Ali West, David Patterson

## 2. Minutes of Meeting

These were accepted without comment

## 3. Presentations

### 3.1. Heartstart

Dr Hamish Tait and the Chair of Heartstart, Kirstie Hastie presented the details of the initiative to set up a number of portable defibrillators in St Andrews. Dr Tait explained the background to the organisation, which has been going since 1987. Technological advances in the manufacture of defibrillators now mean that anyone can use such a device. The plan he envisaged would be to have a number of these portable devices placed in suitable public locations in unlocked cabinets in St Andrews to allow emergency use. The organisation had recently acquired considerable funding thus allowing it the ability to purchase machines for local use. He had come to the Community Council to seek help in finding suitable locations within the town.

The locations could be in public or commercial buildings, but any location would have to have access to a power source to keep the devices charged. He hoped that in any locations the property owners/users would be able to take charge of ensuring they remain in working order. He didn't envisage this as being more than the need to occasionally check that the devices are charged and in working order. He briefly

outlined the process and didn't anticipate that this would be an onerous task for anyone with one of the devices attached to their property.

Dr Goudie asked Dr Tait about his definition of community, as he wondered if there might be a merit in having some of the devices in the buildings on the North Haugh. Dr Tait replied that the university was already quite well covered, but he wasn't against the possibility of installing machines in the North Haugh.

Mr Roberts commented that there had been CC comment at the last CC meeting that the scheme was an excellent one. He suggested that the CC Health, Education & Welfare Committee might be the part of the CC to work with Heartstart to help identify locations and undertake any other work to help promote the scheme.

Dr Tait described the machines in response to a question from Mrs Harding. They are 36 cms tall and 16 cms deep in their containers. Mrs Hastie advised that there had already been a few installed in buildings such as the Leisure Centre and Links Trust but as these weren't open all the time they wanted to get a number set up on the outside of buildings.

Mr Fraser asked about possible issues of installing the devices in a conservation area. Dr Tait acknowledged that this would have to be considered and addressed.

### **3.2. Madras College Education Consultation**

Mr Roberts started by reminding the meeting that the ongoing consultation was an education one not a planning one. He added that the Community Council had not made a decision on how to respond to the consultation, but that the Planning Committee had discussed the consultation and were recommending that the answer should be "No" as regards Pipelands. He asked the meeting for a proposition either for or against the proposal.

Mrs Corbin started the debate stating that she was against the Pipeland site not on educational grounds but partly on the stated view of Fife Council that we had to reduce our carbon footprint. She felt that Pipeland was going to cause its own problems. She cited the need to have dozens of buses coming through the town daily as one of the problems. She also talked about the planned move of the army to Leuchars and new housing developments in that area and suggested that a new school could be sited in that area.

Cllr Thomson on a point of clarification said that while there has been a planning application lodged for kingdom housing at Guardbridge it was by no means certain that it would be approved.

Mr Primmer felt that the Community Council should support the site at Pipeland for the school. He commented on the Council's attempts to find a site since 2006 and acknowledged that the best location should have been the western approaches. He didn't think that the "pond" site would ever be viable, so he thought that the only chance he thought of getting a school in a decent timescale would be to use the Pipeland site. He recognised that this was against planning policies, but felt that the needs of the children should be the priority in making the decision. He urged the Community Council to support the site. Mrs Alexander seconded Mr Primmer's suggestion although she acknowledged the difficulties. Mrs Denyer made the meeting aware of her concerns. She'd watched the Community Hospital being built and was aware of flooding problems down hill from that site when building was taking place. She also added that there was a pumping station at the site, as well as a public right of way and was concerned about how playing fields could be built on a sloping site. As an ex-teacher she added that she was well aware of the educational needs of pupils, but felt that the proposals hadn't been well thought through with plausible answers to the difficulties which might face a new school from planning it to building it and any problems arising once built, such as drainage issues.

Mr Roberts commented that he'd remained neutral on the issue and hoped to remain to do so as Chair of the Community Council. However he had heard a lot about why the Pipeland site was the only site available, but felt that that wasn't the case. He reminded the meeting that the report given to Fife Councillors at the North East Fife Area Committee late in 2012 stated that the Pipeland site was significantly contrary to the Local Plan. He felt that on those grounds alone a planning application for the site would face significant difficulties and that there was no guarantee that a planning application on that site would be approved.

Dr Goudie commented that the Chair was correct in pointing out that the basic assumption that the Pipeland site would be the quickest way to get a new school built was erroneous, due to planning consent difficulties related to the site location on the Green Belt. He recognised that most parents would support the Pipeland site if only because they were given information they believed to be given in good faith and to be correct. He wasn't however certain that this information was any more correct than official's previous statements about the suitability and promise of the two previous potential sites, which for varying reasons fell by the wayside. He personally didn't think that officials had managed to get any of the site assessments correct. He was sceptical about the quality of the information used in relation to the potential school sites with poor comparative site analysis and manipulation of figures to try and shed a negative light on a site or enhance a site's alleged suitability. He cited the cost of the distributor road allegedly needed in the North Haugh site as an example of such manipulation of figures. He felt that such a cost was irrelevant in the equation of site comparison.

He didn't think that the separation of education and planning was sensible, particularly he claimed when no one could say anything particularly enthusiastic about the Pipeland site and mainly claiming that it was the only viable site. He felt that the educational needs of the town needed to be viewed in a broader context, citing the recent evidence given by the Community Council to the Housing Commission. In this evidence the Community Council had pointed out the way that housing policies followed by Fife Council had left the town with little housing affordable to young families, particularly those on lower incomes. This had resulted in a significant decrease in the local school rolls, particularly noticeable in the Primary Schools.

He reminded the meeting that the role of the Community Council was to look at the interests of the town as a whole and not just one sector as important as they might be. He was also concerned about the inconsistencies displayed by Fife Council in its interpretation of its policies, citing as an example the decision last autumn to confirm the Green Belt, then a few weeks later proposing to breach that Green Belt with the school proposal.

Mr Primmer in reply said that the arguments were all very well, but challenged the meeting to come up with a more viable site. He still believed that there was no other place to put a new school within a reasonable time frame than Pipeland. He cited the long saga of the Community hospital, which despite the doubts was a relatively good hospital and it was in a very similar location to the proposed school site.

Mr Roberts in final comments noted the two main points of view, some believing that Pipeland would be the only viable site, the other believing that there could be an alternative on the western approaches to the town. He wasn't convinced by Cllr Poole's claim about the Council/University situation and felt that the elected representatives needed to make more effort. He added that in his understanding as confirmed previously by the University representative on the Community Council that the University still maintained that its doors were open to further discussion on the site situation. Mr Roberts recognised however that the university might not want

to get drawn into a dispute between community representatives and Fife Council about the merits of different sites.

Dr Goudie in a further comment said that he felt that Fife Council were doing in this issue what they'd done over the Local Plan when he claimed that the views of local residents had been largely ignored over the views of larger organisations. He did however wonder whether it might be worthwhile for the Community Council to try and make an approach to organisations opposed to possible sites in the west side of town, such as Station Park, to try and determine what could be done to take their position on board. He felt that Fife Council had shown very little imagination and creativity in its approach to the problem of the school site.

Mr Primmer felt that Dr Goudie's assessment of what had been attempted was unfair and that attempts had been made to work with the University and to get the two sides together. He concluded by urging the Community Council to say yes to the Pipeland site for the sake of the educational needs of the children.

Mr Roberts commented that in his view the question as designed by Fife Council was aiming to get the response they wanted. Asking if a new school was wanted was not in question, however the site was questionable.

Mr Crichton asked about geography of the school attendance. He felt that if more than half the children had to come from a distance by public transport he felt that this was a waste of time educationally. Mr Roberts confirmed that more than 60% of Madras pupils came from outside St Andrews.

Mr Murphy wondered why there hadn't been any serious look at a school outside St Andrews given the geography of pupil attendance and suggested the possibility of Guardbridge where he thought there was a potential site owned by the University. He added that he couldn't understand why Fife councillors were going for the Pipeland site, which he felt was the very last choice, a sort of Hobson's choice. He was worried that the site if chosen despite considerable local opposition could be a disaster.

Mr Colin Brown, a member of the public and parent commented that he didn't think that a school out by Leuchars was appropriate and that for many years children had had the opportunity to come to St Andrews and would continue to do so. He believed the building engineers could manage to build on the Pipeland site. He wasn't happy at the tone of some of the comments from Community Councillors and urged the Community council to carefully consider its position.

Mr Middleton for the Preservation Trust commented that Fife Council's germane reason for rejecting the North Haugh site was that it was unaffordable based on the District Valuers valuation. He questioned this claim reminding the meeting that the sale of the two current school sites could net Fife Council possibly in excess of £12 million. He said that the Council has stated that it has to consider the concept of best value in any transaction. Mr Middleton questioned the way this was calculated as he claimed that the site acquisition costs were a relatively small cost in the total cost of a school. He added that the economic, environmental, social and educational costs for the lifetime of a school also needed to be factored into any analysis. He cited the carbon cost of bussing for the next fifty years as a negative factor for a Council trying to meet government carbon reduction targets as well as the financial cost of a million pounds per year for a cash strapped council.

Mr Middleton then commented upon three major hurdles for the proposed site, namely that it was in the Greenbelt, that it would be on prime agricultural land and that was in the countryside, all of which would go against a presumption for development. He reminded the meeting that the local Plan and Structure Plans both were clear against development in such an area and he felt that the decision could be taken out of Fife Council's hands if the Scottish Government called in the application.

He suggested that both the Pipeland and North Haugh sites should be looked at in a level playing field, as he was concerned that neither site had been properly assessed.

Mr Roberts then went to a vote based on the recommendation of the Planning Committee to vote no and Mr Primmer's request to vote yes. The vote went against Mr Primmer's request for a yes vote. Mr Primmer then announced that he would be resigning from the Community Council in light of the no vote.

## **4. Fife Councillors**

### **4.1. Frances Melville**

Apologies

### **4.2. Brian Thomson**

#### **4.2.1. Fife Council Budget – Housing Proposals**

Cllr Thomson informed the meeting about the £85 million to be invested by Fife Council in new Council houses, plus £30 million to Social landlords such as Kingdom Housing. The former could equate to 800 new homes throughout Fife. He hoped that this would mean new housing in St Andrews. Dr Goudie suggested that the Community Council and local community would support the possibility of some of this housing in the area below Craigtoun in the Kinness Valley. Cllr Thomson thought that the bulk of new housing would still be going into the western extension and he'd also support affordable housing on the sites such as Kilrymont when it became available.

Mr Marks asked about the state of play of the Council refurbishment of properties to modernise heating systems etc. Cllr Thomson replied that there was a requirement on Councils to bring all current stock up to a certain standard by 2015 and he expected this would take place as planned.

Mrs Denyer asked about eligibility for housing, expressing concern that local people were sometimes being denied housing while incomers from other areas obtained houses. Cllr Thomson explained the points system which operated for everyone on the Council Housing waiting list and how this meant that any person on the list couldn't be discriminated against for suitable housing just because of location, although he acknowledged that familial ties did help towards the points awarded.

#### **4.2.2. Free Swimming**

Cllr Thomson announced the availability again of free swimming for children during the school holidays as well as a Quid a Kid scheme for dry sports participation.

#### **4.2.3. Recycling Point Students Union**

Cllr Thomson gave an update on the relocation of this recycling due to the redevelopment of the Students Union. It had been hoped to put it behind the Chaplaincy, but that idea didn't progress so the possibility of the recycling in St Marys Place is being investigated. Cllr Thomson welcomed other suggestions about an alternative site.

#### **4.2.4. Road Repairs Problems**

Cllr Thomson reported that he was chasing up with the Council on poor quality work by Scottish Gas Networks in Strathkiness High Road and Westacres. A strange bump, which had also appeared near the junction of the high Road and Buchannan Gardens, was to be investigated.

### **4.3. Keith McCartney**

#### **4.3.1. Street light Failures and Repairs**

Cllr McCartney reported that lights had been reported as faulty in Trinity Place, Craigtoun Road and Abbey Place (?).

#### **4.3.2. Flooding Problems**

Transportation services will be carrying out further investigatory work on John Knox Road. The problem is believed to be coming from the field behind and the Council will be contacting the landowner as part of this investigation. The dip in Bogward Road was had the drains cleaned out. Flooding has taken place in Market Street outside Costa and Fatface, in South Street near Trespass and in Doubledykes Road, all caused by blocked drains.

#### **4.3.3. Market Street Trees**

A contractor will be checking the trees planted in Market Street and will replace any that require replacing before the end of March.

#### **4.3.4. Graffiti in various locations**

Cllr McCartney reported on graffiti appearing in several locations such as the Ladebraes, Pipeland Park and along Kinnessburn Road. The Council has cleaned up most of this and police are carrying out investigations to try and find the culprits. Mrs Corbin thought that the graffiti was by two different individuals.

#### **4.3.5. Communal Steps and Railings – Scooniehill Road**

Mrs Denyer reported on the poor state of communal steps and railings by a path behind her house, which she felt needed to be fixed. She asked if Cllr McCartney could check out who might be responsible for such work, was it the Council or property owners?

#### **4.3.6. Council House Refurbishment/Upgrading**

Mr Marks asked Cllr Thomson about the progress of the refurbishment of the remaining Council Housing stock. He'd recently come across a tenant who had inadequate and expensive heating and was surprised that not all remaining stock had been brought up to modern standards. Cllr Thomson replied that the Council was legally obliged to bring their housing stock up to a certain standard by 2015. He added that Fife Council had set an even higher standard for their own properties. Mrs Alexander asked that contractors who do work should clean up after them as she'd witnessed the mess left close to her when some work had been undertaken. Cllr Thomson replied that the Clerk of Works should be keeping on top of such issues for the Council. He agreed to mention it to the relevant officer in Fife Council.

Mr Crichton wondered whether the Council had any method to ensure that valuable materials, such as boilers taken out of houses being refurbished could be retained for sale for their scrap metal value? Cllr Thomson said that this was handled on a case-by-case basis. Items of value if identified before work started could be included in any contract with the firm doing the work stating whether they would remain Council property for subsequent disposal.

### **4.4. Dorothea Morrison.**

#### **4.4.1. Toilet Opening**

Cllr Morrison reported on dates for the opening of local toilet facilities in anticipation of the new tourist season. The toilets at East and West Sands will be reopened on 1<sup>st</sup> April. She contacted the Council official concerned to point out that the Easter Weekend was immediately before this date and asked if the toilets could be reopened sooner. She is awaiting the answer to that query.

#### **4.4.2. North Arch – Pends damage**

Cllr Morrison reported on damage to this historic arch when some vehicle tried to go through and struck it in the process. She contacted the transportation officers dealing with the Pends to ask if there could be a restriction on large vehicles using that route. This is being investigated and Cllr Morrison is awaiting a reply.

#### **4.4.3. Westport Hotel**

Cllr Morrison reported that the saga of the pergola at the back of this hotel was still ongoing and hadn't quite achieved a resolution, although she wasn't hopeful.

#### **4.4.4. Town Centres**

Cllr Morrison is bringing up concerns about keeping town centres a vibrant part of the economy to the Fife Council executive on Tuesday this week. She hoped that there would be an examination of ways to ensure that concerns of shops and businesses were more effectively addressed.

#### **4.4.5. Dilapidated Buildings**

Another subject being discussed by the Fife Council Executive at the same meeting as above would be what to do about dilapidated buildings in Fife. Cllr Morrison said she'd thought about Greyfriars Gardens as an example locally, needing to be taken over from the owner. Mrs Rowe mentioned a property close to her in North Street and wondered whether there was anything could be done to force the owner to do something about the lack of maintenance. Cllr Morrison whilst commenting that Fife Council was concentrating mostly on areas like Levenmouth thought that it was worth mentioning such properties to the Council. She'd ben aware of the property in question from others mentioning it to her.

#### **4.4.6. Concerns over the Possible Plans for building in the Cemetery**

Cllr Morrison had contacted the Fife council strategic planners and they are to check out the situation for her as they acknowledged that they didn't know the answer. They did confirm about the water table being high in the site.

#### **4.4.7. Graffiti**

Cllr Morrison said that Chief Inspector Jill Harper is determined to catch the culprits. She reported on the problems in her area where garden gates had been subject to this problem.

### **5. Planning Committee**

#### **5.1. Planning Report**

Mr Roberts reported back in the absence of Mr Greenwell. The last Planning meeting had been mostly taken up with the Madras issue already discussed. He didn't think that there had been anything of significance discussed at the meeting

### **6. Matters Arising**

#### **6.1. Martyrs Monument Update**

22<sup>nd</sup> May has been confirmed for the rededication of the Martyrs Monument according to Mrs Ashworth.

#### **6.2. Craigtoun Park**

Mr Roberts reported that the Grand Opening is to be the 29<sup>th</sup> March with more volunteers required for the ongoing running of the facilities during the school holidays. It was acknowledged that the Friends of Craigtoun would have to employ staff later in the year during the summer holidays.

### **6.3. Botanic Gardens Update**

Mr Paul reported that a business plan is to be submitted to the University by June.

### **6.4. Housing Commission**

Mr Roberts reported that the survey is complete and the analysis is ongoing. Dr Goudie reported that the Housing Commission appeared to be hoping to produce the report by the end of March.

### **6.5. St Andrews Community Trust**

Mr Paul reported about the recent meeting of the Trust at which 6 applications were given approval with grants totalling £9000. He went on to inform the meeting that the Trust tends to have fewer applications in the winter and more in the summer. This year the Trust is on course to award around £65000 in grants.

### **6.6. Reports from Reps**

#### **6.6.1. Greyfriars Gardens Group**

Mrs Denyer reported about a recent meeting of this group trying to sort out the garden at the Market street end of the town. She could only say that the group's work was ongoing.

#### **6.6.2. St Andrews in Bloom**

Mrs Denyer had attended an St Andrews in bloom meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February and reported that things appeared to be going well for the group. The group hope to have a stall at the CC Coffee morning on the 25<sup>th</sup> May. Mr Paul and Mrs Corbin had also attended the meeting. Funding has improved this year.

### **6.7. Any Other Matters arising**

#### **6.7.1. Bill Sangster and Market Square fountain**

Mrs Denyer felt that the Community Council should acknowledge Mr Sangster's hard work in relation to the planned revival of the fountain in Market Square. There was agreement by the meeting to note the significant contribution made by Mr Sangster in getting the fountain back on track to being active again and part of the character of Market Street and Market Square.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Recreation Committee**

No report submitted

### **7.2. General Purposes**

No report – see website for minutes of last meeting in January

### **7.3. 200 Club**

1<sup>st</sup> Sir Peter Bairstow 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr Philpott 3<sup>rd</sup> Mr Graham Methven

### **7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee**

No report

## **8. New Business**

### **8.1. Abattoir Development Proposals**

Mr Cheape started by reminding the meeting that an application had gone in last summer for the demolition of the building and possible building of a Marks & Spencer Food Store and a Premier Inn. He wondered how the Community Council felt about the proposed developments and whether this would constitute support or opposition to the proposals.

Mr Roberts in reply said that the representatives of the developers had attended a Planning Committee meeting before submitting their plans to Fife Council as a pre application consultation. He reported that the Community Council had looked at the plans but hadn't made any comment on them at the time.

Mr Cheape commented upon the way that the closure of the abattoir could affect some local businesses, as the next nearest abattoir was Dunblane. However he was more immediately concerned about the proposed Premier inn and the potential effect its presence would have upon local B&Bs. Mrs Adam, Merchants association representative commented that her organisation was concerned about more such developments on the edge of town and the effect it could have upon some businesses in the town centre.

Mrs Ashworth commented that there were representatives from Stay in St Andrews and the B&B Association in St Andrews Partnership, and both were opposed to the development of a Premier Inn with accommodation at that level, as they thought that there was enough of that type of accommodation in the town.

Mrs Corbin thought that the area proposed for development was only for industrial not commercial developments and also suggested that perhaps farmer within Fife should have their own abattoir possibly at Cupar at the Industrial estate.

Mr Roberts replied that the land was actually termed as industrial employment land and he added that the developers had argued that they'd be creating a certain number of jobs on the site and that this could come within the criteria for the use of the site.

Mr Cheape in response to a query from Mr Roberts said that there was a bit of division of opinion within the ownership/board of the abattoir about the sale, and he acknowledged that perhaps an abattoir as suggested by Mrs Corbin might be an option. However a new build abattoir would possibly find it difficult to pick up business if there was a loss of continuity in local abattoir service for a period of time. He was still more concerned about the plans for the Premier Inn and its potential impact upon local B & Bs.

Dr Goudie reminded the meeting that the context in which the planning committee had to think about the proposal was in the context of the Local Plan. The Local Plan had written in several hotels around St Andrews despite the doubts of the Community Council. He also commented on where would be the most appropriate sites for new hotels given concerns about other areas on the edge of town threatened by the Structure and local Plan conclusions.

Mr Cheape thought that the planning application for these developments was going to committee this month hence his concern to know the CCs possible views as a statutory consultee. Mr Roberts agreed to check out the situation in the absence of the planning committee chair.

### **8.2. Green Week**

Mr Paul advertised the Environment Week, which is being organised by the Transition University Team, reminding folk as well about the Community orchard

event on the 16<sup>th</sup> March between 1 & 3 pm. There will be a lot of other activities to attend as detailed in the advertising for the event.

### **8.3. Allotments Update**

Mr Paul reported both good news and bad news. The good news related to funding obtained in relation to the potential allotment development from the climate challenge fund with StANdens assistance. The bad news was that every time Mr Paul met with the Fife Council official responsible for helping set up the allotments the proposed cost of setting up the infrastructure etc went up and was now at £40000. A second negative aspect has been a request by a developer to buy part of the site for housing as it is zoned in the Local Plan despite issues about its suitability due to high water table levels. He added that the land the developer wanted even included an area for a proposed extension of the cemetery. He felt that the CC needed to make its views known to Fife Council, which was obliged to go through due process in considering the offer from the developer. Cllr Morrison has made some enquires with planning officials about the situation and hopes to get a response soon. Mr Paul wondered when the plan might appear at NEFAC? He added that this would further delay the allotment plans until Fife Council made a decision.

## **9. Reports from Office Bearers**

### **9.1. Chair**

Nothing to report apart from items already discussed this evening.

### **9.2. Treasurer**

#### **9.2.1. Treasurers Report**

Mr Paul requested members to send in outstanding invoices in good time for his monthly accounts and also asked the meeting to approve a request from the secretary for a new printer. The meeting agreed to this request.

### **9.3 Secretary**

#### **9.3.1. Correspondence – see Appendix A.**

The secretary made the meeting aware that he would require a volunteer to take the minutes of the April meeting as he would be on holiday. The secretary also commented upon the need to find out if there was any training available for new community councillors and said he'd speak to Bill Welsh the Fife Council contact for the CC. There was otherwise no outstanding correspondence of note to report.

## **10. Any Other Competent Business**

### **10.1 Preservation Trust Quiz night**

Mrs Denyer thanked those CC members who made up the two teams who had participated at the fundraising evening for the preservation Trust at the end of last month.