

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes – April 2004

Approved

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Laurel Aguilar, Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Ian Hamilton, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Joe Peterson, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Penny Uprichard.

Fife Councillors: Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Bill Sangster

Apologies: Frank Riddell, Joe Lamb, Derek MacLeod, Will MacFarlane, Bonnie Ryder

2. Minutes of March 2004

Accepted

3. Presentations

3.1. Police report

none

3.2. Fairtrade Status

Alice Curteis introduced herself: she has lived in St Andrews for 30 years, working in the university for 15 of those. She is now working with the students in the campaign for a Fairtrade university, though she emphasised that she was on this occasion speaking as an individual.

What is Fairtrade about? Fairtrade covers products from developing countries such as tea, coffee, chocolate, bananas, honey. It guarantees a better deal to producers in the developing world. The money we pay for these commodities easily covers giving the communities producing them a fair living wage covering production costs and allowing for reinvestment by the community.

Fairtrade is not a brand; it is a certification that products have been sourced in accordance with the Fairtrade principles, awarded and reviewed by the Fairtrade Foundation. It does not seek exclusivity; just that Fairtrade products are available for people to choose to use them.

The Fairtrade Town initiative, pioneered by Garstang in Lancashire, seeks to promote awareness of the Fairtrade idea through five goals (circulated sheet scanned and attached at the end of these minutes):

- 1) Support from the local council
- 2) Fairtrade products available in local shops – already met in St Andrews through the major shops and many cafes
- 3) Fairtrade products used in local workplaces and community organisations – the university is working towards this
- 4) Attract media coverage for the campaign
- 5) A local Fairtrade steering group monitors and promotes continued Fairtrade status

She asked if community council would be willing to join a campaign for Fairtrade status for St Andrews. After a brief discussion and some clarification the question was remitted to Health Education and Welfare committee to bring a recommendation to May's meeting.

HEW

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. East Sands & Harbour Regeneration meeting

She felt this was a very good opening meeting and looks forward to starting to make progress. Next meeting is 24 May.

4.1.2. Tetra

Attended a seminar at Tulliallan Police College, where Professor Lawrie Challis of the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme and Home Office Tetra Research Group spoke on health implications of Tetra handsets and base stations. From this she gathered that any major area of concern is with the phone themselves not the masts.

4.1.3. Kinburn Tennis Club

There has been no reoccurrence of the problems noted last month since the increased Police patrols in the area.

4.1.4. Planning

She noted that some objections by community council are causing concern and undermining support from colleagues on Fife Council. As an example she gave the University Gateway building. She voted against it

originally but felt it has turned out to be a very nice building. It lay empty for years so she welcomed the new application for change of use and was surprised that community council objected. Speaking rather indirectly she seemed to be suggesting that other councillors will not recognise any Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council input as valid and they won't support local St Andrews members who do. Cllrs Sangster and Liston added remarks that seemed to confirm problems with how other Fife Councillors respond to points made by local members or community council.

This triggered a long discussion on the approach to planning issues. Archie Strachan suggested that some of our submissions may be too confrontational; as they don't seem to be successful he suggested that we should find ways of working with officials in a constructive way on the controversial applications to ameliorate them before the formal objection process. However he supported the right of community council to say what we think is right. Murdo Macdonald questioned whether the planning committee was working too hard by commenting on the minor issues, which could be left to the standard Fife Council policies and guidelines, as well as the big ones. He felt this lead to some points being put over-strongly in submissions. He did add that Fife Council should assist the planning process by insisting on the use of more 3D models to help visualise the effects of developments.

Ian Goudie as convener of the Planning Committee responded. He recognised the concerns, but asked whether people recognise the realities of how the planning process is conducted currently. St Andrews has problems of traffic growth, inappropriate buildings in town and developments on the formerly unbuilt coast-line. The issues are highlighted by the recent golf applications in the proposed green belt. There does not seem to be proper assessment of technical and scientific reports, such as transport assessments. He noted that for community council submissions on major applications the name of the author was on the letter of submission taking responsibility for the arguments, and correctness of fact and figures cited. He contrasted this with the planning reports to Development Committee by council officials who remain anonymous and effectively unaccountable to the public when the reports often contain contradictions and errors of fact and calculation.

He realised that late submissions on behalf of community council were unpopular and a problem area, not least with those who write them at short notice. They are often due, he said, to new information, previously unreleased for public scrutiny, being included in the reports to councillors. He felt that officials' reports are often not impartial, containing developers' material pasted in wholesale. He criticised the way the Development Plan guidelines seemed to be reinterpreted to fit the conditions of the moment. Despite the assurances of various planning officials, from the former head of planning down, the decisions on the Kinkell '7th Course' and Feddinch week saw the 'prematurity' principal of the greenbelt undermined. Policy against unnecessary development on the unbuilt coast is an absolute failure in St Andrews being ignored or explained away in the cases of Kingask and Kinkell Braes but invoked in the case of the far less coastal Hungry Horse proposals by Guardbridge.

Several people suggested direct discussions with officials and Fife Councillors about the issues, though because of the constraints on Fife Councillors taking part in the Development Committee discussion of individual applications would not be possible at that level.

Donald Macgregor didn't disagree with Ian Goudie's analysis, but rather summarised the problem; we may be right but how do we get that over.

Penny Uprichard illustrated some of the problems she sees with the planning process reading a personal account of the recent East Development Committee meeting which decided the Feddinch and Kinkell golf course applications. (Included at end of minutes).

Pete Lindsay reported that, with the assistance of Cllr Melville, there were some moves towards a meeting with Development Service officials to discuss issues arising from an approach by a local developer who wanted to canvass community council directly over his applications. Perhaps the wider issues raised here could be included.

Meeting agreed to await developments on meetings with Development Service.

4.2.5. Computer Science Building North Haugh

Ian Goudie noted that the Section 75 agreement was not included in the papers for the East Development committee meeting, so the public are not aware of content. At previous meetings the draft S75 talked of the University Master Plan by end March 2004. Does this exist now and will it be public? Cllr Melville will check the position and report back

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

Away.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Road works and controls

Market Street digging should finish about end of this month; Abbey Walk traffic controls remain until early August while Cosmos wall demolished, west side footpath built, then wall reinstated on new line; Gregory Place works will last into July.

4.3.2. Library

Public viewing of the new facilities probably in mid-June or July, just before re-opening.

4.3.3. South Street refurbishment

The Bell Street to Church Street section is to be treated similarly to the west end. There is new street lighting proposed as the style decided on previously is no longer available. A specimen column is set outside MacAr-thurs bakers shop.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Kinnessburn Fence

As has been reported previously this is in a bit of a mess, especially after cars have damaged two sections. She will be discussing repairs with Mike Robinson, Head of Area Services on a site visit. It seems repairs will have to be funded from area capital spending.

4.4.2. 20mph Zones at Schools

Initially planned for the area of primary schools so Madras Kilrymont was not included. She has discussed with Transportation Service the possibility of extending the Langlands along Kilrymont Road to Madras. Mention was also made of a possible pedestrian crossing on Kilrymont Road as part of Safer Routes to School work.

4.4.3. Town Hall

A What's On notice board is amongst a number of minor improvements suggested for the Town Hall, possibly part-funded from the Common Good Fund as the Town Hall is a Common Good property.

4.4.4. Children's Library

With the imminent departure of the library to the refurbished buildings on the other side of South Street various security, safety and access work will be needed to prepare the rooms for external let. The initial estimate is in the order of £40,000 which will probably have to be funded from the CGF itself.

4.4.5. Rats

Murdo Macdonald raised the state of the burn through the Kilrymont school ground and the area around the empty janitor's house. He reported that large amounts of rubbish had been removed recently but that the area was still, or again, a 'tip' to the extent that he had had reports of rats in the area from neighbours.

Joe Peterson who also lives on Kilrymont Road added that through there were 10 bins between the school and Safeway, which were emptied every day, there were still people clearing up litter after breaks. The problem isn't Fife Council, he said, it is the people who drop the rubbish.

Cllr Liston will take the matter of rubbish and rats up with officers and the school.

4.4.6. Bin Sizes

Ian Goudie now has a smaller and more convenient brown bin, thanks to the information from Cllr Liston last month.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Minutes

Minutes of 29/3/04 were circulated at the meeting

Planning Meeting – 29.3.04

1. **39 Bell Street** – internally illuminated projecting sign and fascia signs and advertising canopy – **OBJ. R.D.**
2. **Lawpark Cottage** – conversion of cottage into two dwellings including new upper storey (listed building) – **N.C.**
3. **43 Ruthven Place** – extension to dwellinghouse – **N.C.**
4. **46 Hepburn Gardens** – change of use from flat to house (HMO) – **N.C.**
5. **62 Buchanan Gardens** – dormer extension to dwellinghouse – **N.C.**
6. **Southgait Hall** – install metal gates – **N.C.**
7. **18 Allan Robertson Drive** – first floor extension over existing flat roof extension – **N.C.**
8. **152 South Street** – external alterations (listed building), including exterior vents and internal alterations – **N.C.**
9. **Kinnessburn Terrace** – erection of two dwellings (renewal?) – **P.U. enquire**
10. **67 Tom Morris Drive** – extension to dwellinghouse – **N.C.**
11. **11 Cairnhill Gardens** – porch extension – **N.C.**
12. **Balfour Place** – instal replacement sub-station (electricity) control kiosk
13. **25 Windsor Gardens** – extension to dwellinghouse – **N.C.**
14. **5-7 Pilmour Links** – Golf St. Andrews – new fascia sign, new lettering to read 'Johnstons of Elgin' (listed building) – **OBJ P.L.**
15. **40 North Street** – change of use of flat to HMO (4); internal alterations to allow conversion to HMO – **N.C.**
16. **Bruce Embankment** – widen road carriageway, install street lights, railings and ancillary structures - **PU. enquire**
17. **3 James Robb Avenue** – conservatory extension – **N.C.**

Ian Goudie added that the planning committee would be would be delighted if the Fife Council policy on traditional materials and internal illuminated signs in the conservation area could be relied upon to be enforced, but if we don't comment [items 1 and 14 (involving an aluminium sign painted to look like wood)]

the rules may not be applied. Similarly the lengthier letters written on the big applications are often reminding Fife Council of its own declared policies. The formal planning system is adversarial in that it requires comments to be framed as objections to ensure that they are at least presented for consideration by the Development Committee.

5.2. Police Station Ramp

Murdo Macdonald asked what response should be made to a letter in the St Andrews Citizen on Friday criticising community council for objecting to the proposed disabled access ramp?

Richard Douglas who had written the objection letter on behalf of the planning committee explained that the objection had been in part on the basis of concern at the unnecessary intrusion on the pavement of the proposed ramp presenting a hazard to all passing by, able or otherwise. Meeting agreed a response be sent on behalf of community council. Pete Lindsay to write in consultation with Planning Committee.

PL to respond

6. Matters Arising from previous meetings

6.1. Houses in Multiple Occupation

Ken Crichton reported that in Edinburgh residents of tenements were attempting to restrict multiple occupation of rented flats to keep out noisy students and unscrupulous landlords, and over concerns about the maintenance of flats (external paint etc) owned by absentee landlords, to prevent changes to the character of their area. He asked if community council should be opposing HMO licences similarly as a matter of principle.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston pointed out that HMO licenses were introduced as a safety measure from the Scottish executive following a fire in Glasgow that killed two people in an unsuitable and unsafe flat. Some years before there was a death in St Andrews in a flat fire. Licensing was intended to control a situation that already existed.

After a short discussion it was agreed community council should not take a general position on HMO licensing but deal with any specific issues as they arose.

6.2. Foreign Links Policy

May Agenda

6.3. Showcase meeting

[March 7.3.] Joe Peterson reported that the meeting discussed guidelines for new councils and help with press releases to promote community councils in the run up to the elections, as well as displays and newsletters to point out how much comes through community councils.

He took the opportunity to remind members of a local profile-raising initiative; the community council Coffee Morning at the Town Hall Supper Room on Sat 10/4/04.

7. New Business

7.1. Saint Andrew's Day

There was a brief discussion which was unanimously critical of Mr Brocklebank's position on St Andrew's Day and the St Andrew's Week celebrations. Ian Hamilton added that the remarks in the parliament had caused problems for negotiations between the St Andrew's Week Committee, which he chairs, and various bodies over funding for 2004.

Meeting agreed, without dissent, to write to Mr Brocklebank to express concern over his position and support the St Andrew's Week committee on the lines indicated.

PL to write

7.2. RAF Leuchars

Agreed to invite to speak.

PL to write

7.3. Association of Scottish Community Councils

7.3.1. Annual Subscription

£15 agreed

7.3.2. AGM

Pete Lindsay may able to attend.

7.3.3. Community Planning Survey

Planning committee

7.4. Principles of Charging for Water and Wastewater

answers to PL for May

7.5. Tetra Masts

No action.

7.6. Fife Elderly Forum Executive

Invite to speak.

PL to arrange

7.7. Fife Access Seminar

Joe Peterson may be able to attend.

7.8. Doors Open Day

We have no new suggestions.

7.9. Freedom of Information Fees

No comment.

7.10. Local Plan, 7.11. New Magazine, 7.12. Environmental Services Newsletter, 7.13. Strandline

Noted.

8. Reports from Officers

8.1. Chair

8.2. Treasurer

Accounts for 03/04 closed. Report will be made to council at the AGM.

8.3. Secretary

8.3.1. email loss

Noted

8.3.2. Vacancy

Ian Goudie gave the thanks of the Planning Committee for Gordon Pay's work and unique insights on environmental considerations in planning matters.

The meeting then discussed whether and how to fill this vacancy. On a show of hands meeting decided to appeal widely rather than just follow up unsuccessful applicants from last year, though any could reapply.

Wider 9; Previous 3; abstained 2.

PL to contact press

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.2. From Representatives

9.2.1. Saint Andrew's Day holiday

Noted.

9.2.2. University Sports Centre Advisory Group

Noted.

9.2.3. Kate Kennedy procession committee

Ken Fraser reported that there had been discussion with the Police on keeping the length of the procession within reasonable bounds so that streets could be re-opened as quickly as possible. The Merchants' Association had requested that the procession date avoid Easter weekend.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Town Hall Flag

Ian Hamilton asked when the flag would be raised again. Cllrs Liston and Sangster replied that not only had the rope worn through again, but there were concerns over the safety of the flag pole mountings which were found to be very rusty.

Five Goals for a Fairtrade Town, City or Zone

The purpose of a Fairtrade Town is to contribute to the Fairtrade Foundation's aim of tackling poverty by enabling disadvantaged producers from poor countries to receive a better deal, through encouraging support for the FAIRTRADE Mark.

In order to fulfil this aim by becoming a Fairtrade Town, the following five goals must be realised. When they are, a signed and dated certificate will be presented by the Fairtrade Foundation. The goals are in bold. Optional ex-tras, recommended but not required, are in italics.

1) Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in its offices and canteens.

- Local council commits itself to promoting awareness of Fairtrade to its constituency on a regular basis, through its free publication (if it has one) and other outlets.
- Local council allocates Fairtrade Town responsibilities to a member of staff or committee (possibly its Environmental or Agenda 21 officer, working in partnership with a local Fairtrade steering group – see below) to ensure continued commitment to its Fairtrade Town status.
- Street signs are erected declaring it as a Fairtrade Town.

2) A range of (at least two) Fairtrade products are readily available in the area's shops. Fairtrade products are served in local cafés/catering establishments. It should be easy for local people to find Fair-trade products as they do their everyday shopping. Targets are suggested below*. Retail stockists could include a selection of health and whole food shops, supermarkets, or fair trade shops.

- These should display literature or placards advertising the fact that they serve or sell FAIRTRADE Mark products.

- A local Fairtrade directory could be produced advising people where they can buy or find Fairtrade products both on paper, and on-line.

3) Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc)

- Aim to include a flagship employer

- Venues should display stickers, posters or a certificate advising users that they use Fairtrade products and/or support the local Fairtrade Town campaign.

- Educational campaigns are organised in these places to deepen people's understanding of the issues and deepen their commitment to Fairtrade.

4) Attract media coverage and popular support for the campaign. For the press, the story can be revived as each goal is achieved, organising a big splash for the Fairtrade endorsement ceremony, and developing a strategy to keep it in the news long after. This will also enable local businesses and organisations to benefit from their involvement.

5) A local Fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure continued commitment to its Fairtrade Town status. This should ideally include a council representative, campaigners, and people representing the area's schools, churches and businesses. The group is responsible for an annual assessment to monitor whether the area is continuing to meet the five goals. The group organises special events for Fairtrade Fortnight in March each year.

- An educational event or competition is organised to raise awareness of trade issues and Fairtrade amongst young people.

* Target for number of retail outlets: Population of <10000 – 1 retail outlet per 2500: Population <200000 – 1 retail outlet per 5000: Population of <500000- 1 retail outlet per 10000.

Target for number of catering outlets: Population of < 10000 – 1 catering outlet per 5000: Population <200000 – 1 catering outlet [doc cut off here]

Links Trust Course and Feddinch 5.4.04

A personal view of the East Area Development Committee Meeting by Penny Uprichard

The Planning Reports for this meeting might have been written by Mr. A. Campbell. Each Report listed the matters raised in objections, and matters from the departure hearings. It was said that they had been 'addressed'. They was not true – they were listed, and passed over. One of the matters raised under Feddinch was, I believe, inserted by the Planning Dept. The Report goes on to say that Feddinch 'would form a facility which is ... not available in St. Andrews'. Obviously the Duke's Course and the 44 units which have now got planning permission, as a club, have been overlooked. There are 33 and 24 conditions, but the Council has admitted that these are not enforced and that they are left to the developers to enforce.

The Councillors might have been discussing the City Road lavatories, so disengaged were they. The one subject which aroused interest was traffic. The Transportation official said that a golf course generates limited traffic. Two golf courses also generate limited traffic. Furthermore, at no point would the two golf courses (from the 2 developments) be visible from the same viewpoint. Consequently 'there would not be an adverse cumulative impact...'

There were various questions on this subject, and eventually the official admitted that Transportation are unable to control the traffic in any way, except to count it. After 5 years they have got St. Andrews Bay to sign a Green Travel Plan – but not the original one, which the hotel did not wish to sign – a new one. The Links Trust Report, item 2.39, says that no HGV traffic is to use North Street and the town centre. As the developers usually refuse to be labelled, this also is a condition which the Council is powerless to enforce.

Perhaps the most significant traffic statement comes in the Feddinch Report, item 2.29, '... The town will inevitably get busier and further long term measures to restrain and mitigate traffic growth will be required.'

The Transportation official, when asked if St. Andrews could accommodate the Feddinch traffic, said Oh yes. When the St. Andrews Transportation Plan comes into effect, there will be spare capacity, and the Feddinch traffic will be O.K. Why will there be spare capacity? Because residents are going to be driven out by a huge increase in the charging area, and by the fact that elderly and disabled residents (except those with disabled cards) will find that they cannot walk from their cars to the shops. However, Feddinch will be O.K.

All these items are clearly set out in the Reports, and the Councillors must be aware of what happened at St. Andrews Bay, when 20 lorries per day turned into 104. Yet there was not a single question, as far as I can remember, about these items, or about policies, and very few about anything else. The impression is given, perhaps wrongly, that Councillors simply turned up to vote for a couple of golf courses, having given the matter very little thought. There was no evidence of any attempt on the part of the Councillors to protect the town and its residents, except for Councillor Liston. She made a noble attempt to have the Links Trust application turned down, but was unable to find a seconder.

The Links Trust Report describes the clubhouse and its measurements. There is no description of the maintenance shed.. I am told by the Council it measures 58m. x 35m. Item 2.15 says it 'would not mark a development..., as having an adverse effect on the unbuilt coastline'. The Structure Plan N.6 says 'Development of the undeveloped coast will be resisted'.

The Report 2.14 says '(a) golf course is usually reversible development.' The Structure Plan says that new or additions to golf courses are 'in perpetuity.' I rang the Scottish Executive to check, and was told that the matter was open to 'interpretation'.

The requests by several objectors, supported by the Tourist Board, the Merchants and others, for an economic impact assessment, was turned down (Links Trust 2.30) because 'it would therefore only have a positive impact on businesses...' A strange word, that 'would'.

Another extract from the Report read 'and in discussion with SNH ... The proposals would not have an adverse impact on the character of this area and indeed the character of the historic landscape setting of St. Andrews. As a result therefore, the proposals would not be prejudicial or premature to the setting of the boundaries of the green belt through the East Area Local Plan process.' In other words, it is so because I say it is so. But in this meeting the full Green Belt policy was never quoted.

Interpretation is one thing. Saying black is white is another. I have spoken to a number of people who went to Tuesday's meeting, and most of them feel that following this meeting and these Planning Reports it is pointless to attempt to contribute to the Local Plan, or the Structure Plan. The last Local Plan was started in 1994. They are supposed to be produced every 5 years. Our next Local Plan will probably not happen for another two or three years. Why? Is it to offer the Council a chance of approving every building they can?

During the Links Trust discussion the Planning official referred to the new course as 'a links course'. Strangely enough, the same question had come up in the departure hearing and the same Councillor, Mr. Bell, provided a full answer. An unusual lapse of memory?

In the middle of the Feddinch meeting Councillor Douglas, who is perhaps responsible more than any other single Councillor for this situation, decided to attack the objectors, simply for being objectors. He spoke about letters signed by people who had objected so often before, the usual suspects, etc. The Chairman took no notice.

Almost every one of the objectors' letters showed more knowledge and research than the meeting, which had a very low level of debate.

The Structure Plan has been shown to be useless as protection for St. Andrews. There is no protection for the prospective Green Belt either, or for the AGLVs. The policy on prematurity was disregarded by the Councillors, although Mr. Rae, former Head of Planning, and Mr. Sinclair, present Chief Executive of Fife Council, promised that it would prevent development before settlement of the Green Belt boundaries.

Golf courses are one thing – a huge clubhouse for 160 people, a vast maintenance shed and a clubhouse, and all the traffic that goes with them both should be unacceptable. And it should be borne in mind that although Trans-portion have accepted the developers' estimates, they have not the slightest idea of what is actually going to happen.

If a developer brings up a request for a 1,000 [house] extension to the town and says there are precedents for building in the Green Belt, there may not be many obstacles in his way. Dr. Goudie said in a recent article 'The Green Belt will be dead before it is born'.