

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes – June 2004

Approved

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Chair: Murdo Macdonald

0. Co-option of Community Councillors

As there were two places and three applicants a ballot was held:

Bruce Ryan – 11
Bette Christie – 10
Les Beech – 9.

Bruce Ryan and Bette Christie were therefore co-opted to serve as full community councillors. As Chair Murdo Macdonald thanked Les Beech for coming forward, and reminded everybody that we will probably see full elections early in the new year.

Thanks to Fife Council Local Office Manager Kate Hughes for the impartial and quick count.

1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Hamilton, Joe Lamb, Ian Hamilton, Pete Lindsay, Murdo Macdonald, Joe Peterson, Bruce Ryan, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Penny Uprichard.

Students Association: Derek MacLeod, Ben Reilly, Alex Yabroff.

Fife Councillors: Sheila Black, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Bill Sangster.

Apologies: Donald Macgregor, Laurel Aguilar (University 'vision' launch), Ian Goudie, Dennis Macdonald, Chris Lesurf.

2. Minutes of May 2004

Approved

3. Presentations

3.1. Police report

None

3.2. The Coastal Path

Chris Broome, Service Manager, Fife Council Community Services noted that he had last spoken to community council in the aftermath of a serious accident on the path [May 02, 3.1.2.].

The path is 81 miles or 135 km long. It costs less than £1 per metre to maintain, about £100,000 a year. Construction was partly funded by £1 million from Scottish Enterprise. It is estimated that in 2000 there were 430,500 visits and £2,600,000 economic benefit generated by its users. The route along the coast goes back hundreds if not thousands of years. Planning for the Forth-Tay walk started in the early 90s under the District Councils. Official completion of a recognised, signposted path was 2003. It had been estimated to be a 3 year project.

Phase 2 of the Fife Coastal Path project, North Queensferry to Kincardine Bridge, is under development and phase 3, Tay Bridge to Newburgh, is being studied for feasibility.

The route passes over mostly private land. Fife Council does not own the path. In consequence the path has to be a partnership between the land owners, the communities it links and the users. Fife Council is working to extend and promote the path, and looking to broaden participation by more actively involving communities.

Last year Fife Council established the Fife Coastal and Countryside Trust to promote and guide use of the path. It does not manage and maintain the path on a day to day basis, which remains with Fife Council. The Trust will work with communities, community councils and businesses around the coast to promote the path. Formal invitations to join the Trust will go out in October.

Kinkell Braes: there will be a route marked around the slip at Kinkell Brae, negotiations with the caravan site are nearly complete. However the coastline from St Andrews to Crail is very 'active' – there will continue to be slips and other changes to the path. There will need to be improved signs to let people know what to expect in terms of class of walk and conditions underfoot.

Penny Uprichard felt that the promotion of the path given its state was giving conflicting signals to visitors. She asked how long it was since the St Andrews to Boarhills section was open without restrictions. He did not have that figure.

Archie Strachan asked whether there was even an estimate of a completion date for St Andrews – Crail. The answer was that, no, there will likely always be work to do on the "active" coast. It can't be finished and left for any significant length of time. Obviously this makes the stretch a more difficult walk than some, which raises safety matters. Fife Council intends to install international standard signs to give proper description of the state of the route underfoot.

Chris Broome concluded saying that he hoped to attend again in a year or so to give another progress report.

3.3. St Andrews World Class – South Street

Derek Crowe, Fife Council Area Transportation Manager (derek.crowe@fife.gov.uk) and Scot Harper, Scottish Enterprise Project Executive, St Andrews Physical Infrastructure Project. (scott.harper@scotent.co.uk).

There was a display outside the meeting of the plans for the next phase of the south street refurbishment, proceeding eastwards from the previous work at the West Port.

Derek Crowe outlined the World Class project's aims to improve the town centre and address current and expected traffic problems.

The old-fashioned herringbone style parking was appropriate to the smaller cars of the past, but not now to the wider and longer modern vehicles. The need to reverse out into present day traffic is a problem – South Street has worst rate of accidents in the East Area of Fife, though fortunately mostly damage-only small bumps – few injuries.

The trees are past their “sell-by” date, he said. Root damage to road and footway is extensive and threatens the underground utilities. It is intended bring in new near-mature trees in deep buried containers which protect and control the root systems, as at the West Port end.

Town centres are about people not cars. Fife Council intends to reduce reliance on travel by car in the town centre. To help this Petheram Bridge car park has been expanded to provide more out-of-centre parking and public transport, in the form of the Park & Ride scheme initially, improved. There will be a new bus shelter east of Blackfriars – similar in design to that at Petheram Bridge. To make South Street more attractive to walk along it is proposed to widen the footpaths and provide better access to parked vehicles – both made possible through change to parallel parking. The loss of spaces this entails can in part be balanced by a 30 minutes ticket option (current minimum 1hr) which will encourage a faster turnover amongst those only calling into the shops for one or two items. New street lighting will better support the CCTV system. There is no proposal to bring in more cycle lanes.

Ewen Sparks, speaking as chair of the Merchants' Association, was very worried at the 50% loss in parking places. More parking is needed close to the town centre; Petheram Bridge is inadequate in this respect. He suggested that rather than adopting parallel parking the angle of the parking bays should be changed to minimise the loss of spaces while reducing the intrusion of longer vehicles into the carriageway. The Park & Ride buses need to run all year round and for longer hours to encourage incoming workers to park on the periphery and bus in. Murdo Macdonald called for the transport improvements to come before the parking reductions. Ken Crichton asked what consideration had been given to the effects of the parking changes on nearby unrestricted and uncharged areas.

Responding to the parking points Derek Crowe noted there are 45 currently parking spaces in this section of South Street which will fall to 21; there will be no change to taxi ranks, or disabled spaces. The 30 minute period proposal will help with turnover of parking spaces, which is something that has been called for in St Andrews for some time. They are aware of the effects on unrestricted areas. He agreed Petheram Bridge is not the full solution. This is one of the first phases of the refurbishment of the whole town centre. The Area Transport Plan revision will contain proposals to revitalise parking generally in St Andrews. Extending the Park & Ride is a more complex issue as it would be a cost to the council tax. Joe Peterson proposed: leave the all places intact, half the minimum parking period, build a second floor to Petheram Bridge car park – and on the back of that re-establish the bridge itself.

Penny Uprichard was concerned for the settlements around St Andrews. Where would people coming in to St Andrews for weekly shopping park? The reduction in parking will drive shoppers out of the centre, to Safeway's she said. Cynthia Tero asked what car parks are envisaged, perhaps to the south and east of the town? Derek Crowe thought that purchase of land for parking would be very expensive in and around St Andrews, and probably beyond the Council's means so may have to be funded by other developments.

Ewen Sparks also asked about dates for the work: can't have it running during St Andrews Week. Scott Harper replied that they were aware of issues over timing of the works. They are planned for Sep-Dec, but they will talk to various groups to identify holiday weekends, special events, etc when work must be avoided.

Penny Uprichard believed the Zebra crossings to interrupt traffic flow and to pose a particular danger to cyclists. There have been a number of comments on the proposed change of the Pelican to a Zebra from disabled groups so they are looking at this again, Derek Crowe said. However generally Zebras are preferred as they give pedestrians priority, in line with the philosophy that town centres are predominantly for people, not cars.

She felt the pavements on South Street to be of adequate width already and described the narrowing of South Street carriageway as “criminal”. He pointed out that even if the pavements are adequate now the project is looking at the needs of the next 20-ish years.

Murdo Macdonald felt that cycle racks don't improve the appearance of the town centre. Derek Crowe answered that the proposed cycle racks are of colour and design to match the street environment. The underlying problem with the appearance of cycle racks in St Andrews tends to be the abandoned bikes rather than the racks themselves and he pointed out that there are procedures in place between Fife Council and the Police to deal with this problem.

Dennis Macdonald asked for more information on the replacement trees: these will be lime trees, but a more upright species which does not spread as much as the current type, and probably not quite as tall at full maturity.

Cllr Frances Melville pointed out that many items on the plans will have to be subject to planning

approval. Scot Harper acknowledged this and expected an application for the full scheme will be in process by end of the month.

3.4. Parking Pressure

Sheila Watson of Greenside Court asked that community council bring pressure to bear to restrict the development of flats with insufficient parking places because of the pressure on parking spaces immediately outside the controlled zone and the abuse of private spaces in eg Greenside Court.

Members of the planning committee responded: Pete Lindsay confirmed that the committee did consider and comment on the number of parking places associated with applications. Penny Uprichard felt the underlying problem is development in places where no one has lived before, increasing pressure on infrastructure generally as well as parking. She cited the Cowies Coachworks application as a current example.

3.5. Why South Street?

Carolyn Walker asked why South St was the priority for refurbishment when other areas were in greater need in the centre. Cllr Frances Melville replied that Scottish Enterprise was the driving body, priorities are dependent on what they want to do. She felt that the lack of democratic input or control was a continuing concern.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. David Russell Hall works

One of the planning conditions for the DRH works was for no construction traffic to use the Strathkinness road, but drivers are, apparently, missing the signs directing them. These will be improved.

4.1.2. Bruce embankment

The East Development committee agreed that extending the street lights towards the West Sands was unnecessary. There is still a question of safety over the lack of railings; there will be a site visit to further consider the balance between appearance and safety.

Murdo Macdonald was worried that the delay might cause a loss of funding by the Royal & Ancient, as reported in The Citizen. Pete Lindsay attacked the arrogant assumption by the developer that their application was perfect and should be rubber-stamped by the planning process and the Development Committee. Complaints that a delay might affect schedules and deadlines shows a lack of forethought in the project planning he said. Cllr Melville was grateful for the support for the Development Committee.

Joe Peterson asked why the road was not widened on the course side, where there is space, rather than towards the sea.

4.1.3. David Russell Hall Traffic Calming

Work will start soon; this will not be speed humps but interactive "Slow Down" signs, resurfacing, a mini roundabout at the Buchanan/Hepburn Gardens junction and realignment of the Strathkinness High & Low roads junction.

4.1.4. World Class Survey

She has asked for Community Council to be included in a survey of aims of business development – actually involving the user community at last – and commended participation to the meeting.

4.1.5. Petheram Bridge Car Park

Work has been delayed by unexpected drainage problems. It is scheduled to complete by end of June but work will be held over if not finished by then, rather than extend into the holiday season.

4.1.6. Road Resurfacing

Should be underway at Doubledykes Road and Lawhead Road East now.

4.1.7. Tennis Club

Unfortunately there has been more vandalism recently. Cllr Bill Sangster commented that there are to be further meetings involving the CSP, tennis club and police about this developing problem.

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Bus Shelter at Safeway

There is a proposal to put a shelter on the south side of John Knox Road, which has a bare stop at the moment. She asked if there were any comments or objections? No.

4.2.2. Spar problem

[Agenda Appendix J] She will be in touch with the Police and Local Office on this.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Bus Shelter at St Mary's Place

This has received planning permission; he has asked for an implementation date.

4.3.2. Spar Area

[Agenda Appendix J] Drawing on his knowledge as Chair of the Community Safety Panel he noted that

there was now a mobile CCTV vehicle that might be used to observe goings-on in the area. He explained that the advantage of this unit over a covert camera is that it can be used in court evidence.

4.3.3. Kinnessburn Pollution

Noted reports of a film of oil on the Kinnessburn recently. He had traced this back to an outflow just upstream of the Kinness Fry Bar. He has reported the incident to the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

Pete Lindsay added that he'd seen similar events from the same cluster of outlets. Querying them with Scottish Water some time ago he'd been told that the outlets were probably from the old field drainage system, overlaid by the developments of the 60s between Largo Road and the burn. Though they shouldn't, some of the road drains eventually connect to the older system so when people wash their cars, the foam disappears down the drain to appear in the burn rather than remaining in the drainage system for processing.

4.3.4. May Day

The decision to move the May Day local holiday date to the second Monday in May next year (9/5/2005) was taken so that traffic wardens will be on duty for the public holiday. It is hoped to reduce the difficulties faced this year when there was no warden cover because of the local holiday.

4.3.5. Sound system for traffic lights

The audible warning system for the South Street Pelican crossing has rusted/worn out. It is too old to be repaired; he is pressing for a full replacement.

4.3.6. Hospital Bus Shelter

Having raised the matter unsuccessfully several times with Cllr Sangster's predecessor Ken Crichton reminded him of the need for a bus shelter an Abbey Walk at the Hospital.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Speaker system

Archie Strachan asked what had happened to the microphone/speaker system that she'd obtained for the meeting a few months ago – he and others at his end of the table had found it helpful.

It should be available for July she said, backed by Kate Hughes.

4.4.2. Giant Hogweed

She's noticed a resurgence of this noxious weed along the Kinnessburn this year. She's asking Environmental Services for details of this year's control program.

4.4.3. University 20 Year Vision.

Noted that by some oversight it seems to lack a railway.

4.4.4. East Sands Blue Flag.

She was very pleased to announce that "her" beach, the East Sands, now has a water quality Blue Flag award to match the "other" beach, the West Sands.

4.4.5. Scottish Water

A recent meeting between councillors and Scottish Water representatives was very unsatisfactory. The Scottish Water people appeared to the Public Relations only and unable to provide answers to questions outside their prepared presentation. They did agree to provide better contacts and reports. There may be presentations to community councils later.

4.4.7. Milestones

Welcomed reports of some reports of successes in recovering the metal caps that give the distances.

4.4.8. Local Housing Strategy Published

Looks very likely now that the council will apply for pressured status.

She noted that in a debate in Parliament on Affordable Housing in NE Fife instigated by Iain Smith MSP one St Andrews-based MSP suggested that the poor should leave St Andrews if they could not afford to live here.

5. Planning Committee

Minutes of 31/5/04 were circulated

Planning Meeting – 31.5.04

It was noted that there would be a preview of the University's '20 year vision' in College Hall, St. Marys, at 4.30 on Thursday 3 June. It was agreed that R. Douglas and P. Uprichard would represent the Community Council.

1. **Inchcape House** – internally illuminated sign and menu board (listed building) N.C.
2. **2 Gibson Place** – replacement windows N.C.
3. **105-107 South Street** – push pad to open door N.C.
4. **4 Queens Gardens** – replace zinc roof by lead (owned by Preservation Trust) N.C.

5. **21 Argyle Street** – replacement double glazed windows (9 flats) – occupancy and numbers unchanged. N.C.

6. **9 Melbourne Place** – new bathroom, kitchen and sunroom N.C.

7. **Cairnsmill Caravan Park** – change of use of agricultural land to addition to caravan park. Obj. to creeping development, above the 50 metre contour line, threatens other land nearby, prematurity in view of prospective Green Belt OBJ. R.D.

Penny Uprichard summarised the University's "20 year vision" as: "When we have the money we'll build".

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. Bandstand Concerts

As he had heard nothing by the meeting from the rotary club regarding the physical running of the concerts Murdo Macdonald asked for a number of volunteers from community council should it become necessary. Having received a sufficient number he would confirm the concerts with the performers and organise the volunteers to cover the programme.

6.2. St Andrews in Focus

July

6.4. Memorial Plaque

[May 4.5] Cllr Jane Ann Liston has raised Cynthia Tero's suggestion for a plaque to note the skeleton remains found during the recent works at the Library and at other times in the Church Square/Logies Lane area.

6.5. Leisure Centre

[May 9.2.1] Cllr Jane Ann Liston has written in support of the request for students to be able to use matriculation cards to obtain reduced rate rather than buying a Fifestyle card.

Pete Lindsay (still) to write

6.6. Fife Access Seminar

[April 7.7.] Joe Peterson attended this on behalf of community council. He gained the impression Fife Council were surprised at the level of interest. Very good meeting, covering a range of access issues including the "Bums Off Seats" walks; Falkland Palace grounds access; the Tayport paths project. He thinks we will hear a lot more about this.

6.7. Bless the Community

[May 7.12] Both Joe Peterson and Cllr Sheila Hill have been in touch with CLAN. There should be at least 3 afternoons' entertainments at old folks homes/centres around St Andrews.

7. New Business

7.1. Youth Problem

See 4.2.2. & 4.3.2.

7.2. Nominations for Holyrood Opening

Suggest Mr Christie as Honoured Citizen

Pete Lindsay to write

7.3. Fife Environment Network

No opinion

7.4. Planning Aid for Scotland

7.4.1. Friends Subscription

Annual subscription to Friends scheme: £10.

£10 agreed

7.5. Friends of Holy Trinity

Pass to 200 Club

7.7. Residents Association

Pete Lindsay felt calling the proposed organisation a Residents Association inappropriate given the timing of the meeting and invitation specifically to Owner Occupiers, excluding the majority of town centre residents.

7.8. Community Council Training

Penny Uprichard, Bruce Ryan, Richard Douglas, George Davidson, Pete Lindsay.

Pete Lindsay to arrange

7.9. Scottish Language Dictionaries AGM

Ken Fraser may be able to attend.

Ken Fraser

7.16. RSCDS Bulletin

Circulated at the meeting.

8. Reports from Officers

8.1. Chair

8.1.1. Award Received

Treasurer to write to thank Kate Kennedy Club.

Archie Strachan to write

8.3. Secretary

8.3.1. Resignation of Frank Riddell

Letter of thanks for his service & good wishes

Pete Lindsay to write

8.3.4. ASCC Survey

GP Committee

8.3.5. Trust Fund

Murdo Macdonald will bring forward proposals for reorganisation to a more accountable structure by end of this session.

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.1.2. Recreation

There was no meeting of the committee but Joe Peterson was able to report that the community flowerbeds plantings were in hand; as were the floral decorations for the war memorial.

He added that as a finalist in the Scotland in Bloom competition last year St Andrews does not need to get through the qualifying round as it gets a by to the final this year.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. New Community Safety Officer

Cllr Bill Sangster suggested PC Mark Anderson could be invited to a future meeting.

10.2. Hanging Baskets

Cllr Bill Sangster reported that the St Andrews in Bloom committee's hanging baskets should start going up week commencing 14 June.