

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes – September 2004

Approved

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Chair: Murdo Macdonald

1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Bette Christie, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Ian Hamilton, Joe Lamb, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Joe Peterson, Bruce Ryan, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Penny Uprichard

Student Reps: Bonnie Ryder

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

2. Minutes of August 2004

Accepted

3. Presentations

3.1. Elderly Advocacy Project

Johns Wylie of Fife Elderly Forum Executive spoke.

The Elderly Advocacy Project helps older people in residential and nursing homes. Most older people can speak up for themselves; but some need someone independent to speak for them. While staff at these homes will, quite rightly, say they are advocates for their clients, there can be circumstances where an independent advocate is needed.

An 'advocate' in this case is not a lawyer, just someone helping people speak up for themselves. Someone who can listen to what the elderly person can say, sift for the relevant points, and if necessary stand up against 'the system' to make those points heard. Ordinary people can do it and the Elderly Forum arranges training help them in the task.

Behind the advocacy system is the Fife Elderly Forum's resources, and they pass back to social work service and the health board the issues arising. Though limited in funding for the project FEF are doing what work they can. One person doing 18 hrs/week can't cover whole of Fife but they have 14 volunteers and are looking for more to work as advocates.

The need for a service for older people is only slowly being recognised, despite similar, more advanced services for mental health patients and children. This project funded by NHS Fife, not Fife Council although it is on Fife Council's list of desirable services. Social work say there will be an independent service by 2010, though it is not clear at the moment how this will be achieved.

Murdo Macdonald commented that he sees an increasing need for such services as more people live longer.

Cllr Sheila Black was very interested to hear of this project as she chairs the Gibson House trust.

3.2. Cupar Credit Union

Brian John Owens, Chairman, Cupar Credit Union Limited, circulated a paper covering most of his speech but added a few points of clarification:

Credit Unions encourage regular savings by members, through 'collections', which money goes to fund low cost loans to other members. Credit Unions run on a shoestring; the money belongs to the members, not the CU. They are regulated by the Financial Services Agency, whose permission they need to expand or otherwise change their operation.

Circulated paper:

Credit Union – a talk to St Andrews Community Council on 06 September 2004

The credit union movement has been successful elsewhere in the World for many years, particularly in English-speaking countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. It caught on relatively slowly in Britain, until about 10-15 years ago, since when it has grown rapidly here. In Scotland this growth was led by the west of Scotland and the central belt, but the rest of Scotland has got the message now. There are about 180,000 members in Scotland.

There are seven community credit unions in Fife, but only one of these is in North East Fife, Cupar Credit Union. It was founded in 1999 as a result of an initiative by Fife Council and local community organisations. It is an independent savings and loans co-operative, run entirely by local volunteers. Credit unions encourage the habit of regular saving, and provide a secure home for the savings. This creates a pool of money for making small personal loans to members at a reasonable rate of interest, instead of the very high interest rates which are often charged on this kind of loan.

Until August the credit union operated only in the Cupar area, running four collections per

week in and around Cupar. All other attempts to set up new credit unions in north east Fife had failed, mainly due to the difficulty of recruiting and training enough volunteers to start from scratch. We had to train 15 volunteers for six months before we opened. Recently Cupar Credit Union applied for and received authorisation to extend its common bond area, to make credit union membership available to many more local people. Since August 2004 anyone who lives or works in north east Fife can join.

Now the credit union is deciding where and when to introduce new collections. It has just opened a weekly collection in Anstruther, because there was already a group of interested people there. Over the next year it would like to open collections in about four more towns, choosing those where there is good local support and enough potential members.

A credit union relies heavily on local goodwill and practical support, so it needs to find out whether it would be wanted and supported in St Andrews. It will go ahead here only if there is local support. Then it will need premises which it can use free of charge for collections. A preliminary meeting has identified Fife Council's Office in St Mary's Place as a good possibility. Some local volunteers will need to be recruited, four for each collection. We will probably start with one or two collections per week, and review the position after three months operation and some local marketing.

Benefits to the community will include:

- encouraging members to save regularly and securely
- educating members in money management
- introducing young people to the idea of saving and money management
- lending to members at a reasonable rate of interest, and thereby reducing the likelihood of their taking high interest loans
- keeping money circulating in the community, helping local shops and services
- creating community spirit through co-operation and self-help
- providing training, new skills and practical work experience for local people, which will help them in the job market
- using and developing the skills and experience of retired people, and others who are not active in the job market.
- reducing the extent of exclusion for people on low incomes.

My questions are:

- Does the Community Council want a credit union presence in St Andrews?
- If we go ahead here can we rely on your local encouragement and support?

Brian Owens, Chairman, can be contacted by telephone on 01334-656122, by e-mail at brian@yaho.co.uk or by post at Cupar Credit Union Limited, c/o Fife Council, County Buildings, St Catherine St, Cupar, KY15 4TA.

In answer to the questions community council agreed that the scheme was worthy of support and will give what support we can. However as to whether a credit union would succeed in St Andrews, a supplementary question, no one felt able to give an opinion on the possible level of demand for the service.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. Community Council Elections

With the other community council elections in progress she has asked when the St Andrews elections may be, but received no firm answer. She suggests writing to Douglas Sinclair (Chief Executive) to ask.

Meeting agreed to write after the election process for other CCs is completed in October.

Pete Lindsay to write in October

4.1.2. Strathkinness High Road

There have been complaints about construction traffic and other inappropriate HGVs using Strathkinness High Road and the Hungry Horse turn. A prohibition order could be made if there were community requests from eg community councils.

There was discussion of what exactly such an order would ban, with concern over agricultural vehicles and buses. Cllr Melville will obtain further information from Transportation Service.

4.1.3. Strathkinness High Road / Buchanan Gardens junction

Despite the reconstruction of the junction to give the High Road a squarer meeting with Buchanan Gardens sight lines are not noticeably improved over the old, highly-angled layout. There is still concern about the safety of this junction.

4.1.4. Life Belts

New life belts have been provided for the harbour with money from the Common Good Fund.

4.1.5. Lawhead 20mph zone

In addition to the information in the agenda she said current proposals only cover the north side. The south side has not been forgotten but will be done later.

4.1.6. World Class Vision

In view of the concerns over the lack of democratic participation of St Andrews people in the new formal body she is suggesting that they invite two representatives from Community Council to sit on the board.

Murdo Macdonald was not sure what the benefit of this would be. Pete Lindsay said it would be foolish to turn down a chance to find out what was going on and an opportunity to influence new proposals. The community council is here to represent people of St Andrews, to refuse to take part would be failing in its duty.

Penny Uprichard felt that as we don't know what they are intending to do this was a reason not to take up any such offer. She was also concerned that participating might bring about a conflict of interest for community council. What St Andrews needs is simple maintenance, not grandiose initiatives from groups whose composition we do not know.

Ian Goudie was concerned that this would be a show to say that Community Council was "on board". On the wider question of the effectiveness of development groups and the developments which promised jobs and economic benefit, he asked there was any retrospective analysis of the actual results of these schemes. Kingask/St Andrews Bay had not brought the jobs promised but concern about the level of traffic on Lamond Drive seems to be realised. He was also concerned about the involvement of Fife Council referring to the increasing practice of using front organisations to seek planning permission for its developments, thus avoiding the regulations on councils deciding on their own planning applications.

Ian Hamilton, who is a member of the Word Class project in his own right, suggested that members of community council should come along to the next World Class board meeting, 2pm Thursday 9 September, to see what the group is about, or he'd be happy to arrange meetings with individuals. It is not a 'them and us' situation, he said.

Joe Peterson understood Ian Goudie's points, but felt community council can't ignore the World Class group; we should be in there to find out what is going on. He was more concerned, he said, about development on the perimeter of St Andrews than improvements in the centre.

Meeting agreed it was time for an update on the World Class project.

Pete Lindsay to arrange

4.1.7. Bus Station

The outline plan selected for further development is the option with a new road up from Petheram Bridge car park for bus and taxi access. Ian Goudie expressed surprise as the indicative sketch that passed for a plan in the consultation was physically impossible to fit in the space available without major reconstruction to provide the new road access.

Ken Fraser called for adequate temporary bus shelters to be erected while the station is out of action during the redevelopment.

4.1.8. Petheram Bridge

She hinted that there may be positive developments soon on restoring this crossing.

4.1.9. Hepburn / Buchanan roundabout

Ian Goudie asked when two features would be implemented: the cycle "relief route" for those going west, out of town, and the realignment of the pavement on the north side to dissuade traffic travelling east into town acting as if it still had right of way.

4.1.10. Harbour Gala Day

Very successful despite the mid-afternoon cloudburst. She thanked to harbour master David Martin, trustee Ken Sweeney and the Kilrymont Round Table for organising and running the Gala Day.

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Younger Gardens

She was pleased to be able to report that Younger Gardens is now getting a service and bus stop.

Ian Goudie asked how this was achieved, as the last we'd heard was that a turning circle costing £50,000 would be necessary and there was no budget immediately available for it.

She didn't have the details, but thought it might be to do with the size of bus providing the service?

4.2.2. Consultation on Public Toilet Closures

Councillors are being consulted on the future of toilets across Fife. She asked for feedback on which ones mustn't be closed in St Andrews.

Penny Uprichard asked how many were to be closed in St Andrews. Cllr Black replied that the consultation is about which ones to keep.

4.2.3. Canongate School

As reported in the press, rabbit holes in the playing fields have forced Fife Council to ban children from using them. Though grounds staff and school staff check the field regularly it seems the rabbits have been winning. Further measures will be taken to keep the rabbits from burrowing and allow the children to play.

4.2.4. Recycling Centre

Murdo Macdonald asked for an update on progress on the recycling centre by Safeway's. It is on course for the proposed mid 2005 opening.

4.2.5. Canongate Roundabouts

Joe Lamb raised concerns about the effectiveness of these.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Church Square Toilets

Now have a RADAR key for all hours disabled access.

4.3.2. Kinnessburn Flooding

He had received reports that some properties had 3ft of water under the floorboards. He's asking for bigger, more drains to take water away from Kinnessburn Road as the existing system is not coping.

Murdo Macdonald circulated a picture of flooding in a garden from the Kinnessburn and called for the burn to be cleared forthwith.

Pete Lindsay didn't think that the banks that had built up in the burn were a significant factor. They had been estimated as 100 cubic metres, reported in the press recently, this would not be a significant proportion of the volume of the burn give the water level at the time, approximately 6 feet (2m) deep 10 feet (3m) wide over a quarter mile (400m) length [= 2400 cu m].

Joe Peterson pointed out that water flooding the Kinnessburn Road did not come from the burn which was well below the bank on that side. He agreed with Cllr Sangster that a review is needed of the drainage system on that side of the burn.

Archie Strachan was very disappointed that survey won't be completed until December because of the threat to the Rymouth access.

Dennis Macdonald thought that flooding on the burn was worse since the work a few years ago to install storm water and sewage storage tanks at Pipeland Park and other places along the burn

4.3.3. 15 Kinnessburn Rd

Developer's appeal against refusal of permission for the 5 storey block turned down on grounds of safety of the road exit, and overlooking of neighbours.

4.3.4. Bus Station

Noted that he had some concerns about safety in the proposals mentioned by Cllr Melville, particularly with the increased amount of reversing that would be needed to leave the stances.

4.3.5. Town Hall Flagpole

In response to a question from Archie Strachan he reported that there was no change to the situation: the pole is unsafe and there is no money to do anything about it. Archie Strachan asked how to fly the flag for St Andrews week?

4.3.6. South Street Cycle racks

Ian Goudie reported that the cycle racks in South Street not replaced after the Lammas Fair. It seems these had been mistakenly cut away rather than unlocked and removed temporarily. They will be replaced, but Cllr Sangster did not know a time scale.

4.3.7. Drains in Bell St

Murdo Macdonald reported that the recent heavy rain had shown drains in Bell Street to be blocked. As far as he was aware, watching from his office window, they were never cleared.

Pete Lindsay added that some drains in the south of town particularly had been blown clear from underneath by the pressure of water. As this left debris spread along the gutters and the road surface he suggested roads be swept quickly before gentler rain washed it all back into the drains, blocking them again.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.2. Robert Ferguson's birthday

Reminded by the Canongate School problem, she recited the poet's Rabbits Grace (originally composed in honour of the University's catering in the 18th Century) in honour of his birthday the day before the meeting.

4.4.3. Special uplifts

Stated that despite the fuss in the press by Fife Council's administration she hadn't 'leaked' anything confidential by reporting the proposed £10 charge for special uplifts. It seems that there is some protocol that reports to strategic committees cannot be publicly discussed until after the decision is taken; which did not seem particularly democratic to her.

The reason given for charging was due to increases in the landfill tax. A related development that seems to be under discussion may be to change to fortnightly collections for the main waste bin. It is thought that this will cause more people to consider use of recycling as opposed to throwing everything in the big grey bin.

Ian Goudie suggested the wider issue of the smaller bins rather than a fortnightly collection. The thought of the smell of a bin after a fortnight in mid summer caused general concern around the table.

Joe Peterson asked when the blue bins will be used for cardboard? This is now done in the centre of Fife, with promises that the facility will expand, but there are no dates as yet.

Chris Lesurf asked where plastic bottles could be recycled? Station car park, Spar (Tom Morris Drive) and Safeways all have plastic recycling.

Ewen Sparks asked about businesses' separation of waste at source. Business cardboard has to go out in the same orange sacks with their other waste at the moment, with no opportunity for recycling.

4.4.4. Local Transport strategy

Noted a recent briefing paper outlining current thinking about the draft plan. Also there are two consultation meetings proposed, both daytime. She is strongly recommending an evening meeting too.

Meeting agreed to ask for more/longer consultation sessions for better public feedback.

Pete Lindsay to write

4.4.5. Buses

Concerned that the recent changes to the 99 service now requires a 20 minute wait for the main 8.12am train south rather than the previous 10 minutes. This is not 'integration'.

4.4.6. StARLink Campaign

It is now 15 years since the launch at a community council meeting. There has been progress. A rail link is on the agenda of the local transport strategy. Another study suggests a starting with a guided bus way first, giving a 7-8 minute service to the main line, then upgrade to a full rail link later. There is a problem with heavy rail in that Waverly Station is at capacity and can't take more services. This has knock-on effects for all other rail developments. StARLink may have a meeting to discuss options with the wider public – things beginning to move.

4.4.7. Bandstand Concerts

Archie Strachan asked what the status of the application, from before the summer, to the Common Good Fund as the concerts are now completed and the bands to be paid.

The local councillors on the sub-committee have approved it but this has to be confirmed by the East Area CGF sub-committee.

4.4.8. Fifestyle

Joe Peterson asked why the Fifestyle Bonus Level card is restricted to unemployed over-60s – why the emphasis on unemployed?

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Minutes

Following were circulated at the meeting

Planning Meeting – 30.8.04

Present: I. Goudie B. Christie B. Ryan P. Lindsay P. Uprichard

1.	4B Bell Street – display externally illuminated letters – obj. as door being used as advertising board	Obj PU
2.	4B Bell Street change of use and alter Class 2 office to form Class 3 food use	
3.	40 Lumsden Crescent – subdivide flatted dwelling to form 2 flatted dwellings	N.C
4.	5 Lindsay Gardens – conservatory extension	Plans?
5.	Police Station – entrance steps and doors to form disabled access. Removal of existing steps and replacement of timber doors with enlarged equivalent. Committee suggests a bell at wheelchair height	B.C. to write approval
6.	Kwik Save – replacement windows and shutters, erect trolley shelter and fence around plant. Amend car park layout	N.C.
7.	98 Market Street – instal interior security shutter (retrospective)	N.C.
8.	60 Pipeland Road – change of use of flatted dwelling to HMO (3 persons)	N.C.
9.	1 Kinburn Terrace – change of use of flatted dwelling to HMO (5 persons)	N.C.
10.	72 St. Nicholas Street – dormer extension	N.C.
11.	135 South Street – externally illuminated fascia sign	N.C.
12.	145 Market Street – externally illuminated fascia lettering and projecting sign, and new colour finish for ATM (Abbey National). Obj. on grounds of non traditional materials and lettering	Obj. BR.
13.	9 Little Canon Gardens – conservatory extension	N.C.

5.3. South Street

Planning committee was asked last month to think about the issues. There are some points of agreement:

- i) Trees – only those that are diseased or clearly causing damage that will necessitate their removal within 10 years should be considered for replacement. Replacement trees should maintain the present line. It is recommended that the funds saved by not replacing all the trees should be reserved to replace any failures amongst the replacements.
- ii) Pavement surface – the proposed caithness slabs are seen as desirable

On the matter of width of the pavement and the effect on the width of the carriageway and number of parking spaces there was a split in the committee.

Pete Lindsay spoke against retention of the angled parking. While it functioned well thirty years ago, the increase in traffic now makes this an unsafe system. Cars are much wider and longer than they were, spaces are cramped and vehicles extend over the pavement and into the road more than the system was designed for. Vehicles having to reverse out of the bays frequently cause delays at busy times, often of both lanes, due to angles involved and the length of modern cars again. Reversing out of an angled bay is dangerous as drivers have little view of the traffic approaching them – he cited two incidents, one where a cyclist was struck by a reversing people carrier (fortunately without injury) and another where he had seen a pedestrian have to skip aside from a car reversing out in a manner that carried it onto a pedestrian crossing. He suggested that losing some angled spaces to widen the northern pavement in particular would be small price to pay for an increase in road safety.

Ewen Sparks was worried about precedent being set for the rest of the town in terms of loss of parking without any without any compensation of improved Park & Ride facilities. This was a threat to small businesses. He believed that the business community might be persuaded to accept the loss of a few spaces if it went with an improvement of park and ride.

Penny Uprichard criticised the proposed changes to parking and pavement width as being too much aimed at St Andrews residents, not taking into account the town's 700,000 visitors a year, nor the needs of residents of surrounding settlements who have to come into St Andrews to shop or work. Although Petheram car park had been expanded recently it is too far to walk to the centre and would, she believed, be taken up by university parking for the North Haugh.

Ian Goudie saw the proposal to change the parking layout as another case of Transportation Services trying various ways of getting their desired plan to remove the private car from St Andrews town centre. He criticised the approach as being sticks without carrots. There was no evidence of locals being interested in Park & Ride he said. There is a long history of failed traffic experiments in St Andrews. While people see gridlock as a disaster, Transportation Services see it as beneficial as it discourages people from bringing cars in. He criticised use of computer modelling to justify changes as the underlying assumptions are not open to scrutiny. If there must be modelling he suggested physical measures using cones and blocks to indicate new layouts and so to test changes. It is necessary to see any proposals in the context of the Transportation Plan, but this is not available to us yet.

Murdo Macdonald raised the matter of a questionnaire his business had received very recently from the council. He believed the slant of the questions pointed towards a move to pedestrianisation. Fife councillors were not aware of any such questionnaire and asked him to supply more details as soon as possible so the source and agenda of this questionnaire could be investigated.

Cllr Bill Sangster added on the matter of parking that he understood the current thinking was for a mix of parking styles rather than wholesale adoption of parallel parking on South St.

After some discussion of how to form a clear community council opinion and a number of proposals and counter proposals on various aspects of parking and pavement width it was agreed to take a show of hands on the underlying question of whether community council would support a narrowing of the carriageway of South Street, which would determine whether other changes could be made.

Against a reduction in South Street carriageway width: 10, agreeing to a change: 3. 1 abstained.

Ian Goudie to write

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. Projector

While agreeing that a projector would be a useful facility to have, Paul Marshall, Fife Council East Area Halls Manager) has no equipment budget. Pete Lindsay will investigate costs of simple overhead projector with screen.

Pete Lindsay

6.2. Fairtrade representative

Bruce Ryan

6.3. St Andrew's Day Holiday

Support, as usual.

Pete Lindsay to write

6.5. Jamie Anderson

Fife-based sculptor David Annand's approach noted, but all that is planned is a tree and plaque.

7. New Business

7.1. Lamond Drive Traffic

Concern at suggestion of a bypass on the southern hillside, but sympathy for the overall traffic problem.

7.2. Fair Share for Fife

Agreed to support Fife Council's position.

Pete Lindsay to write

7.5. Police Consultation

Murdo Macdonald & Archie Strachan

8. Reports from Officer Bearers

8.3. Secretary

8.3.2. Remembrance Poppy Wreath

Joe Peterson was concerned at the 'poor' wreath – and asked if we should choose a more expensive option?

The 'No2 Wreath' is the one that has been used for some years – some thought on the advice of the British Legion as to what was appropriate. Agree to use the usual wreath size but investigate whether the community Council arms could be used in place of the standard "Community Council" insert.

Pete Lindsay

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.1.1. Health, Education & Welfare

Joe Peterson reported that the three consultation papers, two on Water Services and one on Housing were very heavy going and they had not reached a conclusion yet and might not be able to do so.

9.1.2. Recreation

Floral competition awards will be presented on Thursday 23 Sep (6.45 for 7pm) at a small reception in the Burgh Chambers.

9.2. From Representatives

9.2.1. Green Belt Forum

Dennis Macdonald noted that there had been no community council representative at a recent GBF meeting. As he had been there representing another body he gave a brief report: Joe Headon, of Headon Developments, spoke to Green Belt Forum on the Western Development proposals. It was clear from the presentation that there was no substance to this 'red herring' and that a more sinister plan is coming along.

Ian Goudie pointed out that Dr Frank Riddell had been our Green Belt representative, until his illness. We need to appoint a new representative as soon as possible.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Westburn Lane

Following reports in *The Courier* Pete Lindsay asked if anyone knew who had met with the developer and reportedly endorsed aspects of the proposal?

Penny Uprichard explained that the developer had confused the Preservation Trust with the Community Council and had written to her to apologise for the confusion.