

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes – October 2004

Approved

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Chair: Donald Macgregor

0. Best Kept Town Award Presentation

Cllr Bill Sangster formally presented the award for Best Kept Large Town in East Fife on behalf of Fife Council. He noted that the town looked grand this year and thanked all involved – individuals, organisations and businesses.

Meeting also applauded Cllr Sangster's personal efforts on this front and those of the Recreation Committee, in particular Joe Peterson in organising watering of the displays and placement of tubs.

1. Attendance

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

Students: Bonnie Ryder, Jaynie Rabenberg

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

Apologies: Ken Crichton

2. Minutes of September 2004

Approved

3. Presentations

3.1. Madras: Community Links and Pupil Involvement

Lindsay Matheson, Rector of Madras College, opened by joking that having just passed 60 he was perhaps not the best representative of the kids he was speaking for here.

Madras pupils as a body have community links through such as the Town & Gown liaison group, the Community Safety Panel whose secretary is a 4th year Madras student, the Community Youth Forum and at various times in the past links with community council. The business community in the town is very helpful with work experience in placements with shops, community organisations etc. Cultural links – music, drama etc. Share the town between citizens and the pupils (65% of whom are bussed in; by no means all pupils are townspeople). There are lots of strands to "community involvement".

Turning to involvement with community council he drew attention to the Madras Whole School Council which is an independent pupil body. Currently linking with the other schools in Fife for dialog. He suggested that they could be a route to approach community council over issues of mutual concern.

The meeting then discussed various ideas for links between the pupil body and community council. It was agreed, without dissent, to allow the school to nominate two pupils to attend community council regularly (as nominated members they could speak but would not have a vote). The invitation should be specifically renewed at the start of the school year to try to maintain some continuity of representation.

As Secretary, Pete Lindsay added that community council's rules allowed any person or any body to speak directly to community council, or write a letter which would be put on the agenda, on matters to do with St Andrews.

Madras to nominate two pupil representatives to community council.

Agreed

Turning to Any Other Madras Business, two points were raised by Joe Lamb, firstly appearance of pupils. He felt they look untidy compared to Waid Academy pupils, for instance. He called for Madras to enforce the uniform use of a uniform – shirts to be tucked in, etc. Lindsay Matheson replied that Madras did have a uniform code agreed with parents, staff and pupils, but it didn't happen to include blazers. On the matter of shirts he said the school does what it can, but if parents cannot persuade their children to dress in a way they feel appropriate he wondered how the school could be expected to.

The second point was emphasised as a theoretical matter: how should parents raise concerns about standards of teaching? Lindsay Matheson said the correct course would be to approach the school through the pupil's guidance teacher who will raise the concerns at the appropriate level within the school.

3.2. Hall of Residence – School Links

The Charities Representatives of St Regulus Hall James Bradley and Shirley ??? outlined how their hall had set up links with St Leonard's school. They are starting a Saturday school, St Regulus Hall will help in providing people to teach in the extra-curricula activities, things like sport, first aid, possibly more serious subjects.. They've had interest in the idea from other schools such as New Park, Langlands and Lawhead and see a possibility for other schools and other hall to link up. They have come to community council to ask for contacts, advice etc.

Bonnie Ryder for the Students Association thought this could be expanded to cover the student body as a whole, not just the halls of residence. It was certainly something the association would support. She suggested contacting the Student Voluntary Service which she thought had similar projects.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston was pleased to hear a new idea like this. She felt that links between a specific hall and school as suggested would provide rather more continuity than more general arrangements between 'students' as a whole on one hand and 'schools' on the other. Murdo Macdonald suggested contacting Trish Ryan, youth worker at the Cosmos Centre. Donald Macgregor added Chris Lusk of the Town Gown Liaison Committee (and Student Support Service) as a useful contact. Cllr Sheila Black was concerned that there needed to be some coordination to make sure that all schools get a fair share. Joe Peterson suggested that as well as schools they might think about think to reach out to the 'disaffected' youth. Lindsay Matheson added that Madras get 30 student tutors coming in already, but more would be made welcome.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.2. St Andrew Public Realm

Market Street refurbishment: there will be a follow up session with results from the recent consultations in early November. Date unclear as the initial suggestion clashes with other meetings.

4.1.3. BT Call Box Removals

She has put comments in to BT on their proposals and received an acknowledgement.

4.1.4. Fife Structure Plan & Local Plan

Draft plan should go out to public consultation over November / December.

The draft Local Plan will go to the area committee in November and to the public in January.

4.1.5. Development Service Reorganisation

There is now one manager in planning instead of four, team leaders will go from three to one and principle planners down to one lead officer in each area. The planning officer level does not seem to be affected. She has suggested that the new names should be publicised.

It remains to be seen what effect these changes will have on service to the public.

4.1.6. Licensing Board

Members of the board undertook site visits on a Saturday night at various premises about in East Fife. They didn't see any problems.

Joe Peterson asked whether off-licences were included, but this session was just for bars etc. Off-licences will be inspected in another session.

4.1.7. New Sports Facilities

She attended the opening of the all-weather track and field facilities by Menzies Campbell MP, who was an Olympic athlete in his youth, at the University Athletics Union. These are community facilities though.

4.1.8. Lawhead School

There will be an after-school care centre in the school soon.

4.1.9. Development Committee Procedure

Penny Uprichard asked if the votes of individual councillors on planning issues were public information and whether Community Council could obtain this information? She pointed out that the vote was in an open meeting, but without name displays for committee members it was difficult for the public to know who's who. Nor was it easy to see from the public benches who voted which way.

Cllr Melville said she pass on and support the name display idea. She was not sure if the individual vote was recorded; if not she would be concerned at the possible delays of formally recording individuals' responses every time.

All four Fife councillors agreed that they were happy to say which way they vote on applications, if they can remember the particular details.

4.1.10. Harbour Trust

Joe Lamb asked when the Trust will hold the annual public meetings he believes they are obliged to, and when the proposals for reform will be published?

Cllr Frances Melville, who chairs the Harbour Trust, replied that hold up on reorganisation is at the Scottish Executive. They have had the reform proposals for some time but not responded yet.

Chair Donald Macgregor reminded Joe Lamb that the matter of public meetings had come up on previous occasions, circumstances had not changed. Annual meetings are a matter for the Harbour Trust (current or new).

4.1.11. Lawhead School

Ian Goudie raised the lack of a road crossing patrol for Lawhead School. Children need to cross the busy Hepburn Gardens from the Bogward. Is it a matter of pay more to attract?

Cllr Frances Melville agreed the money was poor, and Cllr Jane Ann Liston added that the hours, early morning, lunchtime and mid afternoon, were inconvenient for fitting in other part-time work. Cllr Sheila

Black said that ways of combining the crossing patrol with other functions were being looked at to provide useful wages and hours.

Joe Lamb said that Largo Road needed a crossing near Somerfield (formerly KwikSave) supermarket and pedestrian refuge island; it is a difficult road all the way up.

4.1.12. Houses in Multiple Occupation

Cllr Frances Melville spoke about the implications of the overturning of a recent refusal by the East Regulation Sub-committee to grant an HMO licence for 17 Queen's Gardens. The owner appealed; the sheriff found against Fife Council in a 'damning' report on the decision.

HMO licences are to ensure a minimum level of safety for residents. Unless there are good technical grounds an HMO license cannot be refused. It is not acceptable to restrict HMOs in an area by the back door of licencing; that is a planning issue.

She added that Scottish Executive have recently issued guidelines on planning aspects of HMOs in a Planning Advice Note.

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Public Toilets

Councillors will be meeting with Roy Stewart (Head of East Area Environmental Services) to decide the future of the town's toilets at the end of the month. There was considerable alarm at the lack of open public consultation on this and what was felt to be a sudden conclusion after a four year process of review with no consultation. It was agreed that members should pass any comments on toilets to the secretary to write to Fife Council before the meeting.

Cllr Bill Sangster added that the intentions as he understood it was that the money saved on toilets closed will go to upgrade and staff others.

Pete Lindsay to write

4.2.2. Bassaguard

The council has been approached with a scheme for business development. There is a problem in that some of the area is certainly business use, but some is technically housing, being domestic garages. The proposals are being looked at however.

4.2.3. Viaduct Walk

The new fence has been damaged already.

Ken Fraser drew attention to a long crack in the surface of the shared use foot/cyclepath, which he feared would worsen rapidly under the influence of winter frosts if nothing is done about it soon.

4.2.4. Canongate School Rabbits

Ewen Sparks wondered how effective the new rabbit-proof fencing around the playing field would be; he has seen rabbits hopping in through the front gate!

4.2.5. Safe Reversing

Ian Goudie reported concerns about the reversing practices of refuse vehicles at Old Canongate where lack of turning space forces the vehicle to reverse for some distance. Speeds seemed high and there was no one behind the vehicle to direct it.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Schools 20mph Speed Limit

Abbey Walk variable signs will be installed next month. Balfour Place, The Pends and the harbour will all permanent 20mph limits. Penny Uprichard was concerned about the proliferation and positioning of signs.

4.3.2. Waste Special Uplift

With the introduction of the £10 charge councillors are pressing for a 'fast track' for the St Andrews recycling centre.

4.3.3. Garden at 1 Greyfriars Garden

He has suggested a sale, but the owners have asked a ridiculously large figure, as usual. He will give up maintaining it at the end of the year.

4.3.4. Market Street Fountain

Pilgrim Foundation will pay for the cleaning and re-pointing of the fountain soon. Cynthia Tero called for water to be restored to the fountain. Pete Lindsay felt it was better, practically, as a flowerbed.

4.3.6. RAF Noise Survey

He assumes the survey has been completed as the monitor in his back garden has disappeared.

4.3.6. Uplighters

Has been checking uplighters at historic buildings and found many of them inoperative. It seems that no maintenance system was put in place. Looking to fix over the next 6 months.

4.3.7. Centre Waste Collections

Murdo Macdonald reported that the collection was not until after not done by noon. Why could it not be scheduled for 9.30 when the centre was relatively quiet? Rubbish sitting on the pavement all morning was

an eyesore and inconvenience.

Cllr Sangster was exasperated by the situation which he has been working on since long before he became a Fife Councillor. He had thought a lorry was to collect rubbish to a central point first thing. This worked for a week or two then stopped for some reason. He is investigating.

4.3.8. Business Rates

Following reports that the last independent greengrocer in St Andrews is to close, which she feels will be a loss to the character of the town, Chris Lesurf asked how business rates are determined? Murdo Macdonald explained that it was based on an assessment of floor space of a property and the notional rent per square metre. The figure is quite high in St Andrews. He agreed that St Andrews town centre is becoming just like any other with the chain shops.

4.3.9. Britain in Bloom Medal

Joe Peterson queried who had received/holds St Andrews silver medal for Britain in Bloom?

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Student Leisure Centre Access

Community services think it is too difficult to allow students access on production of a matriculation card, instead are suggesting a special student Fifestyle card.

4.4.2. Bus/Train Timetable

With the retiming of the direct 99 service so that it does not conveniently deliver people to Leuchars station for the 8.12am commuter train to Edinburgh, giving a 21 minute wait for the train, Stagecoach now suggest taking the 96 which leaves St Andrews earlier than the 99 then takes the scenic route through Strathkinness before arriving at Leuchars station after the 7.40am 99 service. She thought that she could cycle St Andrews-Leuchars faster than that.

4.4.3. StARLink public meeting

St Andrews Rail Link campaign: She announced that there will be a Public Meeting on 7.50pm, Fri 19th Nov, in the Town Hall Supper Room. It will discuss some of the options available for a rail link now and how the campaign will proceed. Expects MSP(s), rail consultants, perhaps Fife Council officers (for information, not for questioning).

4.4.4. Waste Separation at Madras

Watching from her back window Cynthia Tero has seen the separate waste containers at Madras Kilrymont Road all emptied into the same lorry at the same time.

5. Planning Committee

5.2. Updates

5.2.2. Feddinch Golf Access

Ian Goudie added that the bus shelters originally required at the main entrance were to be erected though.

5.3. Transportation matters

5.3.1. Traffic Calming on Buchanan Gardens

Ian Goudie has received reports that the speed warning lights are triggered at unreasonable low speeds. He feels that they will be ignored if they are set below the speed limit.

5.3.3. Market Street Upgrade

Felt the consultation was dominated by a Transportation Service agenda to pedestrianise Market Street and did not present the effects on traffic and parking in surrounding areas of the town to balance the picture presented.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. Water Services

Joe Peterson asked for guidance on community council position on the question of cost of water service improvements. Should it be borne by the individual consumer or general taxation.

Show of hands: 17 for general, 1 personal, 1 abstain

Secondly he asked what the priority for investment should be: cost-effectiveness followed by affordability then sustainability? This received some support but Pete Lindsay suggested sustainability as a higher priority, also with some support. Joe Peterson asked to use his skill and judgement to encompass community council's range of views in answering this question.

Cllr Frances Melville said that she was aware of many housing projects held up by lack of water infrastructure.

6.3. World Class

[September 4.4.4.] Murdo Macdonald acknowledged that he had been unconvinced by the need for community council to participate in the World Class Vision project last month, but he had not been aware of its more formal status as a corporate body rather than just another pressure group. Given this he believes it essential that we should be represented on the new body.

7. New Business

7.1. Community Council Induction

While agreeing with the general idea, Pete Lindsay warned against anything that might be seen as an attempt to indoctrinate new members, suggesting rather some social gathering over coffee or (his preference) a beer.

As a newcomer Bruce Ryan had found an introduction to the issues Penny Uprichard had given him when he joined the planning committee very useful, as was reading the back issues of the minutes online.

Bonnie Ryder said that a particular problem for the student reps who turn over relatively quickly was who's who. Named place markers would help during the meetings, as would a photo gallery or recognition sheet.

7.2. Phone Boxes

While community council has previously objected only to removals in the residential areas of St Andrews concerns over the availability of alternatives in the town centre brought agreement that the objection should be extended to all removals until BT present coherent strategy for call box provision in the town, rather than piecemeal removal, and undertake proper consultation.

Pete Lindsay to write

7.3. Community Council Code of Conduct

Meeting could see the concerns raised, but did not feel confrontation would be useful on what was really a technical infringement of the consultation requirements for something that was broadly agreed with in principle.

Pete Lindsay to write

8. Reports from Officer Bearers

8.1. Chair

8.1.1. Links Trust Information Evening

6.30pm Tue 26 Oct, Links Club House.

Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Joe Peterson to attend

8.1.2. Remembrance Sunday 14th Nov.

Donald Macgregor gave details of the arrangements and took names of those who will attend.

8.2. Treasurer

8.2.1. Bandstand Concerts

Common Good funding has been confirmed; he expects it to arrive soon.

8.3. Secretary

8.3.3. "Transport Plan" Consultations

Ian Goudie pointed out that there was still no news of actual consultation on the draft Area Transportation Plan.

Pete Lindsay to ask

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.1.1. Recreation

Joe Peterson reported on the results of various "in Bloom" awards, noting that Cupar had snatched the "Most Improved" category.

9.2. From Representatives

9.2.1. Police Consultation

Murdo Macdonald and Archie Strachan had attended this event in Cupar. Murdo Macdonald reported that a new format had been tried with the representatives talking and the police listening rather than vice versa. Unfortunately he felt this lead to a concentration on individual representatives' issues which were often irrelevant to the wider picture.

9.2.2. Hogmanay Ceilidh

Murdo Macdonald asked permission to investigate whether a Hogmanay Ceilidh was practical this year (issues such as hall booking, band availability, etc, may intervene).

Agreed