

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes – November 2004

Approved

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Chair: Donald Macgregor

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Laurel Aguilar, Bette Christie, Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Ian Hamilton, Pete Lindsay, Donald Macgregor, Joe Peterson, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Penny Uprichard.

Students Association

Simon Atkins, Ben Hecking, Bonnie Ryder

Fife Councillors

Sheila Black, Jane Ann Liston, Bill Sangster

Apologies

Bruce Ryan, Murdo Macdonald, Dennis Macdonald

2. Minutes of October 2004

4.3.8. insert "green" before "grocer"

3. Presentations

3.1. St Andrews World Class Vision

Mike Robinson, Fife Council Local Services (standing in for Martin Greig of Scottish Enterprise), Lindsay Adams (Bonkers, Church St).

Mike Robinson opened by going over the origin of the St Andrews World Class Vision group, which came from like-minded businesses primarily from the tourist sector. The informal pressure group, linked with various other bodies, is now forming a limited company that will be able to receive funds from awarding bodies for various projects in St Andrews. It is not an alternative tourist board, as has been speculated. There will be five members of the company's board from the founding Vision group and six from the community. St Andrews World Class will not itself deliver the majority of the projects it is involved with, it will act as an endorser and funding route, to say projects are "World Class".

Lindsay Adam, pointed out that the group is not just about physical infrastructure. They have recently conducted a survey of business skills needs, which involved members of community council. This exercise reported that: business faces a need for St Andrews knowledge; problems with high cost of housing in recruiting workers; and that St Andrews could market itself differently as there is some perception that it is orientated to golf and older visitors, which may put some potential visitors off.

The "World Class" title is the name of the group, an aim. It is not intended for public use as a marketing campaign. The WC group may try to establish a St Andrews promotional "brand", with a logo design, which is on the web site <http://vision.standrewsworldclass.com/> for comment.

The golf development project brings the four operators of golf facilities together using joint promotion of St Andrews, rather than competing.

Gateway building at the North Haugh: WC is looking at establishing the orientation centre for visitors at the entrance to town, which was suggested early in the Gateway saga.

Physical environment projects that WC are involved with or are considering:

- Bruce Embankment – work is beginning on this high profile area, views of which are recognisable worldwide. A multi-agency project.
- Market St – consultations on how to upgrade have begun, and there will be much more consultation than previous projects. A lesson learnt.
- South St – Lindsay Adam said that, in retrospect, this should not have been labelled as a WC project. They had not been not aware of what would be involved.
- Harbour – could be upgraded.

Comments & Questions:

Ken Crichton was in favour of groups working together for the benefit of St Andrews. He criticised the World Class group for not including local organisations such as the St Andrew's Week committee. He disagreed with the proposition that St Andrews is not up to world class and considered it a slight on the work over the years of town bodies. Referring to some of the illustrations in the presentation he was moved to ask if Market Street, shown with street tables and gaily-coloured striped awnings, was supposed to be in Scotland – or France?

Mike Robinson replied that he did not think St Andrews is being run to a World Class standard at present.

Things can always improve, however good they may be. St Andrews Word Class, working in partnership, can 'draw down' funds from other places. Some of the proposed works would not be finished to the quality they are aiming for otherwise. The specific Market Street illustration in the presentation was just a picture, not a proposal, but a useful point for discussion of what St Andrews could be like.

Penny Uprichard said the main problem for the town was the lack of proper regular and continuous maintenance of the infrastructure. Big bang projects such as South Street cause a great deal. She felt that Scottish Enterprise Fife, as the major funding agency, run roughshod over the town's desire and are democratically unaccountable. She recalled that St Andrews was said to be operating at its visitor capacity some years ago; she did not therefore see the need to attempt to increase the number of visitors still further. Finally she noted that the involvement of the St Andrews Bay Hotel and their very American style caused her grave concern.

Lindsay Adam said that it was felt that St Andrews Bay has a lot to offer on training methods etc. But she assured the meeting that WC does not want to 'Amercanize' the St Andrews experience.

Mike Robinson added that it is not really the intention to increase number of visitors, rather trying to provide the quality of facility the existing levels need. May get an increase as spin-off, but the aim is to give encourage visitors to spend more in St Andrews.

Donald Macgregor asked if the WC group would take comments from organisations or individuals?

MR: Either. The web site <http://vision.standrewsworldclass.com/> has various feedback forms and a contact list of individual members.

Laurel Aguilar enquired where the line between a public project and business enterprise is drawn for World Class?

MR: The new Limited Company is non-profit, "limited by guarantee". Funds plough back into St Andrews projects.

Ian Goudie found that World Class does stick in gullet as a name. It may have been intended to be internal, but is all over this presentation and the web site. He noted that WC was now stepping back from taking responsibility for South St, but it still seems to be rather authoritarian in approach: saying what will be, but not taking account of democratic input, or elected representation.

MR: certainly presentation has been a problem. In formal democratic terms South St proposals will go for planning approval next month. He hoped Market St consultation will be better, it is certainly not supposed to be 'take it or leave it'.

Referring to the mention of housing as a problem for business expansion Ian Goudie warned that the scope for new housing is very limited in St Andrews.

Lindsay Adam agreed they are very aware of housing as a problem, shown up again by the business survey. St Andrews WC are not prescribing a solution, nor talking of building barracks for low-paid...

Joe Peterson did not want St Andrews to benefit at the expense of regeneration work in the rest of Fife. He asked where funding for St Andrews projects is coming from?

MR: Fife Council has approved three town centres as priority venues: St Andrews, Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. They recognise that improvements in these locations will trickle down benefits to the rest of Fife. There is no specific Fife Council funding for St Andrews; projects will have to compete with all others on their merits. National level funding would be purely for St Andrews, which is recognised as a key economic driver for Fife and Scotland. Again funding would be competed for project by project.

Ewen Sparks asked if the World Class Vision has a lifetime, and end point?

MR: Last year's presentation was based on a 10 year vision, but there is no fixed lifetime; the issues in getting St Andrews to be World Class and keeping it there will be continuing.

[NB Vision web site is <http://vision.standrewsworldclass.com/>. Do not be misled by the rather easier to find <http://www.standrewsworldclass.com/> golf marketing site – PL]

3.2. Flooding at Kilrymont Road

Ken Sweeney spoke about issues arising from the extensive flooding along Kilrymont Road on 15 October. His personal connection with this was his mother's house being flooded to 1.5m.

Looking into the flooding he found it affects at least Scooniehill Road, Roundhill Road, Lamond Drive, Kilrymont Place either directly from the fields or as the flood overwhelms the town drainage system.

He has approached the farmer and the managers of the land immediately south of Kilrymont and Scooniehill to discuss the problems. From these and other discussions he would like to see long and short term action.

In the short term for Kilrymont a ditch at the back of the houses could divert water into the Kilrymont burn which joins the Kinnessburn at Woodburn Park, below the area of the Kinnessburn flooding problem. He also thinks something similar could be done for Scooniehill.

Long term, he believes the main cause to be a major drain laid across the south of St Andrews some years ago; Scottish Water deny there is a pipe there, though he remembers it being laid. He thinks it destroyed the field drains, so water from the drains upslope stops at the newer pipe that does not exist, then spreads along the line of the pipe, saturating the ground and emerging at various points as 'run-off'. He hopes that Fife Council can help put an organisation in place to take this problem on. The land owners and farmer think the problem will get worse if nothing is done.

He emphasised that he does not want to apportion blame because it would be pointless; rather he wants the problem dealt with.

Joe Peterson suggested as a temporary measure asking the farmer to leave a 1m grass strip at the field

plus a temporary ditch which would retain the waters.

Ken Sweeney responded that the farmer has tried something like that but it is overwhelmed. In addition the farmer does not want to held responsible for diverting water to someone else's house – hence the need for jointly agreed action involving all the appropriate agencies.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston recalled that a pipe went in about 10 years ago, certainly in Fife Region days. She is trying to get hold of the appropriate people in Scottish Water, which inherited responsibility for water matters from Fife Region at reorganisation in the 90s. SEPA should also be involved. Fife Council may be able to do something under the new Powers of 'well-being', but formal responsibility for water matters was stripped from local authorities with the formation of Scottish Water and SEPA. Nonetheless the problem does affect Fife Council directly through roads and drains being blocked, and work needed to clear them and indirectly through social problems, possible need to rehouse people flooded out etc. She recalled similar though lesser problems in 2001. At that time she saw water gushing up out of the ground behind Scooniehill. She strongly advised formation of a Residents' Association.

Ian Goudie suggested that community council invite Scottish Water to speak on these problems, but Ken Sweeney asked that this not be done just now as he wanted to keep this low profile while progress was being made.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. Clatto Hill wind farm

The proposal was rejected by 10:6 votes.

4.1.2. Street Lighting

Concerns have been raised about lighting along Old Guardbridge Road. The road sees lots of use for access to the Old Course Hotel and the various golf facilities. Cost to provide street lighting along the length will be some £30,000. It should have been provided as part of the original planning consent for the Old Course Hotel, she noted.

Pete Lindsay supported adding streetlights. He recently wrote for the community council on concerns over the lights from the golf practice range, but the overspill from the hotel was perhaps worse; both make cycling or walking along the road – part of the cycle route to Leuchars and the only pedestrian access to the golf range etc – blindingly difficult.

Penny Uprichard was not surprised to hear that the work should have been done as part of the Old Course Hotel development. This reiterated the general point she has made on planning conditions not being enforced; is there any way they can be made enforceable longer term?

Ian Goudie added that lack of enforcement often falls back on Fife Council when they have to undertake work later at public expense.

Ken Crichton recalled that Community Council objected to levels of lighting from the golf range when it was first proposed.

4.1.3. Community skips

Although the provision of skips about town at the end of the university session to take house clearing debris has been very successful at reducing rubbish on the street, it now seems that it will fall foul of regulations on problems with unmanned skips. Roy Stewart is discussing the implications with the university.

4.1.4. Strathkinness

Has been suffering problems with numbers of lorries from John Knox road – 100/day – shifting topsoil; and the attitude of some of the drivers. This is being raised with the developer and various alternatives are being tried.

4.1.5. Adopting Roads

Fife Council has recently agreed to take on the maintenance of those roads they own, but have not Adopted.

4.1.6. Structure plan

A 20 year vision. A draft will be out for comment soon; contains reference to housing numbers and suggested sites for development that will be of interest to St Andrews.

4.1.7. Toilets

Very successful meeting with Roy Stewart; councillors suggest he speaks to HEW. Trying to get £80k of the Fife-wide £100k budget for toilets improvements.

4.1.8. Links Trust Management Committee

Will not be taking a place on the St Andrews World Class committee.

4.1.9. Buchanan Gardens

Confirmed reports [Oct 5.3.1] that the "traffic calming" speed warning signs are more sensitive to traffic travelling one direction than the other.

4.1.10. Street Lighting

Ian Goudie raised a need for improved lighting at Balnacarron on Hepburn Gardens

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Safe Reversing

[Oct 4.2.5.] Canongate reversing – procedure and vehicles checked, crews reminded of proper practice.

4.2.2. Crossing at Somerfield

To be considered in the 2005/6 schedule of road schemes.

4.2.3. Viaduct Walk

[Oct 4.2.3.] Fence will be repaired. The longitudinal crack in the path surface will be monitored but it is too narrow to need work yet.

4.2.4. Trees at Crawford Gardens

Have been dealt with already.

4.2.5. Melbourne Place Crossing

Cynthia Tero asked if this was under consideration still. Cllr Sheila Black replied that it was scheduled for next financial year's programme.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. A boards

Problems with A boards: there are no regulations to control where they are positioned relative to the place they advertise. They are leading to problems on the pavements particularly for disabled or child buggies.

4.2.2. Fly posting on railings etc.

There has been an unwelcome outbreak recently

4.2.3. Christmas Lights

Welcomed this year's lights, mostly supplied by the town's merchants, erected by Gilmartin Ltd.

4.2.4. Bridge St/Largo Road & Doubledykes Road

Are to be resurfaced in November.

Richard Douglas asked if pavements are included? No information but probably just road surface.

4.2.5. Dunhill Road Signs

Ewen Sparks pointed out that temporary signs for the Dunhill Cup traffic were still up on lampposts etc. Cllr Bill Sangster replied that he and the Local Office were on the case.

4.2.6. Market Street Drains

Cynthia Tero asked that something be done about the persistently reoccurring puddle in the pavement drain by Bottoms Up and Tesco.

4.2.7. Flagpole replacement

Joe Peterson asked how much it cost to replace the town hall flagpole?

Bill Sangster did not have the figures but it would have been a lot to hire the crane alone.

He was concerned that the one saltire flag was probably too large for continuous flying; need a smaller one that won't shred itself on the support wires. He hopes community council will provide as usual.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Old Guardbridge Road

As a frequent cyclist along this road she commented that the main problem arose from the overwhelming lights of the hotel, leaving the road and path surfaces too heavily shadowed by the wall for glare-dazzled vision.

4.4.2. South Street Cycle Racks

Temporary racks have been found to replace those sawn off at Lammas.

4.4.3. Cycle Lights

Noted calling out to an unilluminated cyclist to get lights; there was no response, the lady was wearing headphones so she couldn't hear...

She noted too that by no means all the benighted cyclists she calls out to are students.

4.4.4. Park & Ride

At the recent Area Services committee it was reported that the longer park & ride hours 8.30-5.15 were not attracting commuters. It seems 10-11 is the busiest time. At the moment the scheme is supported out of the Fife-wide budget; there is now talk of introducing charges, which she feels would be a mistake.

Ewen Sparks supported lack of charges; he thought the balance will change when the controlled parking area in town expands. Cllr Liston agreed.

Pete Lindsay suggested that if charging were introduced some mildly innovative thinking be used to preserve as much as possible of the current appeal of the park & ride scheme. He wanted any charged

ticket to allow all day hop on/off use of the bus.

Cllr Bill Sangster reported that the buses carried over 30,000 passengers last year.

Ian Goudie doubted that the current scheme would attract local commuters as it does not cover great enough distances.

4.4.5. Links Information Meeting

She was surprised to hear Peter Mason suggesting the University plans to expand to 10,000 students. She put this figure to the University who vehemently denied it, and are trying to find out whence Peter Mason got it.

4.4.6. School Estates presentation

She commended this to community council, hopes as many people as possible will turn up. She has seen some of it in which Madras Kilrymont building is referred to as "Robust" which will probably come as news to the staff and pupils.

4.4.7. Waste Separation at Madras

[Oct 4.4.4.] Roy Stewart, Area Head of Waste Management explained that the vehicle Cynthia Tero had seen loading different types of bin was internally separated into three compartments, which would not be obvious from the outside. The waste is kept separated.

4.4.8. Railway Development Society

Community Council sent a supporting subscription a few years back, but were never noted as supporters for some reason and so never received the newsletters and information from the society. By way of apology community council will receive a free two-year membership, with papers, commencing now.

4.4.9. Starlink Meeting

While on the subject of railways she reminded the meeting of the 'progress meeting': 7.50pm 19th November, in the Town Hall Supper Room.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Minutes

Appendix A 2.2.8.

Ken Fraser commented that there was little seating for waiting passengers compared with present arrangements.

Bruce Ryan to add to objection

5.5. New Path, The Scores

Ian Goudie thought this came out of discussions at the cycling forum where the unsatisfactory nature of the existing on-road counter-flow was raised. Planning committee haven't seen the plans yet but he doesn't think there is actual environmental damage likely. He did sympathise with Dr Reid's point 6 regarding the applicant; this appears to be a way for Fife Council to avoid the restrictions on considering its own planning application. Penny Uprichard added that the "St Andrews Town Centre Development Trust" was one man.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. St Andrews Community Council Election

No one foresaw problems with proposed timescale.

6.3. Madras Whole School Council

Donald Macgregor asked for two volunteers to join the Madras College Whole School Council, as suggested by Lindsay Matheson last month.

Cynthia Tero, Simon Aiken

6.4. Britain in bloom medals

[Oct 4.3.9.] It seems that the silver medal mentioned last month was awarded to another St Andrews, a village somewhere in the south west of England?

6.5. Water Consultation

[Oct 6.1.] Joe Peterson has replied on the lines discussed last month.

7. New Business

7.1. Recommended Dates for Local Holidays

Meeting agreed that this request was too vague to express an opinion – what was proposed as an alternative?

Joe Peterson warned the effects on shop workers must be considered, which had a measure of support in the meeting.

No Opinion. Write for clarification

7.2. Community Councils Issues

7.2.1. Community Council Working Group

Bette Christie volunteered, providing the location of the meetings was suitable for access in her wheelchair.

7.2.3. Complaints Procedure for Community Councils

December agenda

7.3. Trees at Crawford Gardens

While this affects a public footpath,, it was felt this was a matter for immediate neighbours.

no comment

7.4. Rural Scotland

Penny Uprichard, who is a board member of Rural Scotland, drew attention to the suggestion in the covering letter of an extra donation to help RS out of a sticky patch. She proposed a total £30 to support the work of Rural Scotland.

On a show of hands £30 – 6, £15 – 7.

£15 to Rural Scotland

7.6. Farmers' Market

Cllr Bill Sangster added that the Market is charged for the use of the St Mary's Place car park.

7.7. Planning System Consultation

Penny Uprichard

8. Reports from Office Bearers

8.1. Chair

Donald Macgregor has now taken over from Murdo Macdonald as chair of the Town-Gown liaison group of which the community council forms part.

They will have a public meeting in January to raise the town's awareness of the group and to hear issues.

8.2. Treasurer

8.2.1. Interim Accounts

Archie Strachan circulated interim figures.

8.2.2. Common Good Fund

Following a query he raised concerning the sum of money being taken from the CGF each year to service loans to the Byre Theatre, he has received confirmation from Fife Council Law & Administration Service that the fixed sum being paid to the theatre should in fact have been variable with interest rates. This had resulted in an overpayment £12,000, which has been repaid to the CGF. He thanked Fife Councillors for their support and the Fife Council officers for their diligence in investigating this.

[Pete Lindsay & Jane Ann Liston left the room before discussion of the next item]

8.2.3. Honorarium.

Meeting agreed £250 honorarium to the Secretary.

8.3. Secretary

8.3.1. Best Kept Town

Letter of thanks to Community Services agreed.

Pete Lindsay to write

8.3.5. Jamie Anderson tree

Joe Peterson

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.1.1. Recreation Committee

The photographs on loan from the University are the university's display copies, not valuable originals.

9.2. From Representatives

9.2.2. RAF Leuchars Community Forum

It was reported that Dennis Macdonald attended. There was no business relevant to St Andrews, mostly it was about noise at Leuchars village.

9.2.3. Links Trust meeting

Dennis Macdonald attended; again, nothing to report.

9.2.4. Kate Kennedy Parade committee

Cynthia Tero asked for a stand-in to take the community council place at the next meeting.

Bonnie Ryder or Richard Douglas