

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Draft Minutes – December 2004

(Copies of Agendas and Minutes of the Community Council are held at Fife Council's Local Office, St Mary's Place and the Town Library, Church Square. Those from late 1997 on are on line at <http://www.louisxiv.demon.co.uk/standrewscc/>)

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approved

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Chair: Donald Macgregor.

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Ken Crichton, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Joe Lamb, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Joe Peterson, Bruce Ryan, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Penny Uprichard.

Students Association

Simon Atkins, Ben Hecking, Alex Yarbrough

Nominated: Madras College

Kitty Napier

Fife Councillors

Sheila Black, Jane Ann Liston

Apologies

Frances Melville, Bill Sangster, Bette Christie, George Davidson, Dennis Macdonald, Cynthia Tero.

2. Minutes of November 2004

Lack of attendance list: the completed attendance sheet has been mislaid. If it reappears the details will be added.

Add: Chair: Donald Macgregor

4.2.3. Christmas lights: erected by Gilmartin Ltd.

The corrected minutes were accepted

Approved

3. Presentations

3.1. Need for Small Business Premises

The original speaker, Alex Rintoul was unable to attend, but Murdo Macdonald knew something of the situation he wished to raise. Alex Rintoul has built up a business recycling old hospital beds into animal grooming tables. Due to lack of suitable workshop premises in St Andrews he is forced to work from his domestic garage, which was not entirely suitable being in a domestic area.

Murdo Macdonald felt this illustrated the point he and others have made concerning the lack of small business units in St Andrews, particularly as the limited supply of brownfield sites are converted to housing. Cllr Jane Ann Liston added that the proposed hospital site on Largo Road used one of the last undeveloped sites currently zoned for "light industrial" use. Pete Lindsay said that community council should raise this in the Local Plan consultation early next year.

Murdo Macdonald commented that more practical sites were needed than the North Haugh 'high-tech' zone which was low-lying enough to suffer flooding; a more practical site was needed. Joe Lamb suggested that sites need to be affordable for small businesses. Ian Goudie said there was a need to conserve existing sites from competing development pressures, as well as identify new. Archie Strachan wanted community council to write to Fife council to point this issue out as an urgent concern, which was agreed.

Pete Lindsay to write

3.2. Tourism

Dean Knuth has been a regular visitor to St Andrews since the 1970s. He is now contributing editor of the US-based Golf Digest Magazine. Here with the magazine's travel editor he has also spoken to the Links Trust, the R&A etc. He wanted to raise awareness as widely as possible through St Andrews of the quality competition posed to Scotland generally and St Andrews particularly by the Irish travel and tourism industry. He considered them to provide a superior, better-run experience which must threaten the Scottish industry despite assets such as St Andrews.

4. Fife Councillors

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Small Business Units

Will also raise the concerns of community council about small business, but she emphasised that everything will be covered in the structure plan and local plan consultations in 2005.

4.2.2. St Andrews Week

She felt this went very well, and thanked all who participated.

4.2.3 Town Hall Flag

Donald Macgregor noted a problem with the town hall's flag. Cllr Jane Ann Liston said that it had been reported, but staff were waiting for the wind to moderate before dealing with it.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Enforcement of Planning Conditions

She has made suggestions to Development Service about enforcement following comments in community council. In response they say there is a "more robust model" now; enforcement officers are regularly passed details of appropriate conditions to monitor their implementation.

Ian Goudie thanked her for pushing this issue, and asked her to find out when these arrangements came into action, particularly in respect of the Craigtoun B bus turning circle affair? He also noted the recent query by Sir Menzies Campbell MP on Fife Council's resources devoted to the legal side of planning enforcement, and asked if there were enough people on the ground in this rôle? He suggested that enforcement needs strong office backup for successful recordkeeping and monitoring systems, and called for regular reports to the appropriate Development Committee. Cllr Liston thought more regular reports to committee a good idea and would raise it with the appropriate people. They do get an enforcement report every quarter. She noted one outstanding issue goes back to 1994.

4.4.2. Zebra at St Mary's Street

Work on this has started at last, though several noted it had stopped again, partway completed.

4.4.3. Recycling Paper

She asked for a quick show of hands of anyone who found the paper bins too small now that the paper collection includes cardboard – 3 out of 18 showed for problems fitting in all their waste paper for 28 days. She will ask for bigger paper bins, or a second small one, to be issued to those who need them.

Ewen Sparks, backed by Murdo Macdonald, reminded her of the question of recycling of paper and cardboard by businesses; currently it all goes in a general business waste bag and landfilled. Businesses wanting to do the Right Thing environmentally can be prosecuted for putting business waste paper into domestic recycling bins.

4.4.4. Chip van at Madras Kilrymont

At the recent East Area Regulation Sub Committee meeting concerns had been raised over the van's operation. The Rector had spoken, pointing out that the sort of food supplied from the van was against the guidelines for healthy eating from the Scottish Executive; Transportation Service want the bus bay which the van uses as a bus clearway (no other vehicles allowed to park there) for the movement of pupils between sites, South Street and Station Park playing fields, by bus during the day; the nearby bus stop in Kilrymont Rd may be moved to the bus bay too.

A licence was granted for the van's operation in East Fife, but with an exclusion zone of 100m around the boundary of Madras Kilrymont school. This includes neighbouring roads such as Roundhill and Kilrymont and probably a section of Lamont Drive.

Some problems were foreseen with the clearway suggestion. Ian Goudie was concerned that banning cars entirely from Kilrymont Road lay-by would be a problem for residents of neighbouring streets during evening events. Murdo Macdonald, who lives opposite the school, said that the parking within the school grounds was often full. The lay-by is 6 bus lengths, not all of which need be available exclusively to buses in the evening, whatever the situation in the day. On busy nights cars already spill over onto surrounding streets; excluding them from the bus bay will make this worse.

4.4.5. StARLink meeting

There were very exciting ideas from speakers over the way forward on funding a railway by other development and safeguarding a route.

4.4.6. Roadworks

Ewen Sparks asked why various major road resurfacing work, at Bridge Street and Doubledykes Road, had been scheduled during St Andrews week?

She replied that it has to be done some time - it seems there's always something on in St Andrews or some reason someone does not want work done at a particular time. Doubledykes Road was scheduled, but Bridge Street was fitted-in early because another project of similar scale elsewhere had slipped and so resources were available.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Minutes

A.2.6. Recycling centre

Ian Goudie explained that community council support for the principle of a recycling centre at this location goes back to the early 90s when it was first proposed. However parts of the proposal need refinement, hence the objection to lack of pedestrian access. A possible problem of traffic queuing for access to the recycling centre blocking access to the adjacent residential development was discussed, but as this would require a tailback of 14+ vehicles it was not pursued.

A.2.8. KwikSave / Somerfield

Richard Douglas asked why there had been no objection to the totem-pole style sign, which had been objected to previously. Ian Goudie said this was a modified design, now no larger or garish than the current sign at the site.

5.2. Bus Station Objection

Joe Peterson strongly disagreed with several aspects of the objection, asking if the planning committee was familiar with the bus station. He disliked the description of "tatty"; considered urgent change was needed, not least for disabled access; and objected to the reference to possible integration with a future rail link as being unrealistic. He strongly suggested planning committee reconsider the objection.

Bruce Ryan responded that he did use the bus station, at least twice a week, and that he felt 'tatty' to be a reasonable description of its condition. The comment about the integration with a future rail link refers to the need for integrated planning looking to the longer term rather than piecemeal development of infrastructure that is happening currently. He agreed that wheelchair access was one of the pressing needs for the bus station though. Ian Goudie added that there is already structure plan provision for a rail link back to St Andrews. It is important to try to look ahead when considering proposals, for example the work on decorative railings, flagstones and flowerbeds in the environs of the bus station done some three or four years back was money in effect wasted as they are now mostly to be destroyed in these proposals. There is a lack of strategic thought in them.

Joe Peterson asked why planning committee hadn't commented on the location of the pedestrian crossing on City Road; he felt should be closer to the Bus Station. Pete Lindsay replied that the committee had discussed several variations on crossings and traffic lights in the area at various stages in the Bus Station consultation. If the crossing were any further north the east (town) side would be on a particularly narrow strip of pavement and blocking a row of garages.

Joe Peterson also disliked the style of the objection. Cllr Sheila Black added that St Andrews objects too much; it would help if comments on development applications were more positive in manner. Murdo Macdonald noted that we had been round this discussion before; not everyone will be pleased on the issues covered in planning responses, but he asked if the objections could be more widely circulated for general comment.

Bruce Ryan responded that his objection was circulated to other members of planning committee by email, for review, before it was sent. Pete Lindsay didn't see any problem with wider circulation if people so desired, but warned there might be a problem if planning committee members, who already spent hours examining the details of plans and applications, then found themselves defending the details of responses from comment by those who had not looked at them. Ian Goudie said that anyone who wanted to discuss the detail of applications was very welcome to come along to the planning committee on the second and last Monday of the month. He also asked how community council was supposed to word comments? It is necessary to address the main issues, to point out when the basis of plans are mistaken as well comment on the minor detail. It is inappropriate to be deferential while standing up for St Andrews.

Ken Fraser asked if there were considerations of time limits on funding; what if an objection takes the project over a deadline?

Ian Goudie acknowledged that this concern was a general problem, especially when used by developers to apply pressure to planning decisions. However community council policy has always been that planning has to be approached on a rational basis, on planning issues not speculative external factors.

5.4. Hospital

Plans for the hospital site at Largo Road have now arrived. They will be considered in forthcoming planning meetings.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.2. Community Councils Seminar

Bruce Ryan, Pete Lindsay

6.4. Toilets

Joe Peterson reported that the aim of officials is to have only three council-run toilets, in St Andrews, but for them to be "first class facilities", with full disabled access, though where charging will "probably" be introduced. Additionally for toilets in the Castle area they will negotiate with Scottish Heritage for public access to the castle museum toilets; similarly the Links Trust will be approached over replacing the West Sands by access to the Clubhouse; in Kinburn Park close the current block and use museum's (though there is a question of effect on the tennis club); West Port will be replaced by the new bus station toilets which will be staffed and open longer.

He felt it was essential to have new facilities in place and signposted before the old are closed, and essential to keep discussion open with Fife Council.

Penny Uprichard felt three inadequate, but it was pointed out that Dundee manages with three.

6.6. Town Gown Public Meeting

[November 8.1] Donald Macgregor gave details of the Town Gown Liaison Group meeting which he will chair: 7pm Wed 26 January, Town Hall. There will be representatives from the University, Fife Council, Police.

7. New Business

7.1. Fair Share Fair

Chris Lesurf to get a preliminary indication of interest from town businesses and report back. Ewen Sparks offered to bring it up at the next Merchants' Association meeting. Cllr Jane Ann Liston noted that the proposed date roughly corresponded to the Senzie Fair allowed in St Andrews' charters.

Chris Lesurf to investigate

7.2. Local Paths

7.2.1. St Leonard's Fields

It was thought that the closure of the informal (ie hole in fence) access to the hospital grounds from the path along the north bank of the Kinnessburn might be a safety measure by the Health Board as there is a deep hole to a drain or culvert just within the grounds in the area accessed from the path.

Archie Strachan said that the path has been used for many years and may be a Right of Way. Ian Goudie thought this should be investigated and steps taken to formally protect it if it does qualify [20 years use etc].

7.2.2. Local Walks information

Meeting agreed that walks promotion should be investigated further – what sort of help was envisaged?

Archie Strachan to investigate

This might be a candidate for a grant from community council funds. Ian Goudie recalled that community council passed a lot of path and walk information to the District Council, though little was done with it for reasons of cost.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston suggested contacting Development Services in Cupar who deal with paths and rights-of-way.

7.3. Draft Good Practice Agreement

There were some concerns about the tone of this document and the feeling that it was being imposed rather than agreed to. Agreed to wait on reports of the outcome of CC seminar, and discuss in January.

7.4. Lettings Plan – St Andrews

Health, Education & Welfare

7.6. St Andrews in Focus

7.6.1. Next article

Chris Lesurf offered to prepare another article based on there Fair Share Fair idea, which offer was gratefully accepted.

Chris Lesurf to write

7.6.2. Circulation

Members felt that perhaps Flora Selwyn had not grasped the magnitude of the practical problems of her proposal.

Pete Lindsay to respond

7.8. Scottish Language Dictionaries

Information pack and newsletter passed to Ken Fraser

8. Reports from Office Bearers

8.1. Chair

8.1.1. Community Council Trust

Vice Chair Murdo Macdonald reported that steps were now under way, following discussions between Chair Donald Macgregor, himself and solicitor Bob Inch, to prepare a restructuring of the Trust to modernise it to meet current and forthcoming legislation, make it more accountable and safer for the future through a wider range of trustees, and more accessible to the town with a view to giving small grants.

(The Trust has been effectively dormant for some years now. There are three trustees, the Chair and Secretary of community council, ex officio, and an external trustee, Rev Marie-Louise Moffat.)

8.1.2. Hogmanay Ceilidh

Murdo Macdonald took the opportunity to mention that there were still a few tickets still left for Hogmanay ceilidh, but they were going fast. He'd be happy to see other community councillors there...

8.2. Treasurer

8.3. Secretary

8.3.3. Patras Book

Agreed we should investigate with the Town Library the possibility a small presentation ceremony, perhaps involving the Mackie family's representatives.

Pete Lindsay

8.3.4. "Season's Greetings" Cards

Pete Lindsay

9. Reports

9.1. From Committees

9.1.1. Recreation

1. Take Pride in Fife

Joe Peterson added that one project involved developing community paths in Kelty, a project which may have some relevance to 7.2.2. above.

2. Art & Photographic Exhibition

Joe Peterson was surprised at the self-congratulatory remarks by the St Andrew's Week Steering Group in the Citizen as his impression from the exhibition and his own visits elsewhere, was that most events weren't too well attended during the Week. The actual St Andrew's Day was very busy though. He felt there was some confusion about St Andrew's Week and reported a remark that it was "just another festival". He wondered if it needs to be made more unique in some way? He also called for more signs to promote it through town.

3. Young Citizen 2004

Joe Peterson called for entries for the Young Citizen award, to be made in the new year, by 31st December.

4. Senior Citizens' Tea

Ken Crichton reminded the meeting of the date and time of the Tea and asked as many members as were free to come along to lend a hand.

5. Coastal Path

Joe Peterson has also heard that the coastal path could circumvent the problems at Kinkell caravan site through the periphery of the Links Trust's new course.

9.2. From Representatives

9.2.1. Fairtrade

Bruce Ryan reports that a web page for a Fairtrade Directory, listing where to buy Fairtrade products in St Andrews, is under development at <http://www.sites.ecosse.net/mycelium/forothers/ft.html>.

As part of St Andrew's Week the Fairtrade group had a stall in the food & drink fair. Had to explain to another exhibitor that Fairtrade was not a franchise marketing organisation.

9.2.2. Kate Kennedy Procession Committee

Richard Douglas reported the date for the 2005 Kate Kennedy procession: Saturday 16 April.

KK Club has refurbished the Archbishop's coach, which they may be prepared to lend for special occasions.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Christmas Lights

Ewen Sparks asked whether the Merchants' Association application to the Common Good Fund for a grant of £6000 towards the Xmas Lights had been processed yet? CGF representative Archie Strachan reported that it had been discussed and a recommendation made.

10.2. Calor Awards

Murdo Macdonald reported having seen positive coverage of community councils on television through the Calor community awards. He recommends community council pay serious attention to putting in an entry next year, as has been suggested several times before.

10.3 Green Belt Forum

Ian Goudie reminded the meeting that a Green Belt Forum representative is still needed.

10.4. University and St Andrew's Day

Ian Goudie reported that despite the general move towards adopting a St Andrew's Day holiday in Scotland, the University seemed to be moving in the opposite direction with scheduled lectures in the morning at least. Several members, former students, were surprised by this, recalling St Andrews Day to have been a holiday in the misty past of the 1970s. Ben Hecking thought that there may not be a University policy; attitude to St Andrew's Day may be set at departmental level.

The meeting agreed to find out what is the university's policy, and commend to them support for a holiday on Scotland's Saint's Day.

Pete Lindsay to write

11. Mince Pies

...and sherry, both provided by Jane Ann Liston and Pete Lindsay.

Phew, another year over.