

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council Minutes – March 2006

Approved

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Young St Andrews Citizen of The Year

Mr Peterson presented cheques and the Cup for the Young St Andrews Citizen of the Year to Victoria White, Claire Simpson and Jenna McFarlane before the start of the March meeting. The girls shared the Award for their services at the Step Rock Swimming Club.

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Bette Christie, Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Keith McCartney, Patrick Marks, Joe Peterson, Penny Uprichard, Maggie Stracey.

Students' Association

Ben Reilly, Frederic St Johnston.

Nominated

Ewen Sparks.

Fife Councillors

Sheila Black, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Bill Sangster.

Apologies

Carol Tricker, Stuart Holdsworth.

2. Minutes of January 2006

The minutes of the February Meeting were accepted unanimously as an accurate minute.

approved

3. Presentations

3.1. Kinnessburn Flood Study

Mike Thorpe and Derek Crowe from Fife Council presented the results of a major study into the flood problems associated with the Kinnessburn. Fife Council had employed a firm of specialist consultants, to come up with a range of scenarios in relation to the flooding issues and how these might be managed. These ranged from 1 in 5 years to 1 in 200 years events. The study had assessed peak river flows and tidal effects to assess the flooding risks. Proposals for at least some of the major flood events included raising of the footbridges and removal of vegetation where it might obstruct flow of flood waters. Costs for the project ranged from £1 – £3 million. Fife Council would have to request grant funding assistance, of which up to 80% might be available, but Mr Crowe emphasised that the project would have to be economically justifiable, and even then the Council would need to find capital funding over and above the remaining 20% of the costs. Routine maintenance and clearance of blockages was all that the council had money for at this time.

Among the questions asked was one about the cessation of regular dredging. Mr Beech was informed by Mr Thorpe that a great deal of benefit hadn't been achieved by dredging in the past and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency would have to be consulted, given the potential environmental damage of dredging. Mr Dennis Macdonald asked who people affected by flooding could sue? Mr Thorpe replied that people normally sued when someone was found to be negligent or in some way at fault. He insisted that Fife Council was doing all it could given its limited resources. The findings are to be considered at the Fife Council East Area Services Committee on the 8th March.

3.2. World Heritage and World Class

3.2.1. World Heritage Proposal

Patrick Laughlin presented the World Heritage Proposal for St Andrews first. He told the Community Council that a meeting to discuss the proposal took the view that a bid for this status should be seriously considered. He informed the meeting that any proposal should have the endorsement of at least two other official bodies, or it would not be viable. He said that the Community needed to actively back the proposal. If the proposal received support an Investigative Group would be set up to take the concept to its next level, to look at costs, time scale etc. He asked the Community Council if it would support this next step.

Richard Douglas asked about the benefit of being a World Heritage Site. Mr Laughlin couldn't say that the designation would give economic or social benefit, nor any added legal protective value, rather it would be an accolade recognising the intrinsic worth of the old part of St Andrews. Mr McCartney asked about the criteria and whether it would be all or part of St Andrews. Mr Laughlin referred to the UNESCO definition and suggested that the historic core and the Golf Links might be the likely area covered. Ms Uprichard was concerned that large peripheral developments could impact upon such a status, but was assured that this was unlikely given other urban sites with the designation such as Prague. Mr Sparks wondered if it

would put further restrictions upon planning. Mr Laughlin thought that it wasn't intended to stop appropriate change happening in an urban context. Councillor Sangster asked about the cost and who would pay. Mr Laughlin couldn't give costs; it would depend upon what kind of support you could get. He felt that goodwill support could reduce costs. It would take between 5–10 years to achieve World Heritage status.

Chairman Donald Macgregor suggested that a vote be taken at the April meeting, giving members time to think about the proposal. Mr Lindsay felt that it wasn't an option and the Community Council should be represented.

April Agenda

3.2.2. St Andrews World Class

Patrick Laughlin then outlined the World Class concept. It was conceived three years ago by some local businessmen, keen to make St Andrews a better place to work, live and visit. Funding for projects supported was awarded by Scottish Enterprise. He acknowledged that World Class failed in communicating its ideas and in involving the local community, hence his appointment as manager to improve matters. Involvement has increased to over thirty organisations since last summer and the door is still open for other groups to become involved. He acknowledged as well that the name wasn't one he personally liked. Mr Crichton commented that there were other organisations who should be involved. Mr Laughlin said that the door remained open to more representation, that World Class wasn't a closed club.

Mr Sparks commented that a lot of local people viewed it as tourist orientated and wondered about practical projects of immediate and tangible benefit to the town. Mr Laughlin said that World Class was about adding value, citing the example of the Bruce Embankment where they'd given money to use better materials in its construction.

Mr Laughlin said that several million could be available from Scottish Enterprise for St Andrews projects which could benefit from the added value concept. This funding wasn't available to official bodies like Fife Council, as Scottish Enterprise was there to support local businesses and communities acting together.

Mr Laughlin said that the group wasn't accountable to anyone, being a gathering of like-minded people, a sort of talking shop with a common vision.

Mr Lindsay said that the name was a problem and raised some hostility. He thought that the Community Council should be involved. Mr Laughlin hoped that St Andrews World Class would develop into an organisation which could help manage the town. He talked about needing more imaginative ways to deliver local services. This suggestion alarmed some who were concerned about the accountability of St Andrews World Class.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. City Park Kitchen Closure

Cllr Melville brought the issue of the closure of the kitchens at City Park Sheltered Housing to the attention of the meeting. The owner, Viewpoint Housing Association, has plans to close kitchens in this complex and others it owns, for economic reasons, by the end of March. They are liaising with residents, families and Social Services to determine what alternative provision can be made, as the residents of the more sheltered part of the complex are very frail and will lose both the benefit of freshly prepared meals and the chance to socialize at meal times. The Community Council agreed to write to Viewpoint to express its collective concern at the withdrawal, particularly at such short notice, of a valued service to frail, elderly residents.

Secretary to write expressing the concern of the Community Council

4.1.2. Second Draft Structure Plan

Cllr Melville has seen this plan in which Cupar and St Andrews are designated Strategic Development Areas. Cllr Melville thought that the designation was inappropriate and used usually for large urban areas. The plans contain a number of concerning proposals, including major housing proposals for the west side of St Andrews. Cllr Melville considered this a dangerous precedent. There is even mention of a new Primary School (in a table on page 16 in the Structure Plan) which surprised Cllr Melville, particularly with the current proposals relating to the rationalisation of primary schools in St Andrews. She and her colleagues had tried to get the Council to defer any decision about the future of primary schools until the publication of the Structure Plan. She couldn't understand how such a proposal could creep into the Structure Plan, suggesting that this demonstrated a lack of communication between these departments. Figures from Children's Services had taken into account the possible increase in housing when arriving at the present decision, so how a new primary school could be viewed as necessary she couldn't understand.

4.1.3. Car Parking Charges

Cllr Melville said that a decision had been taken at Policy and Resources Committee to have a Fife-wide charging policy. However she couldn't understand why St Andrews couldn't have a half hour parking charge like some other Fife towns, or a delay in charging for parking as she'd noted happened at City Quay in Dundee. Mr Sparks for the Merchants later asked for Community Council to support the Councillors in pushing for an initial free half hour parking. He felt that it would be beneficial to local residents coming in to buy their papers etc and would get a lot of traffic out of the way in the morning, but despite years of pressing the council, the idea has met with a negative response. He also wanted the councillors' opinions about the large price rise in the parking tickets. He wondered why we should be lumped in with Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy in this respect.

4.1.4. Lawhead School 20mph Zone Plans

Cllr Melville informed Community Council that the plans for this are now published and she encouraged anyone who wanted to make comments.

4.1.5. St Leonards Fields Planning Inquiry

This inquiry will be from the 14th–17th March at the Scores Hotel. Mr Goudie had hoped to attend but work commitments have made this impossible

4.1.6. New Bus Shelter

A new bus shelter has been built in the bus lay-by beside Little Carron.

4.2 Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1 Education and Children's Services Committee Meeting

Cllr Black informed the meeting that the date for this committee was 16th March not the 10th as stated in the Community Council minutes. At that Meeting it was likely that the decision to house Greyfriars in Langlands Primary would be taken. Mr Sparks asked if it was true that the Council were thinking of putting primary school children on service buses for a trial period to see whether it was worth putting on school buses? Cllr Black replied that she had heard this idea being suggested, but nothing had been finalised and matters were still under discussion. Mr Douglas raised the issue about the distance pupils had to live from the school to qualify for free school transport, this being over a mile, thus limiting the numbers eligible. Cllr Black said that this was a long standing rule but she was still trying to get the Council to make a concession as it was initiating the closure of a school, though it didn't have a legal obligation to provide transport for anyone living less than a mile from a school. A question was asked about the Burgh Nursery at Langlands and was informed by Cllr Black that it would be remaining there.

4.3 Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Park and Ride

Cllr Sangster is still trying to push for continuation of the Park and Ride Scheme, even at a reduced level. Decisions about sufficient funding being available are still unclear.

4.3.2 Police Station Access

Mrs Christie asked Cllr Sangster for his comments about disabled access to the St Andrews Police Station. Cllr Sangster agreed that it was poor at present, as the access ramps had to be set down by the clerical staff when a disabled person required access. He had received an acknowledgement that this was an unsatisfactory arrangement, added to which the bell for attracting attention to gain access is out of the reach of wheelchair users. The situation is being reassessed and a new accessible means of communication is to be installed. Cllr Sangster hoped that this would be the end of a two year saga of trying to sort out access.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1 Fly Posting

Cllr Liston has spoken to the Student Societies Officer who had managed to get a major reduction in fly posting by Student Groups. However Cllr Liston had noticed some new posters which she'd removed and had spoken again to the SSO, who'd promised to speak again to the offending societies, though not all are affiliated to the Union.

4.4.2 Pressured Area Status for St Andrews

St Andrews and the East Neuk are being looked on favourably by the Scottish Executive in relation to this status.

4.4.3. Milestones

Fife Council have undertaken to look after historic mile stones. She added that their preservation could be a benefit to local tourism and were useful to cyclists.

4.4.4. Park and Ride

Car Parking income in Fife in the previous financial year was £2,357,619 of which St Andrews contributed £468,275. Approximately £21,000 was levied in parking fines. The cost of the Park and Ride locally was £35,000 last year. However expenditure in Fife on provision and management of parking was more than the income in the past year.

4.4.5. Rail Fares

Cllr Liston had a couple of items relating to local train services. One related to the lack of saver tickets from Leuchars via Dundee to other Scottish destinations such as Glasgow. Cllr Liston had asked Scotrail who said that Fife Council only needed to push them a bit on the matter and provision might be possible in any new fares package.

4.4.6. Leuchars Stop

A second issue related to a Virgin Rail service to Birmingham, which doesn't stop at Leuchars, but stops at Cupar. She was concerned that this could set a precedent for other rail providers to miss out Leuchars as well, despite the fact that probably more passengers use Leuchars than Cupar. She has approached both Virgin Rail and Fife Council on this matter.

4.4.7. Old Hospital Site

Mr Sparks asked Cllr Liston what plans are to be made for the old hospital site, once the new hospital is up and running? He wondered about the possibility of using the site as a car park, with a park and ride

element. Mr Lindsay reminded the meeting that the Cottage Hospital is a Health Board owned site and therefore would not be available to Fife Council to use as suggested.

5. Planning Committee

5.1.1. Convergent Technology Centre

Mr Goudie had attended a meeting on proposals by the University of St Andrews for a new building to be known as the Convergent Technology Centre, to be built, if approved, between the Physics Building and the Gateway. The application will be made in the near future.

5.1.2. St Andrews Bay Development Proposals

Ms Uprichard has recommended that the Planning Committee put in an objection to the proposed development at St Andrews Bay. She commented that in relation to her concerns about increased transport that Fife Transportation Services didn't see any problem with the projected numbers. Using the Freedom of Information Act, Ms Uprichard had discovered that Fife Council had spent £70,000 on conferences at the St Andrews Bay. Mr Macdonald in relation to the transport issue, commented about the increase in green transportation by St Andrews Bay, the Old Course Hotel and the Links Trust.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. Hospital Liaison Group

Mr Macgregor confirmed the attendance next month of the HLG to discuss their proposals. Ms Uprichard asked if Dr Kilpatrick was included in the HLG? The secretary confirmed that Dr Kilpatrick is the Chairman of the HLG.

6.2. What we can do to help Community Councils

Mr Lindsay confirmed that the final draft of the response to the Executive's discussion paper has been circulated at the meeting and he would be submitting them very soon. He welcomed any last minute comments by the following day.

6.3. Community Council Vacancy

Community Council vacancy is to go on the Community Council notice board as planned – see 6.3. in March agenda.

6.4. Reception for Visiting School Party

Mr Crichton and Mr Macgregor attended the reception, which they felt had been successful.

6.5. Fairtrade Town Certificate

The secretary is progressing this matter.

6.6. St Andrews Day Holiday

The replies from the MSPs were included in the agenda at Appendix B for information.

6.7. Reports from Representatives

6.7.1. K.K. Procession

Mr Douglas reported that although he'd not managed to attend the meeting arranging the KK procession, he'd been informed that it will be on Easter Saturday, 15th April

6.7.2. Community Health Partnership

Ms Lesurf reported her attendance at a workshop organised by this body

6.7.3. World Class Meeting

Mr Macdonald reported he attended at a recent meeting of World Class. The Park and Ride under-funding had been discussed. The deficit was reported to be much larger than anticipated, around £20,000. There was discussion about sources of funding. Mr Macdonald had suggested possibly accessing the Common Good Fund, given previous Fife Council use of these funds for other local purposes. He is still to hear if that idea will be considered.

6.7.4. St Andrews Week

Mr Crichton reported that the committee haven't decided whether St Andrews week will begin on the 30th November or end on that date. Mr Crichton is still waiting a reply to emails in relation to this matter.

7. Reports from Committees

7.1. Health, Education and Welfare

7.1.1. Committee Cessation and remit of Ms Lesurf

Ms Lesurf reported that the Health, Education and Welfare Committee will cease meeting as there are insufficient members to make it viable at this time. Mr Lindsay reminded the Chair that in the past Ms Lesurf had been given the Community Council's permission to represent it on health matters. This permission was renewed unanimously by the Community Council.

7.2. Recreation

7.2.1. Bandstand Concerts

Mr Peterson reported that Ms Methven, due to work and family commitments, hasn't been able to complete organising the concerts for this year. The Recreation Committee will take over the task when they receive the paperwork from Ms Methven. Mr Peterson is conscious that the dates for concerts need to be confirmed in the near future.

8. New Business

8.1. Fairtrade Booklet financial assistance

A request for financial assistance towards the printing of this booklet was detailed by Mr Marks, Secretary of the Community Council. He had been approached with a request for a contribution towards the £300 cost of printing this booklet, which is being printed to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight in March. He acknowledged that not every Community Councillor was convinced that this was appropriate given the national nature of the issue, but argued that the booklet was being produced by a purely local group and it would be a potential benefit to businesses, local residents and visitors to St Andrews.

Mr Lindsay suggested that the Community Council could offer to print the inside on the Community Council printer. Mr Marks replied that as the cover would have to be produced commercially, it would seem sensible to get the whole booklet printed by one source as they would have to staple it anyway.

Ms Uprichard asked about the printing cost and suggested that we could offer £300. This proposal was later withdrawn.

Mr Crichton voiced an objection to the proposal as he felt that this was a national charity and outwith the remit of the Community Council. He also felt that this could be viewed as advertising for the charity and the private businesses, and could we justify spending council money on such a booklet. Mr Lindsay viewed the request as a continuation of our support in recent times, and felt that the booklet could be viewed as an information booklet rather than advertising. He proposed that we continue with our support for this year, but might want to review any future request were it to come our way. Mr St Johnston argued that the booklet was the product of a local campaign and detailed local sources of Fairtrade products, although he acknowledged that Fairtrade is a wider issue. Mr Sparks, from the Merchants Association, commented that his Association had not been approached for a contribution, but he'd be happy to take it to the next committee meeting.

Mr Macgregor's proposal for a contribution of £150 was put to the vote. The result was 11 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

Action : Secretary to contact the Fairtrade secretary to advise of the outcome and contact Mrs Tricker, treasurer to arrange for the issuing of a cheque for £150

8.2. Fife Constabulary Consultation Event

Mr Marks, secretary detailed the invitation received to attend open evenings at Fife Constabulary Headquarters as detailed in Appendix D of the March agenda.

Anyone interested to request the application form from the Secretary at the end of the meeting, for the meetings on the 10th and 18th April.

8.3. Forestry Commission Public Meeting

Mr Marks outlined the invitation to this event in Dundee on 9th March and at Luss on 21st March. See appendix E of the March agenda.

Interested parties to speak to Mr Marks to obtain the application form.

8.4. Fife Coastal Partnership

A letter had been received from the Fife Coastal and Countryside Trust which looks after the coastal path, and which had planned to develop a body made up of individuals, groups and organisations as a Fife-wide coastal Partnership to promote best use and management of the coastal path. Unfortunately an internal restructuring of the Fife Ranger Service has delayed implementation of this scheme, but the FCCT would keep us informed as to when they could proceed with this scheme. The letter was passed to Mr Peterson who is the contact for the Community Council on this matter.

8.5. Installation of New Rector

Mr St Johnston had been asked to mention that the new Rector would be happy to see a representative from the Community Council while on his drag around St Andrews this coming Thursday. Mr Fraser agreed to meet the Rector when he reached the town hall.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

The Chair had nothing to report.

9.2. Treasurer

Mrs Tricker was unable to attend but had mentioned to the Chair that the accounts needed to be audited quite soon. Mr Peterson who assisted with a preliminary audit last year said that Mrs Tricker had been in contact with him and he'd be willing to do the same this year.

9.3. Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence

Mr Marks briefly outlined the correspondence as listed in Appendix F. No questions were asked in relation to any of the correspondence. Letters or literature relevant to committees would be passed to those committees.

9.3.2. Future Presentation

Mr Macgregor noted briefly the presentation by the Hospital Liaison Group in the April meeting.
